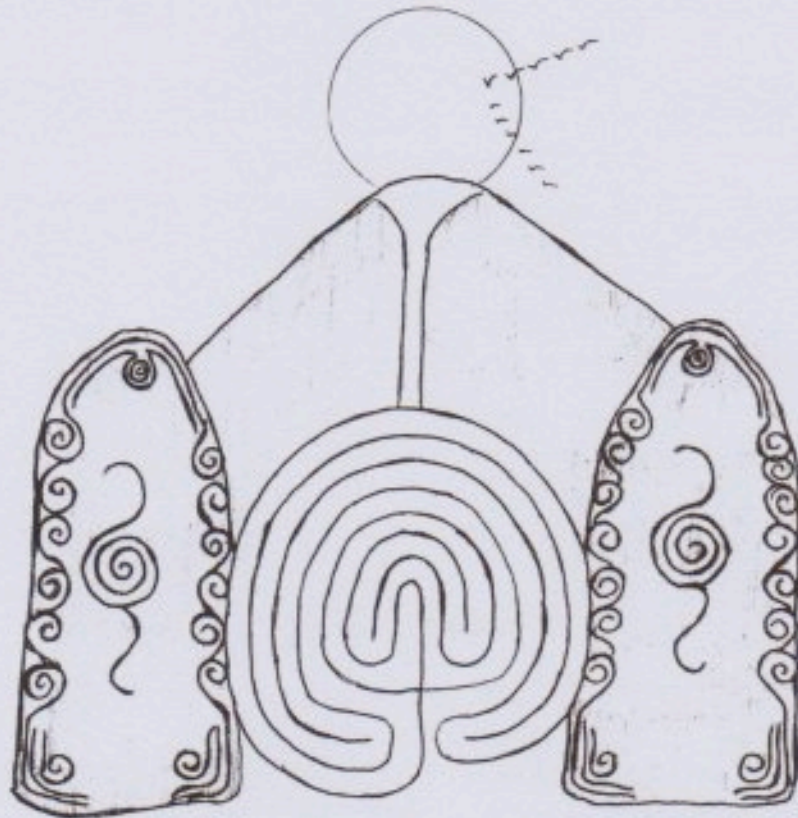


NWYVRE PATH TO THE SUN

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Back in the summer of 1993 I began to wonder if there might be some kind of solar connection concerning Cam Peak, so much so my curiosity led me to spend midsummer's morning there awaiting the sunrise (see GEM16). Although I could draw no conclusions from my vigil, I couldn't rule out the possibility of a solar connection as I feel the landscape here is more than accidental, and, recently I happened across an interesting link; In Dursley, at the bottom of Long Street is/was an area known as *Troy Town* and, at Cam, just off the High Street is an area that is/was also known as *Troy Town*. This name is all that there is left to remind us that a turf maze once existed at these places (see *Gloucestershire Mazes GEM16*). the discovery of a one-time existence of labyrinths in the two towns that neighbour Cam Peak are an interesting ingredient if a solar connection is to be pursued.

Cam Peak has a special ambience about it and two other places with similar appearance and traits that immediately spring to mind are Glastonbury Tor and Silbury Hill, the former of these two has an obvious maze link as it has ridges or 'walls' shaped into it producing the classical seven circuit labyrinth (see Fig.1) as 'discovered' Geoffery Ashe in 1968 (although this is not categorical). I suppose at first glance Silbury Hill has nothing alluding to the labyrinth, but what about the coiled and winding stone rings and avenues of Avebury? These may be representative of the snake, an ancient symbol of healing and of the Life Force. So how does the labyrinth tie in with the sun..?

The pre-Celtic root words *Swoi-Sul* meaning sun and also the sole of the foot have also produced:

- Irish** - Sul (eye)
Brittanic - Sul (sun)
Breton - Sul (Sunday, day of the sun)
German - Sohle (sole of the foot)
French - Sol (Earth)
 Sole (sole of the foot)
Latin - Sol (sun)
 Solarus (related to the sun)
 Sole (sole of the foot)

Word roots linking the sun, the ground and point of contact between foot and ground - the sole. All this seems to suggest an ancient association between sun, ground and sole and evidence to support this can be found in the shape of the feet and spiral carvings found at some megalithic sites. The Taoist shaman sorcerers, whilst in a trance state, used to perform a spiral



The Glastonbury Tor Maze (JW)

dance which celebrated the union between Heaven and Earth, in this dance the Earth was represented by a spiral of three rings or turns and Heaven by Ursa Major which was set at the centre of the spiral, the dance itself consisted of a series of hopping movements which is reminiscent of the Crane Dance which, throughout Europe is associated with the labyrinth (Ursa Major or the Great Bear can also be linked with the sun in that great solar hero Arthur).

The four elements of Earth, Air, Fire and Water are familiar to us all, but the concept of a fifth was commonplace to most ancient cultures. The Gaullish Druids added a fifth element which they called the *Nwyvre* which they saw as an energy which was present everywhere. *Nwyvre* derives from words meaning *underground water / serpent* and in English the closest we get to

Nwyvre is *water* leading to the meaning of "oscillation" which fittingly describes the way a serpent moves, so the word *Nwyvre* suggests there is a link between serpent and some underground force or energy - a telluric current.

It is known that solar activity can affect the electrical flow in the earth and it appears that ancient cultures were aware of this as the language remnants show there is a relationship between the labyrinth and Shoemakers who have been entrusted with their upkeep in various places (such as Slupsk in Poland), there is an interesting coincidence concerning this in a legend about Cam Peak: The Devil was engaged in transporting earth to block up the River Severn but during the course of this he was interrupted by a *Cobbler* who persuaded him it wasn't a good idea so he dropped his lot and Cam Peak was born. Cam's name is supposedly from the Celtic *Camma* meaning 'crooked' but can we take that a little further and find 'curved as in the Latin 'incurvus' (it is also interesting that locally Cam Peak and the Long Down are known as 'Dragon Hills'). If indeed telluric currents and geomagnetism are related it would seem that the pattern of the labyrinth is more than a ritual dance floor or rustic pastime, it may in fact be a diagram which can be utilised allowing us to interact with this energy which is present and ancient and sacred sites.

Studying the behaviour of birds is an ancient practice and it may have some relevance here as birds are known to be very sensitive to magnetism and it plays a great part in the migration process. The behaviour of birds at ancient sites has been remarked on by many people who have watched them gathering and spiralling, and something else that should be mentioned here is the ancient practice of augury, which of course is based on the behaviour of birds - I've sometimes wondered whether Cam peak may have been (partly) used for this very reason. However, to get back to the solar aspect of all this, apart from the labyrinth link, Cam Peak does have a long history of May Day festivals which could, and probably are, the echo of some older ceremony such as Beltane which would have been celebrated at this time by lighting of fires to mark the end of the dark time and the coming of Summer. I think there is sufficient evidence here to suggest that Cam Peak was (and is) one such place where the relationship between the Sun and the earth was extremely evident and could be sensed and worshipped at a very high level.

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