

Test For Correlation Between Dowsing Response And  
Magnetic Disturbance.

Having received the comment from Mr. P.A. Raine of Bexley, Kent, that armed with two brass dowsing rods he could rival the ability of the proton magnetometer<sup>1</sup> in the detection of buried archaeological features, arrangements were made to test whether Mr. Raine obtained a dowsing response from a Romano-British pottery kiln. Mr. Raine's previous experience had been on masonry, roads and paths and it was felt that a kiln being very much more strongly magnetic, would establish in a clear-out way whether or not there was any correlation between dowsing response and magnetic disturbance.

The kiln selected for the experiment was about 150 feet from a group of two others on the outskirts of Durobrivae near Peterborough, Northamptonshire. Its exact location was known from a test-hole dug in April 1958 after a proton magnetometer survey<sup>1,2</sup> had indicated a strong magnetic disturbance above the surface of the pasture field at that point. The upper rim of the kiln was 3 feet 6 inches below ground level and before digging the test-hole there was no surface indication of its presence. The test-hole had been filled in and the turf put back. At the time of the present experiment some settling of the refilled hole had occurred so that over the kiln there was a hollow about 4 feet across and 3 or 4 inches deep. In the region covered there were two or three other hollows not strikingly different from this.

Two regions were gridded out with 50 foot strings laid parallel and 10 feet apart. The more westerly region was 50 feet by 100 feet and the east region was 50 feet by 50 feet. The kiln lay in the latter approximately 15 feet diagonally in from one corner. The westerly region had not been previously surveyed magnetically.

First of all Mr. Raine conducted a dowsing survey; he was unaware in which region the kiln lay. Within the larger or westerly region he obtained responses marking out three clear areas and one response on the edge of the region which because of its position was not completely surveyed as an area. In the smaller or easterly region one area of response was found. These areas were marked out with pegs or paper and the area of ground giving the dowsing responses amounted to approximately 500 sq. ft. in all (one fifteenth of the total area surveyed).

Subsequently a magnetic survey was conducted. No significant magnetic disturbance was found in the west region where three major areas of dowsing response had been found. In the east region a strong disturbance due to the kiln was found as before with some smaller disturbance up to 15 feet away from it. The nearest point of dowsing response was some 30 feet from the kiln. The location of the kiln was then indicated to Mr. Raine and he went over it again. As before he felt no response.

Whether or not any feature, archaeological or geological, lies under the areas of dowsing response is unknown at present; it is hoped that during 1959 one of these will be tested by digging. On the other hand, because the kiln produced no dowsing response and because the regions where dowsing response was obtained were devoid of magnetic disturbance, the question of correlation between dowsing response and magnetic disturbance has been answered unambiguously in the negative.

M. J. Aitken.

References.

1. Aitken, M.J., *Archaeometry*, 1, p. 24 (1958)
2. Aitken, M.J., Webster, G., and Rees, A., *Antiquity* XXXII, p. 270 (1958)

