



## ***Mary / Michael Pilgrims Way Newsletter No.3***

*Autumn 2012*

Welcome to the third newsletter of the Mary/Michael Pilgrims Way. This edition charts further exciting progress in developing the pilgrimage route, with new 'inroads' described between Glastonbury and Avebury, and welcome news of work being done on 'the eastern front' near Hopton in Norfolk. We also celebrate an individual pilgrimage made across several sections of the Mary and Michael lines across the country (including where the guide books have yet to reach), and a group one day pilgrimage on Dartmoor with the Gatekeeper Trust. This illustrates the varied ways in which the Way can call to us. Thanks to all who have contributed, including photos by Liz Turner, Richard Dealler, Mike Timms and David Kelf.

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### ***'Her Blessing'***

The meaning of this painting has grown in me since I've finished it...! She is the Sunrise of the divine feminine that needs birth and expression, now, within us all, if we are to save our eco-systems and thus ourselves. She always acts, sees all details, loves life passionately, and in her love reveals Her transcendent nature. Spirit and matter are one. The wren is this voice! The waters of life constantly flow from her inconceivable depths. She may be Anna, Sophia, Shekinah, Tara... (When I was painting this Venus was conjuncting the Sun! I didn't realize...)

***Simon Prince (2012)***

## Dartmoor Pilgrims

Who were they  
The ancient ones  
Who placed these stones?

I glimpse them  
Gathered wraith-like  
Within Scorhill Circle  
Then processing  
Slowly, silently  
Through this long stone row.

I sense them  
Spiralling through  
These seemingly scattered markers  
Pale cloaks brushing  
Inwards, outwards  
Through death and rebirth.

I hear them  
Chanting around  
This lone standing stone  
Invoking the Light  
To penetrate the Earth.

I join them  
Along the ridge route  
To climb the granite slabs  
Of high Kes Tor  
For the purification ritual  
In the font-like rock pool  
On the summit.

And I realise  
I was one of them.

**Helen Loxton**

## Project Progress Report – by Richard Dealler

With work on the guidebook for the Cornish section of Mary/Michael Pilgrims Way complete, attention has now turned to the route between Glastonbury and Avebury. Indeed identifying a satisfactory way through the sometimes confusing choice of footpaths is well advanced with the section just to the west of Trowbridge the last unexplored piece of the jigsaw.



*Sunrise at Glastonbury*

Glastonbury to Avebury is a shorter distance than that covered by both the pilot section (Brentor to Glastonbury) and the Cornish section, but is none the worse for this, with a wide diversity of landscape types from the Somerset Levels; through the hills and valleys of the Mendips; along a stretch of the Kennett and Avon Canal towpath and up onto the expansive chalk downland of Wiltshire.

As with the other sections of the pilgrimage already established, there are numerous places of interest on route situated along the Michael and Mary earth energy currents, including churches and holy wells, hill forts, standing stones and burial mounds. Linked to these are many stories and legends which animate the landscape and help us to connect more deeply to the land and to those who have gone before. This section of the pilgrimage also joins two key centres of spiritual power in the country, Glastonbury and Avebury each of which has had a profound influence over the surrounding lands and been a magnet for pilgrims for thousands of years. Both still retain an air of mystery and wonder for the modern day pilgrim.

As before a guidebook will be written to support pilgrims following the route. My hope is that this will be available in the spring 2013. I have a vague notion to add a section with a potential route that could be followed by pilgrims on bikes. The idea was sparked by recognising that the flat lands of the Somerset Levels are to my mind at least, ideal cycling country and our proposed route interweaves in places with part of the National Cycle Network. A stretch of the Kennett and Avon Canal towpath is also followed which is accessible to bikes, whilst the network of By-ways along the downs leading to Avebury is a popular destination for cyclists. This may attract a new group of people to Mary/Michael Pilgrims Way, hopefully without detracting from the enjoyment of the pedestrian pilgrim.



*Sunset at Avebury*

The second major focus of attention over the next few months will be to establish a programme of guided, group pilgrimage walks between West Cornwall and Avebury expanding on the day long walks we have already been leading. In the summer we received a generous donation that enabled us to buy a van. This has now been kitted out as a mobile kitchen and the plan is that the van will carry tents and other luggage for pilgrims and will rendez-vous with the group of walkers at our agreed camp site each evening, the spirits of weary pilgrims lifted by the delightful aromas of wholesome cooking that will hopefully be emanating from the van.

My idea is that we will start with a first pilgrimage retreat of 5-7 days in the spring, beginning in the far south-west of Cornwall at Carn lês Boel and finishing at the Fal estuary and that this will be followed by a whole series of similar journeys covering other stretches of Mary/Michael Pilgrims Way through the summer and autumn, leading all the way to Avebury. The groups will be led and meals will be provided but we will be creating a sense of community with the encouragement that everyone participating shares their gifts and skills to enrich the experience for all. We are still fine tuning the details of this programme but if it is something that you may like to participate in do get in touch.

Thank you to all who have given feedback, help and encouragement along the way and to those who have supported the project, bought guidebooks and joined us on walks. In particular thank you to Jeff Cornish, not only for his editing efforts with the newsletter but his ongoing passion for this project, without which it would have faltered before now.

## MEANDERING ON THE MARY/MICHAEL PILGRIMAGE WAY

*by Mike Timms*



“Are you God?” the young boy asked. I was standing at the back of St Mary’s church in Woolpit, Suffolk— ending my pilgrimage near the well where I had intended it to begin. My journey to reach this destination had involved many unsettling changes of plan; now I was hearing unsettling words. I introduced myself to seven year old Ethan. He told me he had asked his Nan to bring him here this Saturday morning because he wished to pray that his best friend’s Dad could get out of prison soon. Perhaps he wanted to check with me that the message had got through – hoping for tangible reassurance after time praying to the intangible and unseen. St Mary’s provided a space where young people could write their prayers and stick them on a board. Ethan added his to the litany of “Thank you God’s for Mummy and Daddy, friends and food. His prayer concerned a wider world, one beyond the self.

This brief encounter, rounded off by his Nan’s invitation to come for tea, seemed to echo much of what pilgrimage is about: seeking intangibles beyond the self. The comparatively brief walk I had just completed required considerably less stamina (if we can take Dartmoor out of the equation) than my Camino from Carcassonne in France a year earlier. Like the French stretch of that journey to Santiago, the Mary/Michael Way had been quieter (less people, fewer towns) than the popular Spanish section. But, like France, it had provided much more food for thought. First there was the dichotomy between the seen and the unseen in my English walk. I had traversed some beautiful countryside: through woodlands carpeted with bluebells, over a badger sett (with a notice warning it was protected and inspected everyday), across the middle of a field of yellow rape seed (my boots and lower body being soaked by the dew laden crop brushing against me). I’d been on Yes Tor and Brentor and seen great panoramas, walked down tree-encased ‘green lanes’, and sat watching a fox run across a field near Chagford – Sunday lunch, a rabbit, in its mouth.

Yet this Way bore the scars of conflict down the centuries, evidence of fighting or protecting against something that was “other”. I walked through the ancient hill forts on the Ridgeway, Letcombe and Barberry Castles; monuments remembering wars - in the Crimea (the memorial to Baron Wantage) and South Africa (the Coombe Hill memorial to those who fought the Boer War); pill boxes from the Second World War; an underground nuclear observation post from the Cold War of the fifties and sixties – this one just off the Ridgeway; the many churchyard

war memorials. Then the conflicts arising within a society: the Prayer Book and Monmouth rebellions hurting some of the localities I walked through.

These prompted memories of the Camino of St James, and how that Way was marked not only with religious icons but also testaments to the myth that St James returned to Spain many years after his death to aid the battle against the Moor. There was a triumphalism in the Spanish experience that I could not sense on this walk. Here I repeatedly saw the futility of war, perhaps most poignantly marked at Shapwick. This is a “Thankful” village, one of only 50 out of the 16,000 villages in England where all the men who went to fight in the First World War returned home. Yet there was a bronze memorial in the church here too. It was for the 19 year old son of a pre-war vicar who had moved on in his ministry before that great conflict. So no escape from painful memories, even here.



*Shapwick church in Somerset*

My awareness of these historical hurts was softened by the unseen humanity I experienced. I mean the openness to, and trust of, “other” by the people I met on my way as I, a stranger, passed through their lives.

Caroline is an example of this. She runs the isolated B&B beside Okehampton army camp (excellent value at £25 for the night). She was feeding an orphan lamb when I walked up the path to enquire if there was a bed for the night. When I declined the welcoming cup of tea, she offered a pint of homebrew – a great thirst quencher. And I recall the huge goose egg with the breakfast fry because the hens hadn’t laid that day: that amounted to a lot more than the usual “Full English”. The electricity I used was wind-generated from the back garden, the force that blew me around on Yes Tor the day before being harnessed to good use.

Then there was Ed, a community worker with Mill House Retreats at Rockwell Manor Farm. Near the village of Westleigh, this place of rest is described on page 58 of the Pilot Section Guidebook. Visiting here involves a departure from the path, adding to the walking distance for each of two days, but it is well worth the detour. Indeed, its tranquil garden with stream running through, and library stocked with books to aid meditation and reflection make this the ideal spot to pause a day or two if time permits.

Ed was a homeless man for many years, before spending many more in Rehab. He hinted at hurtful experiences while on the road, but now the skills he learned building rough shelters for the night have created a willow seat for the garden and directed renovations to the buildings of the Centre. He works hard with his hands, but also with his heart. The tender care extended to me, the thoughtful prayer at supper, and the warming embrace when I departed all spoke of a man now at peace with himself, and giving it back to the world as well.

Stuart was actively homeless, sleeping rough outside Avebury. I met him in the Red Lion pub, inside the stone circle. He showed me where I could pitch for the night out of sight of the National Trust patrols. As storm clouds brewed later in the evening, I phoned a B&B in a neighbouring village and booked in. So then Stuart offered to show me a short cut to that village across the fields; it meant I got in before the rain. He gave, asking nothing in return.

Near Princes Risborough on the Ridgeway, I booked a B&B which turned out to be a self-catering apartment. It was a Sunday night, and there would be difficulties getting an evening meal. The thoughtful landlady had bought a prepared dish from the supermarket and left it for me to warm while I had a shower. When I sat down, vegetables had been added to the dish as well as a glass of red wine and a homemade dessert to follow. The charge for this dinner was £2-55, the price of the supermarket pack. Real hospitality for the hungry traveller.

There was so much more: a bed for the night at Richard's in Chagford with his hummus and 14 year old daughter Esme's flapjacks for my picnic the next day; the farmer who offered a clean stable for the night (gladly accepted) because there was no room at the inn (well, pub actually) on the Icknield Way; Simon in Baldock offering the key to a nearly-built house where I could have laid my head on a dry floor; then dear friends Brian and Celia, who took me "off piste" to their home in Oxford when housekeeping things like laundry needed doing, and helped me discover that ancient seat of learning.





## **The Road Haphazardly Travelled** (part 2 of Mike's meanderings)

The original plan was to walk from Woolpit to the point near Land's End where the ley line enters the sea. A combination of adverse weather conditions (it was April/May 2012), and unfamiliarity with the terrain led to the following peregrination:

From the home of special friends Sarah and Peter in Harpenden to Whipsnade on the Icknield Way, to Ivinghoe Beacon to walk the Ridgeway (with a descent to Uffington church and the Blowing Stone) to Avebury, then bus, train and bus to Tavistock to follow the route of the Pilot Section Guidebook to Glastonbury. Public transport took me back to Harpenden from where I walked out to Leagrave (Waulud's Bank henge) and through Bury St Edmunds to Woolpit.

Before I started, I was concerned in myself that the Christian sites on the path represented an attempt to 'colonise' or disguise, even trample, this ancient Way. As I walked, I came to appreciate that through history each age, or cultural visitor, has in some way contributed to enhancing and emphasising the treasure that lies underfoot.

After I finished my walk on this Way, the idea and plan for a mini pilgrimage struck me. "Mini pilgrimage" may be an oxymoron, but a weekend taster could give birth to the desire for a longer journey. So here is an idea:



*The Blowing Stone*

The start, I suggest, is at St Mary's church in Uffington – known as the Cathedral of the Vale and on the Mary energy line, this is a good place to meditate on intention before setting off for the climb up onto the Ridgeway path at Blowing Stone Hill. The Blowing Stone itself is located beside the start of the climb and was (allegedly) blown by King Alfred to summon Saxons to defend against invading Danes. Whatever the truth of that story, the Stone can be sounded, and so used to declare intention in Nature and to the Universe.

The first day of the walk goes on to offer opportunities to:

Walk over White Horse Hill and contemplate the “horse’s” tongue. Is it forked? Could it be that of a dragon, reflecting the serpent energy of the line? After all, close by is the site where Saint George is said to have slayed his dragon.



*Uffington White Horse*

Ask permission of the spirit world to enter Wayland’s Smithy Long Barrow and meditate at the entrance to the barrow.



*Waylands Smithy*

Stand on Liddington Castle (one of the earliest hill forts in Britain, of the Bronze Age) and contemplate the panorama and siting of this ancient fort.

The day ends at Ogbourne St George which has the name of Og, the Celtic God of Youth, embedded within it and so reminding us of another cultural influence here where earlier in the day a Saxon one was felt.

The second day is to Avebury through Barberry Castle, turning right before Overton Hill and the Sanctuary (it's possible to go on and visit these of course) to reach the West Kennet Avenue and walk up to the entrance to the Stone Circle. If the walk is timed to arrive here on the night of a full moon, you may encounter Druid ceremonies and find wild camping is permitted (though I cannot confirm this). There are many individual stones as well as the village church dedicated to St James, with its scallop shell over the church gate reminding of the end of another great pilgrimage road, all offering themselves as a place for concluding meditations. Perhaps this could whet some appetites to take on some other stretch – or even the whole Way, coast to coast. I hope so, for the Mary/Michael Pilgrim Way offers time (with its length) and space (with the landscapes it traverses) to engage fully with the key to pilgrimage – space away from the ordinary in which to engage with the extraordinary – in the modern world.



*White Lady waterfall at Lydford Gorge*

# **Michaelmas on the Michael Line**

***by Jeff Cornish***

September 29<sup>th</sup> 2012 dawned bright and fair. Sixteen hardy pilgrims gathered in Belstone for a Gatekeeper pilgrimage that promised much on such a day. A big group for a grand occasion on Dartmoor.

From Belstone we convoyed by car to Fitz Well, our chosen starting point about 3 miles down the road the other side of Okehampton. Alas, Saturday morning Okie traffic held us up from reaching that starting point for what seemed like an age (maybe it was 30 minutes). Then we lost one member of the peace convoy, who had gone straight on instead of left at the lights, and that took more time to rectify.

Happily we did all eventually gather by the well and our turbulent start began to be stilled as Richard our Guide and Gandalf for the day acknowledged how obstacles and difficulties seem to be a common experience for the pilgrim. A kestrel hovered over the magnificent backdrop of the land stretched out below us as Richard spoke of the theme of autumn birds leaving, and what echoes of fare well at this fair well might arise in us today. The blessing was confirmed by the cry of a buzzard nearby. Helen (Loxton) helped us attune for the journey, Walter Raleigh sounded a call for the pilgrim's 'scallop shell of quiet...and staff of faith to walk upon' and we were off, guided by the tall staff bearing aloft –what else, but Michaelmas daisies... These were to be placed along the way as beautiful purple offerings at particular points in our pilgrimage.

We journeyed silently, meditatively, to the site of St Michael's chapel on farmland in Halstock. Richard described the history of the chapel, which is mentioned in the 'Perambulation of the Forest of Dartmoor' in 1240, and its destruction following the Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There are now no walls or roof visible, just the outline of where the building stood, with a pleasing stretch of green grass inside, and Dartmoor ponies in abundance. The Michael line was dowsed as going through the entire building (or remnant thereof), and the sacred atmosphere was still tangible despite the desecration of four hundred years ago.



*Dartmoor ponies at Halstock*

We gathered in a circle on the grass, which the ponies seem to keep beautifully short cropped, as latter day guardian spirits. Richard at this point offered a beautiful ceremony involving the passing round the circle of a heart shaped stone (found whilst swimming in a river on a previous occasion). Each person imbued the stone with loving and healing energy, and words were spoken as moved, all within the palpable ‘glow’ of the Michael line on the St Michael chapel ruins, on this auspicious Michaelmas day. And who should it be but Michael (Loxton) who voiced how profound a change had occurred within our group in sharing this simple ceremony, observing that we had gone straight to a deeper level of connection through this sharing. The heartstone was placed on the grass in the centre of the circle within the chapel, where it continues to resonate.

From here we climbed a ridge towards the open moor, and then descended to the East Okement river for our picnic lunch, near to Cullever Steps. Despite much encouragement from Richard to take to the waters, this being a favourite swimming hole, the chilly autumn breeze seemed to deter any of us from taking the plunge, though Liz I think was tempted. The sun shone as we feasted by the rushing water, in a delightful spot attended by unseen undines and water sprites.

Having crossed the river where the old horse-drawn gun carriages in Napoleonic times processed across the cobbles at Cullever Steps, we wended across the landscape to Nine Stones. This is a little cairn circle which also marks the Michael line. Caroline intuited that there were originally 22 stones. There was just enough room within the circle for the sixteen of us to form a circle within a circle. Here at my behest we grounded ourselves in this sacred spot by breathing in from the earth through the heart chakra and breathing out to the skies above, and then from the sky down into the earth. The in breath and out breath mirror the theme of balance, reflected in the equinox balance of day and night, and Libra’s and Archangel Michael’s scales.



*Nine Stones cairn circle below Belstone Tor, where we sang and danced*

We then sang Danu's "Yona" song which had been sung all along the Michael and Mary lines on May 5<sup>th</sup> this year, on International Dowsing Day. 5<sup>th</sup> May is the birthday of Hamish Miller, who came to this exact spot with Paul Broadhurst 25 years ago in 1987, and dowsed the Michael line here, as well as finding that only nine of the stones had dowsable energy lines connecting to the centre of the circle). Danu Fox was inspired at Carn Les Boel in Cornwall a few months ago to create the chant and offer through it with others a sense of gratitude to the earth and dedication to reinvigorating and healing the earth and all beings.

As the "Yona" chant became a round, the harmonies started to take off, and then we became two interweaving circles moving in opposite directions within the circle as we sang, doing a 'splitting the willow' or 'grand chain' movement. Luckily (is there such a thing?) we had even numbers to create that continuing balance, and also a reasonable balance of male and female (with goddesses naturally in the ascendant).

I personally felt one of the effects of this small ritual at Nine Stones was to enhance the sense of coherence, togetherness and 'fun' in the group. Interestingly, dowsing the Michael line at this spot before and after our activities, showed it had increased from 12 paces wide to 18 paces (a remarkable 33% expansion). The increase was confirmed by Margaret's dowsing rods, which had been created in Hamish Miller's own forge in Trencrom in Cornwall. This was similar to the results we had had after singing at Spinsters Rock in May (see previous Newsletter).



*Pilgrims gather outside St Mary's church, Belstone*

Sadly, with the delayed start to the day, there was not enough time to climb to the dizzy heights of Belstone Tor (to the regret of some, and no doubt the relief of others). Instead, guided by Helen, we sent energy from the Nine Stones circle to the distant Tor above. Then we wended our merry way to the Church of St Mary in Belstone. Richard drew our attention to the mysterious Belstone Ring Cross, which used to be propped outside the

church and now has pride of place within. It appears to be a tall, slender megalithic stone which has had a circle and cross carved on to it. The carving is believed to date from the period between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D, though the stone itself may be much older. Richard observed that some visitors feel a strong urge to touch the stone, and one person said they felt it was a clear depiction in stone of ‘ the sun and the serpent’’. Here we lit a candle beneath the cross. The church felt dark and peaceful, a contrast to the sunshine and breeze we had experienced earlier.

We finished the day as previously with writing and sharing ‘two minute poems’ in the church. This felt unifying and was a creative way to complete the day by sharing some reflections of our experience of the day’s pilgrimage. It amazes me what people can come up with in such a short span of time (see below). Christel read a quote from Rumi from the Mary/Michael Pilgrims Way guidebook to round things off.



*Belstone Ring Cross (photo by Angie Lake)*

The day could not be considered over without the traditional Gatekeeper tea. This time, unusually, it was provided from Richard’s Pilgrim Wagon in the car park outside Belstone. The big kettles were fired up on the two impressive gas cookers in the van to provide a selection of beverages. Richard’s daughter Esme had baked as fine an array of baked goodies as any famished pilgrim could wish for, including chocolate brownies, apple cake and flapjacks. She had even provided a proper printed Menu! As we guzzled or nibbled according to greed or propriety, Charlotte spoke about the links with the Dartmoor zodiac she has been exploring with the group, and cosmic connections were made amongst the comestibles.

Big thanks are due to Richard for his in depth guidance of the group, which was conducted with his usual warmth, wit and wisdom. Every one in the group contributed towards creating a unique experience. It was for me a thoroughly satisfying, enjoyable and indeed inspiring day. Merlin and many others seemed to accompany us on this magical Michaelmas.

*“Two Minute Poems” written at the end of our Belstone pilgrimage by: Helen, Michael, Petra, Margaret, Charlotte, Frank, Mike, Susan, Richard, Liz, Christel, Eleanor, Arthur, Caroline, Mary and Jeff (not in any particular order)*

Finding that stillness  
Where our footfall ends  
In the centre of the barely visible chapel,  
A circle of buried stones  
I see the jasper and crystal temple  
And then a dome of light  
And then emptiness  
And ineffable stillness

Buzzard wings spread full,  
Circles high.  
Below the ancient cross  
Firm and proud sits midst  
The ancient well.  
Wind blows, cold  
And chilly as our steps  
On mother earth progress.  
Foundations of an ancient  
Church sit midst the fields  
Visited by ponies, horses  
And all that come.  
Waters tumble splash  
Carving their way  
Across the moor  
And standing stones  
Proud in their circle  
Brave the elements  
Day after day.  
Feet find their way  
Amongst the moorland bogs  
And cold hands connect  
As warm melodious voices  
Fill the air with joy and happiness  
The journey now complete.



*Fitz Well*

An overwhelming  
Sense of presence  
Upliftment  
Group unity  
Co-mmunity  
Co-mmmitment  
Co-creation  
Co-operation



Peace  
Joy  
Celebration  
Life

The sun shone from a wide sky  
The earth was green and glistening  
The water tumbled and laughed  
Its way down, down  
And the beautiful, the oh so beautiful  
Horses grazed and grazed  
The landscape fair  
In appreciation, we were embraced



Rarrgh  
It's been an animal day  
A beautiful day  
Thankyou for such a day  
Peace to all

We follow the Michaelmas Daisy  
Staff along the Michael line.  
We flow as one.  
We pass around a heartstone  
Leaving it with its blessings  
In the centre of our circle  
And we sing, we sing and  
Move around the Nine Maidens  
Send OHMs to the angel  
Overlighting Belstone Tor  
Circling back to the deep,  
Deep peace of this church

Learning to linger  
To stop and listen  
To allow  
Then time to move again  
Over the blustery moor  
To find a present moment  
Wrapped in the church stillness



### **Michaelmas Day**

Open spaces,  
A blue sky  
Wind in my hair  
Delightful miniature ponies  
A coming together,  
To sit by the gurgling  
Water, to eat.  
A final resting place  
Of peace and tranquillity  
In God's church on  
The Mary / Michael line.

Out there – space, light, distance  
In here- a battle, a struggle  
Just to be.  
Beauty and shimmering air  
Call me to leave all the  
Noise in my head  
The pain which drags me in.  
Let glorious Dartmoor be!



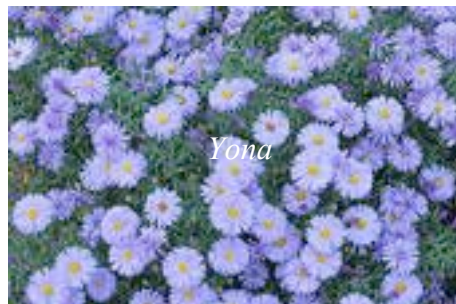
Wandering through  
 Cowpats to the well  
 To the ruins  
 The moor hovers around  
 Protectively  
 As the peace of grass  
 Crunching, stones  
 Rattling  
 Seeps into my bones  
 And ancient lights  
 Twinkle.

A sacreday - most blest day  
 Entering into the sacred  
 Heart of the ancient ones  
 Being at one with the granite stones  
 And the moorland magic  
 A time long gone but not forgotten  
 Was I one of these ancient ones?  
 Are memories of past times  
 Returning?  
 I was there  
 I am part of the  
 Ancient landscape

Michael's chapel  
 Still resonates  
 Though roofless  
 & without walls

Michaelmas  
 daisies  
 dropped  
 along  
 the Way

Wilderness  
 Of buzzard  
 And hovering kestrel  
 Ponies  
 Both timid  
 And unafraid



Deep water  
 Picnic restores  
 And reinvigorates

Balance:  
 Men & women  
 Sing and weave  
 Amid the ancient stones

## Walking the Michael and Mary Earth Energy Currents; A Pilgrims Way (in the Land of the Rising Sun) by David Kelf

In the course of building, then walking, the concentric paths of a labyrinth in Seaton, Devon a few years ago I also came across the book “The Sun and the Serpent” by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst. I was amazed to see that the Michael and Mary Lines crossed and left (or arrived at ?) our shores at a small, east Norfolk coastal village called Hopton-on-Sea. This was a place I knew very well having grown up just a “stone’s throw” from it and I remembered very well playing on a derelict church there. I also realised that I had spent much of the rest of my life in different places but nearly always surprisingly close to these mysterious Lines.

So, a few years later, in 2008, when I returned to Norfolk after a working gap of about 40 years, one of the first things I considered was a closer exploration of these Lines.



*The atmospheric ruins of Hopton church where David played as a child*

I soon discovered there was already a new project to restore the old Hopton St. Margaret's church and to promote its significance with respect to the Lines, so it wasn't long before I became involved with both.

Gradually I have learnt more about dowsing (for the Lines) and have been an active member of the Hopton Volunteers group which is part of the Parish Council effort to stabilise and restore the old church and to preserve it as a community and visitor heritage attraction. Also as a central venue for village fayres. Since it marks the most easterly crossing point of the Lines it, or the nearby shore, may become the start or finishing point of a 500 mile pilgrimage route from (or to) Carn Les Boel (Land's End) and already numerous people have made this walk. Generally they have followed routes of their own choice but, thanks particularly to Richard Dealler and his new Guides, we now have the possibility of this becoming an established pilgrim route.

At Hopton we would like to play a small part in delineating this route so have been plotting how this might be done. We decided to dowse for the Lines in more detail; both their track and structure. Firstly, once a month, a distance of about four miles is dowsed along the Mary Line and through or past the many churches, then a recce walk determines the closest and most suitable existing public footpath(s). Finally a conducted walk, led by myself, visits the religious sites and other places of interest along the chosen path. Hence we progress from east to west following the Mary Line as closely as possible. We have now (November 2012) reached Denton Church just west of Bungay.

As a result I now visualise the Lines as living currents of energy which wander and pulse across the land, sometimes rising above it altogether. These currents wave in both the horizontal and vertical dimensions and contain many alternating filaments within them. They change width and form depending on many other factors including human attention to them, topography, water features and of course established churches and ancient sites. I see them as part of Gaia's living physiology and energy circulation pattern. The ancient people knew about these currents of energy and placed their sites (of worship) in relation to them

Our intention as a group is to follow the Mary Current as far as Eye in Suffolk hoping that our walks will aid both the earth energy and our own respectful connections with the land. We will then turn and follow the Michael Current in similar fashion back towards Hopton. We keep a written, mapping, photographic and dowsing record of our walks and hope these will eventually help in compiling a Guide for this portion of the pilgrimage route from (the) Eye (of the dragon) to Hopton.

**David Kelf**

Retired Meteorologist and Oceanographer (familiar with current structures in the atmosphere and the ocean) - October 2012



Archangel midsummer sunrise over the Mary/Michael lines at Hopton--on--sea

*“Who in that land of darkness and blind eyes... Thy long expected healing wings could see... There is in God (some say... A deep, but dazzling darkness...” (Henry Vaughan)*