

The 2nd South West Dowsing Festival!

DFEST SOUTHWEST DOWSING FESTIVAL '22

11th and 12th June 2022

South Zeal, Devon

*Dowsing for One and All
'the inter-connectedness of all things'*



SOUVENIR ISSUE

An Overview

by Nigel Twinn

After months of frenetic activity, the modern-day Christmas can often seem like something of an anticlimax. However, this thrice-deferred event not only met with the anticipation of the capacity 120 participants, but exceeded the expectations of even the organisers. From the very start - in fact, even before the doors formally opened - the buzz in the Victory Hall was almost tangible. Like-minded people had been separated by circumstances beyond their control for too long - and the relief, bordering on excitement, at the return of the dowsing dawn was palpable.

And so it self-sustained for the rest of the weekend. Day 1 commenced with three talks in quick succession, which hit the sweet spot throughout. The afternoon was graced by four field trips and two workshops, which were much appreciated by those attending - and will be remembered for many years to come.

There was plenty of time to socialise - and judging from the hubbub and the laughter echoing around the venue, there seemed to be rather a lot of that going on. New books and dowsing equipment were acquired, and there was much rummaging at the second hand stall. Old acquaintances were renewed with post-pandemic hugs, and new friendships kindled amongst the melee of disorganised chatter. Novices gained new mentors, and older hands new students. Everyone seemed to meet someone different, to their mutual benefit. Such was the inclusivity of the melange that no one seemed to be left out. It's a formula that isn't easy to bottle.

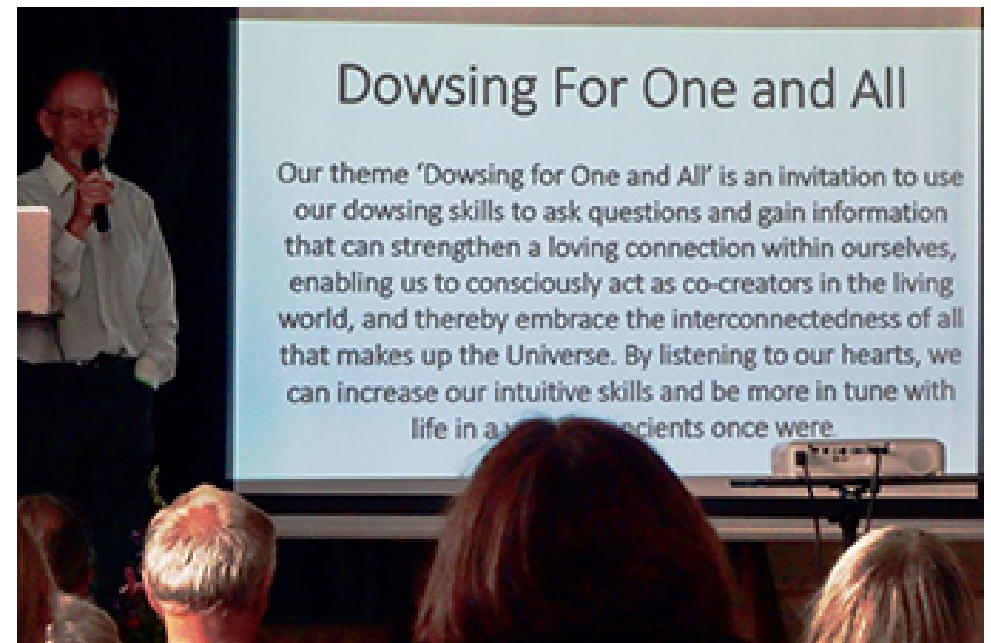
The morning of day 2 saw more smiling faces arriving, and another choice of six different outings and workshops. By lunchtime everyone seemed to be almost blissed out - but, like bees on pollen or imbibers of IPA, they were still up for more. The two afternoon presentations were similarly well received - and the resounding applause for Gwynn Paulett, Diana Burton and their colleagues at the end of the festival really was heartfelt appreciation.

You just wanted it to go on forever, but everything has its place in spacetime.

Even quicker than it had assembled, the dowsing community drawn to West Devon was on its way home. Gwynn's entourage of elves dismantled the stage set and emptied the temporary temple more enthusiastically than a swarm of leaf-cutter ants gorging on a tree in the rainforest.

And it was over. Except that a large number of dowsers had been greatly encouraged and evidently uplifted in otherwise challenging times. It will be a tiny beacon of hope that will shine brightly and will last long 'out there' in the information field.

We welcomed the presence of BSD President, Richard Fry, as both a punter and a participant, which added a little more to the significance of the proceedings - although he must have gone home wondering quite how to find the recipe for quite such a harmonious convention. It's not easy to fathom, and we wish him well.



The Nine Maidens are not Stonehenge, nor is Spinster's Rock Carnac, but a small village in the quiet countryside north of Dartmoor seemed to be just the right place, with just the right ambience, at just the right time for a group of self-selected dowsers to have a truly memorable weekend together.

If there were any wrinkles, nobody noticed - nor even cared.

It goes without saying that although the weather gods and dowsing divas may be with you, events like this only happen successfully on the back of months (and in this case, years!) of painstaking preparation.

Well done to those who put so much effort into setting up DFest'22, to the group leaders and speakers who took on their supporting roles with quiet professionalism - and to the residents of South Zeal, who tolerated the brief conflagration in their own tiny community with traditional equanimity.

Anyone up for another one?

Nigel Twinn

Programme of events

Saturday 11th June

Morning events in the Victory Hall:

Festival Welcome - by Gwynn Paulett (Chair of Devon Dowsers)
'Transitioning into the Silver Age' talk by Sean Ferris
'Portals to Place' talk by Emma Cunis
'Dowsing an Ancient Site -where do we start?' talk by John Moss

Afternoon Field Trips to:

Brent Tor with Peter Knight
Holy Wells with Angie Kibble
Kes Tor with John Moss
Lydford Gorge with Stuart Dow

Afternoon Indoor Workshop:

'Finding Your Silver Lining - Using Dowsing to Find and Stay on your Path' with Sean Ferris

Afternoon Outdoor Workshop: (in a nearby South Zeal Garden)

'Delight in the Kingdom of Nature - a Garden Odyssey' with Kate Smart

Sunday 12th June

Morning Field Trips to:

Scorhill Stone Circle with Peter Knight
Spinster's Rock with Nigel Twinn
Round Pound with John Christian
Belstone with David Lockwood

Morning Indoor Workshop:

'An Introduction to Bird Spirit Wisdom' with Dr Karen Stead-Dexter

Morning Outdoor Workshop: (in a nearby South Zeal Garden)

'Delight in the Kingdom of Nature - a Garden Odyssey' with Kate Smart

Afternoon Presentations:

'Perception and the Unseen Realm' from Dr Karen Stead-Dexter
'Interesting Times and Exciting Challenges' from Nigel Twinn

Plenary Closing Session



'Transitioning into the Silver Age'

Sean Ferris

With so many friends and clients in the audience, Sean was pushing at an open door. Sean knows his material and the listening public were all-ears, ready to hear about it.

While Sean is probably better known for his allergy consultations and his earth energy matrix work, here he was straight into a very personal passion - alchemy.



For some while, Sean has been making the connections between the state of the planet and its human crew, the transition between one cosmic era and the next and the impact of planetary influences on the sequence of unfolding generations. Part of this work explores the relationship between the presence or absence of certain metals and other elements at any given time, the miasms that have afflicted mankind over the millennia and the impact of the interrelationship between and the basic elements of alchemy - earth, air, fire, water - and aether.

Along the way he makes a strong case for the rehabilitation of aether as an addition the four-element system used in many worldviews. Einstein may have sounded the death knell for aether, but in fairness, he only said he didn't need it for his equations to operate - not that it didn't exist.



All this in the first short session set the festival off like a firework from which never really made it back to ground.

'Portals to Place'

Emma Cunis

Wildly different, but just as engaging in its own way, was the talk by next speaker, Emma Cunis. After half a lifetime touring and working around the world, Emma has returned to her Devon roots, with decades of global experience to draw on.

Perhaps best known for her 'Dartmoor's Daughter' forays and walking tours, Emma has made a specialisation of introducing both locals and those 'from away' to seeing her home landscape in a more holistic manner.

Often working with her mother, Sally, a stalwart of the local dowsing community, Emma shows how to appreciate the local landscape as a place to be, rather than just to see pass by the coach window.

Many of the sites she described in this beautifully illustrated presentation were places of ancient or sacred significance. They are places that have a certain feel for the more sensitive and capture the imagination of just about any thoughtful visitor.

She mused that ancient people might have felt these sites to be more than just rocks and rivers with some charm, but to have a sense of intangible animation - even an eternal presence. As she noted, it's a meme that echoes through the stories of aboriginal peoples across the planet - and it would undoubtedly have been sensed by our own ancestors.



This was another session that could easily have lasted all day, but it proved to be an excellent taster for some of the field trips to follow.

‘Dowsing an Ancient Site - where do we start?’

John Moss

Well, where should we start? John Moss, the hugely experienced dowser and group leader, and formerly Director of the British Society of Dowsters, answered this seemingly obvious question in his time-honoured tell-it-how-it-is style.



What not to do is to jump out of the car, rush up to the site in question and start firing off all sorts of cosmetic requests for information, just because we can.

John's considered opinion, based on decades of field work, is that the first thing to do is to do nothing - well nothing active. Take in the place, its feel and its ambience.

‘Ask’ the site guardian if you should be there at all, and if so, if it's OK to dowse there. ‘Talk’ to the spirit of place - only then enter with all due caution and consideration.

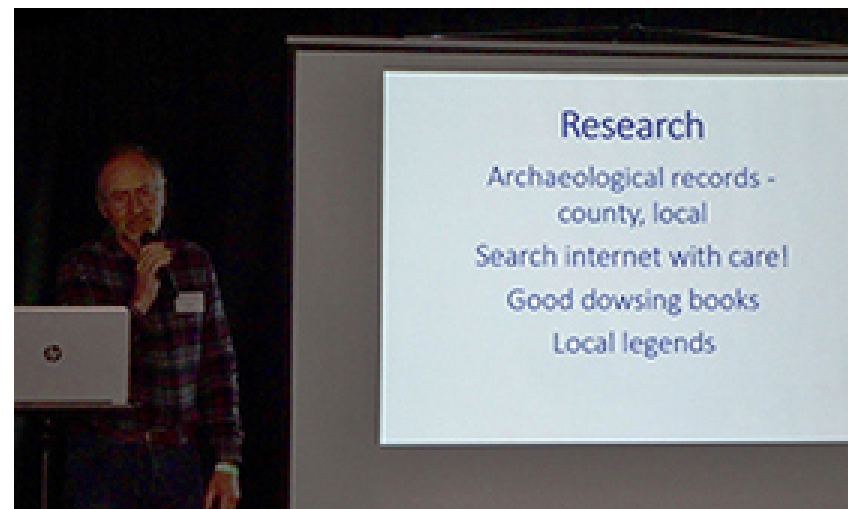
The dowsers usual basic protocol works well for most people most of the time.

May I, Can I, Should I dowse here today?

If you get a no to any of these, don't do it - ask if you can come back on another occasion.

Always protect yourself psychically. Most places are safe and free from personal issues - but not all . . . It pays to be prudent.

When you do start to examine a site, do so in a methodical manner, not just a series of random and dissociated streams of enquiry. Depending on your reason for being there, you could start by looking at the water features, which are almost always present and relevant. Then maybe dowse for earth energies, leys or grids. Consider the historical and/or the archaeological journey of the place and its inhabitants or users. Perhaps move on to elementals and site-specific spiritual aspects. Take a measured approach through the layers of the landscape in which you find yourself.



This was a valuable introduction for the less experienced, but it also had many of the rest of us looking at the floor, recalling all the times we had over enthusiastically blundered into a site less than fully prepared or grounded.

Important stuff - delivered by a seasoned professional in a delegate-friendly way.

A lot to think about – and much to discuss over lunch.

Finding your silver lining - Using dowsing to find and stay on your path with Sean Ferris

Devon-based Sean Ferris has become established as one of the most sought after practitioners for allergy dowsing and similar conditions. His experience in this field has been founded on the training he undertook with the legendary Jack Temple, whose books *The Healer* and *Medicine Man* he recommends as a starting place for an understanding of the dowser/healer's craft.

Temple's work talked about the importance of miasms (predilections to serious diseases or illnesses). In Sean's opinion, all miasms have their origins in bacteria.

Sean emphasises the need to use our dowsing in the form of establishing percentages of well-being. In his view, over 80% represents good health in an adult, while anything below 70% indicates that there are problems which could be addressed.

The moon has a profound interaction with our physical body. In turn, the metal associated with the moon, in alchemic terms, is silver. Due to its strong antimicrobial activity, silver is also commonly used as an adjunct in wound care. David Hudson is generally credited with discovering this connection - and David Wolfe has written about it.

The removal of miasms, by eating certain foods and avoiding others, can prolong life by accessing appropriate metals and reducing the presence of others. Too much nickel (often associated with the Devil in former times) apparently distorts our view of ourselves, while low silver levels can also affect our ability to absorb zinc.

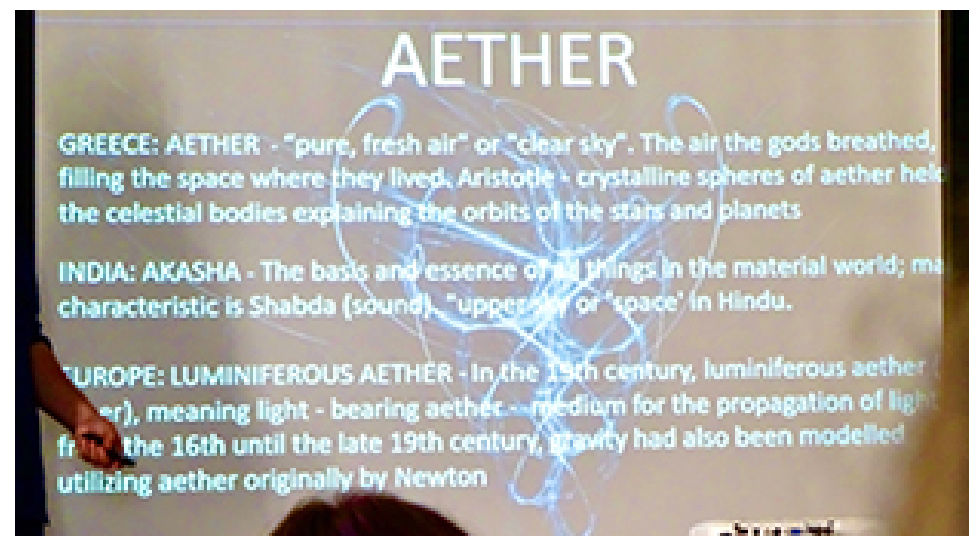
On the day of the talk, I dowsed that my own silver level was 72.5%, whilst a colleague dowsed it at 68%. So, it appears that the input of the dowser is also part of the process - and maybe that's a good indicator of the benefit of employing an experienced and independent practitioner.

My level of absorption for the Vitamin B6, that day was a healthy 78%. B6 is a precursor and indicator of serotonin levels. Generally, we don't need so much B6 when we are on holiday or at other times when we are subject to less stress. To aid the absorption of B6, we should eat more rice, buckwheat, quinoa or oats - all of which are gluten free.

While silver is associated with the moon, the metal palladium is similarly associated with the planet Venus, the Mother Goddess.

All too often, we seem to experience too strong an influence from the outer planets. Saturn can be detrimental to our self-esteem; Pluto can project darkness or despair; while Neptune can emanate excessive romanticism. It is preferable to for our well-being to consciously increase our connections to the nearer celestial bodies - Venus, the moon and Mercury.

Sean emphasised the interconnectedness of the organs of the body and their respective planetary influences. He cited the example of low magnesium absorption resulting in poorer liver function. Sinus and respiratory problems reflect what is happening in the lungs, which in turn affects the liver and can lead to a drop in magnesium levels.



As ever, this information-packed workshop was only scratching the surface of a lifetime of experience spent using dowsing to address many of the less obvious sources of ill health and a generally impaired sense of wellbeing.

If there is anyone who knows more about this subject than Sean does, I have yet to meet them.

An enjoyable and informative session, much appreciated by those attending.

Food for thought, indeed.

Ros Twinn

Delight in the Kingdom of Nature

- A garden Odyssey

with Kate Smart

Literally just over the road from the Victory Hall lies the two-acre garden owned and tended by Fi and Simon Redaway. Being both a Devon Dowser and a local resident, Fi warmly open her beautiful backyard to the DFest hordes on both days - and even provided afternoon refreshments.

It is a landscape with a long history, dating back to a time when the precursor of the A30 actually ran through South Zeal and the houses along its length had enormous strip allotments behind them, running back for hundreds of metres. During World War II, what are now her outbuildings were built as piggeries to provide local food for the numerous American GIs stationed at Okehampton Camp. Many of the decaying sties have now been converted by the Redaways into sheds and greenhouses. The site also hosts the national collection of *Nepetas* (see the internet!)

Field trip leader, Kate Smart, has specialised in dowsing gardens and their plants. A garden designer by trade, she has also become well-known in dowsing circles for the establishment of the zoom-based Spiritual Special Interest Group (SSIG), which has been steadily gaining attention, mainly by word-of-mouth.

Kate used the remarkable outdoor training location to ask the DFest groups questions about the on-site horticulture. What plants attracted our attention - and why? Which plants acted as guardians of the site - and what did they have to 'say' about the additional attention they were suddenly receiving? And, in the spirit of the theme of the weekend, which plants worked together in a community?

We could have spent many hours just looking at the immaculate borders and themed patches of vegetation. However, with Kate's questions and Fi's remarkably verdant and productive garden (remember this adjacent to the northern slopes of Dartmoor, not an area renowned for its clement climate or fertile fields) each group was able to come to appreciate the more profound implications of gardening in depth and at scale.

The sheer health and fecundity of this location speaks volumes for the unstinting love and attention of its owners, both in physical and in non-physical terms. Many will have come away in awe, inspired and energised by what can evidently be achieved through being at one with the environment at a vegetative level.



This is clearly a growth area of dowsing - where tree-hugging and talking to your houseplants meets human-scale horticulture. The US agricultural dowser, Patrick MacManaway would have had a field day (pun intended!) in this village garden.

Nigel Twinn



Brent Tor

led by Peter Knight

Brentor is an imposing and prominent hill at the western edge of Dartmoor. Composed of volcanic breccias and lavas, it is different in geology from the prominently granite landscapes of Dartmoor. Three legends concerning the Devil are associated with the hill, pointing back to times when such a prominent peak would surely have been sacred to pre-Christian Pagan cultures. Iron Age earthworks encircle the base of the hill, and Brentor has been 'Christianised' with the erection of the 12th century church of St Michael.

Dowsers will of course be familiar with the fact that Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst dowsed the male and female currents of the St Michael Line converge on the hill. These, amongst other things, were to be our focus on the DFest visit on Saturday.

After passing over the road from the car park, Peter gathered the group to kneel and touch the ground as we said an invocation to the Land, and set out our intent for the afternoon. We then skirted the high rocky outcrops to pick up on where the Mary flow started its ascent of the hill, near to some old mine workings. We all felt that the energies passed through a nearby tree.



We then went back to the main path and ascended the hill, pausing here and there to examine and dowse the earthworks. Some present believed that the earthworks are older than 'Iron Age', something which has been borne out elsewhere. As we ascended further, the lofty tors of Dartmoor revealed themselves in all their glory, bathed under a hot sun and clear skies. We could even see a sliver of sparkly sea to the south.

At the summit stands St Michael's Church. Peter explained how St Michael supplanted older gods and goddesses associated with high places, such as Bel and Lugh. We dowsed where the Mary and Michael flows entered the church, chiefly at the tower end, and seemed to exit via some thorn trees on the east side of the church.

Inside the church was a quiet, peaceful and yet powerful place. More dowsing was attempted inside, and a powerful spiral was felt in front of the altar.

Most attendees, however, felt a profound peace inside, and mostly sat in silence and tuned in. There was a profound silence here.



Reluctantly, we made our descent, as time was marching on. At the foot of the hill, we gathered around a large boulder, and sent out healing blessings, and gratitude, to the Great Mother. It was a great outing, with lovely people, to a place of great beauty and power.

Peter Knight

Holy Wells

led by Angie Kibble

What distinguishes a Holy Well from every other kind of emergent water source?

Legends abound of miraculous healings occurring at Holy Wells, particularly in the days before medicine was freely available. Did faith contribute to the healing process, or was it due in part to the mineral content of the water, to traces of magnetism, or even perhaps here in the South West to minute particles of radio-activity, absorbed by the water as it forced its way up through the rock from deep within the earth.

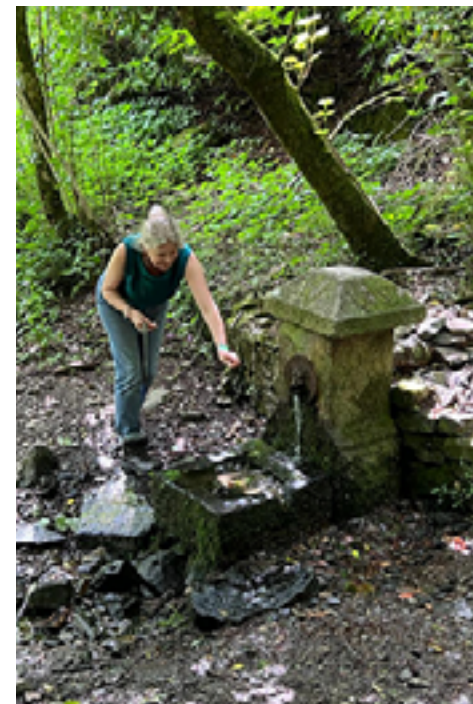
And what part do crossing Earth Energy lines, underground water lines, and Energy Leys play in enhancing the healing quality of the well water? All these questions and more were considered by the dowsers who joined me for the Holy Well Tour on the Saturday afternoon of DFest.

We began our dowsing investigations at Fitz's Well on the high moor above Okehampton, opening with a beautiful Water Blessing shared by Sue Wallace. An ancient cross marks the spot where a couple, lost at night in thick fog, were saved from the spell they believed themselves to be under when they found a spring of pure water. This well is still regarded today as a well of good fortune.

We then moved on, in a splendid convoy of five vehicles, to the Holy Well at Belstone, sadly dry for the past few months, where we dowsed for the guardian tree, for the presence of Elementals, and for the nature of the energy line that connects the Holy Well to the Church.



Proceeding on to the Lion's Mouth Spring in Skaigh Woods, we used various types of Mager Rosettes to dowse for the quality of the water. Curiously although this spring is not Holy, the water dowsed as possessing healing qualities.



Our tour culminated at the Ladywell at Sticklepath, now beautifully planted and maintained by a human guardian, although the water itself was a mere trickle, and low in energy. Some of us climbed the very steep hill up to the rock where the great Methodist preacher John Wesley attracted crowds of hundreds of people, adjacent to the field where the spring that feeds the Ladywell rises.

It seemed fitting to end the tour at a place where prayer has been valid, and I gave thanks for good company, for the sunshine, and for Dartmoor looking at its glorious best, grateful that no-one fell into any of the wells, and that by some miracle we did not lose anyone along the way!

Angie Kibble

Kes Tor

led by John Moss

Everything happens for a reason.

I had signed up for the Kes Tor outing on the Saturday afternoon of DFest and much to my delight, so had a good friend. At first I thought this was a great coincidence, then a split second later, I realised that as we had both independently dowsed which workshops we should do, it was no coincidence. Car sharing was required to get to our meeting point, so I offered to drive my friend and a couple of other dowsers who I had met a few times, but didn't know very well.

Despite having been to the meeting point before and having directions, a map and a map reference, we managed to get lost. Having contacted the group leader so that he was aware of the situation, we turned up to find the group had made a start by dowsing at Round Pound while they waited for us to arrive. I was feeling bad about making my passengers late and for making the group have to hang around and alter the planned order of events for the afternoon. My friend kept cheerfully telling me as we were driving along the lanes, 'Everything happens for a reason', but that didn't stop my feeling of guilt.



Now that we were a complete group, we all set off to find a stone row – which didn't seem to want to be found. Dowsing for its location didn't lead us to it. At this point, I was feeling slightly more relieved – maybe I wasn't the only one who wasn't being led to their planned destination that afternoon! By this time, we were on the slope of Kes Tor, so we climbed to the top, from where we could see the stone row that we had missed.

The afternoon then seemed to go to plan and my earlier feelings disappeared as I welcomed the sense of freedom that being on Dartmoor always seems to bring. I marvelled at the views, the vast open space and the feeling of being in a landscape that has been worshipped for thousands of years.

As we came back down to the road and Round Pound, I asked my passengers whether they would like to dowse at Round Pound before we finished. We asked one of the other group members who was making their way back to the cars to let the leader know our plans and that we would be fine to make our own way back a bit later. Rods in hand, I started to ask my permissions to dowse at this site. I received a 'no'. Turning to the others and letting them know what I had been told, they too received the same answer. It was at this point that I asked whether I should perform a clearing. I received a 'yes'. I had been taught a clearing process as part of my Seichem initiation, but so far had only used

it on myself and was still relying on reading it from a sheet of paper. I had been led to believe that I might need to use the clearing at some point when I was out dowsing, so had it with me. The others decided to stand to one side and let me 'get on with it'.

Trusting that I could 'give it a go', I dowsed that the clearing was for myself, the land and the area. I dowsed where to stand and which way to face and worked my way through the process. I focussed on putting my energy into doing my best, hoping that it would make a positive difference.

To finish, I dowsed that I should give thanks and love to the lone hawthorn tree that I was facing which was growing on the side of the pound. I had become aware of the tree during the process and felt that it was a significant part of what I was doing that afternoon, so went over and made an offering of rose petals.



Returning to my passengers, they told me that they had felt the energy lift as I carried out the clearing. I had to admit that I had been concentrating too much on 'getting it right'. Despite us now getting 'yes' for our permissions to dowse, we felt that it was time to head back. As we walked the short distance towards the car, a sheep limped across the road and then lay down on the grass. A lamb appeared beside it. Realising that the afternoon was not quite yet finished, I rang the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer (a useful number to have in your phone) and left her a message with the details of the injured sheep.



Driving back to South Zeal, we chatted about the afternoon's events. I felt lighter – as if the four of us had shared a significant event. I also had to believe my friend's earlier words that everything happens for a reason.

Emma Young

(Karla McKechnie, Dartmoor Livestock Protection Officer can be contacted on 07873 587561 for incidents of sheep worrying, road traffic accident casualties and livestock in distress on Dartmoor.)

Lydford Gorge

led by Stuart Dow

After some initial haste to park at the top end of Lydford Gorge in good time so as to catch a public bus to the lower end (and thus only have to walk one way, and arrive back at our cars) we had a relaxed and blissful afternoon.

There was some disappointment on arrival at the entrance to find the Devil's Cauldron (but which the likes of us translate as the 'Divine Cauldron') was closed off following a rockfall at the beginning of the lockdowns.

Knowing this, we had a relaxed pace of walking and lots of stopping and staring and 'being'. This was just as well as two members of the group couldn't refrain from chatting whilst walking uphill, despite their medical conditions.

As we walked down into the gorge, we noticed several yew trees which had a strong elemental presence clearly recognised, both by members of our group and other visitors who were drawn to these beautiful spots.

At the White Lady Falls we were drawn to the confluence of the waters to sit and eat lunch, only afterwards learning that that was the power spot, rather than at the foot of the falls. Several people were even drawn to stand for a while, in the centre of the Michael Energy Ley that ran through this spot.

As we sat there, a family of three trolls living under the bridge, made their presence known and the male drew our attention to his presence by splashing around in the water - truly magical!

On one of the pauses in our walk, as we marvelled at the beauty of the dwelling places of the Elementals and nature beings, I felt a strong draw to go bathing. Paul Syrett commented that merely standing in the flowing water, or putting hands in would be equally appropriate, and certainly more practical for this clunky human who had no towel or change of clothes.



Paul tuned into the water spirits, I presume Undines, and gave the group a message from them. They really appreciated us regarding them with respect and they were happy that we were there. Lovely! Most of us put our hands or feet in the river by way of a reciprocal appreciation, some finding the water warm, inviting and invigorating for the last stage of the walk.



Fortunately, we all had permission to cross the last bridge that had a strong presence underneath it, in order to return to our cars, later in the afternoon than expected. For me, it seemed that time had stood still.

Ali Denham

A Magical Garden

with Kate Smart

I had dowsed that I should choose to do the garden workshop on the Sunday morning and when talking to participants who had visited the garden on the Saturday, I was met with comments such as, 'I won't tell you about it' and 'I don't want to ruin the surprise', which only fuelled my curiosity further. 'What did the garden have in store for me?' I wondered. The blurb in the DFest programme promised a 'practical exploration of a magical garden', but I had no idea just how magical this garden would be.

The garden is set in a double burgage plot, steeped in the history of the town and nestled beneath the towering South Cosdon Hill. It has been lovingly brought to life in its current form by the very modest Fi Reddaway (I have never visited a garden which exuded so much love!) and I am so grateful that she was happy to share its delights with so many dowsers over the weekend. Kate Smart 'led' the workshop in such a way that everyone had the opportunity to explore and spend time in the areas, which called to them, although help and guidance was on hand if requested. She set us 'tasks' with a suggested time frame, after which we came back the central meeting point and shared our experiences if we wished to do so.



To begin with, Kate suggested that we wander around the garden to explore the different areas within it. My rods led me on a tour, prompting me to stop every now and then and feel what the garden was like at that point. I was taken past the bee hives, some hedges, then down to the stream and the willow area, before heading on around past a beautiful blue orb and finally to a secluded area with an old lime or linden tree.

Our next 'task' was to spend time with a tree, which held meaning for us. Kate invited us to dowse the aura of the tree, particularly if it had a weakened or missing branch and to notice the shape of the aura around that section of the tree. I had dowsed that I should

go back to the tree where I had finished my tour of the garden. Despite there being about 20 participants in the workshop, only a couple of other people were nearby, leaving me to enjoy getting to know the tree in peace.

One of the things, which I was drawn to, was a place where the trunk was split open and crystals had been placed inside. The tree had grown around the crystals, so that they had become part of it. It was as if the history of the tree was still showing, but it had continued to grow. Ivy also grew up the trunk of the tree and in places it was difficult to tell which parts were ivy and which were the tree. Different elements and events were all intertwined: visible if you looked closely, but not detracting from the magnificent whole being. The tree was flourishing and standing tall on the boundary of the garden.

Our final 'task' was based on the theme of the weekend, to find a plant, which was an example of inter-connectedness. For this, I was led to one of the many *Nepeta* plants in the garden. The particular variety I was led to bore the name of my late father-in-law so I said a quick hello to him, before watching the bees dart quickly from flower to flower gathering nectar and pollen.



Bees are so important in the pollination of plants and I realised that the area of the garden I was in was where pigs had previously been kept. The connection of the land providing the food for animals, which in turn, directly or indirectly, provide the food for humans, who in turn should look after the land. Sitting in this little area of paradise in the warm sun, listening to the birdsong and drinking in the colours of all the plants, anything seemed possible.

I feel I should add a footnote to state that this is a personal account of the workshop and I'm sure that each participant has a very different, yet equally valuable story to share.

Emma Young

Bird Spirit Medicine with Dr Karen Stead-Dexter

Victory Hall was transformed in readiness for Karen Stead-Dexter's 'Bird Spirit Medicine' workshop. The chairs were rearranged in a semi-circle to form an open space in the middle, enabling people to feel connected to each other and the energy, which was tangible! Beautiful raptor feathers were placed carefully on a white cloth on the floor, along with painted stones, essences, drums and other artefacts. It formed a calming centre in the middle of the room, full of people eager to know more. This all set the scene for an inspiring and fascinating two hours of learning and activity.

Karen described her background as an environmental researcher and scientist, and explained how this had developed into being an Animal and Nature Assisted Therapist, Medicine Woman, Teacher and Environmentalist. Her love of raptors and the healing that they bring to people was clearly evident as she described her work with families and other adults. Karen moved on to explain the different attributes of many birds, including the Swan who looks so serene above, but underneath they are busy paddling, the Buzzard with its joy of gliding, the Harrier Hawks which hunt in packs and raise their young together. Along with the Falcons and their powerful eyesight, and the multidirectional vision of the Owl.



We were then invited to thoughtfully choose a feather, to which we were attracted; to contemplate its shape, structure and colour, using our senses to listen and feel. I chose a primary feather, gifted by Khan, Karen's beloved Falcon. For each of us, Karen drew on her intuition and gave us some words about the feather. For me it was, 'Patience, pure forward direction'. We all gratefully received the medicine of the birds.

Karen went on to speak about the Ancient Wisdom Essences that she had created at significant times during the year, from the Spring Equinox and the New Moon. We were offered to experience the essence of Raven, which brings protection, order, clarity and balance, being an Ancient Wisdom Keeper. Other essences were also gently sprayed over us, if we desired that to happen!



As a skilled Shamanic drummer, Karen then led us in a drumming session, taking us on a journey in our spirits. That was a wonderful experience! Those who wished to were able to share what they had seen and felt whilst the drumming was happening. Karen had created a safe and respectful space, where people felt confident to describe what had happened. This brought healing to many, I am sure.

Finally, many questions were asked of Karen about birds, and birds of prey in particular, and how to work with them in the spirit realm, rather than feeling slightly antagonistic to some of their activities.

This was a memorable workshop. Karen gave her heart, mind and soul to every person who attended. Thank you, Karen for sharing your knowledge and wisdom. I hope your 'cup of energy' has been re-filled in these last few weeks. I have kept Khan's feather, and everyday it offers me its Bird Spirit Medicine of calm and strength, as I walk past it on my walnut table on my landing.

To know more of Karen's work head to the brilliant webpages: <https://www.flyinginnature.co.uk/>

Scorhill Stone Circle

led by Peter Knight

Skirting our way around the edge of the moor, along narrow lanes, 5 cars and their occupants were pleased to arrive at the small but popular car park for Scorhill to find we had enough parking places. Thank goodness this walk was in the morning.

We left the cars, and Peter paused everyone to kneel and touch the Earth, with love and gratitude. We then ascended the hill that overlooks the stone circle, and Peter made us aware of how the moor suddenly opens up and that several tors had come into view. Prominent to the south was Kestor. Dartmoor is all about the tors, and the relationship between them and the positioning of the prehistoric sites. Landscape is everything. Nothing is by chance.

We gradually descended to the stone circle. Peter asked us to pause and ask that we may enter, and that we come with peace and gratitude in our hearts. We asked that the spirit of place help us connect and understand the secrets that all such places hold. It is all about intent, Peter concluded.



Herbythyme, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

Peter explained the archaeology and history of the circle, and some symbolic shapes in the granite stones. He also revealed some of the astronomical alignments that had been shown to him during his research for his book, *Dartmoor Mindscapes*. Three small stones, for instance, aligned with Kestor, over which the midwinter sun rises. Another set of three aligned stones points to the midwinter sunset. A line of tors graces the skyline to the west, aligning with sunsets at various times of the year. Also in the context of landscape setting, Peter pointed out that Scorhill is one of several stone circles that appear to form an intentional 'crescent-shaped arc'. These include Sittamoore circle, Fernworthy circle, Grey Wethers, and others.



We then had a dowsing session where Peter invited attendees to dowse for various things, such as energy flowing in and out of the circle, vortices and blind springs inside the circle, as well as the auras of individual megaliths. People had varying degrees of success with all these.

We then took the short walk across the open moor to the Teign, which was spanned by a granite clapper bridge. Peter read out a blessing to the waters of the world, and added how special and how vital water is for all life, and how we must regard it as sacred, as people once did. Attendees then took it in turns to cast a pebble into the sparkly waters, in order to release some aspect of their lives they wished to release. This was done with gratitude – all things that come into our lives hold lessons for us.



We then went back up the hill to the stone circle. Peter invited those present to sit, lie on, or stand by a megalith that they felt comfortable with. Peter then gently drummed and chanted; he invited people to merge and connect with their stone, and perhaps even be transported back to prehistory. Many people in the past had sat where they were sitting, perhaps also tuning into the circle and the Land. Peter concluded with a powerful ancestral chant which he invited all present to join in with. We all opened our hearts and sent out Earth-healing out across the land. The stones, the drumming, the chants, the sun, and the gentle caress of the wind on our faces, all conspired to create that special moment in time, at this special place. We then had a sharing of our experiences, and some of those present felt powerful energies and love, and even felt themselves merging with their megalithic brothers.

With reluctance, we had to leave.

We turned and collectively thanked the place for having us.

Peter Knight

Spinster's Rock

led by Nigel Twinn

If three spinsters (as in female wool spinners) really did erect this megalith, then there were some mighty amazons living in the village of Drewsteignton in times gone by.

Now beleaguered in a quiet field with only sheep and a few cattle for company, the historical record hints dimly at a configuration of other such stones of a similar vintage in the vicinity that have yet to be uncovered by the archaeologist's spade.

Our group of many backgrounds sensed the energy of the site, before taking up the tools to study the lines, grids and alignments of the area.

The site guardian seemed happy enough to have us there - and maybe that was why the tiny parking lay-by, which had caused me so much concern, was found to be completely clear of tractors and trailers on the day that mattered.

Water, as ever, clearly had a hand in the location of this structure, with flows and spirals evident to all. Earth energies, too, were very plain and very prominent - with the centre band of the 'Mary' line coursing right through the middle of the quoit. It was a good excuse to examine the width of the bands, and to discuss their quality, colour and 'gender'.



With a current this broad, even the bands can be felt to have structure in themselves. As we worked with the flow, it expanded and unfolded, much as ever - seemingly acknowledging our benign interest.

We pondered as to why the main energy spiral seemed a bit off centre to the structure, and that in turn set off a discussion as to whether the stones were re-erected in their original positions. We dowsed as to where they had been quarried - not far away, as it turned out - and we considered if the composition of the uprights had any bearing on their energy.

Hartmann and Curry seemed not be the starting point of the footprint, but a Benker grid box encased the main components, like a protective wraparound. Were the builders really aware of - what we now know as - the Benker grid all that time ago? Apparently so.

Everyone seemed to be finding something of interest and, before too long, there was much discussion of other dowsing and dowsing-related matters arising from the interchange of ideas.



This is a place for all persuasions, and a site for all seasons. But it was still so much more enjoyable of a warm sunlit Devon morning. The livestock were unphased by our presence and the stones themselves untroubled by our interest.

A very nice outing of varied dowsing - all wrapped up by lunchtime.

Nigel Twinn



Round (or Roundy) Pound led by John Christian

This must be one of the most unusual monuments on Dartmoor - a kidney shaped outer enclosure stone wall, with a circular inner enclosure, connected to each other by four curved 'spokes' and a small 'hut' circle.

Led by John Christian, ten of us were shown how he uses colours as 'witnesses' to more easily identify different types of earth energy lines (or 'field' lines as he calls them).

He showed us his progression from using those colours on a Mager Rosette wheel, through hand held cards containing different line-specific colours, to having these colours applied directly to sets of L rods, making their use even easier.

Participants were given cards with black/red/white lines to try this out, which John associates with a 'field' line that runs up to the Pound, along a reave, and then crosses through the circle with an unusual 'dog leg' diversion.



John identifies this 'kink' in the energy line as 'conductivity discontinuity', where the energy line's path is 'distorted' by a water line radiating from a Blind Spring. There are several water lines radiating from this spring which appear to follow the curved radiating spoke walls. Or is it the other way around?



The Mary Current runs close by the Pound, which can also be identified by different colours - for John, these are yellow/red.



We also visited the nearby 'Healing Stone', where several of us benefited from its therapeutic energies despite its hard unyielding surface. This, too, has an energy line 'distorted' by a water line. Maybe this explains its healing qualities?

Alan Murray

Belstone

led by David Lockwood

I was asked to lead the walk to Belstone Stone Circle, and Paul Gerry volunteered to join me as the group photographer.

Twelve others came with us, and the walk up to the circle was pleasant and chatty. Interestingly, I had been thinking about ley energy discs a few days before the walk, and reasoned that these amazing discs have a spirit being with them - and this threw more light on why the male and female energies of these discs move to different locations from time to time.

At the circle, and after all preliminary tasks, I asked Olga, who we had met at West Kennett a few weeks earlier on our weekend course, 'How many circle guardians were there?' She said three, one being rather large and positioned at one of the crossing Earth Energy Discs at the circle. I felt that spirit was with the disc rather than the circle.



Later, she called me over to tell me that she had more information on the disc's spirit. He says he has to be big, as he has to look after the disc at the top - some 28k miles above. I thanked her for this information; it is great having sensitive folk around to tell us what is actually going on!



Later, at the Church, Jane Taylor said the Mary Line was not in the church - and, indeed, we found her (Mary) flowing at the side of the church, passing through the porch.

Several of the group dowsed the age of the special standing stone, now housed in a granite base against the south wall. Apparently, this stone was relocated here and had previously been in several other places nearby. It dowsed as being sited in the area, in the 6th or 7th century.

Paul Syrett and Jane realised that the stone had a female spirit with it, and were soon having intense conversations with it. A very sad story emerged. She said she was the missing stone from the Belstone Stone Circle, had been engraved with Christian insignia, and was now stuck in this dark church with a roof over her head. She was very unhappy.

Then, suddenly, Paul Syrett became aware that the Mary Line was now passing close to this stone, where she had been previously at the stone circle. We all confirmed this with our rods and pendulums. Quite an amazing happening!



David Lockwood



Sunday Presentation Report

If starting well is an important pre-requisite, finishing strongly is a must.

After a couple of days of essentially practical dowsing, these final two sessions took a longer look at how dowsing has progressed and is still developing.

‘Perception and the Unseen Realm’

Dr Karen Stead-Dexter

All those who feel that the golden age of dowsing greats is passing, and that there is no new blood coming onto the scene to replace them, clearly have never been to a talk or workshop run by Karen Stead-Dexter.

This presentation was given a sound quotes and extracts from the work of well-known and well-respected writers and practitioners in their respective fields. Everyone from Dante to Goethe, Keats to Steiner was called on to add their support.

Karen referred to the observation the American author and philosopher, by Wayne Dyer, that:

‘if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change’

This interaction between the dowser and the dowsed is pivotal to the seismic shift occurring, not only in the dowsing world, but in science and philosophy, too.

Perhaps even closer to the essence of our craft is a quote from the late British author, Aldous Huxley:

‘There are things known and there are things unknown, and in between are the doors of perception’

Karen explained how our ability to perceive is limited by ‘gating channels’. While these are necessary to prevent the sensitive being overwhelmed by the flood of information available to us, all too often these gates are tightened so much that we can become quite insular. Indeed, her observation is that sometimes the most learned are also the most narrow mined in their approach. In typical humans, these gating channels are most overt at around eight years old and thereon they tend to close. Consequently, it could be argued that pre-teenage children have a significantly closer connection to the world around them than us!

Yet, we can always prize open those gates, even in adulthood – if we have a mind to do so. As Roald Dahl once said:

‘Those who don’t believe in magic, will never find it.’

I am sure we have all come across the occasional dowsing sceptic hiding behind the secure grill of denial.



Those who know Karen’s work will be aware that she engages with the plant, animal and, especially, the bird kingdoms to glean information and wisdom, in a parallel path to that of the traditional dowser using a rod or a pendulum. Whether you feel you are in direct conversation with the bird or, maybe, you are - avian guided - both accessing the same part of information field is a good after-dinner discussion. What Karen showed was that by interacting with the realm of birds, through the medium of a witness or a pixel, such as a feather, we are able to gain access to knowledge beyond our day-to-day experience.

Karen has a personal bond with her raptors (birds of prey), but she also works closely with corvids (crows, rooks, choughs etc.). To illustrate her point, she handed out a bag of crow feathers for us to hold and sense. Her advice being that ‘if anything comes to you (when holding the feather), it is for a reason. It is potential medicine for you to use’. We were being invited to open our own gating channels, with the help of our flying friends.

In an echo of John Moss’s talk the previous day, Karen’s prompting is to think and to consider before you start dowsing. We should open our perceptive abilities, before we seek to examine the feather in our hand. To get the most out of the contact with the creature from which the feather fell, we should contemplate it – its shape, texture, form and construction. Only then can we make the most of the new information it may have for us.

It was a veritable tour de force of a presentation, which had me mumbling quietly about it being a hard act to follow!

'Interesting Times and Exciting Challenges'

Nigel Twinn

Trying to sum up the themes of such a well-attended and well-received weekend - and to emphasise the substantial progress made by the dowsing community in recent decades to boot - is quite a big ask. Here DFest co-host, author and former BSD Trustee, Nigel Twinn gave it his best shot.

When Colonel Arthur Harry Bell set up the British Society of Dowsters in 1933, he was not only engaging in a technically illegal act, but he was also setting out his stand against the prevailing order of the day. Today, I have a feeling that he would be fascinated by the talks and the workshops at DFest - even if he might have found some of the concepts a bit far fetched.

By his death in 1967, he was well into a personal journey that had led him to accept that remote and map dowsing worked - and consequently, he was not studying subtle emissions, but some kind of inexplicable information transfer.

A little later someone else coined the 'giant leap for mankind' strapline, but it could just as easily have applied to the input of AHB.



Dowsing has come of age since the latter part of the 20th century. What now seems just a few decades ago, most people were ignorant of, or in denial about, the validity of dowsing. But, as ever with radical 'new' ideas, denial gradually faded in to ridicule - and now we are well into the 'OK-how-does-it-work-then' phase. Even at the turn of the millennium a chance encounter with a new contact might elicit a 'What's dowsing?' response.

Today, it's more likely to be 'Yeah, I tried that at a garden fete once' or, increasingly more often, 'my friend/ Mum/neighbour does that'. Aided and abetted (and sometimes impeded) by social media, programmes about ghost hunters, films about psychic aliens, Harry Potter and the like in 2022, a fairly serious discussion about dowsing is common currency amongst a much more diverse catchment, even if it is still widely misunderstood.

Dowsing has spread from old farmers water-divining and beardy-weirdies leyhunting to many other aspects of the modern world. We are more likely to find a dowser working in horticulture or agriculture, in the alternative health and wellbeing of people and animals, in archaeology, in cosmology and even emerging physics. Yes, it is creeping, rebadged and rebranded into the homeground of science and the heartland of philosophy.



When cutting edge dowsing thinkers - and the likes of Brian Cox - are both saying in the public domain that the world is, at heart and in essence, composed of information, then these really are exciting times.

There was a modicum of humour in this presentation along the way (not all of it scripted!), which helped to round off the formal presentations in a positive manner.

Nigel Twinn

Plenary Closing Session

Such was the warmth of the vibe generated by this event that few chose to leave before the short soft buffer session.

Half a dozen of the speakers and group leaders were persuaded to attempt to answer questions from the floor, and in the round, on anything about the subject. Some participants spoke up with encouraging, even laudatory, comments - which were greatly appreciated by the organisers. Others were more interested in trying to get to the bottom of what all this new understanding meant in practice.

Dowsers will probably always be better at asking questions than answering them - and that's why we are moving onward and upward.

Amid much cheerfulness and mutual support, we concluded that the previous two days had been really informative, hugely worthwhile and thoroughly enjoyable. Even Colonel Bell might have applauded - politely.

Many thanks to all those who contributed material to this compendium, including:

Angie Kibble
Alan Murray
David Lockwood
Emma Young
Gwynn Paulett
John Moss
Jane Taylor
Karen Stead-Dexter
Paul Gerry
Peter Knight
Ros Twinn
Ros Weston
Stuart Dow

Nigel Twinn



Reflections from Ros Weston

It was with eager anticipation that I drove down to the Southwest, with my camping equipment packed in the car boot, to DFest'22. I was not disappointed. From the warm welcome to this novice dowser on Friday evening, to the departure on Sunday afternoon, I knew I had been in the company of some wonderful human beings - and others.

There was tremendous energy and focus as everyone gathered in the Victory Hall on Saturday morning. Gwynn and Nigel set the scene as a brilliant 'double act' - and kept us on track, and on time, the whole weekend.

Sean Ferris' opening talk 'Transitioning into the Silver Age' had my head spinning, as I followed the 'Silver Cord' and learnt about alchemy, Aether and the pure air and essence breathed by the gods. This was skillfully linked to 'Noetics', and to how we know and use our intuition. Being a midwife, the 'silver cord' resonated with me and my knowledge of the umbilical cord - which, when cut at birth, enables a baby to breathe air for the first time. Sean briefly mentioned Ecclesiastes, that wonderful Hebrew writing. Here, the silver cord alludes to life ending as the cord is loosed, and when the spirit leaves the body. Finally, the elements, and gold in particular, were introduced to us. I was inspired by the idea that Aurum is the light of the dawn.

Dartmoor's Daughter, Emma Cunis, then took to the podium to talk to us about 'Portals to Place'. We were taken on a whistle-stop journey around the globe, from the First Peoples of Australia and their 'song lines', to Columbia and the Qin Ling Mountains in North China. Then, closer to home, we came to Dartmoor and the epic poems of Beowulf and Carrington. In all these places energy lines join important places and ancestral spirits 'sing the song to keep it alive'. Here in the UK, Emma suggests the song lines have almost been lost. Just fragments remain in nature - in springs and trees - whilst the rocks and stones of Dartmoor are a repository for memory.

Stories are told in those landscapes, and the rocks imbue power, making connections to the universe. For example, at monuments there is a liminal feeling, as if peering through a veil. Emma referred to a couple of books: *The Old Straight Track* and *The Ancient Tracks of Dartmoor*. Both of these I will read, in due time. She challenged us with these final thoughts: 'Tradition is tending the flame, not worshipping the ashes' and to always keep curious. After this talk I certainly will!

Emma's talk was followed swiftly by John Moss who asked: 'Where do we start when dowsing an ancient site? For me, being a complete beginner, this was a practical and 'down to earth' session. I appreciated his methodical approach and respect for dowsing, suggesting that archaeological, county and local records, along with dowsing books and local legends, are all good starting points.

On arrival at a site John reminded us of the importance of seeking psychic protection and asking for permission to dowse. Then pause, reflect, and observe. Walk around the site, consider the location. Ask: 'Can I, may I, should I'. Then take time to process and take

one thing at a time. Dowse for water lines, blind springs and spirals. Trace and follow them, record what you find. Be systematic and patient. There may be other dowsing targets, such as energy and leys lines. Then take a break, advised John. It can be tiring work. Pause, reflect, and record. Reinforce your psychic protection.

John went on to say that when dowsing individual stones, we will find each has its own energy. Ask how the stones interlink, are there any missing stones. Don't be afraid to make contact and touch them. Consider their characteristics, do they mimic any landscape features? Is it at an entrance?

Take another break! Ask yourself 'how do you feel?'. 'Top-up' your psychic protection again. Take notes, and photos. Ask for other information such as how long has this stone been here for? What was its purpose? Dowse the energy lines again.... and finally express your thanks - and close down from your dowsing mode. All great advice John, thank you.

After picnics in the hall, Gwynn ably directed us all to the various groups and field trips arranged for Saturday afternoon. Some went travelling in convoy, hoping to return safely without getting too lost, to places on Dartmoor to enjoy dowsing on-site at Brent Tor, Holy Wells, Kes Tor or Lyford Gorge. Others stayed locally in South Zeal. My choice was to Fi Reddaway's lovely garden. Walking respectfully between the burgages, I could feel the presence of others who had walked there, generations before - monks and farm labourers and more recently soldiers billeted during the Second World War. Suddenly our short walk opened into a hidden gem of a place.

Kate Smart led the workshop skillfully and sensitively - encouraging us with various activities around the garden. The first was to find and listen to a guardian. With rods in hand, I tentatively walked along gravel and stone paths, until I came to a place where I knew I had to stop. Standing in front of a tall plant I heard: 'I am the guardian who holds altogether, and I am holding you together as well'. That was good to hear! At a walnut tree the guardian told me: 'I am a young guardian, grafted into an old guardian' and, looking up to the hills above the 2-acre garden, there was protection from another guardian. The final dowsing activity was to seek connections between the trees. I was pleased to get some reactions with my rods and noted these down. Thank you Fi for your generosity in opening your garden, and to Kate for your wisdom.



Saturday evening saw many celebrating Gwynn's birthday in the Oxenham Arms, followed by drumming and singing around a fire in the camping field. Thank you to Tom for spotting my phone in the grass, in the dark! It was good to wake on Sunday morning to the dawn chorus - and further purposeful field trips journeyed to Scorhill, Spinsters Rock, Round Pound or Belstone.

Meanwhile, I was thrilled to be introduced to Karen Stead-Dexter's, Bird Spirit Medicine. We heard about her work with her beloved raptors, and the healing they bring to many. There was more than a touch of this through their feathers, which Karen had brought to the workshop, along with the sensitivity of Karen herself. I chose a beautiful feather from Khan, her falcon. I was told this was a primary feather, from his right side, and was associated with patience and pure forward direction. I was happy to hear this! Notwithstanding all the energy that Karen had given out in the morning workshop, she spoke again in the afternoon on 'Perception and the Unseen Realm'. This was a fascinating and thought-provoking talk. I loved the idea of a sixth sense being a 'heartfelt sense'.

To wrap up a thoroughly enjoyable DFest'22 Nigel Twinn, in his inimitable style, looked back on dowsing over fifteen years, or so, and then looked to the future with optimism in his talk 'Interesting Times and Exciting Challenges'.

Thank you to the DFest'22 Committee and many others for all your work and excellent planning. This novice dowser, Ros Weston, is incredibly grateful.

