

The Holy Axis

A zoom presentation to the
Tamar, Devon, Somerset, Trencrom and Thames Valley Dowsing Groups

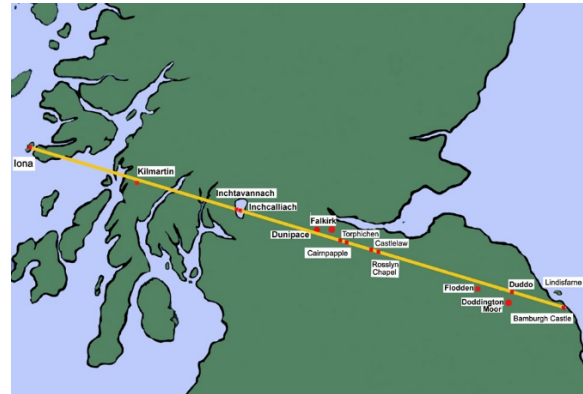
by **Caroline Hoare and Gary Biltcliffe**

The sagas of Gary Biltcliffe and Caroline Hoare have already become the stuff of legend in the UK's earth energy dowsing community. Their epic journey from the Isle of Wight to the North of Scotland, which became *The Spine of Albion* project - itself inspired by the seminal *Sun and the Serpent* - has already established the Dorset-based dowsing duo as the first couple of the genre.

The forthcoming book of the zoom- *The Holy Axis* - tracks their trail across the Anglo-Scots border from Bamburgh and Lindisfarne in north eastern Northumbria, through the lowlands of l'Écosse to the sacred isles off the west coast of Scotland. As ever with their work, it's partly serious landscape historical and archaeological research, partly engaging picture-postcard travelogue and partly personal pilgrimage. It tells the story of two erudite researchers exposing the underlying nature of Albion through practical dowsing, applied intuition - and a lot of solid footwork often over variable terrain and in predictably unpredictable weather.



The result has become another engrossing tale within a tale. While the skeleton is provided by some of the holiest places in the land - Lindisfarne, Rosslyn, Kilmartin, Iona - the flesh is added by the history of the people who inhabited these once-troubled border regions. The spirit, meanwhile, is supplied by the beliefs and the experiences of those who have lived in and passed through this terroir across the millennia.



However, *The Holy Axis* story is very much one of real people on a real quest, augmented by frequent bits of synchronicity and the occasional mishap. Turning up at the right place and the right time is very much the order of the day, but getting locked out of the very place they had travelled the length of the country to visit also happens from time to time.

The sheer scale of the enterprise is difficult to envisage - and the time it has taken to complete it in such a comprehensive manner would have most of us leaving the whole shebang to someone else. Yet, in the manifest Biltcliffe-Hoare worldview it has become something between a mission and an obsession - and a real pleasure for those of us who have had the privilege to hear about the findings without having to apply quite such an all-embracing commitment.

Several of the participants in this zoom will have visited and dowsed at some of the sites in question in isolation, but to see the bigger picture - complete with geographical linkages and ethereal threads - adds a whole new layer to the experience.

In common with Michael/Mary and Ellen/Belinus, there are two entangled gendered energy 'currents', which play the roles of project narrators. Here dubbed Lugh and Bride - two of the prime landscape animators of Celtic origin - they criss-cross the borderlands, nodeing at various significant points along the way. But this matrix is more than just a space-shifted comparison with their better-known siblings from the deep south, with added oatcakes. Lugh and Bride have their own signatures and their own characteristics - forged in the magnificent solitudes of Inner Farne and distant Mull, but also grim remanances of the lowland killing fields, which had even our battle-hardened hosts beating a grateful retreat to the local hostelry on occasions.

It is a story that unfolds across the ages - from the most ancient geology, through the first megaliths of the Bronze Age, right up to Victorian country piles and the mundane modernity of twenty-first century Falkirk. The Romans get a mention, with their Antonine Wall - as do the great and the good of early Christianity on these Islands, featuring Aiden and Cuthbert in cameo roles. It's a vast tableau, with layer upon layer of intertwined themes. Wells, caves and holes in the ground appear in abundance, as do rock outcrops and promontories, not to mention a volcanic plug and a whirlpool (yes, a real whirlpool!)

Throughout it all, dowsing the long distance energy lines is the core of the quest. It's what links the places with the people, and the spirit of the land with the spirit of the seekers.

Amongst the many insightful comments and questions at the end of the session was one from a relatively new dowser - What came first, the energy lines or the sacred sites? One could sense a collective intake of breath - the answer to that is, after all, right at the heart of the enterprise. But Gary, ever the diplomat, replied (in summary) that it seemed to be a bit of chicken and egg. Most of the sites dated back to at least the Bronze Age in origin, but clearly the geological input took it right back to the dawn of time, as least as we know it. Yet we humans have had - and are still having - an influence, too.

Later in 2023, there will hopefully be a paperback - The Holy Axis - and probably a series of talks and walks to enable us to experience a little of this expansive swathe of reality for ourselves.

Many thanks to Caroline and Gary for such an information-packed presentation.

Nigel Twinn Tamar Dowsers March 2023