

## DOWSING FASHIONED INTO ARCHAEOLOGICAL TOOL

By Dr R.H.G. Whaley

The BSD Journal circulated details of archaeological dowsing trials conducted by the North East Hampshire Archaeological Society in April 1990. Some BSD members took part. The following is a brief account of the results, and a note of further trials for which volunteers are welcome.

In dowsing experiments on a filled-in moat, the Society found a quite strong connection between dowsing and the likely position of the moat. This has been developed into a method to help locate archaeological remains whose position is not known.

The course of the moat in Yateley, Hants, which was filled in about 1700, had been approximately located by Resistivity Surveys (measuring the electrical resistance of the ground) over 1987-9. A small part was excavated in 1989, during which some Society members tried Dowsing over the lawn where the moat ran. This seemed an ideal situation to experiment with Dowsing.

An experiment was carried out in 1990 to see if a connection could be found between Dowsing and what was known of the course of the moat, and if this course could be identified more closely.

The Resistivity Surveys led to *Uncertainty Bands* where the moat's edges were likely to be located, of 1 metre for the inside edge, and 3 metres for the outside edge (which sloped). Over a dozen people took part in the experiment. They undertook pre-determined Walks, and were asked to find the edges of the moat. Their dowsing reactions were recorded. About half of the 20 Walks crossed one edge. But about half did not – these were Control Walks – and led to a False Alarm Rate being calculated for each person – how many reactions he gives when what he seeks is not there.

If chance only operates there should be no statistical difference between the number of reactions in the *Uncertainty Bands* and elsewhere. But there were far more reactions in the *Uncertainty Bands* than there should have been from peoples' False Alarm Rates – to the tune of 6 parts in a million if chance only was the cause.

This method has been developed, where parallel Walks cross an Area to be investigated. The False Alarm principle is incorporated, and a computer calculates 'hot spots' of significance and outputs a map of them. The method will be applied in the Autumn to a large site in North Hants where a manor has been excavated – but appears much larger than we thought. Location of other buildings is the aim. The method works by combining a large number of people's results – and volunteers are sought. People who would like to take part, with or without experience, contact Dr R.H.G. Whaley on Farnborough 0252 548115.

Statistical tests rely on what happens if chance only operates, and give the odds of the result one has observed occurring if chance only operates. It seems however that in human processes where chance only should be operating (such as shuffling cards or rolling dice) in many cases chance may not be the only factor operating. In cards it seems people may display unconscious preferences. These effects may be related to Dowsing, and experiments are being conducted. Those interested also contact Dr Whaley.

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## DIAMOND JUBILEE CONGRESS

The Editor regrets that the September issue of the Journal did not record the valuable service of Mr Clive Thompson and Mrs Mary Ison, who stepped in at short notice as additional tutors in the Dowsing School.



Photo: R. Howard

Delegate from Lithuania to the York Congress, Vytautas Kapaciauskas, with his interpreter Vita Kaziliunaite.