

British Society of Dowzers Annual Conference 2022

**Held at the Fire Service Training College
Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire**

It seemed destined to be a weekend of unexpected energies. In the hours before the BSD Conference, the British monarch, who had lightly held the reigns of influence for the previous seven decades, had passed on the baton to a nominal head of state with well-documented leanings towards nature conservation, plant communication, homeopathy and youth empowerment. Was this an input or an output of the morphing of the pulse of the community of Albion? It was difficult to tell - but the shifting ambience was tangible, even within the prosaic confines of this late 20th century and outwardly utilitarian facility.

Formal proceedings got off to a powerful start with Devon-based healer-philosopher, Sean Ferris giving a new and improved version of his latest work concerning an alchemic interpretation of the unfolding journey of mankind. Sean is an experienced practitioner, but also a big picture thinker - and his proposition that we are living through a transition from the age of fire and gold to one of aether and silver has been evolving for some time. It's a talk full of ideas, but also packed with solid examples in support of them. If anyone had turned up anticipating a quiet weekend in the countryside, this was a real eye and mind-opener. The jabber in the subsequent coffee queue was very evident.

Next, we had a tale from the other end of the dowsing spectrum, with the long-serving Guy Hudson explaining the practical work of BSD-sponsored water dowzers in Africa. The sheer numbers of villages and villagers helped over the decades is seriously impressive. While many of the host settlements are on the front line of encroaching deserts and socioeconomic conflict, at least someone is bringing a hint of relief to beleaguered communities. It was interesting to note that alongside the physical dowsing and water management, significant and catalogued improvements in disease reduction are being effected by improved sanitation and personal hygiene practices. The interlinking of everything was very much a theme of this weekend.

The afternoon of day one was devoted to outdoor workshops in the vicinity of the college. Water specialist, John Baker, gave a short master-class in the process of finding and evaluating water sources. Gordon Field led a group to investigate, by dowsing, trees of various types and ages on the campus, including a prime example of a Beacon Tree. While Kate Smart, who has a great deal of experience in horticultural dowsing, took a group to the nearby Batsford Arboretum to immerse themselves in the energies of plants in the landscape.

Perhaps the standout session of this Conference was the evening talk by the well-known explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell, CBE. Being a retired Royal Engineer himself, Col. John started his presentation by describing the work of some of his fellow RE predecessors who had started up the BSD in the first place. He was also able to relate stories of using dowsing in operational circumstances and indeed to note that well into the 1970's a wooden box of dowsing equipment was still standard issue for his troops in the field.

In these days of official scepticism to anything pre-technological, it was reassuring to listen to a high-ranking, but very down to earth, military officer relating cameos of dowsing being used in - often highly dangerous - practical applications.



CJB-S's talk was full of amusing anecdotes, and sometimes surprising revelations, about his work to date and his ongoing ventures. Although clearly older than most of us in the room, he shows no sign of slowing down, and explained how he would shortly be off to northern Bolivia on another dowsing-related expedition. A remarkable man, with a remarkable back-story - and well worth the attendance fee on his own.

Day two started with Dowsing Today editor, Trish Mills, describing the evolution of the book that became 'The Interconnectedness of All Things'. John Gibson-Forty's tome is best known for its study of the closely related pre-mediaeval perpetual choirs of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford - and how those vast institutions maintained a decagon of beneficial earth energy in the West Midlands and the Welsh Borders, centred on the area surrounding the late Whiteleaved Oak. The book itself covers a much wider spectrum of the dowser's worldview. However, Trish's talk also covered the odd circumstances surrounding the publication of the first edition, and the unexpected personal involvement of former Led Zeppelin frontman, Robert Plant. No fuddy-duddiness here.

We then had another very different type of talk by the former chair of Cardiff Dowers (CD), Grace Edgar. Now living in Sussex, Grace gave a presentation about her approach to map dowsing, with her own experience of the do's and the don'ts of the process. She followed this up with a resumé of a substantial investigation by the CDs into the earth energy matrix of the city of Cardiff, carried out in the years prior to lockdown. Quite apart from the practicalities of such a grand scheme, one of the significant outputs was to indicate that there seemed to have been a switch from the previous sources of energy - in both senses of the word - from the north/south coal mining to shipping routes of previous centuries to today's east/west direction of the Westminster/Welsh Assembly corridor of power. Interconnectedness at yet another level.

Aided and supported by his colleague Maz Harper, BSD stalwart Ron Dudley-Smith then used his motorhome as a presentation to describe two important aspects of his dowsing experience. Firstly, he has become one of the trustees/site guardians of the area surrounding and including the Rollright Stones (a few miles to the east of the FSTC). This has clearly become a great passion, and he was able to relate various fascinating practical and dowsable aspects of the megaliths - and of their visitors! He then went on to describe his visits to the Bosnian Pyramids - an often controversial, but nonetheless fascinating, group of massive structures in the southern Balkans. Both of these topics could clearly have lasted all day, but there was a sufficiency in each to whet the appetites of dowsers at all levels of experience.

The Conference came to an end with The Bards of Avalon - Bristol-based duo Bea Martin and David Johnson - describing their personal journey into the world of the unseen. The session culminated in an extended meditation session accompanied by gongs, singing and other musical sounds. By then, we were suitably chilled out and re-centred to make our various ways home safely and in good spirits.

While an attendance of sixty-odd might have seemed modest in comparison to the grander gatherings of years gone by, it was really encouraging to see the BSD back in action - and able to put on a national event that washed its face financially.

The vibe in the group was excellent throughout, and you appreciate the supportive ambience when minor technicalities are brushed off as endearing glitches. The venue seemed appropriate (and had previously been used by the BSD), the food was good - especially the formal dinner with Col. Blashford-Snell - and we effectively had the run of the place to ourselves. The onsite staff were helpful, and the rooms were comfortable and clean. Moreton-in-Marsh is a central location; the FSTC itself is only a short trip from the mainline railway station - and the whole endeavour was good value.

Congratulations should go to Richard Fry for getting, and keeping, the show on the road in somewhat unusual circumstances - and also to Nick Heywood for coping with the IT side of the presentations, at times in spite of the input from the presenters!

The BSD office staff, Hilary and Amber, were there to assist and support throughout - and Amy Murphy-Watts generated considerable interest with her stand selling the Nature's Wish range of home-produced sustainable and energetic aromas and scents.

Based on this, some form of future national gathering would seem to be both welcome and possible - and hopefully, post lockdown, future events will attract more newer dowsers into the fold.

Nigel Twinn
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