

TRACING THE LOST

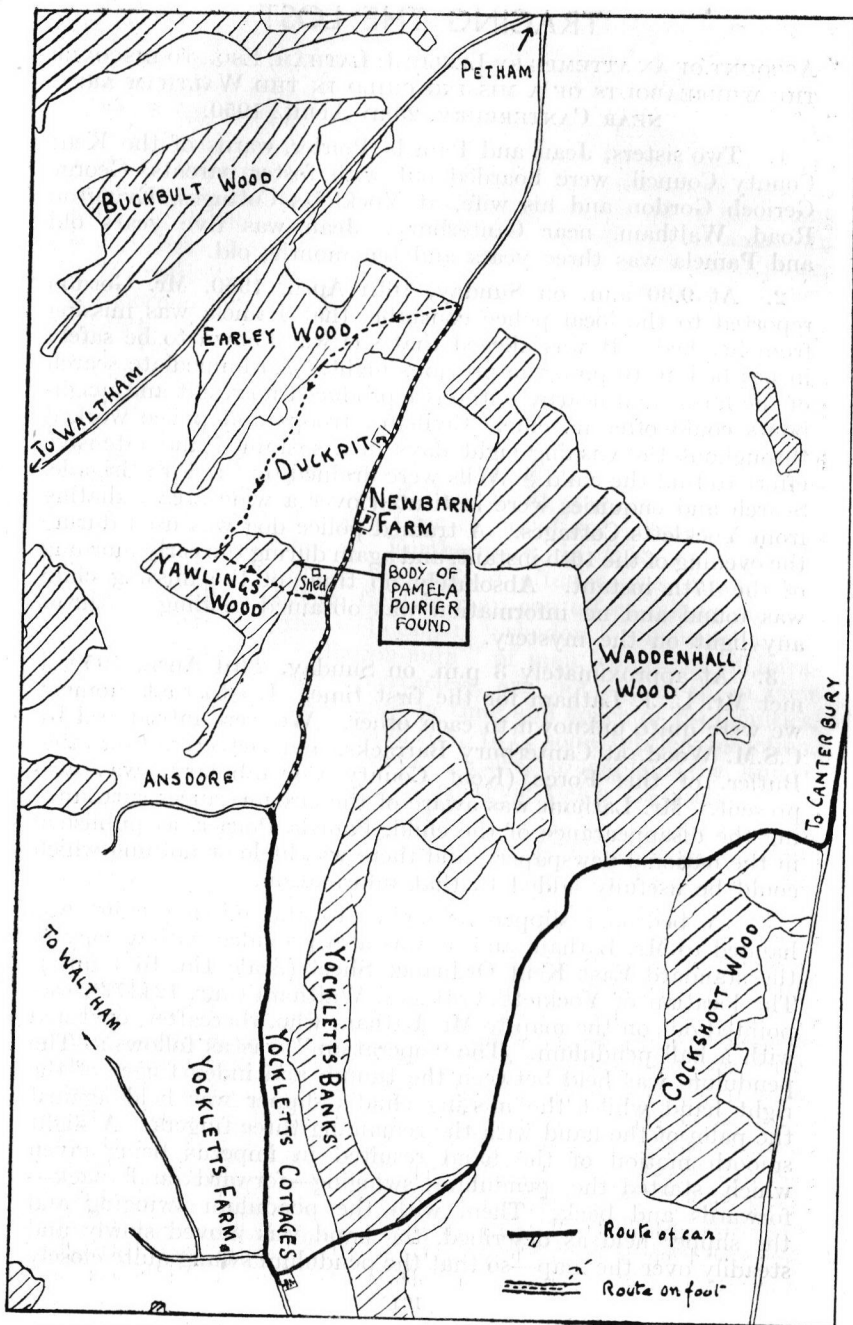
ACCOUNT OF AN ATTEMPT BY LESLIE J. LATHAM, Esq., TO DISCOVER
THE WHEREABOUTS OF A MISSING CHILD IN THE WALTHAM AREA,
NEAR CANTERBURY, 23RD APRIL, 1950.

1. Two sisters, Jean and Pamela Poirier, wards of the Kent County Council, were boarded out with foster parents, George Gerioch Gordon and his wife, at Yockletts Cottages, Evington Road, Waltham, near Canterbury. Jean was five years old and Pamela was three years and ten months old.

2. At 9.30 a.m. on Sunday, 16th April, 1950, Mr. Gordon reported to the local police constable that Pamela was missing from her bed. It was alleged that she was known to be safely in her bed at 10 p.m. the previous night. An immediate search of the house and nearby outhouses produced no result and neighbours could offer no clue. Civilians, troops and police worked throughout the ensuing eight days in a sustained and intensive effort to find the child. Wells were drained by the Fire Brigade. Search and enquiries were instituted over a wide area radiating from Yockletts Cottages. A trained police dog was used during the evening of the 16th instant, and again during the early morning of the 17th instant. Absolutely no trace of the missing child was found and no information was obtained tending to throw any light on the mystery.

3. At approximately 3 p.m. on Sunday, 23rd April, 1950, I met Mr. L. J. Latham for the first time. Up to that moment we were quite unknown to each other. We were introduced by C.S.M. Wood, at Canterbury Barracks, and Detective Constable Butler, of this Force (Kent County Constabulary), was also present. Mr. Latham was aware of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of the child, Pamela Poirier, as published in the national newspapers, and there was little or nothing which could be usefully added to that information.

4. A bedroom slipper belonging to the missing child was handed to Mr. Latham and he was also provided with a copy of the standard East Kent Ordnance Sheet (Scale 1 in. to 1 mile). The location of Yockletts Cottages, Waltham (m.r. 124477), was pointed out on the map to Mr. Latham who, thereafter, operated with a ball pendulum. The "operation" was as follows:—The pendulum was held between the thumb and index finger of the right hand whilst the missing child's slipper was held against the palm of the hand with the remaining three fingers. A slight smooth motion of the hand resulted in impetus being given which started the pendulum swinging—forwards and back—forwards and back. Then, with the pendulum swinging and the slipper held as described, the hand was moved slowly and steadily over the map—so that the pendulum swung quite closely



THE AREA OF SEARCH

Scale 3 miles to the inch

to it. This action was carried over an area representing several square miles of country all round Yockletts Cottages.

5. In very few seconds after commencing the test Mr. Latham claimed that he detected emanations from the area to the north of Yockletts Cottages and indicated an area between one and two miles from the cottages towards Petham village. A larger scale map of the locality was produced (six inches to one mile) and precisely the same procedure as has already been described was again followed—with this map. On this occasion it was very noticeable that when the pendulum was brought above a certain area of the map the swinging motion changed to a strong gyration. This gyration was very definite and was repeated on every occasion the test was made. I watched most closely to detect even the slightest movement on the part of the operator to induce this variation and I am quite convinced that the gyration was not so produced. This response was evident only over the area which, on the map, included Yawlings Wood, Duckpits, Earley Wood and New Barn Farm. The latter is marked on the map but is not named. It is within one hundred yards of Duckpits. Mr. Latham then borrowed a knitting needle and used that in his left hand in addition to the pendulum and slipper in his right hand. He was quite definite in his assertion that the emanations indicated either:—

- (a) the location of Pamela Poirier—alive
- (b) the location of Pamela Poirier's dead body, or
- (c) the location of portions of the child's body and/or clothing.

6. At 7 p.m. that same evening Mr. Latham, accompanied by C.S.M. Wood, D.C. Butler and myself travelled by car to Yockletts, Waltham. The car was stopped near the cottages but no-one left the vehicle. We then went on towards Petham and stopped the car at Ansore turning. We left the car there and walked towards Petham. At this stage Mr. Latham produced a divining rod made of two pieces of whalebone joined together at one end. He held one of the free ends in each of his hands with the "joined" end pointing away from himself. The road on which we were walking passes all the places named previously as having emanations. Yawlings Wood was on the left—about one hundred and ten yards from the roadway. When passing the wood Mr. Latham commented, "I get a definite pull here." This comment was repeated more than once and, in addition, Mr. Latham mentioned a shed which was in the field between the roadway and the wood. New Barn Farm was passed next—on the right hand side of the roadway. Then came Duckpits and then Earley Wood on the left. Earley Woods has a track which traverses it diagonally from north-east to south-west. We followed that track with the divining rod still in use. Afterwards, without following any convenient track we walked through undergrowth, over fences and other obstacles and followed a

direction which, more or less, tended steadily in the direction of Yawlings Wood.

7. It was becoming quite dark when we reached the north-west corner of Yawlings Wood. We entered the wood—walked through it—and emerged on the eastern side. Then we crossed the field and reached the roadway. Whilst in the wood and also after leaving it, Mr. Latham repeatedly said, with emphasis, “The wood must be thoroughly investigated.”

8. On regaining the roadway we retraced our steps towards New Barn Farm. Here Mr. Latham used the divining rod and declared that strong emanations were present in a midden adjoining the roadway. The rod was seen to react quite vigorously and a particular area of the midden was defined very clearly. Before leaving this vicinity Mr. Latham stated his intention of returning from London on the Tuesday (25th) if possible, and of further investigating Yawlings Wood. I undertook to investigate the midden at New Barn Farm on the following morning—Monday, 24th. Mr. Latham added that if it became necessary he would remain in the area on Tuesday and Wednesday to complete his tests.

9. Subsequently we all returned to Yockletts Cottages and entered the house occupied by the Gordons—the adjoining house is unoccupied. Mr. Latham tested the bedroom from which the missing child had disappeared. He excluded the window as having been the means by which the child left the room—but traced the child down the stairs and out through the back door. He stated, with emphasis, that the child was not buried in the garden of the house—but claimed to detect her emanations strongly near a corner of the house. No further tests were made and at approximately 9.40 p.m. we returned to Canterbury.

10. At 11 p.m. I returned to Canterbury Police Station having seen Mr. Latham on his train for London. I was then informed that as a result of certain developments in the case the approximate location of the missing child was known. It was stated that she was dead. I immediately asked my superiors that I might be allowed to explain to them the work done by Mr. Latham—about which they knew nothing—and further, that I might test his work by pointing out on the map—*before they gave me any further information*—the places which he had indicated as justifying investigation. This was sanctioned. I pointed out Yawlings Wood and New Barn Farm and was informed that from the information then to hand it did appear that the missing child was, in fact, buried in Yawlings Wood.

11. At 6.30 p.m. on Monday, 24th April, 1950, I was present at Yawlings Wood when the body of Pamela Poirier was disinterred at a spot about 30 yards inside the edge of the wood nearest the road—directly in line with the hut specifically mentioned by Mr. Latham (para 6).

12. I attach hereto illustrations showing the route followed and the locality of the search described in this report. I wish to place on record that throughout this investigation with Mr. Latham I acted completely without the knowledge of my superior officers and that this report is a true record of the circumstances—in which I acted as a private individual and not as a Police Officer. It is true that the actual discovery of Pamela Poirier's body was not due to the investigations carried out by Mr. Latham. However, having now seen this demonstration by him—in the presence of C.S.M. Wood and Detective Constable Butler—which demonstration was necessarily curtailed owing to the lateness of the day—I am convinced—against myself—that Mr. Latham could have located the child, and would have located the child within a very few hours if he had not been forestalled. It must be remembered that he was without any “pointers” whatsoever as to which direction and how far the child had gone—or had been taken. Yet, with the whole country from which to choose he clearly indicated the burial place—*within a margin of a few yards.*

(Signed) J. R. GRIFFITHS,
50 Hillside Avenue,
Canterbury, Kent.

I was present throughout the events described in the above record of tests by Mr. Leslie J. Latham, at Canterbury and Waltham, on Sunday, 23rd April, 1950. This record is true.

(Signed) M. E. BUTLER

I was present throughout the events described in the above record of tests by Mr. Leslie J. Latham, at Canterbury and Waltham, on Sunday, 23rd April, 1950. This record is true. I was not present when Inspector Griffiths pointed out on a map, to his superior officers, where Mr. Latham had been working—and to that extent only am I unable to authenticate this document.

(Signed) G. E. WOOD, C.S.M.

NOTE BY L. J. LATHAM

1. I have studied the Inspector's Report and in all material particulars concur with its contents. It may be accepted by the interested bodies as a scrupulously fair and impartial survey of the events it records. The value of the document as evidence for the possibilities of divining as an aid in certain limited classes of Police enquiry, is apparent. Apart from this it may not be out of place to record that the Report is praiseworthy in itself as embodying an exact chronicle of events in their proper sequence, since it embodies the specially accurate recollection in retrospect that characterises the professionally trained observer. Obviously, a diviner himself is properly all too engrossed in his survey to memorise sufficient material for the production of such a document, and being himself often “imported,” he lacks the necessary topographical knowledge.

2. I accept and confirm the fact that Inspector Griffiths and Detective Constable Butler were acting, as was their right, entirely in their private capacity. How private that capacity could have remained had the case not broken within the eleventh hour of our efforts remains, for the layman, an interesting speculation. Judging from the comforting speed with which the official presence of policemen is conjured when occasion arises, one presumes that they are only faintly off-duty at any time. Certainly upon this occasion our team was sufficiently undisguised to reveal useful exhibitions of systematic energy, of exhaustive local knowledge and a co-operation valuably silent. There was also a commendably rigid (if at times amusingly strained) impartiality difficult enough to achieve in such strange circumstances. That the venture approached as near success as it did, in fact, is due in no small measure to this psychological restraint on the part of the observers. Hence, probably too, the clarity of the Report.

3. As the initiated are aware, the acutely sensitive balance of perceptive faculties that make up divining is all too easily disturbed, and it is thus fortunate that the Canterbury case involved two such open-minded observers. Weird and in many respects startling as the transaction must have seemed to them, there was no want of either patience or of consideration. Indeed it seems fitting to recall here that in common with their colleagues, both officers had suffered a gruelling week of search over rough country at various hours of the day and night as well as in all weathers. Under the most discouraging conditions with the central mystery darkening hourly to possible tragedy upon the mind, the whole available Force had toiled with all its skill against an ugly problem. To add to their sense of frustration certain sections of the popular Press had already assumed that destructive querulousness of language that is a feature of a toppling circulation. Yet despite obvious fatigue and disappointment, the two officers in question had abandoned an off-duty period, not in any sense of taking part in a stunt, but in order that "even divination" might be tried. Also deserving of honourable mention is the ubiquitous Staff Serjeant Major G. Wood, of the Royal Corps of Signals, stationed at Canterbury Barracks. This Warrant Officer worked with our team until a late hour, even joining us in our twilight penetrations of dense woodland. He and Mrs. Wood placed at the expedition's disposal their home and hospitality as an indispensable base of operations. Mr. Wood will be remembered as an old and tried member of the British Society of Dowsers, and it was at his instance that divination came to be employed.

4. It ought at this stage to be stressed that at the outset of operations I drew attention to the many adverse factors. For example, the child had been missing a long time. A great many

persons, all more or less in states of emotional tension, had crossed any trail that might exist. The countryside had been drenched by heavy rains and swept across by typically gusty April weather. The thorough nature of the search in the interval suggested complete abduction from the district. We were seeking a small child whose limited walking range at night compelled one to assume that a person or persons unknown had carried her. Having at that moment no suspect for the latter role, we were without samples of his or her/their clothing. All these considerations combined to rule out the classical text-book method of crossing the terrain bloodhound fashion from disappearance-point to hiding-place. The classical apologetics of this rare but ancient class of divination are briefly that persons behaving under great emotional stress impregnate as it were the physical fabric of their clothes, dwellings, chattels, even the very terrain across which they tread. This impregnation equivalates to what the French call *rémanence*, and is, in fact, a remaining-behind of the intensified personal nervous pattern, or "aura" as our *exceedingly* distant spiritualist cousins would term it. That this aura, in fact, exists is within the experience of even the most hard-headed among us whenever we have been in a company a member or section of which has disliked us. Despite all surface pleasantries, we have felt unerringly the element of dislike directed against us. By holding a sample of this intensified pattern in the form of clothing and so on, the diviner professes to establish a sympathy within his own nervous system to the same pattern deposited along the track of the missing person. This valuable intensified and detectable pattern is manifest alike in the track of both victim or assailant the effects of guilt or terror being of similar intensity. The modern encephalograph of brain therapy and the crude "lie-detector" of the world's less ethically restrained Police forces are examples of instruments recording at close range this step-up in thought-intensity. We shall return presently to a scientific appreciation of the dowser's claims. In the meanwhile, we must add to the foregoing that on this occasion we were driven to resort to the unsatisfactory methods of longer-range divination by map and pendulum. In view of this I was compelled to warn the officers concerned that I offered only a twenty per cent. chance of results. Privately, I was also very worried over my own special fatigue which could not fail but be reflected in my accuracy. I had for some nights been working beyond twelve-thirty.

5. As to the actual operation which followed, I can add nothing materially to the description so vividly drawn by the Inspector himself. As a minor point of interest, however, the rod described as employed on the spot was of the usual black whalebone favourite among diviners today. The pendulum was of the usual shape and size as those habitually employed, save

that it was of real elephant ivory and not merely whale ivory. I am now sensible of my duty to hazard an explanation of the highly suspicious "shadow" emanations I claimed to find manifest on both map and terrain. Clearly the child could be buried in only one spot out of the four offered from the survey by myself. Three must on the face of it be wrong. In retrospect, a number of possible reasons occur to explain this "muzzy definition" if I may so call it. The most simple is that the operator was in sheer error due either to inability, lack of practice or to fatigue. And having regard to the relatively approximate correctness of one of the four emanations I might without shame accept this verdict and still leave impressive laurels to divination. Against this defeatist verdict, however, there stands in rebuttal the significant fact that no similar flights of error were indulged over any of the other likely spots across the wide wealds of Kent. Moreover, these shadow, or reflection-images, were situated peculiarly en route for the most part, to the place of interment. My own theory for the images lies in the undoubted link between the nervous system of the operator and the highly pungent mental state of the person carrying the child (for what other link have we to consider in remote map-work?). In other words, so soon as this case shall have receded safely onto the pages of the Law Reports, I expect to discover that the persons carrying Pamela that night did, in fact, successively *contemplate* the advantages offered by the other spots as alternative hiding places.

6. Before leaving the actual divining operation, it is necessary to add that there was present in the shoe of Pamela a strand of her hair measuring some five inches in length. The presence of this was, of course, accidental, and may have had its origin in the fact that a recent pre-decease combing of the child's hair had deposited the strand in the slipper. This accidental strand was welcomed as offering considerable amplification of the missing child's personal emanation. There were also present in the slipper, however, two divinatory disadvantages. In the first place the slipper itself had not suffered that typically long wear that adults love to accord their slippers. Children of Pamela's size it will be recalled, grow out of such things rapidly. This meant that the sample-impregnations, if I may so call them, of the slipper were of dangerous short-standing and thus perhaps hardly of the strength the task demanded. The second disadvantage lay in the accidental presence in the slipper of two hairs of the family's pet dog Glenny. Looking back upon the operation I will now admit that I should have been well advised to have accepted Mr. Wood's suggestion to have removed these two hairs. After hasty consideration I expressly allowed them to remain, and as a consequence experienced difficulty in declaring whether the child was alive or dead, this due to the overlapping influence of the animal.

7. The whole question of the search by divination for missing persons offers no easy scientific presentation, certainly not at any rate within the scope of this note. Indeed it is only in recent years that physicists have succeeded in wresting ordinary ground divining from the grasp of spiritualism. And indeed there is ample evidence in the grim history of man's long traffic with the Devil to suggest that the diviner was often the tool of mere witchcraft and of magic. Despite the difficulties however, we may take comfort from the fact that there are in certain circumstances tangible links of a healthily non-occult character between living and dead organisms. These links are often but faintly detectable, but are nevertheless observable even by sceptics if they care to look. Before passing to a short review of these links I should state at once that I am not here offering irreverence to recognised Christian truth as I am discussing a quite independent phenomena.

8. We turn now to the observed and carefully reported behaviour of what I may term the scavenger-fauna, which demonstrate ample evidence of the link referred to. To cite only a few, owls, vultures, jackals and sharks reveal the power in everyday life, and this without any trace of occultism in the West End sense. For example, a distinguished ornithologist lately reported the apparently inexplicable phenomena that an owl with which he experimented in a darkened room unerringly located living mice. It quite failed, however, to locate dead ones, although the owl finds either palatable. In considering the vulture, who because of his repulsiveness escapes much scientific write-up, I have myself in Cairo noted the birds circling a house a few hours prior to the death of a mortally sick occupant. In both cases the houses were cleanly and neatly kept, with no external sign that could have communicated the birds their grim invitation. As to sharks, we know it to be no sailor's myth that they appear astern prior to a sea burial. Or, if one wishes to come nearer home, we have but to consider the peculiar howling of sometimes quite distant farm dogs in lonely districts at the onset of a human death; a performance which can be compared with similar unpleasant abilities on the part of jackals in the East.

9. What is the nature of this extraordinary emanation which the roving detector-mechanism of Nature's scavengers picks up so unerringly, at long range? Whatever the true nature of the emanation, it does undergo a subtle change at sickness or dissolution which is interpreted by the constantly "tuned-in" scavengers. Possibly this, and the answer to many another scientific problem lies already half-solved behind the guarded walls of our atomic research stations. We shall for many years be doomed however to be kept in ignorance of recent findings upon the nature of matter, as many discoveries are tangled up with increas-

ing security aspects. Despite this we are on occasions afforded glimpses to awaken us to the realisation that even an apparently dead organism continues to radiate something. To quote one recently observed activity now attracting widespread attention, there is the method of dating archaeological deposits by the radio-activity present in carbon of bones and plants. For reasons too technical to discuss here, organic carbons lack the stability of inorganic ones. As a result, atoms of organic carbon tend to be slightly radio-active. In other words they throw off a steady stream of electrons. Living organisms keep alive by taking on board carbon in the form of food. At dissolution carbon naturally ceases to be so absorbed, and that remaining at the moment of death slowly loses the intensity of its radio-active emanation. The rate, however, is so gradual, that it is estimated that the atom is still at half-strength after some 5,000 years. Thus by assessing the activity of the discovered remains, a possible dating can be arrived at.

10. It is not my purpose to suggest that such sluggish give-off is the clue to our scavenger and diviner problem, but there is in my opinion evidence that this is the avenue we must explore for our explanation of something that looks otherwise uncanny. As a matter of encouragement to this theory by no means all elements are as slow as carbon in their give-off and there do in point of fact exist atoms whose activity is almost instant in exhaustion. In view of this, it would appear conceivable that the so-called scavenger species referred to have secreted within their elemental nervous system a type of Geiger counter mechanism which records changes of emanation for them at long range. Man for his part retains in a smothered fashion but a faint trace of these primordial instincts which other forms of life so effortlessly demonstrate. Centuries of reliance upon mechanics and reason have naturally weakened men's more disused functions that must so admirably have served him in the early jungles of his development, so much so that almost as an excuse for his helplessness, he often prefers to discredit their very existence. One still hears quite sane and hardheaded persons unguardedly speaking of their "premonitions" and "funny feelings," however. In the diviner, we may regard the rod as merely a convenient index or amplifier of these submerged flutterings now receded deep into a highly evolved nervous system. The functions of that nervous system in the more common form of ground divining are of similar origin, but their discussion has no place here.

11. Before closing the chapter upon vultures we may still note the somewhat terrifying faculty of anticipation with which they are credited. Lord Chelmsford in his *Diary of the Zulu War*, affirms that at Isandhlwana these birds darkened the sky some six hours before the contending scouts had sighted each other. This on the face of it defies explanation, until we recall

the tremendous power of auto-suggestion as evidenced for example in the simple will-to-live which doctors strive to instil into patients as a recovery aid. We cannot presuppose in vultures a sense of tactical appreciation which would have attracted them, as all bodies of men are the same from such heights. We are forced, instead, to the startling conclusion that our emanations suffer a detectable change for the worse by the very act of even mentally resigning ourselves to imminent death. And we may take it that at this stage of the campaign few men on either side had many illusions as to what their ultimate fate might be!

TELEPATHY : A SUGGESTION

BY OSCAR BAGNALL

*Reprinted from Country Life of June 23rd, 1950,
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I wonder whether those interested in the transmission of thoughts have considered the possibility of human radiations being the agent—radiations emitted by the nervous system in general, and by the brain in particular.

I am a biologist, having no knowledge of, and but little interest in, the occult, but I have gathered considerable evidence that rays emitted by our bodies have a wave-length somewhere in the ultra-violet region—probably just short of our visible range, but within that of nocturnal animals, the retinas of whose eyes are studded with nerve-endings not unlike those which we use for night-seeing and which are blinded by daylight.

Although such eyes cannot distinguish colours, as such, they are aware that the wave-lengths which appear to us as (say) yellow and blue, are different. They are not able to detect red at all, but, for compensation, their spectrum extends slightly into the ultra-violet country, as I pointed out in an article published in *Country Life* of August 5th, 1949.

Rays incident upon our bodies are presumably re-emitted as emanations, radiations, auras—call them what you will—with an altered wave-length. I suggest that rays of short wave-length are re-emitted as a haze around us and that the fluorescent substance responsible for the alteration of wave-length that causes the production of this haze is our nervous tissue. It seems that, although these radiations are just not visible to our eyes, unless we have sensitised them by the use of special apparatus—I used a dicyanin screen—it is probable that many animals can detect them clearly as a haze surrounding us.

The dicyanin screen to which I have just referred, consisted of a hollow biconvex lens which was made of plastic material and was filled with a solution of the coal-tar dye, dicyanin; the use of such a screen for a short period each day gradually alters the