

## THE MODERN DOWSER

*A talk given before the Radionic Association at the Annual General Meeting on 10th July, 1971, by Major-General J. Scott Elliot, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.*

It has not been easy to decide what to talk about to this gathering, as many of you know a great deal about dowsing. So I decided just to speak for myself, my beliefs and my experience. Some will agree with me and some will not. In this type of work, which is largely mental, one can only speak honestly and with accuracy about oneself and even that is difficult enough at times! Trying to describe other people's mental experiences and feelings is not on.

In the beginning, I believe there was built into man an ability to sense and perceive. This enabled him in his daily life to find what he needed, his water, his animals, his way to and from places, his salt and minerals, his kinsfolk who were nomads like himself, and the game and fruits on which he lived. This ability also enabled him to help and heal his family, his friends and his animals. There are still stone age tribes to be found in the world who have got these abilities. They also have the ability of Knowing and Communicating over long distances. All this today for us comes under the heading of Dowsing.

I have here a Hand Axe that was found in the northern Sahara. It is dated to about 250,000 B.C.—a quarter of a million years old. This type of axe is thought to be man's earliest tool or weapon. It intrigues me to think that man of those days probably treated the whole subject of what we call dowsing as normal, natural, instinctive and commonplace, probably just as we treat a sense of smell—every one has it but some have better noses than others! As far as Healing is concerned, perhaps just the touch of the hand or merely a thought did the trick?

Since those early days, man has lost these abilities to a great extent just as he has lost many other abilities, simply through the lack of "need." Today we all know of the man with the bump of locality, the person with green fingers, those who get hunches, the person who finds things (my mother was a dab at this), the doctor with the good bedside manner who makes you feel better, just by his presence alone. But what many do not realise is that all these folk are usually the types who can become good dowsers, if they so wish. The word "need" I would like to emphasise, leave for the present and come back to later, for the Need to know is one of the background factors in successful dowsing.

Through the centuries there have always been those who could "see" and "feel," abilities which have been used for good and for ill. There has been much persecution of those who were known to have the various gifts; thus, with the lesser need for these

instinctive abilities and the public feeling against such things, they have been less and less developed and less and less passed on genetically.

In more recent times, when the British Society of Dowsters was formed in the 1930s, many thought that the dowster worked mainly by picking up emanations. Some thought that the rod picked up emanations and therefore it mattered what sort of rod was used. Others thought that the man himself picked up the emanations; this is said to be the Physical theory for the explanation of dowsing. However, with the very much wider use of Distant Dowsing, or Map Dowsing as most people loosely call it, a new theory had to be produced because quite obviously a man with a pendulum here in this room could not pick emanations from the buried and invisible remains of a palisade trench round a long-lost archaeological site in Africa. The new theory was that it was all a Mental business, and there it roughly remains today.

I am now going to describe briefly how what I call the modern dowster might tackle a job. I am speaking for myself and a few others, not for all, and I am talking of method, not comparing individual skills.

Long ago Miss Baerlein told me that she thought there was an archaeological site in the garden at Swinbrook Cottage. Some three years ago I was shown the garden but did no work. To be honest, I went away thinking that it was a most unlikely site, too low in the flood plane of the river and with much better ground only a short distance away. However, I had been given part of a 1/2500 map. This I enlarged till the garden was about 4in. long. Much to my surprise, when the garden was map dowsed, a rectangular shape appeared under the western part of the lawn, which dated at A.D. 1125. This was the end of Stage I. Stage II is to go and confirm on the ground, which I did, and found that the site did appear to be there under the lawn. I was still a bit sceptical as there are many pitfalls in archaeological dowsing. Stage III is to dig to prove. With Miss Baerlein's enthusiastic approval a trial cut, 10ft. by 4ft., was opened. Here we found a quantity of animal bone, pottery, and two post holes—sufficient evidence of a site. Last year we excavated quite a large part of the site and found several floors and much pottery which dates from the 11th to the 12th century.

This method of approaching a problem enables one to do a great deal of the preliminary work at home in comfort. In a very short time a very large area can be searched and often great detail worked out about sites or other things sought. To produce comparable results by walking might take weeks and in some cases would be impossible. This method is applicable to most types of dowsing work. My own special line is Archaeology and it has

enormous value here. In water finding, mineral prospecting, seeking lost people and lost things in particular, it enables a much quicker and more accurate search to be made.

The traditional tools, the rod, the pendulum, the hands and the mind have not changed, but the attitude towards them has. It has often been said and I believe thought that "the rod says," "the pendulum says." I know what was probably meant when this was said by the originator of the statement, but it is taken by some to be literally true. It is, of course, neither the rod nor the pendulum which "says"—it is the operator who "feels" and instinctively uses the rod or pendulum as an indicator. The very fact that one can do the same job with one's hands alone, or by just sitting and thinking, shows that one does not need the rod etc., to do the seeking for one.

I use a rod for all outdoor work. With my hands alone I cannot get quite the same accuracy, though I do use my hands alone at times when it is inconvenient to use a rod. I use the pendulum for all types of map dowsing work. When seeking things on a map or plan I find that I can work down to about 1 mm, though this really depends on the fineness of one's tools.

Some time ago after talking to some professional archaeological friends one of them challenged me to find a bit of metal which he said had been in his back since the first war. I had never done such a thing before, but there was no way out. We laid him out on the table and I quickly ran my pendulum over his back and put my finger on a spot near the spine, which he was said correct!

I can use my hands alone on a map or plan, but it is only useful in giving a general idea as the fingers are too large for detailed work. For outdoor work where one cannot use a rod I quite often use my hands. Recently I was doing some work in cathedrals and churches and used my hands, as there were too many people about for any other method. Not that people looking on worry me much, but in a church it is a bit different. I do use my hands also for healing work, not that I do very much of that. There I find that my hand is drawn to the sore spot or the possible source of trouble, where there seems to be more warmth than elsewhere. Such work as I do seems usually to be with muscular strains, sprains, and tensions, though I have reason to believe that Rheumatoid Arthritis yields to this sort of treatment.

The Mind is the next means. Here we are on the million dollar question. But what I want to emphasise is that much of what can be done with the rod, pendulum, or hands can be done sitting quietly in a chair, or, if out on the ground, simply by looking. All of us here know the ordinary Question and Answer method, which is tricky and difficult, but highly reliable if well done. The main difficulty is the formulation of the question, since forming the proper question is vital in all dowsing. There is the tale of

the great general who found himself with his army on one side of a large river. On the other side was his opponent, also with a large army. So he decided to ask the oracle at Delphi. A messenger was sent with the query "If I cross the river what will happen?" The answer came back "A great army will be destroyed." So he confidently crossed the river and attacked. By nightfall his army was destroyed. He had got his question wrong!

Sometimes walking the hills or fields in Scotland I have used this sort of method with success in that I was able to select among the many possible hillsides or fields. In these cases I asked my own oracle, not Delphi! The following is an instance of a chair-borne success. A little while ago I was having supper with a friend of mine, a simple affair in the kitchen, but there was a bottle of wine and the atmosphere was very relaxed. She began to tell me about a pear-shaped stone that had disappeared at the time of her move to the present house, and for which she had searched many times. "But it's in this house" I said. I suppose I had become interested and had switched on. I was told that this was not possible as the house had been searched a number of times. However I maintained that it was in the house and suggested that she took me round the house mentally, since I did not know it well. So, sipping my wine we went mentally from room to room. The rooms on the ground floor were all negative. On the next floor they were negative until we came to her bedroom, which was positive. Each piece of furniture was negative till we got to the dressing table, which she described as a kneehole table with four drawers on each side and one drawer in the middle at the top. I was asked if the stone was in one of the drawers on the left side of the table? No. In the centre? No. In the right side drawers? Yes. In the top drawer? No. In the second? Yes.

She said this was not possible as the drawer had been searched before, so I went on with my wine and the talk turned to other things. Next day however my friend turned out the top drawer and found nothing. The second, the one I had selected also was unproductive, but in the third the stone was found in a brown paper envelope.

I have told this tale because it illustrates this strange ability in man, the ability to "know." It is this ability to "know," by focusing the mind, which is, I believe, the real explanation behind dowsing. If one takes away the tools, the frills and all the rest of the outward and visible parts of dowsing, one is left with a man on two legs able to do work at any distance round the world and able to "know" things he cannot consciously know by any form of learning.

Who can be dowsers? Briefly, I believe that the ability was

in all men. Today there are many more with sufficient sensitivity to be dowzers than was thought some years ago. Judging by results in testing and helping people who have never held a rod before, I would say that about 10 per cent of people could be good dowzers, if they wished; of the next 80 per cent a few could be taught and would make average dowzers but the remaining 10 per cent are too insensitive. A few years ago I was at the Roman fort at Broomholm near Langholm in Dumfriesshire, helping with the excavation. I was in the process of working out the line of one of the ditches when a friend of mine appeared. He was then chairman of a well known local paper and later became chairman of Reuters. He asked what I was doing so I told him and asked him if he would like to try. He said he would, so I gave him my rod and explained what he should think about and set him off across the line where I thought the ditch ran. Shortly the rod turned in his hand, but he said not to count that as he had made the rod turn by mistake. So I set him off again on another line, but I marked his spot. Shortly after the same thing happened and again he said that he had made the rod turn. Again I set him off on another line so that he could not see the previous peg markers. A third time the rod turned and I marked the spot. He gave up arguing when he saw that the three pegs were very nearly in a straight line and when I told him that I thought that they were on the line of the ditch. He was a very shaken man when he realised he could do this thing that he had not believed in—and recently he has joined the Society.

I would like to say a word about Samples and Shibboleths. People still talk of “like to like.” They say one must carry a sample of what is sought. In this context the idea is erroneous, for they imply that the bit of stuff in one’s hand does in fact attract or react to its opposite number deep in the ground, actually and physically. In distant dowsing this obviously cannot be correct, and I am sure it cannot be under any conditions. The sample, in what ever way it is used, is a mind focuser and nothing else. I learnt this very early; there is no sample to help one find a Roman ditch, nor is there a possible sample of an Iron Age palisade trench. If one accepts the sample as a mind focuser things become simpler. I used to use samples, to the extent that I wrote down on a bit of paper the name of what I sought and either carried it in my hand or in my pocket. Nowadays I use this method when I am getting tired, when I have to change quickly from one object or one type of object to another, or when I am seeking something I cannot visualise because I have not seen it before. For instance if I change from seeking a Lead lode and wish to find a Silver lode, or if I had to seek an ore that I had never seen like Wolfram, then I would write Wolfram on a piece of paper and have it about me somewhere, but only to focus

my mind.

So much for Samples. Now Shibboleths. So often when reading books one is led to believe that one must do this and do that, or one will not get results. In many cases this is not true. Most people who are practising dowsers have developed their own methods, and these methods work for them, but they are often not necessary for others. For example, one must not wear gum boots when dowsing. This stems from the older idea that things emanated and that the rubber of the boots isolated the body from the ground. I do not think there is any truth in this, but of course if a man believes it, then it will affect his work. Again, the map or plan must be orientated. This is untrue and sometimes most frustrating if the work to be done is at the far end of a large map. I just turn it round till the position suits me, but if the operator believes the map must be set, his work may be upset if it is not. It is said that one must face north, or west or in some other direction when map dowsing. This again is false, but if one believes it then do it. Never dowse before 10 a.m. or after sun-down. I have seen this in print. This is a matter of taste; one of our dowsers told me he did his best work after dark. Personally I dislike working after a heavy meal or after drinking, but maybe this is a shibboleth, as the story I told of the lost stone in my friend's house took place after one or two glasses of wine!

One sees people with elaborate rods and pendulums and all sorts of gadgets; to them maybe they are essential and I would never suggest change unless they asked for advice, but for beginners and for most of us the gadgetry is not necessary. Keep it simple! I am a firm believer in keeping it simple and the simpler the better. I believe the complications arise because people:—

- (a) Will not accept that the basis of our work is mental.
- (b) During training and learning, people want to take short cuts and so listen to those who "sell" gadgets.
- (c) Do not get enough practice to find out through constant work that they can dispense with a lot of the clobber they have hung round their necks!

If one can learn to focus the mind and Listen or wait to Feel, one is getting somewhere, but it is a very personal matter and one has to learn for oneself. Were this a physical matter there could be short cuts, but because it is mental there are few, if any, short cuts.

Lastly I would like to touch on the guide thoughts I would give to beginners.

- (a) All dowsing, practically speaking, is seeking.
- (b) One must know what one is seeking and, ideally, be clear since the correct question is part of this.
- (c) It is essential to know the background of the field in which one is working: for water, how water lies in the ground;

for geology, how water is got out of the ground; for archaeology, a knowledge of archaeology, the types of buildings and defended places that people used and so on. For minerals, a knowledge of geology is essential, also of how minerals lie in the ground, and some knowledge of mining method is required. A good water diviner does not necessarily produce good results in archaeology and vice versa. The seeking of lost people I believe to be very difficult and the work needs a great deal of practice and experience.

- (d) Dowsing is a work of the whole body but mainly (for want of a better word) of the Mind. Hence one must set out to train this Mind and body.
- (e) Have confidence that it works. Confidence is born of competence, much practice and experience. How often has one heard "Oh yes, I can do it. but I don't understand it, I don't believe it."
- (f) One must train one's Sensitivity, and one's Feeling. It is essential to be open and listen.
- (g) An essential part of training is Practice and Test. If self training is good and success is achieved from time to time, then confidence grows.
- (h) Having got Confidence in one's sensitivity one must trust it and the indicators—the rod, pendulum and so on, but it is not a blind trust, as it is necessary to know when and where to look for trouble and what the indications are. We all probably differ in this, but for myself I always keep an eye open for trouble when things seem to be very easy!
- (i) The Preconceived Idea. Beware of this. The difficulty comes in knowing the dividing line between the intelligent use of other evidence and over-allowance for this. Wishful thinking is part of this danger. I find my solution is to use the other evidence to the full, say, to locate an area and then hand over completely to my subordinates, Sensitivity, Perception and the Mind, and trust them to tell me if there is, or is not what I seek in that place. It is not always easy!
- (j) The Need to know. I believe the Need to know is the essential ingredient in any dowsing job. In some strange way it seems to sharpen and make more active the careful, selective, seeking, perceptive mechanism. Without the Need, they seem to be dead and lifeless. Also I think that the brain tends to take over. I believe that the lack of Need to know is often part of the cause of failures when under test conditions to show that dowsing works.

So, in all dowsing, with:

Knowledge of the particular subject; Skill; Experience;  
Confidence; the Need to know

it is perfectly possible to seek and find what is required at any distance round the world by Map dowsing, then confirm it on the ground. Thereafter the factual confirmation is obtained by digging or by whatever other means are appropriate.

I know of no one who knows how it works. I believe it is an ancient natural ability in men, probably part Mental and part Physical, but the major part is what I call Mental for want of a better word.