

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DOWSING

Extract from: **The Successful Treasure Hunter's Essential Dowsing Manual**

Dowsing has been recorded since the time of Moses, for the story of Aaron producing water from the rock (Exodus chapter 17, verse 6) is often quoted as the first written evidence. Even if we dismiss the Biblical claim, dowsers appear engraved on ancient Egyptian stonework and on the statue of a Chinese emperor dating circa 2200BC. Little else of dowsing is recorded until Agricola, in 1556, wrote *De Re Metallica*, a composition on mining, which included an illustration of a German dowser at work.



Almost a hundred years after Agricola, Martine de Bertereau, Baroness de Beausoleil travelled Europe, with her husband, locating mineral deposits by dowsing. They discovered over 150 ore deposits of iron, gold and silver in France alone, before being imprisoned for practising the 'black arts'. Later, in the same century, a particularly interesting book was written by Jean Nicholas de Grenoble published in Lyon in 1691 under the title of *La Verge de Jacob or L'arte de Trouver les Tresors, Les Sources, les Limites, les Metaux, les Mines, les Mineraux et autres choses caches par L'usage du Baton fourche*. (The Rod of Jacob or the art of finding treasure, springs, boundaries, metals, mines, minerals and other hidden things, by the use of the forked twig). Dowsing then seems to have sunk back into obscurity, although, undoubtedly it continued to be practised, at least for finding of water - the lifeblood of all living things - practised in secrecy, perhaps, because of its occult associations and the Church's condemnation as the work of the devil.

Victorian scientific interest aided by a softening of the Church's attitude brought dowsing out into the open. In 1874, Thomas Welton translated and published Jean Nicholas' book in English. During the following decades a number of respected men, including the physicist, Albert Einstein, performed impressive feats with a variety of dowsing devices. Most of these feats were only of academic value but by the middle of the 20th century dowsing was regularly being put to a great variety of profitable uses.

Farmer J W Young convinced wild-catter, Ace Gutowski, that oil lay beneath West Edmond, Oklahoma by demonstration with a goatskin-covered bottle hung from a watch chain which invariably swung from north to south when over oil. As a result, in 1943, Gutowski drilled a hole and discovered the largest oil deposit in Oklahoma for 20 years. And that is just one of very many examples of oil strikes by dowsers.

Colonel Harry Grattan, CBE, Royal Engineers was given the task of building a new Headquarters for the British Rhine Army at Monchen Gladbach, Germany in 1952. Planning for at least 9000 people who would need 750,000 gallons of water per day was a major project. Water supply was a big problem. Notwithstanding that the British Army preferred the security of it's own water supply, the three local waterworks would have had to upgrade their equipment and pass the costs on in the form of water rates at £20,000 a year. A considerable sum in 1952.

Colonel Grattan knew of a nearby family with a private well, which produced better quality water than any of the waterworks. He employed a geologist with the intention of tapping this source but a trial bore produced very little water. The Colonel was a proficient dowser, however, and decided to use his skills to solve the problem. Using the traditional forked twig the colonel began dowsing and getting reactions everywhere to the west of the test bore. On the strength of this two further trial bores were executed with spectacular results.

The trials showed that the ground was mainly solid clay, but between 73 and 96 feet down there was an aquifer, which produced a copious supply of excellent quality water. The German government, responsible for site construction, were less than convinced by such surveying techniques and were adamant that the water supply would soon dry up. Gaining the support of his superior, General Sugden, Colonel Grattan was able to continue his exploration. Dowsing from horseback, the colonel plotted out the full extent of the aquifer, which extended to within a few hundred yards of two of the waterworks. The British Rhine Army's private waterworks were constructed providing the Army with all the water it needed and savings running into millions of pounds over the years.

Somewhat closer to our quest for buried objects was the work of Major General Scott Elliot, a former president of the British Society of Dowsers who spent many years finding previously unknown archaeological sites by dowsing. His initial plan was that he would find the sites and then hand them over for professional excavation. On discovering that the professionals were not interested, partly through skepticism and partly because they had more than enough sites of their own, the major learned to do his own excavations. He also discovered he could save enormous amounts of time and effort by mapping out the site features by dowsing before he removed the first sod. Nothing spectacular in terms of finds of great intrinsic value were ever reported but nevertheless, over a period of some 20 years the major discovered and excavated an impressive list of sites.

The fairly recent development of treasure hunting as a popular hobby has drawn one or two dowsers to the challenge of using their skills to find buried metal artifacts. In the USA, Louis J Matacia is a surveyor who has studied dowsing for years. During the Vietnam War he was commissioned to teach dowsing skills to US Marines so that they could avoid booby traps, navigate safely through jungles and learn the whereabouts of the enemy. Soldiers reported that using the L-rod in this way saved many lives. Louis is particularly interested in the challenge of the search. Using his dowsing together with a range of scientific devices he has located lost pipes, oil, wells, caves and buried treasures.

The most successful treasure dowser in Britain is Jim Longton from Lancashire. Jim took up dowsing when he retired from the wrestling ring and first hit the headlines in 1990 after finding a spectacular hoard of Viking silver brooches valued at over £42,000 (\$80,000). His latest find is potentially Britain's Tutankhamen: a seventeenth century shipwreck, believed to contain untold treasures, including a 230 piece gilt-silver dinner service once owned by Charles I. While divers work on the recovery, Jim is being kept busy locating more treasure wrecks for a marine salvage company.

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