

AT HOME AND ABROAD WITH THE PENDULUM

*A talk given at the Geological Society by
Sir Charles Jessel, Bt., on 23rd November, 1982*

This is going to be a very personal talk about dowsing and briefly it is going to be divided into two parts; my home activities, mainly based on my farm, and my discoveries when I went on a tour of Greece and the Greek Islands.

When I was asked to give this talk I refused at first because I felt that I had little to tell that could be of use to anyone here. But then I reflected that if I could tell you about some of my findings, particularly my mistakes, then maybe there would be something that could help others in this great work that we all do. I think it was Field Marshal Slim who said, "Defeat has more to teach us than Victory", and I have certainly found this to be true with my dowsing.

My interest started when I saw one of my friends dowsing at Rievaulx Abbey and I wondered what he was up to. He was waving a pendulum about and he said he was trying to put into practice what he had learnt from that remarkable book 'Patterns of the Past' by Guy Underwood. He asked me if I would like to try and thrust a pendulum into my hand. At that time I had never even read Underwood or heard of the words that he used in his books and articles, such as blind spring. The most extraordinary thing was that my pendulum seemed to know because wherever I went and whatever I asked, it seemed to give me definite answers. My friend turned me to water-lines, track-lines and all the other phenomena and each time we appeared to agree.

After this I took lessons from Jim Scott Elliot, who is not an Underwood fan, but I seemed to be an Underwood follower. Underwood divides dowsers into two classes, which he calls 'positive' and 'negative'. I do not like this expression very much but there may be some truth in it. When I went to learn in Jim Scott Elliot's garden he started me off finding drains. I was interested to see that my pendulum reacted to an imaginary drain, which appeared to run from a heavy metal downpipe to a heavy metal drain cover. This was mistake number one. The interesting point was that even when I knew that there was no drain there, my pendulum still reacted on this line. Why was this? I thought about it quite a bit and came to the conclusion that it might have something to do with what the Abbé Mermet called 'witness rays' or what I call the 'rays of similarity'. Obviously, in this case, my question was sloppily formed so I received the wrong answer.

After this I wandered around in abbeys, the ruins of monasteries, cathedrals, pre-Reformation churches and around hill figures like the Cerne Abbas Giant and the White Horse of Uffington. I checked up on Glastonbury, Iona and ancient centres like Whiteleaved Oak, circles like Avebury, Stonehenge and the Cornish circles, Scottish standing stones and English holy wells. Everywhere I seemed to find the same picture as had been presented by Underwood. At the Long Man of Wilmington I did quite a detailed survey which, as it was not covered by Underwood, I found most interesting.

It appears that all these chalk figure sites have certain features in common. There is usually a mound, tumulus or holy hill and then there is the actual figure itself. A stream, well, spring or underground water is not far away and an access route, avenue or holy way is close by. Very often in the valley below there is a building, abbey or ruin in which some form of worship was carried out.

What started to become clear to me was that these centres were all constructed to a somewhat similar design in which the landscape was used in roughly the same way as had been done by the Chinese geomancers with due regard to the forces under the earth as well as the physical features above the earth.

It appears to me that as Man has become more and more centred in his physical body, these centres and geodetic forces have had less and less influence on him. So he has neglected them, only a few people marvelling and puzzling over them, and only dowsers are now able to 'read' them, albeit rather unsurely.

About this time I became interested in dating objects, such as parts of the churches and while I was doing this I made mistake number two. Just asking with your pendulum for the date of a flint in the wall of a church does not give you the age of the church, or even that part of the church. First of all, do you mean the date the flint was coalesced together by natural forces or when it was hewn into shape by a mason or builder; or when it was put into the wall, or, as I often found, when it was taken out and used again and again? So when I realised this problem I tumbled on to the solution. Why not date the mortar instead of the flint? The mortar was made up for that particular edifice only and fresh mortar is always made for a new building.

While dating, I got into trouble with a local vicar. He insisted that his church contained the only known representation in sculpture of Archbishop Beckett. First of all, he tried to catch me out with a copy he had had made, which he kept in his house. I did not fall for that one, but when we got to the original my pendulum placed the stone tablet rather earlier than Beckett. I checked up on this in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and found a rather earlier archbishop. There was some architectural detail on the tablet which could have been significant but, unfortunately, the person who could have helped me with this had died a short while previously. I thought this was all rather interesting but the vicar was not at all amused for the

reputation of his church apparently depended on it being Beckett.

Now, I have never been very interested in underground water, although it seems to be one of the easiest things to detect. Mr. Smithett, our late Secretary, used to chide me over this and tell me to get down to something useful! However, I often have to find pipes and leaks on my farm and then, of course, the pendulum comes in very useful. I must admit that I still need a lot of practice in this. The small pipes that are made of plastic are very hard to find and this is unfortunate because they are the ones the water company cannot find either; their sonic equipment works only with metal pipes.

I decided I must try and do something about water, so we organised our little East Kent Dowsing group to go to the local waterworks. The point of telling you this is that on the dials of the pump-house are the numbers of gallons per hour or minute which the water company are extracting. So you can have a check to see if you are right or wrong in assessing the quantities. I dowsed with my pendulum over the pipe through which the water passed and I got the correct amount of water being pumped out but when it came to the depth I made mistake number three. I found water at say 100ft. down but actually there was water much nearer the surface. My mistake was that I had not gone carefully down from the top through each layer. Every time a mistake is made it always turns out to be a useful lesson.

Trying to make use of dowsing in my farming life, in all its facets, I thought I would use it to enable me to pick out a suitable employee from several who applied for a specific job. I will not go into this in detail, and I have only used it once on this specific occasion, but suffice to say it proved about 95% correct.

I set out all the attributes I required and I allotted them numbers 1 to 10 using the application letters as witnesses. At this point I made mistake number four. One or two of the letters were written by the wife of the applicant, but signed by the applicant and until I realised this I got some funny answers in my dowsing. I then made mistake number five. I thought one of the applicant's wife had four children, when, in fact, she did not have any when she arrived. I think this was due to the fact that in my dowsing I had forgotten to use the little word *now*. The wife was very young at the time and I think she will have them or perhaps has had them by this time. In the end I did not select the top scorer by dowsing but the one who came second, because I realised the top scorer would not have stayed with me.

It is sometimes said that we cannot dowse without knowledge of the subject and I believe that this is generally true. Nevertheless, one can dowse with the aid of proxy knowledge, just as one can dowse by proxy or impart dowsing ability by touch. I proved this proxy knowledge through one of my sons, who cannot dowse, but knows how to make pottery. He knew how to glaze and construct glaze colours, but he wanted a special colour which one of his friends had achieved. So we sat down with his knowledge and his text books,

using the friend's glaze as a witness, and I dowsed the ingredients of the glaze out of the text books, putting questions to my son at the same time and we achieved the exact colour that he required. I have never made a pot or a glaze in my life. My son actually made the colour and it turned out exactly right.

I am not really an archaeologist as I am more interested in what people did and thought than in their artifacts, but I have done a lot of dowsing on beacon hills especially after reading 'The Old Straight Track' by Alfred Watkins. On the top of beacon hills I usually find a pit and perhaps it is there because the fire could not be lit in a high wind without some shelter. It has always seemed to me that if the wood ash from these pits could be augered out and measured by Carbon 14 analysis this would give us a check on the dates of the original use of the Beacon System, which was one that Alfred Watkins added to his other theories in 'The Old Straight Track'. There may be some members of the Society who have already done this check.

I have some friends who were interested in ley lines at that time and, by using Alfred Watkins' techniques, they drew out a ley map of my surrounding area, merely by using ley names from maps. Now when I went to the actual spots on my farm where the lines should theoretically cross I got a definite pendulum reaction. One of these is marked by a twisted oak tree, just in front of my house, and many dowsers have tried dowsing round this oak. Near my home is an old Roman road and at one of the junctions where a road joins it is another twisted tree, a beech. When I take people there, who have not done any dowsing at all, they find that a pendulum whirls round in their hand when they approach this tree.

What are ley lines? No-one knows exactly, but I am going to stick my neck out and pose the question: Are they similar to what the Abbé Mermet called the witness rays? In other words, do they join up like with like, as the good Abbé found happened with the two silver coins he had in the same room and perhaps, as I found, between the heavy metal downpipe and the heavy metal casing of the drain cover in Jim Scott Elliot's garden. That is just something I put out for you to think about.

When visiting ancient sites with our local dowsing group, we seem to find what appear to be ley lines, joining up sites and often radiating like the spokes of a wheel. We have to be careful not to confuse them with other forces and, of course, with underground water.

When I was looking, at one time, for a lost silver object, I 'homed in' on something in my son's room, which was in the pocket of his coat. This was mistake number six. It was not what I was looking for at all but it *was* a silver coin. This shows that I had not focused exactly enough in my thoughts and so obtained a result that is 'one off'. If this is done with homoeopathic remedies it can be quite unpleasant for the recipient, who gets a 'one off' remedy. So it has taught me to be

accurate in my scanning and formulate clearly the object for which I am looking.

On the farm, the pendulum is an invaluable tool and it comes in handy in the most unlikely ways. Once, I had to determine the loss of corn that had been shed behind the combine harvester to see if we had an incorrect setting on the machine. To take a square yard of shed grains and count them up at various places in the field is a very time consuming job; sometimes there are about 250 grains or more per square yard. I realised, after checking once or twice by counting the actual grains, that I could do it far quicker with the aid of a pendulum, merely asking over each square yard how many grains had been shed. I have a square yard already made up in wood, put it down in the field and put my pendulum over it. I may add that I was quite alone in the field at the time. I do not find that I can do serious dowsing in critical company.

Once I did not know the right price to ask for a second-hand combine harvester I was selling, but the pendulum did and the buyer was satisfied.

To find whether the cows' electric fence is on or off is often necessary and as I dislike getting electric shocks, a pendulum rotating over the top of the wire tells me that the fence is switched on. But if I show this off as a trick, which I did the other day to my tractor driver, of course it does not work!

When my weekend visitors ask if there are any mushrooms about that they can pick, the pendulum will indicate the places in the fields where they are lurking. However, one has to be up a bit early to beat any other eager searchers for them.

In the garden I often lose my secateurs and trowel and I find the pendulum a necessity to retrieve them from the thick ground cover plants which cover my garden soil. I like to do this immediately after I have lost them as the 'scent' seems to get cold after a while.

When planting trees, the pendulum indicates the correct spot and also the direction in which the tree should be turned if it is to continue its growth unchecked. This seems to me usually the way it has been growing before, i.e. if one side has been facing south it likes to go on facing south. In other words, it has a critical position. This is particularly true in the kitchen garden when plants are set out from seed trays into the ground. If they are set out with the aid of the pendulum, which finds the critical position, they do not suffer any setback.

A lady dowser from Australia taught me how to differentiate between seeds with the pendulum and to 'sex' shrubs and trees. I think everyone knows there are males and females in nature, or positive and negative (incidentally, in her scenario the positives were females) but do we realise that there are sometimes neuters? She even mentioned there are neuter human beings but I do not suppose we see many of them at the British Society of Dowsers! Certainly in agriculture we

have neuter animals. There are also androgynous or bisexual animals and plants.

The farmer is a jack of all trades so his dowsing will tend to cover a very wide field and as other farmer dowers have remarked, rather ruefully, we tend not to get very expert at anything because we have so many genuine needs and interests. The health of our cattle can be dowsed in a general way but I leave the practical work to the experts, because I do not pretend to be a vet. I hope more vets will take up radiesthetic work; it is sadly lacking in their profession and could have great results, allied, preferably, with homoeopathy.

Now, I must leave the 'at home' part of the talk and go on to the 'abroad' part.

I was fortunate enough to travel a few years ago around Greece and its islands and also to the Turkish mainland. Here, I was able to dowse at close range around the great sites of old civilisations: Cnossos, Delos, Athens, Olympia and on many of the small islands. At one place I went into the situation in some depth, which was at the healing temple of Asklepios, or Aesculapius, as he was called by the Romans.

Now the first thing that happened was, I think, on the island of Delos, which is sacred to Apollo. I was shown a small triangular walled area, which the guide called an abaton but which is pronounced 'avaton'. Abaton means a place difficult of access, i.e. forbidden to the uninitiated. It had supposedly been struck by Jupiter's thunderbolt. I put my pendulum over this area and the pendulum circled enthusiastically so I posed the mental question 'Is this mainly celestial or terrestrial energy?'. The answer, in this case, was celestial. Jupiter was a male Olympian god so at every sacred site I asked the same question and I found that if the energy was mainly celestial, the temple would be named after a male god or a 'light' god, like Apollo. If mainly terrestrial, it would be named after a female, or 'dark' god like Artemis. There is also this division between the Olympian and Chthonic gods, the gods of the underworld. I asked the Archbishop of Canterbury, who happened to be on our trip (before he became Archbishop) if he would kindly help me make the differentiation. I think he was a little puzzled by my questions. . .!

We can see that polarities come into the siting and naming of temples, rather like the 'Michael' and 'Mary' churches in England, which are said to be on positively and negatively orientated sites.

Now, when you see a statue with a serpent or dragon on or around it look out for underground earth forces. When I was dowsing at the palace of Cnossos, I found the very room, where the so-called snake goddesses were found, and it was definitely a dowsing spot full of underground energies.

Similarly, if you have read Underwood, you will recall that the Erechtheum on the Acropolis at Athens was mentioned by him as being full of geodetic lines. The myths about Erechtheus and the foundation of this site are full of tales of serpents. The full symbolism

of the serpent is really a study in itself, which I will not go into now.

At Delphi, by the way, I could find no cracks in the ground through which the ladies of Apollo's oracle could have inhaled vapours to send them into trances. As you know, they were supposed to have sat over these cracks when they went into their routine. It could, perhaps, have been an underground earth fault or faults.

Now, as Underwood clearly says that what he calls the blind spring was the centre of the Old Religion. We know from Seneca, the Roman, that 'where a spring rises, there ought we to build altars and offer sacrifices.' This is quoted by John T. White in a book called "A Country Diary: Kent".

What I discovered in Greece was that the geodetic lines or the earth forces are mostly outside the temples. The altars are outside the temples and people worshipped outside the temples. They were able to do so because of the weather, whereas, in places like England and other parts of Europe, in the mediaeval cathedrals and churches, they worshipped indoors. In Greek temples the cult figure was inside but the altar was outside.

So if the geodetic lines run outside the temples, the temples themselves could be of regular design and not built at peculiar angles like the pre-Reformation cathedrals and churches. These latter follow the principles laid down by the master masons as they had to comply with the rules. I am sure you all know that this is the reason for the chancels being often at an angle to the nave. I have often checked up on this with the pendulum and invariably the main building follows the angle of the central geodetic line.

It is sometimes said that the building affects the line, but the lines can be found by dowsers in ruins and these lines often go out through the door into the surrounding area, where there is no building at all.

So the gloriously regular architecture of Greece is possible because the lines seem to me to be mostly outside the buildings.

As opposed to the regular temples in Greece, however, we have the palace of Cnossos on the island of Crete. According to legend, this was the centre of King Minos and around it is built the story of Theseus, the Minotaur and the Labyrinth. This is a much earlier civilisation than that of the Hellenic temples and the difference here is that the geodetic lines run under the palace. They may be outside as well but I did not have time to check. I would like to suggest that the 'labyrinthine' architecture of the palace, in contradistinction to that of the Hellenic temples, is possibly due to the fact that the geodetic lines, as well as other factors, run under the palace. As I mentioned before, the so-called Snake Goddesses were found in a room above a dowsing zone, possibly a blind spring.

My main interest was, as I say, in the healing temple of Asklepios. I have read up everything I could about it and I would like to dwell on it a little and tell you what I found there.

First of all, the whole site was a mass of underground water. You

did not even need to be a dowser to realise this, just as at Glastonbury you can hear the roar of underground water under the Tor and the council actually pipe it out. At Epidaurus there is a well in the enkoimerion, or dormitory, where the patients spent the night in 'temple sleep'.

Now the whole complex was devoted to every form of healing of the body, of the conscious mind, of the unconscious mind, of the emotions etc. There were baths, gymnasiums, libraries, a magnificent theatre (which is one of the few in Greece which has not been tampered with by the Romans) and the temple of Asklepios. There is the temple of Artemis and the most beautiful building of all, I think, in the whole of Greece, the Tholos.

To study this sacred temple area is to study the nature of the healing of Man in all his aspects and that is not the object of this talk. But perhaps the words over the propylea, or entrance gate, give us a clue as to the high spiritual nature of the whole place. There it is written:

'Pure must be he who enters the fragrant temple;

Purity means to think nothing but holy thoughts.'

Various stelae have been discovered telling of the cures that took place in the temple and I think the following one is of interest to dowsers.

"A woman of Pellene came to the temple to ask the god to grant her a child. Having slept in the Abaton, she saw a vision. It seemed to her that she asked the god that she might get pregnant and that if she asked for something else he would grant her that, too, but she answered that she did not need anything else. When she had become pregnant, she carried in her womb for three years until she came again to the Hieron and supplicated the gods concerning the birth. When she had fallen asleep she saw a vision. It seemed to her that the god asked her if she had not obtained all she had asked for and was pregnant; about the birth she had said nothing and that, although he had asked if she needed anything else, she would say so and he would grant her this too. But since now she had come for this as a suppliant to him, he said he would accord even that to her. After that she hastened to leave the Abaton and when she was outside the sacred precincts, she gave birth to a girl."

The somewhat mythical nature of this story should strike a cord in us. The lady had made a sloppy request so she got a sloppy result. Our dowsing is a question of forming exact questions and it is the questions that often let us down, not the answers. I am also reminded of Emerson's remark: "Be careful what you ask for, you are sure to get it".

I went on to visit Mycenae and the nearby Tomb of Atreus. The circular shaft grave at Mycenae where Schliemann discovered what he thought was the death mask of Agamemnon and other treasures is a geodetic area. I often wonder if Schliemann was a dowser. The 'Treasury of Atreus', a nearby beehive tomb, dating from

about 1300 B.C., did not have a geodetic area but attached to it is another much smaller underground tomb. You do not hear about this in the guide books, but this is where I found the area of pendulum reaction.

From this I evolved the theory that people do not spend too much time over a 'blind spring', though some animals might like it. In fact, when I started dowsing they used to make me feel ill. Whether it is in a tholos, under a tower or campanile or in an underground tomb, the area is probably kept clear of live human beings, although important people often like to be buried near these areas when they die.

So, to finish, I like to think of us dowzers as working under Hermes. Hermes, besides being a messenger of the gods, was, you will recollect, also a trickster. We, too, must remember that we can bring useful information to light for the benefit of mankind. But we must beware of this trickster element, especially when intellect gets mixed with intuition. Our only safeguard is profound humility, for, as all the Greek myths show, hubris is always followed by nemesis.
