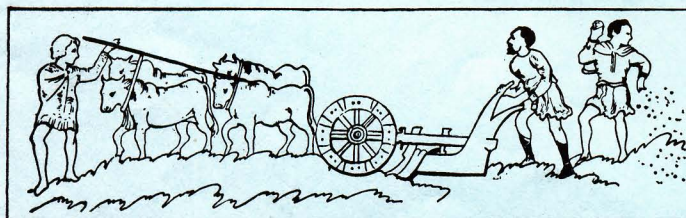
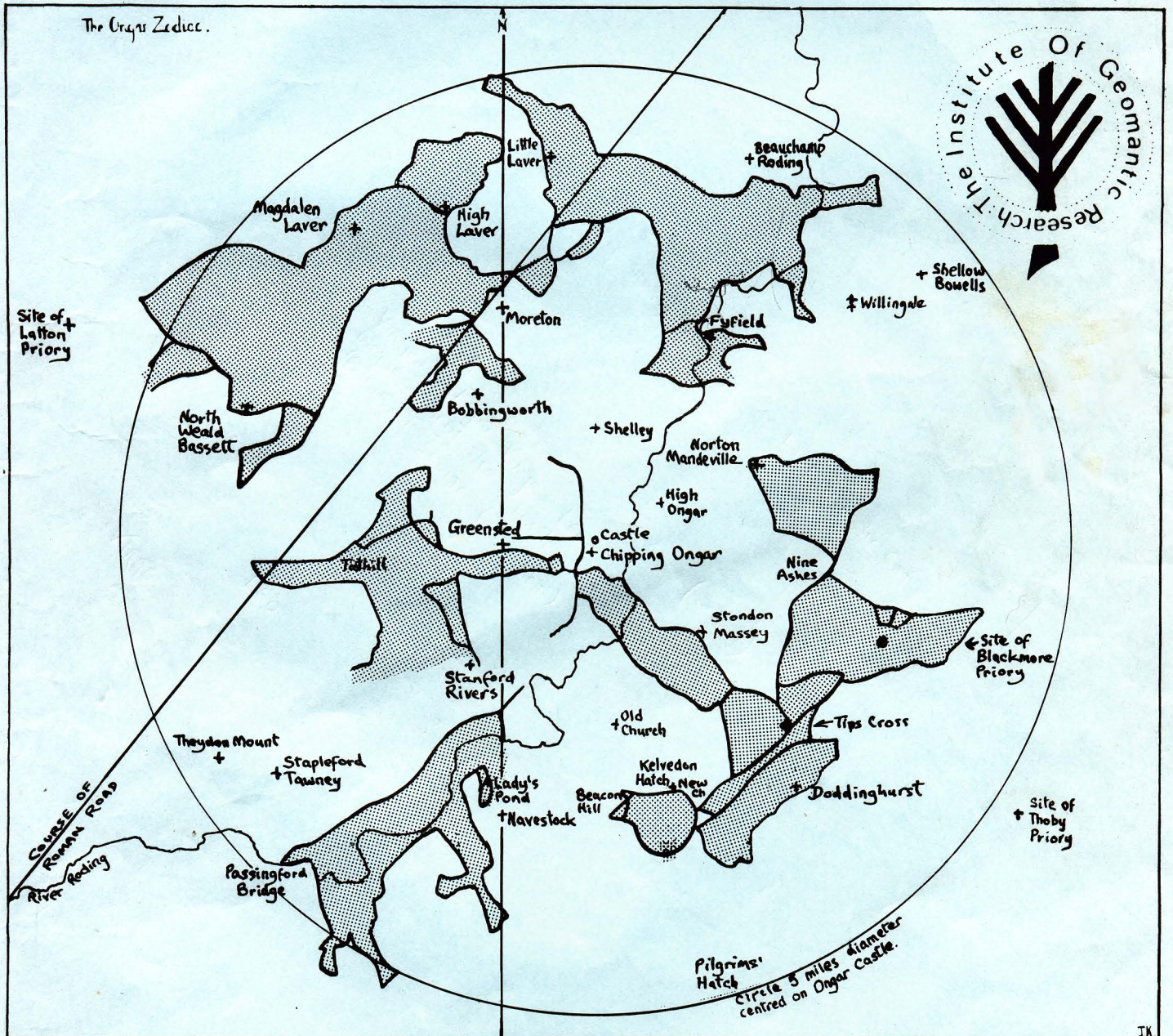


ONGAR ZODIAC

**JIM
KIMMIS**

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THE ONGAR ZODIAC

by JIM KIMMIS

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INTRODUCTION In a young science, as the study of geomancy or earth mysteries in its present 'rediscovered' form surely is, the researcher is in the happy position of being able to refer directly to the earliest sources of information and inspiration, without blunting his curiosity with a burden of dogma and received wisdom. The major sources I have used in producing this paper are listed in the Bibliography at the end, while references in the text will indicate the origins of particular facts and theories. The debt to others for information is obvious, but the work also depends on encouragement, for which thanks are due to Frank Dineen of the Essex Dowser, friends and correspondents, and especially the Institute of Geomantic Research.

This survey contains that mixture of fact and theory which is characteristic of 'fringe' sciences, and doubtless there are some errors of fact as well as errors of interpretation. I would be glad if any obvious mistakes are pointed out for correction; for the rest, it is left for the reader to decide what to accept and what to reject.

Four hundred years ago, heresy such as ours might have ended at the stake or on the end of a rope. In this enlightened age, we have only to contend with the occasional vitriolic comment in the pages of an august journal, a fate which is harmless enough though it should cause concern among educationalists. Attitudes of open- or narrow-mindedness are created early in life, and if we are attempting to erase prejudice (or to reveal another 'truth') we might do well to review the history syllabus employed in the country's schools - still the basis of most people's knowledge of their heritage. If there is an apologetic tone to the more speculative parts of this paper, it is a result of a conditioning imposed by a far from adequate schooling in that subject. For this reason, I look forward to the publication of the first Young Person's Guide to Mysterious Britain.

THE ZODIAC

The existence of a terrestrial zodiac around Ongar in Essex was first suspected in 1974, and although mention of it has been made since in earth mysteries publications this is the first more-or-less complete account of the structure and its 'meaning' (as it is presently understood). This paper has an arrangement based on Philip Heselton's booklet on the Holderness Zodiac: the first part contains a brief description of the zodiac figures; the second examines the zodiac as a whole under a number of thematic headings. I find this second approach to be more useful in that it allows the zodiac to be considered as one undivided structure, a whole that is 'greater than the sum of its parts'.

In his valuable booklet, Philip Heselton has listed eight features that may be characteristic of zodiac areas, or at least may indicate likely zones for zodiac formation. Summarized briefly, these are:

- 1 - a varying landscape of slopes and intermittent woodland.
- 2 - old roads, often sinuous and coinciding with Parish boundaries.
- 3 - a loose settlement pattern with a dense network of narrow lanes.
- 4 - 'peculiar' place-names (recognized intuitively).
- 5 - a strange remoteness, or sense that the area is out of touch with time.
- 6 - a tradition of witchcraft.
- 7 - ancient forest lands.
- 8 - meeting-points of three counties.

No. 8 does not apply to the Ongar area; Nos. 2 & 3 are partly a matter of individual judgement, but I find the road network of Ongar distinctly odd, particularly as many lanes seem superfluous in terms of transport/access. The other five features are all characteristic of this zodiac. Several county guides have remarked on Nos. 4 & 5; for No. 6, see separate heading. The most useful maps to complement these notes are:

Ordnance Survey 1/50 000 (First Series) Sheet 167 - Chelmsford and Harlow.
Ordnance Survey One Inch (discontinued) Sheet 161 - London North East.

The nominal centre of the zodiac is the old castle and market town of Chipping Ongar, situated at the confluence of the River Roding and one of its larger tributaries, the Cripsey Brook. The town has long been the social and trading centre of the middle Roding valley and is the point where the major routes through and across the valley converge. It lies at Lat. 51°42' N; Long. 0°15' E.

The Roding flows out of the circle in the south-west at about 100' above sea-level. The hills rise to about 350' near Epping (west) and about 300' near Harlow (north-west) and Kelvedon Hatch (south-east). Woodland is most extensive on the higher ground and represents the remains of the once-vast Royal Forest (most of the county was under Forest Law at one time, though not all 'forest' was woodland). The gentle changes in slope, the frequent small woods and 'springs' breaking up the skyline, and the art of earlier generations in siting their villages, churches and farms so as to sit comfortably in the landscape, all these go to make up a very attractive piece of country. The towns of Harlow, Chelmsford, Brentwood, and the outer suburbs of Greater London lie only a few miles from the circle, yet it has so far resisted major changes such as urbanization; an airfield and a few radio masts are the most obvious incursions. Even the motorway to Cambridge has had no great effect, sited as it is on the extreme western rim of the zodiac.

Comparison with other terrestrial zodiacs may be useful. This one is a true circle of about 10 miles diameter, as is the 'original' ring in Somerset; Nuthampstead appears as a vesica piscis, Kingston is an irregular circle, and Holderness is a larger circle. In all the zodiacs known to me, there are some similarities of iconography and some differences, perhaps dictated by the varying topography. One feature does seem important, and may indicate a 'polarity' in the zodiac system - this is orientation. Somerset, Nuthampstead, Kingston and Pumpsaint have Capricorn in the north and Leo in the south; Holderness, Ongar and Jonathan How's Chiltern Hills Zodiac have the opposite arrangement. Unfortunately I have no details of the Co. Durham and other zodiacs for comparison, but it would be interesting to know whether they all fall into one of these two categories.

The relationship of leys and geometrical patterns to zodiacs seems to vary from high correlation (eg. Holderness) to the apparently random. Much of Essex seems to be poor ley country by comparison with Herefordshire (to use an obvious reference). However, I suspect that there is a geometrical network linking the significant points within the Ongar Zodiac, and there are notes on this in the second section.

Finally, it should be emphasized that this is only an introduction to Ongar and by no means the 'last word'. There is still a great deal of work to be done on both the structure and the interpretation of the zodiac; indeed, I feel that every terrestrial zodiac discovered contains within it at least one lifetime's work. What seems important now is to publish all that is known about the various structures so that the assembled information will provide a basis for the better understanding of this curious aspect of the old wisdom.

JIM KIMMIS
Southend-on-Sea, Essex
August 1977

1.1 ARIES

The Aries figure is the most easterly sign, lying around the village of Blackmore. The figure is about 2 miles long and appears to be a hornless lamb rather than the zodiacal Ram. The head is reverted, the top lying at the aptly named Tip's Cross where the figures of Aries, Pisces and the Whale meet, representing the Vernal Equinox in the calendar. The front and underside of the figure are drawn by motor roads that meet at Nine Ashes; the corresponding point at Nuthampstead is called Ashgrove, and in Somerset there is Marshall's Elm; in three cases a clump of trees marked the cusp between Aries and Taurus. The head and upper back are also marked by roads, but the outline of the rump is unclear; 200 years ago it was bounded by Fryerning Wood but encroachments on the woodland since have altered the line.

No legs are visible on the map, but the configuration of lanes in and around Blackmore itself suggests hoofs, as though the legs were drawn in under the body, Blackmore was originally called Fingrith, explained as 'the stream of Fin's people', and this was the only manor in the area held in 1086 by the Crown. (In neighbouring High Ongar are Crownland, King Street and Kingsriden, seeming to indicate a 'royal road' into Ongar, but Dr. Reaney gave other explanations.) Blackmore, meaning 'black swamp', was the name of a priory established in the 12th century for a Prior and 12 Augustinian Canons. A St. Lawrence's Day (Aug 10) Fair was granted by Henry III and the present parish church, part of the priory buildings, is dedicated to St. Lawrence. The priory was dissolved earlier than most, in 1527, and changed hands rapidly 4 or 5 times before the Smyths obtained and demolished it. A modern priory on the site is called Jericho, traditionally because Henry VIII used to visit a mistress at Blackmore and the Court was told that he had 'gone to Jericho'; the River Wid or Can, which rises here, is sometimes called the Jordan.

Near the neck of the figure is Woolmongers Farm, the name dating from the 14th century, and south of the figure in Fryerning is the Woolpack Inn (see under Earth + Stone). If these names remember a wool-route, it passes through the most appropriate part of the zodiac.

1.2 TAURUS

The main Ongar-Chalmsford road crosses the Bull's head, collaring it at Norton Heath. King Street forms the top of the head and Norton Lane, known in the 13th century as The Causeway, draws the underside. Like Aries, Taurus appears to be without horns, and to tame it further Norman builders tinged its nose with All Saints church at Norton Mandeville. Four fields and a strip of woodland marking the former road seem to form a hoof to the north of the head, which follows the pattern of other zodiacs. Interestingly, in an area given over almost completely to grain, there is pasture for cattle at Norton. The parish's surname, which also occurs at Keinton on the Somerset zodiac, came from Ernulf de Maundevill, a descendant of Geoffrey, Earl of Essex. Both men were Templars (Geoffrey achieving notoriety and excommunication) and there were extensive de Mandeville estates to the north-east, including Shellow Bowells and Berners Roding (Gemini-Leo).

1.3 GEMINI

Expecting to find at least one giant in a boat around Willingale, doing duty for Gemini, Cancer and Orion, I have so far been disappointed. As mentioned elsewhere, the twin churches, one dedicated to St. Christopher, indicates that the figure should be here. One possible configuration of lanes and streams does not have the feeling of 'rightness' which I associate with the rest of the zodiac. The eclipse of the figure may be due to a vast WW2 airfield which obliterated the old lanes and woodlands between Willingale and Norton, and early large-scale maps may yet reveal the missing giant. (Two medieval manors have also vanished from the area, which seems to be prone to such changes and disappearances - mercurial change is a traditional characteristic of the sign.)

1.4 LEO

The lion is about 4 miles long and occupies the northern part of the circle. It differs from the other figures in that only a small proportion of the outline is drawn by metalled roads; this makes it difficult to be sure of the details in places, but I am satisfied that the basic shape of the Lion is 'right'.

The main street of Fyfield, meaning 'five hides of land', forms a collar like a heraldic gorget for its neck, and the church of St. Nicholas lies on the lower jaw. The head extends to Witney Wood, where the airfield takes the blame again for blotting out the details of the snout.

One upraised front leg is drawn by a lane and stream near Miller's Green. The other is thrust outwards from Birds Green, drawn by tracks and paths, and is crossed by the River Roding north of Shellow Bridge. The line of the underside of the body between Birds Green and Butt Hatch, on the B184 road, is unclear, but from this 'gate' it is drawn by a green lane which coincides with the parish boundary as far as the aptly-named Blackcat Cottage. From here the single hind leg extends north-westwards to Matching Green, the hindquarters being drawn by a motor road running past St. Mary's church at Little Laver.

A combination of lanes and parish/field boundaries outline the back and an arching tail, the hollow of the back once marked by the now-diminished Nor Wood. From Norwood End a series of lanes draws the back of the neck as far as the main road at Fyfield.

Where the Roman road from London to Bury St. Edmunds crosses the rear of the lion there is a large farm called Envilles, which has two homestead moats rather than the usual one. The farm took its name from the family of Henry de Enefeld (1287) who came from Enfield in Middlesex. Coincidentally, an 'enfield' was a rare heraldic beast with the head of a maned fox, the forelegs of an eagle, the body and hindlegs of a greyhound, and the tail of a lion, which description could almost apply to the Leo figure. Fyfield contains another pictorial clue in a 450-year-old inn called the Black Lion.

1.5 VIRGO It was this figure that led to the discovery of the rest, and it still seems to me the most impressive. Four miles long, it is mostly drawn by metalled roads and tributaries of the Cripsey Brook. The head is at High Laver where All Saints church marks the throat; a stream forms the outline of the hair or hood (it may be either), flows down the middle of Watery Lane above the forehead and draws the profile of the face.

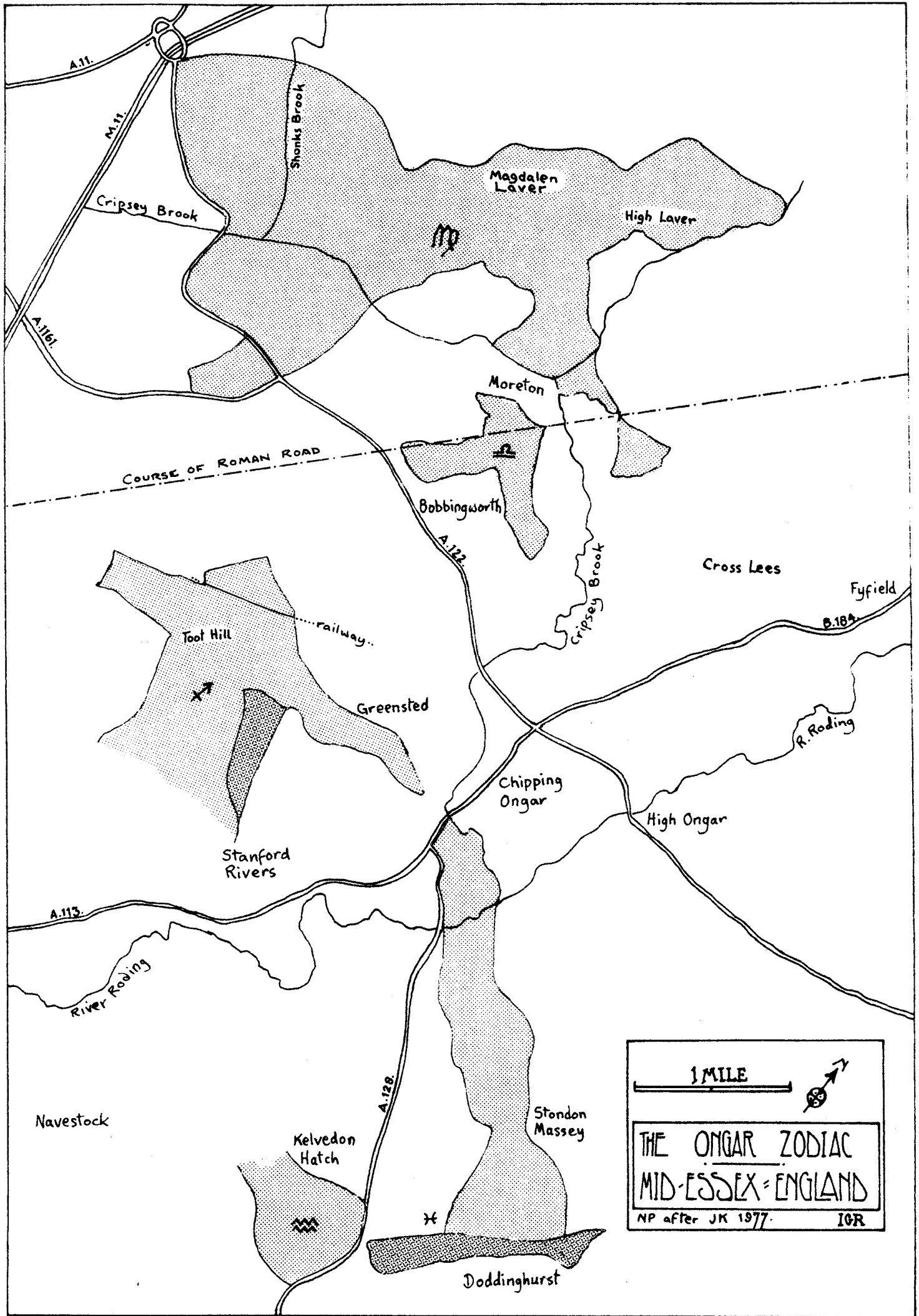
Streams also mark out the sleeve, while just north of Moreton lanes and paths outline a hand holding a triangular object, looking more like a fan or piece of cloth than the usual corn-dolly; waving a water-soaked cloth was once a magical way of making rain or raising storms, and this figure does look like a dancing witch. The motor road at Newhouse links a corner of the triangle to the lion's tail, while the course of the Roman road touches another corner and the edge of Virgo's hand (see under Roman Road).


The road from High Laver to North Weald outlines the front of the body and skirt as far as the crossroads at Tyler's Green. From here the Epping road draws the front of one leg, now mostly clad in a housing estate; the place-name Skips Corner occurs elsewhere in this part of Essex, but it seems well sited on the leg of this dancing figure.

The A122 marks the hem of the skirt, with a possible deviation by a lane across the Cripsey Brook at Delved Bridge. On the hem at North Weald Bassett lies St. Andrew's church where 36 bushels of grain used to be distributed to the poor of the parish on Ash Wednesday; this makes poetic sense when Virgo is seen as the corn goddess (Ceres). The Cripsey Brook indicates the line of the other leg, but this is not very clear on the map.

The M11 London-Cambridge motorway swings westwards to avoid cutting the figure, but doubtless the surveyors had quite prosaic reasons for laying out its course in this respectful manner.

Another minor road draws the rest of the figure, from the corner of the skirt to the back of the neck, passing the church of St. Mary Magdalen on Virgo's back. Two roads crossing the figure seem to form a collar and a belt or sash. On the skirt are a house and brook called Shonks, spelt Schancks in the time of Elizabeth I. The name also occurs at Shonks Mill and Bridge or Capricorn, where Stephen Schonk was a miller in 1403. The family seems to have spread over a large part of Essex, and the name seems originally to have been a nickname meaning something like 'longlegs'. On the Nuthampstead Virgo there is a Shonk's Moat, the site of the giant legend of Piers Shonkes, who clearly deserved the nickname. It is curious that his namesakes should have settled on the Virgo figure of another Zodiac.



1 MILE 

THE ONGAR ZODIAC
MID-ESSEX - ENGLAND

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To the north of the figure is a place variously called Threshers Bush or Thrushes Bush. A letter in an old copy of Essex Countryside magazine stated that this was a thorn bush protected by a fence, from which I infer that the tree is (or was) a 'holy thorn' of the type found at Glastonbury. At any rate, it must have meant something to the local people to deserve protection and to give its name to the hamlet.

1.6 THE DOVE

As elsewhere, the Scales of Libra are replaced by a Dove, flying between the Archer and the Virgin. The beak is at the bridge over the Cripsey Brook at Moreton, the tail at Lower Bobbingworth Green. One wing stretches eastwards, bounded by a minor road and a small brook or ditch, but the other, at Padlers or Peddlars End, is mostly missing. Most of the twisting lanes around Bobbingworth (also called Bovinger) are used to outline and mark off sections of this figure. The course of the Roman road runs along the axis of its body.

1.7 SCORPIO

Like Gemini, the Scorpion is presently missing but not without trace. At the headwaters of the stream that flows through Stanford Rivers is the place named Nickerlands, derived from OE nikur, meaning 'water-sprite'; perhaps this was the Saxon equivalent of the Celtic 'peiste' or water monster. From here two roads and a sinuous parish boundary run southwards towards the River Roding, cutting across the area where the Archer's horse should be. It seems likely that this 'corridor' contains either the scorpion's tail or some other serpentine figure.

On the higher ground to the north-west, the course of the Roman road cuts through a well-wooded area which looks like good hunting ground for the Scorpion's claws. However it will probably take aerial photographs to show where the true outlines of the figure lie.

1.8 HERCULES/SAGITTARIUS

This figure, lying to the west of Chipping Ongar, seems to have a bow and arrow formed by the main road (Ongar High St.) and an avenue of trees between Greensted Hall and Ongar Castle; the significance of this arrow is discussed in the second section.

The Archer's outstretched arm is drawn by the motor road past Greensted and a path that follows the parish boundary. Most of the body and a quiver are marked by the lanes between Greensted, Stanford Rivers and Toot Hill. There is a shoulder at Toot Hill but it is unclear whether the other arm is flung out toward the west, partly obscured by woodland, or is meant to be folded across the body in the act of drawing the bow.

The London Transport Central Line now slices across the Archer's head, but it is possible to make out a capped helmet, the outline coinciding again with a parish boundary. Lanes at Greensted Green form a beard and the fields immediately to the north suggest other details of the face, but a 19th century map is needed to verify the original outline.

On the horse's back is Knoghtsland Wood, another place name which seems to retain a memory of the zodiac. The horse's body must lie around Stapleford Tawney and Theydon Mount, and there are indications of part of the outline and the legs, but the 'corridor' mentioned under Scorpio obscures the figure. There is no sign of a head, which suggests that the figure is a true centaur and not a combined horse and rider.

Pensons, formerly Pinions, Lane leads from the Archer's head to Ackingford Bridge north of Greensted. The bridge was originally ealh-ing-ford, the first element meaning 'temple', and the reference may be to the sacred grove which existed on the site of Greensted church. In the 16th century, the name of the bridge had become Hawkynford; though it is poor etymology, it is tempting to see a connexion between 'Hawk-', 'Pinions', and the nearby figure of the Dove - though this may stretch credibility.

South of the Archer's eastern arm is a curious arrangement of narrow belts of woodland, one of them called Kettlebury Spring. Their purpose may be only to mark the boundary between the parishes of Greensted, Stanford Rivers and High Ongar (which extends around the south side of Chipping Ongar). However, if the terrestrial zodiac corresponds to the celestial, this area would mark landfall of the constellation Cygnus; and the swan was the badge

of the de Mandevilles (who owned much land hereabouts) and later Earls of Essex, the de Bohuns. There is not enough evidence to establish the existence of a Swan figure, but the question of the purpose of the tree-belts remains.

1.9 CAPRICORN The A113 London-Ongar road forms the back of this figure from the tail at Passingford Bridge to the head and a possible horn at Little End. Like the Lion and the Archer, the Goat/Unicorn has been defaced, this time by a former park at Navestock Hall. Nevertheless, some of the woods surrounding the estate still give a suggestion of the head, and Lady's Pond is placed where the animal's mouth and 'beard' should be (see under Aquarius).

It is possible to make out all four of the figure's legs, drawn by roads and paths. The forelegs encompass the village of Navestock, set around the Heath, and nearby Yewtree Farm seems appropriately named on the sign that includes sleep and death among its attributes. Curtismill Green forms the bulk of one of the hindlegs; at one time this was the furthest extent of the great Forest of Waltham, now Epping and Mainault Forests, so that the hart is seen emerging from the woods leaving only a 'haunch of venison' as the foresters' share. The River Roding flows down the length of the figure, coming to Shonk's Mill Bridge where the forelegs join the body, reinforcing the connexion between water and this oddly-named family. Navestock church, south of the figure's head is dedicated to St. Thomas the Apostle who in some places was said to ride a chariot to the churchyard at midnight on the Winter Solstice to bless the dead. Like St. Nicholas, St. Thomas took over the chthonic aspects of Woden, functions which belong in astrology to Capricorn.

1.10 AQUARIUS The Aquarian figure at Glastonbury is an impressive Phoenix and other zodiacs, apart from Pumpsaint, have similar figures. Here, however, Aquarius is quite clearly a jug or pitcher. The base is formed by the Brentwood-Ongar road at Kelvedon Hatch, the sides and lip by minor roads around Dudbrook and Beacon Hill.

Dudbrook is now the name of a large house but originally it must have meant the stream that flows from a spring within the figure, westwards to Lady's Pond in Navestock Park (enabling Capricorn to 'drink' from the Aquarian life-giving waters). 'Dud' seems to be identical with the first element in the neighbouring Doddinghurst, and an explanation of the meaning can be found in Chapter XI of Alfred Watkins' The Old Straight Track. The brook is now called the Wetstaff, apparently a corruption of Wardstaff (see heading in second section).

The lip of the jug lies at the western end of a ridge running through the Aquarius and Pisces sectors. Here are Beacon Hill and Drakes Hill, the latter indicating a dragon connexion which does not seem to have been recorded in the folklore of the area. The clear and extensive views to the north and west make this a very suitable site for a beacon, and it seems likely that the next point in the chain was Toot Hill above Stanford Rivers. However, I have not yet found any good alignments sighted on Beacon Hill, so the name may refer to a later signalling system. The Eagle Inn, on the base of the jug, is the only reminder that Aquarius may be represented by a phoenix or eagle.

1.11 PISCES There are two fish placed back-to-back and 'swimming' in opposite directions - an arrangement that is closer to modern astrological symbolism than to the pattern of other zodiacs. A thin, rather eel-like, fish is drawn by two nearly parallel lanes running along the top of the ridge above Doddinghurst, its head touching the base of the Aquarian jug. The second fish is broader and extends from the tail at Doddinghurst Common to the head at aptly-named Hookend. All Saints' church and the core of Doddinghurst village lie around the gills. Three lanes cross each of the figures, marking off the heads, tails and mid-sections.

The Whale may be considered as part of Pisces or as representing the constellation Cetus. The broad tail is contiguous with the back of the 'eel' fish and also meets the head of Aries, the corners of both lying at Tip's Cross; as stated earlier, the place where the 'tips' of Pisces and Aries 'cross' must indicate the Spring Equinox.

The underside of the Whale is drawn by a lane from Tip's Cross to High Ongar, passing the church of SS. Peter and Paul at Stondon Massey on the belly. The lane meets the River Roding by Hallsford Bridge, from where the river and the Cripsey Brook outline the Whale's head (unless the jaws extend to encompass the town of Chipping Ongar).

The back of the Whale is drawn by a lane and a stream as far as Langford Bridge on the Roding, from where the Brentwood-Ongar road completes the head. At Cooper's Hill this road is also part of the Archer's bow, running through Marden Ash which was originally a hamlet of High Ongar. Marden means 'boundary valley' and is taken to indicate a pre-Norman division between the two Ongars. While this may well be the correct explanation, it is notable that the place is also the 'boundary' between the Archer and the Whale, between mythological light and dark (for this symbolism, see K.E. Maltwood's Temple of the Stars).

1.12 THE CENTRE The relationship of three points within the centre of the zodiac, Ongar Castle, Four Wants crossroads, and Greensted church, is discussed under two headings in the second section (As Above, So Below and Relationship of Sites). The three points, together with certain bridges, road junctions and turning points on parish boundaries, can all be linked by a vesica piscis consisting of one-mile radius circles with centres at the crossroads and the church. Such patterns, however, are largely subjective until some other criterion can be found to check their validity.

Mary Ceine has made the point that the Lion and Unicorn, supporters of the Royal Arms, are heraldic representations of Leo and Capricorn, opposing signs in these zodiacs. The 'Crown' and 'King' names, mentioned under Aries, on one of the roads leading into the centre of the zodiac, may indicate that the crown for which the two creatures 'fight' in the old rhyme is none other than the zodiacal pole. Until the exact centre of this zodiac can be found, it seems best to take the moated mound of the Castle as the focal point, as it was certainly the political centre of the area for centuries.

1.13 THE WATCHDOG The Somerset zodiac has an extra figure outside the circle, the Girt Dog of Langport which plays a Cerberus role in guarding the south-western approach to the 'temple'. A similar figure around Chertsey stands watch south-west of the Kingston zodiac. At Holderness, the dog is beyond the Aquarius sector in the south-east. Details of the Ardeley Hound outside the Nuthampstead Zodiac are to be published shortly (Journal of Geomancy Vol.2, No.2); see map for outline and position.

So far, no stray hound has turned up around Ongar. If there is such a figure, it may lie around Roxwell and Writtle to the north-east, where the main road and the streams suggest a vaguely canine shape. This would be in accord with the inverse relationship between the Somerset and Ongar figures.

1.14 GATES There is both logic and intuitive appeal in the idea that terrestrial zodiacs, as giant temples, should be guarded by gates on the main water and land routes that cross their boundaries. A number of place names around Ongar are so positioned as to suggest such gateways.

The southern and western edges of the zodiac coincide with the former boundary of Waltham Forest and here are found a number of 'hatches' or forest-gates. Kelvedon Hatch itself is named after one such, and on the same Brentwood-Ongar road are Fox Hatch and Pilgrim's Hatch (see Pilgrims' Way). Clearly there was at least one gate on this road where it crossed the ridge between Brentwood and the Roding Valley.

Mapletree Lane in Fryerning, just east of the Aries figure, was formerly Mapelereshach, that is 'the forest-gate marked by a maple tree'. South of Capricorn, in the parish of Stapleford Abbots, is Nuper's Hatch, formerly Newport Hatch. On the opposite side of the zodiac is Butt Hatch, which lies on the Roding valley road where it crosses the Leo figure; the name in this case is unlikely to record the site of a forest-gate as it is some miles from the nearest point on the old boundary, but it is an obvious place for a zodiac-gate.

Rood Street, on the boundary between the parishes of North Weald Bassett and Theydon Garnon, was formerly Rodegate. The first element means

'cross' or 'gallows' and the second refers to the position on the forest boundary. It is in this area that the Scorpio figure should lie, and the association of this 'death sign' with a place of execution seems appropriate.

Near Nuper's Hatch is Passingford Bridge, where the Roding 'passes' out of the circle. The bridge is probably on the site of the stapolford which gave its name to the villages on either bank. A 'stapol' was a pillar or post, and survives in the names of two Essex Hundreds, Barstable and Thurstable; the assumption is that a pillar marked the site of the moot-place, and there is evidence to suggest that such pillars were carved with aspects of the gods, notably Thunor or Thor; they must have looked something like the 'totem poles' of North America. Why the ford through the Roding at this point should have been similarly marked is unknown, but it may be relevant that the site lies on the tail of Capricorn 'the gate of the gods'.

Of these, only Passingford is a 'gate by water', and only Butt Hatch of the 'gates by land' has no obvious connexion with the old forest limits. Both are on the main route along the Roding valley and provide another instance of the 'Lion and Unicorn' polarity. I have found no gate on the Chelmsford Road (Taurus), the only main route through the zodiac without an appropriate place name. Tilegate Green in High Laver (Virgo) may lie on an old road from Ongar to Harlow, but sections of this are now forgotten green lanes and the modern main road runs further south.

The only 'gate' name that I can find inside the circle is Colliers Hatch, in the Scorpio sector, which seems to have been a gate on the Roman road. All the other sites are near the perimeter of the zodiac, some on the edge of a figure. This distribution is another of those 'coincidences' that seem to owe more to planning than to chance.

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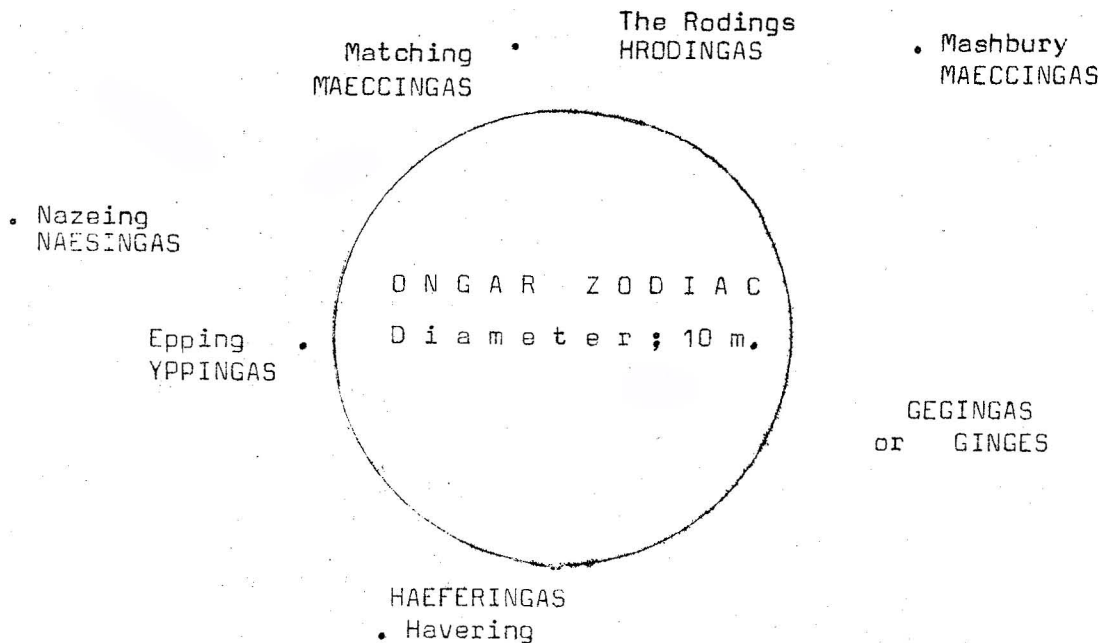
2.1 EARLY SAXON SETTLEMENTS

Dating of zodiacs is a tricky

business as there is little 'hard' evidence concerning settlement in the era we call 'B.C.'; inevitably this leaves much room for speculation about the people (or peoples) responsible for the construction or the refinement of the structures. Concerning Ongar, I have not found that such speculation produces any satisfying answers; however, there is some 'soft' evidence to suggest that the existence of the zodiac was recognized during the long period of Saxon settlement between the 4th and 7th centuries.

According to Dr P.H.Reaney, author of the indispensable Place Names of Essex volume published by the English Place Name Society, the earliest Saxon settlement areas can be recognized by the common -ingas ('people') element, surviving in scores of names ending in -ing. The Ongar area is ringed around by such names, three of them occurring over unusually wide regions. In the north are eight (formerly nine) villages called Roding or Roothing, derived from OE Hrodingas. To the south-east is a group of six places (Margaretting, Fryerning, Ingatestone, Buttsbury, Mountnessing, Ingrave) all known in Norman times as Ginges, from an earlier OE Gegingas ('people of the region'). In the south is Havering-atte-Bower, a royal residence which was the centre of the Royal Liberty of Havering created in 1465; the Liberty was originally the settlement area of the Hæsfaringas. In addition to these, Matching and Mashbury on either side of the Rodings were settlements of the Maecingas; Epping to the west, derives from OE Yppingas ('upland people') and Nazeing from OE Naesingas ('people of the headland'). These places form an almost complete hedge around the zodiac circle.

Within the circle there are three names involving compounded -ing, but none with the earlier simple -ing ending. If you like 'reasonable' explanations, the notion that the zodiac was heavily afforested and unattractive to the first wave of settlers may seem the obvious answer. The alternative I propose is that the native Belgic people (even Essex was Celtic once) were reluctant to hand over tenancy of this particular area to the newcomers, at least until they had ascertained that the Saxons had a respect for the environment equal to their own. In time, of course, the Saxons gained control of the entire county as they spread across south-eastern Britain, and most (though not all) surviving place names seem to have Saxon origin.



2.2 PLACE NAMES

There are some two dozen villages/parishes in the zodiac circle, for all of which Dr Reaney identified a Saxon origin (as far as the present names are concerned). Many of these interpretations are quite straightforward, but some need to be questioned. A general query applies to place names in any part of the country: to what extent does an incoming people take existing names and 'translate' them into similar-sounding names that make sense in their own language? To take an example that is known to have occurred: Celtic -dun ('fort') may become Saxon -duna, later -don ('hill') without any serious loss of meaning. (Another example is the modern 'cold', a common place name element that puzzled Alfred Watkins among others; most commentators seem to agree that it has a Celtic origin, though they are by no means agreed on what it was).

A favourite loophole of the etymologists when seeking an interpretation of a place name is to assume that an unsolved syllable in a compound is derived from a personal name. There are three examples in the Ongar zodiac, these three being the three -ing compounds already mentioned: Bobbingworth, Doddingtonhurst, and Willingale. Dr Reaney traced them back to three Saxon worthies named Bubba, Dudda and Willa (an early vaudeville trio?). The reasoning seems sound: -ing, -worth, -hurst and -ale (health) are all very common elements in Essex; if these are Saxon, the first elements must be Saxon also. This is neat, but it leaves out a number of alternatives, the likeliest of which is the assimilation of an earlier name (i.e. Celtic) in a compound which would have a meaning for the new settlers. For Bubba and Willa I can offer no explanation yet; Dudda, however, with its modern form Dodd-, seems to be none other than the 'ley hunters' old friend, the dodman (see pp. 79-81 of The Old Straight Track).

In the north of the circle are three villages called Laver, said to mean 'ford', derived from OE laqu-faer. Now, laqu means water (lake, lagoon) but it has only been recorded in Old English poetry, referring either to water as an element or to the ocean, and is not found anywhere else in place names. Neither the fords through the Cripsey Brook nor that at Watery Lane seem to qualify for such a poetic appellation; all other fords in the area were named 'ford' from the earliest Saxon times. An intrusive 'n' in some of the early forms of Laver suggests that the first element may have originally been lan, a common Celtic word meaning either simply 'place' or 'sacred place', often with reference to a church. That still leaves -gefara(e), or an equivalent, to be identified (the 'g' later dropped out as did the 'n'); or there may be a completely different answer.

The neighbouring village to Doddingtonhurst, in the south of the zodiac, is Kelvedon Hatch, a place name that gave Dr Reaney a difficult task as there is also a Kelvedon in Essex, a name with a very different ancestry. Hatch is straightforward, a late addition meaning 'forest-gate', and -don is likely to be 'hill' as the place stands on some of the highest ground in the

area. The earliest recorded spellings of the first element are Kylewen and Kelleuen, for which the currently accepted origin is OE cylu, another rare poetic word meaning 'spotted' or 'speckled'. This looks like clutching at etymological straws in a desperate attempt to keep everything 100% Saxon. Equally likely, to my mind, is a derivation from the common Celtic word for 'grove', celli or Kelly - not out of place in old forest land. Perhaps there was also a middle element - wen or - wyn ('white, fair'), which was lost when the name became telescoped.

Although there are other instances in this area of Essex of place names whose accepted meanings seem unsatisfactory, this is not the place to go further into the question of re-interpretation. The examples given above should show that there is considerable room for doubt, and (of course) equal room for speculation, not all of it valuable. A balance of open-mindedness and scepticism, if that is possible, seems the best approach to this kind of study.

2.3 WATER

Zodiac researchers have noted the importance of water, whether natural streams or man-made structures (ditches, moats, wells), in connection with the delineation of zodiac figures and the characteristics of zodiac sectors. There is something attractive about the theory that one key to the function of zodiacs, as a class of ancient structures, lies in the water flowing through and under them. One of the most interesting developments in the earth mysteries field at the moment centres around the question of 'energies' in the earth - fields and currents which may be manipulated to the benefit of the land and its inhabitants (without resort to the wasteful and sometimes dangerous practices which are the mainstay of the nation's present energy policy). Although research is still in its early stages, it already seems clear that some of these energies are directly related to flowing water, and more particularly to underground streams (see the recent work of dowsing Tom Graves). Without embarking on a thorough and lengthy dowsing survey of a zodiac area, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the effects of underground water in the zodiac, but a good map supplies much useful information about the surface water-system.

One of the most obvious characteristics of the Ongar zodiac is that it lies almost entirely in the basin of the River Roding and its tributaries. A low ridge across the south-eastern corner provides a watershed, the streams on the far side being part of the system of the River Wid or Can. The Roding (named after the Roding villages rather than the other way round) enters the circle in the north, crosses the Leo figure on its way to the centre, then crosses the Whale and flows down the length of Capricorn, leaving the circle at Passingford Bridge. Dividing the circle fairly neatly in two, the river thus joins the old heraldic supporters, Lion and Unicorn, much of its course being contained in those figures. Following a suggestion in Philip Heleton's account of the Holderness zodiac, it is possible to imagine a flow of energy coinciding with this current of water; for every figure in the zodiac there is at least one stream, either rising within the effigy or crossing it, that joins the Roding before it leaves the circle, so adding the particular quality of that figure to the combined current. One striking example is the Wetstaff (or Dudbrook) mentioned under Capricorn and Aquarius in the first section. From the zodiac, the river flows through the eastern suburbs of London and empties into the Thames at Barking. It may be relevant that Barking Abbey, an early foundation with royal connections, was sited on the river bank, while Glastonbury Abbey was sited where the River Brue flows out of the Somerset zodiac. In the same way, Westminster Abbey is 'downstream' of the Kingston zodiac and Cambridge University 'downstream' of Nuthampstead - the link is intuitive, not 'logical'.

This part of Essex has a relatively high concentration of homestead moats, another puzzle for the archaeologists; no date is ascribed to most of them, and guesses about their function range from site drainage to defence, from imitation of baronial castles to ornament. To these theories should be added a reminder that water in folklore acts as a barrier to witches and powers of evil. The distribution of moats throughout the zodiac is not even; of the thirteen sited within the boundaries of figures, there is one each on Aries, Aquarius and Capricorn, two on Pisces, three on Leo and five on Virgo.

There are a further twelve situated in the Leo/Virgo region and a cluster of five in the area where Gemini should be found. On the other hand, the Taurus and Scorpio/Sagittarius sectors have only one moat each. Topography and geology might be expected to have some bearing on this, but the map of the area shows no obvious correlation with that of moat distribution. Social factors, such as imitation of neighbours, lie so deeply buried in the past that it is difficult to state what effect they may have had. There is presumably some good reason for the marked cluster of moats on the 'Summer side' of the zodiac and the lesser group on the 'Winter side'; the pattern is apparently not based on alignments, though these are common in the south-east of the county; it must remain a puzzle for now.

The distribution of wells and springs also shows a distinct unevenness, and again this should be determined to some extent by rock and soil, as well as by settlement. That said, however, it is remarkable that wells and springs occur within the boundaries of only four figures and these are consecutive: Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces and Aries. The first three of these are shown in pictorial zodiacs to have water connections; Cancer, the other watery sign, does not seem to be included in terrestrial zodiacs. At Ongar, it is the signs of the wet Winter and early Spring months that contain (and are surrounded by) man-made wells and presumably-natural springs. In contrast, Taurus and Leo are quite 'dry' and the sectors of the Dove, Scorpion and Archer almost equally so. If there is an explanation for this pattern in terms of the zodiac, it is odd that the submarine Whale lies in the 'driest' area. I think that the answer lies in the calendar, for there is no indication that moats, wells, or springs were employed in the actual drawing of the zodiac figures. However, this is another part of the study that requires a great deal of further work.

2.4 EARTH AND STONE

It is thought that the southern limit of glaciation during the last Ice Age lay across central Essex in a line that coincides with the low hills in the southern part of the Ongar zodiac. The topsoil of most of the zodiac area is therefore Boulder Clay, broken in places by gravels, and the nature of this soil affects the zodiac in two ways. Firstly, dotted around the area are small boulders, most of which seem to be sandstone, all of which are assumed to be erratics deposited by the retreating ice; whatever their origin, it is certain that some of them have been put in their present position by human beings. The second consequence of glaciation is that the fertile soil had been under the plough for centuries - this is good cornland - and an unguessable number of former structures such as mounds and markstones have been ploughed out or broken up. Where earthworks have survived, it is either because they lie in some out-of-the-way place such as a wood, or because they were valued by the local inhabitants. Boulders used as markstones have survived on the verges of roads and in churchyards.

The best-preserved earthwork in the zodiac is Ongar Castle, a good example of Norman motte-and-bailey work though now partly obliterated by the town. The moated mound is impressive (and inaccessible), being still completely surrounded by its deep ditch. The supposition that the Normans used an existing mound as the basis of their defences seems highly plausible; apart from any archaeological consideration, the Hundred Moot was probably held there in Saxon times (if it was not at Toot Hill). The mound is the obvious 'geomantic centre' of the neighbourhood, and figures in a series of orientations between nearby sacred sites (see separate heading). I understand that the Institute of Geomantic Research has also found a 'geomantic network' of measurements incorporating the Castle, though I don't know the details.

Two smaller moated mounds exist, one at Magdalen Laver on the Virgo figure and the other at a farm called Slades between Capricorn and Aquarius. I have found no suggestions as to what their functions were, though the second is adjacent to some fishponds and an old homestead moat and was clearly part of a 'domestic' structure at some time.

There were two mounds at Shelley, north of Ongar. One was on the common and was formerly marked on OS maps as a 'Tumulus'.

The other was in the grounds of Shelley Hall, described by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments as having the appearance of a bowl barrow and being gradually obliterated by the garden. Why the only two such mounds noted for the area should be found only a third of a mile apart remains a puzzle.

Between Capricorn and Aquarius, near Slades (see above) lies Fortification Wood which contains a rectangular bank-and-ditch 'camp', measuring about 350 ft by 240 ft; its age and purpose are not known.

Somewhere to the south of Fortification Wood was something very peculiar. The well-known 18th century antiquary William Stukeley, following his identification of Avebury as a Druidic serpent-temple, came to Navestock Common to find its counterpart. A drawing he made of this 'Alate Temple' was reproduced in the Essex Naturalist together with an account of a trip by members of the Essex Field Club to discover the remains of the earthwork. Although it had been damaged by digging (for gravel, I think), they identified it as a motte with a double Bailey and a small exterior mound; naturally, they gave no credence to Stukeley's temple theory. More recently, Dr. E.A. Rudge turned his energies to sorting out the puzzle and found some very dilapidated mounds in a small wood called Mores Plantation, which he was satisfied were the remains of the 'temple'. It is now too late to determine the original nature and function of this earthwork. It lies near the southern perimeter of the zodiac circle, in the vicinity of a place called Princegate (which is, perhaps, another gate to the zodiac); the nearest figure is Aquarius.

Limited fieldwork has so far discovered three boulders within the zodiac set in place artificially, and the 'law of Inherent Probability' suggests that there must be more to be found. The three are all of pink/grey sandstone and all in the Gemini-Leo sector. One is by the side of the road outside an old farm called Dukes in Willingale; another at the junction of the two main streets in Willingale; the third set into the ground by the buttress at the SW corner of Fyfield church, on the jaw of the Lion. It will take further work to determine whether any of these stones lie on alignments.

To the south-east of the zodiac, the town of Ingatestone apparently takes its name from three boulders (said to be fragments of one big stone) of the same pink/grey rock. One is by the south door of the church, the other two on either side of the turning that leads to Fryerning, and hence towards the zodiac. The local explanation I heard was that the latter two mark the site of a former toll-gate; however the etymology 'in-gate-stone' is false and presumably an example of later rationalisation. At the top of Fryerning Lane is an inn called the Woolpack which, by analogy with examples elsewhere, would seem to indicate that there was a wool-route passing through here (with a gate where it met the main London-Colchester road at Ingatestone). If this is so, it might have entered the zodiac very appropriately on the sign of Aries on its way to (or from) Blackmore and Ongar. This is only speculation born of an intuitive link between the stones, a chance inn-sign, and their position relative to the zodiac - but there may be something in it.

Within 10 miles (2 radii) of the centre of the zodiac are at least five and possibly seven prehistoric camps. Wallbury Camp (Little Hallingbury) and Pleshey Castle are both 10 miles from Ongar Castle, centre to centre. Epping Forest contains Ambersbury Banks (about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles) and Loughton Camp (9 miles). The remains of a 'Fort' in South Weald Park lie just outside the circle at about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Ongar. All these seem to have been used, if not built, by Belgic (Iron Age) people and the Epping Forest camps are associated locally with the Icenian uprising. The other two sites are settlements occupied in Roman times which may have had a Brythonic origin: Moulsham (Chelmsford) was probably Caesaromagus, a station on the Roman Road to Colchester; Blunts Walls, Norsey Wood and Bell Hill, all in Billericay (formerly part of Great Burstead) have turned up the kind of archaeological detritus which indicates continuous occupation from early times, as well as earth fortifications. 'Practical' reasons for the siting of these camps can be easily deduced - they are easily defensible, on rising ground for the best visibility, and command

vital roads and waterways - but other forts have been shown to be sited in accordance with 'geomantic' principles. I suspect that some of the places named are related to the Ongar zodiac by the same principles.

2.5 CHURCH DEDICATIONS-

That early churches were dedicated in the main to the saints of the Christian pantheon whose attributes most closely approached those of their pagan predecessors is well known. For the 400 or so old parish churches in Essex, the 'top ten' dedications show the same pattern as most of the rest of the country (with exceptions such as Cornwall). These are :

- St. Mary the Virgin (over $\frac{1}{4}$ of all dedications - the popular 'Great Mother')
- All Saints (the day of the Celtic fire feast Sam'hain).
- St. Peter (often combined with St. Paul)
- St. Andrew (patron saint of the Celtic missionaries)
- St. Nicholas (the spirit of Christmas and a guise of Woden)
- St. Margaret (who was similarly connected with dragons)
- St. Laurence (an early martyr and patron of cutlers)
- Holy Trinity (recalling the triple aspects of many former deities)
- St. John the Baptist equally with St. Mary Magdalen

This is not the place to enter into discussion of the displacement of the old mythology by the new, though it is a fascinating subject, but I would like to make one observation that may have some relevance to terrestrial zodiacs and to earth mysteries in general. A 'frequency table' of the dates of saints' feast days should theoretically show a regular distribution throughout the year; in fact, the saints chosen for church dedications are honoured in two calendrical periods: June-September and November-December. Very few of the popular medieval saints have feast days falling in October or in the first five months of the year (St George, an exception, rose in favour as late as the 12th century).

As an illustration, here are the dedication in the old churches in the Ongar zodiac area:

St. Botolph	(1)	June 17	St. Mary	(4)	Aug. 15
St. Peter	(3)	June 29	St. Michael	(1)	Sep. 29
St. Margaret	(1)	July 20	All Saints	(3)	Nov. 1
St. Mary Magdalen	(1)	July 22	St. Martin	(1)	Nov. 11
St. Christopher	(1)	July 25	St. Andrew	(3)	Nov. 30
St. Germain	(1)	July 31	St. Nicholas	(2)	Dec. 6
St. Laurence	(1)	Aug. 10	St. Thomas	(1)	Dec. 21

The reasons for this clustering seem to lie in a pre-Christian calendar based on the pastoral or agricultural year, and certain of the dates are stations of the year in the Celtic and pagan Saxon calendars; but no full explanation can be offered here.

St. Martin's Day was (and in some places still is) a rent-day and one of the year's high festivals, being a Christianization of the Saxon 'Winter's Day', dedicated to Frey ('lord') for peace and plenty. St. Martin's church at Chipping Ongar, the centre of the zodiac, is therefore a latter-day equivalent of a temple of Frey, exercising a stabilising influence on the surrounding countryside.

Both St. Nicholas and St. Thomas the Apostle, whose feast-day falls on the Winter Solstice, are connected in their legendary acts with Woden and the Wild Hunt. That St. Thomas's church at Navestock lies near the head of Capricorn, the month beginning at the Solstice, seems appropriate as the goat was the essential animal-disguise of the participants in the Hunt.

St. Mary Magdalen's church at Magdalen Laver is on the back of Virgo. Two of the four churches in the area dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin are at Little Laver and Moreton, the former near the head and the latter near the hand of Virgo. This kind of clustering suggests planning rather than 'coincidence', although strange coincidences do occur everywhere in connection with these terrestrial zodiacs.

Although I have not yet made out a satisfactory figure for Gemini/Orion, the presence at Willingale of a church dedicated to St. Christopher seems a hopeful clue.

The Christ-carrying giant would be a most suitable guardian for a figure similar to that at Compton Dundon in the Somerset zodiac, the hidden numen of which has been revealed on aerial photographs by Mary Caine. Willingale is one of a small number of villages possessing two churches in a single churchyard (the other church is dedicated to St. Andrew and All Saints), and this seems to be another pointer to the presence here of the Twins.

The popularity of St. Andrew is a little puzzling, but it has been explained by some commentators as an extension of his patronage of Scotland; early dedications to this saint may record the foundations of Celtic missionaries who set out from centres like Iona to convert the Anglo-Saxons in the south. The feast-day falls at the end of November, the Saxon Blodmonath or month of sacrifice, and St. Andrew's ritual death on the saltire cross in the dark and cold of winter may well have fitted in neatly with Saxon calendar customs. His dedications in the Ongar area are at Willingale, North Weald (Virgo) and Greensted, but this last should really be a shrine of St. Edmund the Martyr (see separate heading). Andrew has been linked with Indra, the dragon-slayer and rain-bringer of Hindu mythology, and the name seems to have had some significance in mediaeval witchcraft.

St. Germain, at Bobbingworth, is another name for St. Germanus, a 5th century missionary responsible for the British 'Alleluia Victory' (anticipating the historical role of King Arthur). Local rumour has it that he actually founded the church here during a journey to St. Albans, but naturally this cannot be proved.

St. Margaret emerged from the belly of a dragon ('Satan') and went on to win the hearts of mediaeval Christendom. She is represented here at Stanford Rivers, on the effigy of Sagittarius/Hercules, a multi-purpose figure who certainly does battle with serpents and dragons. It is interesting that her festival and those of St. Mary Magdalen and St. Christopher all fall within a week, and that their churches in the zodiac are connected with the three anthropomorphic signs, the pre-Christian Trinity. The three churches of St. Andrew are similarly distributed.

There are two examples of 'polarity' in connection with church dedications here. The two churches of St. Nicholas, at Fyfield and Kelvedon Hatch, are in the Leo and Aquarius sectors respectively, on opposite sides of the zodiac. Two of the All Saints churches, High Laver and Doddinghurst, are on the Virgo and Pisces figures respectively, again diametrically opposite; (the third All Saints church is at Norton Mandeville on the Bull's nose).

Lack of evidence concerning the dating of dedications for most churches, and the responsibility for choosing the dedication, makes it difficult to assess the relevance of this study to terrestrial zodiacs. In addition, as stated in the introduction to this section, most of the dedications can be found all over the country whereas zodiacs (as far as I know) cannot. Despite this, coincidences gradually combine to add circumstantial evidence for the theory that this zodiac, with its counterparts elsewhere, was a living reality for those dwelling in the area well into the historical period. It is to be expected that the churches, spiritual centres of these people's lives, should be incorporated into the larger pattern of the zodiac.

NOTE: There are three sites of former Augustinian priories in the area: Blackmore, inside the zodiac, has retained the church of St. Laurence; Latton and Thoby, on opposite sides of the circle, were dedicated to St. John the Baptist (Midsummer Day) and SS. Mary and Leonard respectively. All three were apparently part of the '31 system' of sites (see separate heading).

2.6 THE LEGEND OF ST. EDMUND

At Bures St. Mary, Suffolk, on Christmas Day, 855 AD, Edmund was crowned king of the East Angles, being then 15 years old. In the winter of 869-870, a Danish raiding army left the neighbouring kingdom of Mercia and camped at Thetford in Norfolk in preparation for an East Anglian campaign. Edmund met them in battle and lost; the condition of peace was his agreement to turn to the pagan religion of the conquerors. On his refusal, Edmund was executed either by arrow-shot or by beheading following an ineffective attempt to shoot him; (a fairly common attribute of early martyrs was the ability to turn aside fatal arrows).

A tree at Hoxne in Suffolk, long claimed as the site of the martyrdom, was felled in 1840 and a Danish arrow-head was found embedded in it. When his followers collected the corpse, the head was missing but a voice called 'Here!' led them to a wood, where they found a grey wood guarding the head. In 1010 St. Edmund's relics were removed to Westminster (to safeguard them from marauding Danes) but 3 years later they were taken north again to Bury St. Edmunds and interred; (there is a tradition that they made another journey south after this).

On its travels the corpse rested at Greensted in Essex, a site lying on the arm of Hercules/Sagittarius figure of the Ongar zodiac. The place has the only surviving Saxon wooden church in England, and tests have dated the oldest of the oak timbers of the nave to c.850. The first church may have been built as early as c.650, and before this the site was apparently a Celtic 'nemeton' or sacred grove, as indicated by the name Greensted. The fact that it was an established sacred site in Edmund's time has led some writers to guess that he actually came here to worship, which is not impossible. In the church is a stained-glass window showing the king bound to a tree and being shot at by two archers; there is also a carved wooden spandrel showing a wolf standing guard over a crowned head. The church is dedicated to St. Andrew, perhaps indicating a Celtic foundation, but retains a strong memory of the king who was the first patron saint of England, before the Crusaders brought back the cult of St. George.

Leading from Greensted Hall, adjacent to the church, to Chipping Ongar and aligned on the old castle mound is a dead-straight avenue of trees, shown on an accurate map of 1777 and therefore not recent. This avenue is in exactly the right position to form an arrow for the zodiac Archer, and it may give a clue to the geomantic layout of some of the sites within the zodiac area (see separate heading). St. Edmund's symbol is an arrow, an apt 'coincidence' that identifies his mythological role in the zodiac-story.

November 20th and 30th are the respective feast-days of S.S. Edmund + Andrew, both falling in the old Saxon month of winter-sacrifice called blodmonath. Edmund was made king at Christmas, when the days begin to lengthen after the solstice, and reigned for twice-seven years, being in the prime of his life when he was murdered. Whether he was shot or beheaded, it is certain that royal blood was shed on the ground. Later he was canonised and invoked against disease (caused by invisible arrows according to medieval lore), becoming a miraculous healer. Those familiar with the work of Dr. Margaret Murray and Robert Graves will have immediately recognised Edmund as the 'divine king', ritually slain to ensure the fertility of the land and the people. Whether or not the Danes ordered the execution is largely immaterial; what is sure is that the inhabitants of the eastern counties acknowledged Edmund's status as the divine victim, to the extent of raising him to the honoured role of patron saint of the entire county. His nearest equivalent in the Celtic west was King Arthur, who has been identified with the Archer figure in the Somerset zodiac - a combination of sun-king, spirit of the year, protector of the people, and the many-named god who is alternately killed and resurrected as long as the stars remain in their courses. This identification makes the wooden church at Greensted, spiritual centre of the Ongar zodiac, a surviving temple of the old religion - a notion which might surprise 20th century pilgrims who repeat the Collect of St. Edmund when they come to worship here and view an oddity of ecclesiastical architecture.

2.7 THE ROMAN ROAD

The supposed route taken by the bearers of St. Edmund's relics is marked on modern Ordnance Survey maps as "Roman Road (course of)". Starting at Woodford Bridge (NE London) it runs up the Roding valley to Great Dunmow, goes on to cross the Stour into Suffolk at Clare and thence to Bury St. Edmunds. Stretches of it survive as modern metalled roads, a 4-mile section south of Dunmow being the most obvious.

The road enters the zodiac circle near Hobbs Cross at Theydon, climbing a well-wooded hill to a ridge, the summit marked by a pond in Ongar Park Wood. The eastern spur of the ridge is at Toot ('look-out') Hill on the

Archer's shoulder, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the course of the road. When the road was first laid out, there must have been a sighting-point somewhere on the ridge, and it is possible that the name Toot Hill has been slightly displaced. Somewhere on the upward climb, the road must have crossed the elusive figure of the Scorpion.

From the ridge, the road runs down to Bobbingworth, marking the western edge of the Lower Green on the tail of the Dove. The axis of this figure is more-or-less parallel to the road, and the beak lies where a bridge over the Cripsey Brook has replaced an earlier ford - such is the conservatism of travellers that, although no trace of the road itself survives here, the bridge is aligned exactly on its course.

Continuing northwards, the road almost immediately crosses the hand of Virgo, a fact which poses an intriguing question; for the Foss Way cuts across the Somerset zodiac in the same manner and direction, as does the course of a Roman Road (Beards Lane) in the Nuthampstead Zodiac. A Roman Road in the same position in two terrestrial zodiacs might be coincidence; in three, it looks like planning. But which came first? Did the Roman military surveyors, or the dodmen before them, so arrange their routes as to cut a particular segment from each circle and, in so doing, acknowledge the existence of a gigantic, unseen figure of a goddess? Or were the zodiacs surveyed and laid out from a datum line that was later used as a (straight) road? The other two possibilities are that the road-surveyors were somehow guided in their choice of route to unconsciously enhance the zodiacs; and that 3 parallel instances do not make a pattern after all, but are only 'coincidence'.

The road goes on to cross the hindquarters of Leo, leaving the figure at Blackcat Cottage, and continues as a metalled road for about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, finally going out of the circle near Rookwood Hall. In crossing the zodiac, the road has measured 8-9 miles, of which about a third is still marked by modern roads, paths and a bridge. The alignment is not perfect but seems to be made up of three sections with very small angular deviations; the average orientation is about 38° E of N.

In an article in the Essex Countryside magazine, Dr E.A.Rudge deduced the existence of another Roman Road in this area, being an alternative route to the A12 from London to Chelmsford. Also starting at Woodford Bridge, this road would cross the south-eastern part of the zodiac circle, running south of Capricorn and Aquarius and through Pisces. The only map evidence that would satisfy most archaeologists is at Fryerning, where Mapletree Lane runs dead straight for about a mile, aligned on an old hilltop chapel called Bedeman's Berg (beyond the Aries sector). The proposed course has several changes in orientation over a relatively short distance, making it look very un-Roman; some features, however, suggest that there was formerly a road of some kind along the general line, perhaps a drovers' way. If Dr Rudge was right, the position of the lost station Durolitum, mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, might be verified by conventional archaeological techniques; the suggested site is Knolls Hill in Stapleford Abbots, where mediaeval terraces may have been based on older earthworks (outside the zodiac but not far from the Capricorn figure).

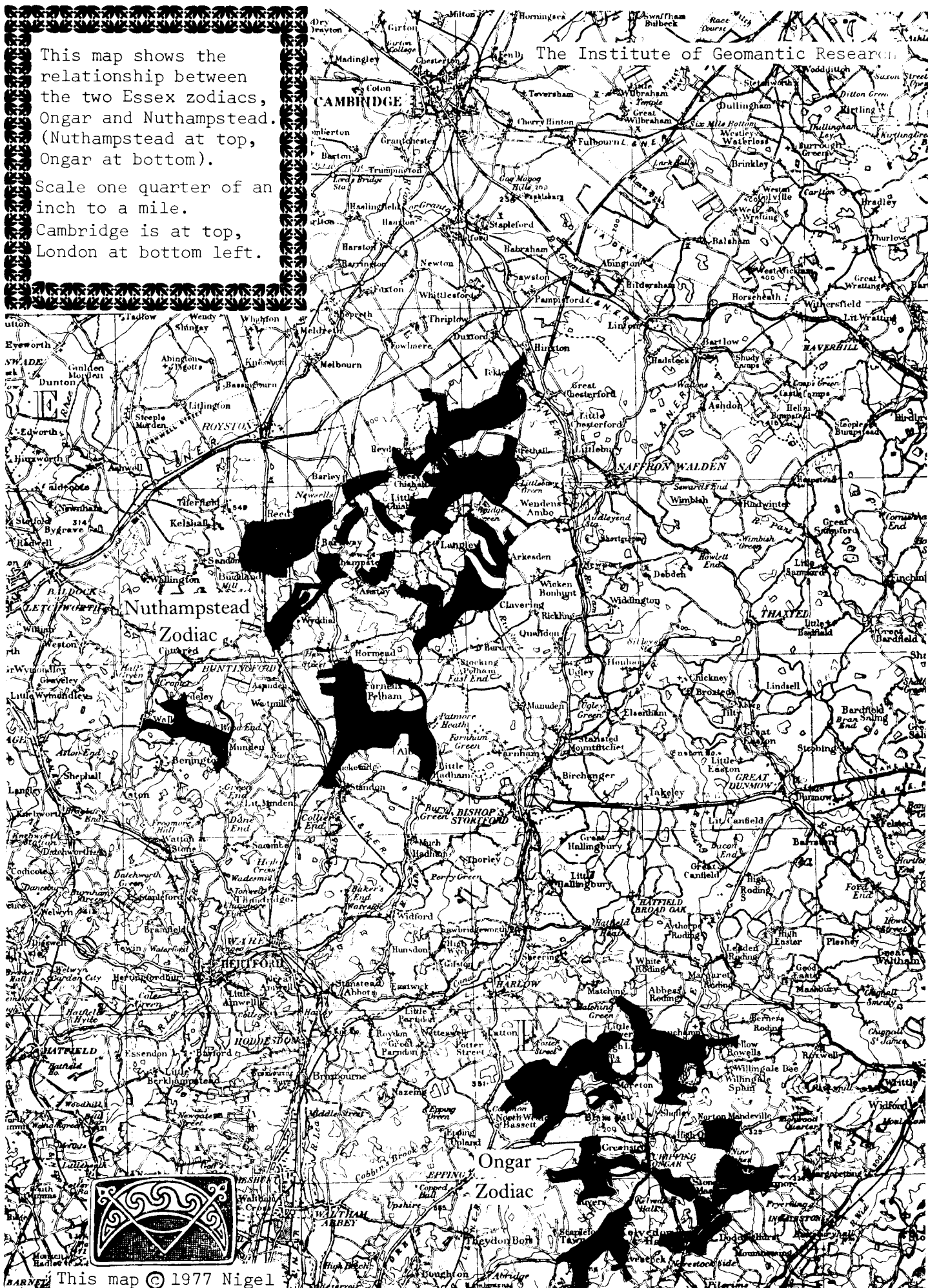
2.8 THE PUDDINGSTONE TRACK

Among the many mysteries that attracted the attention of Dr Rudge and his wife was the occurrence of a long series of puddingstone boulders marking out a trackway from Chesham, Bucks, to Grimes Graves, Norfolk (and beyond?). This track crosses the northern part of the Ongar Zodiac in the Leo-Virgo sectors. The Ridges found puddingstones at Thornwood Common (North Weald), Magdalen Laver church, Beauchamp Roding church and Berners Roding church, the trackway running to Holyfield (Nazeing) in one direction and Broomfield (north of Chelmsford) in the other. The stone at Magdalen Laver is said to be incorporated in the foundations of the north wall of the church, one of sixteen examples of incorporation in buildings, but I could see no sign of it on a recent visit. The Chiltern Hills Zodiac apparently lies on the line of both the Puddingstone Track and the Icknield Way; it may be significant that the one leads to Ongar, the other to Nuthampstead. If there are further examples of links between terrestrial zodiacs and ancient tracks, a very early date must be suggested for the former.

This map shows the relationship between the two Essex zodiacs, Ongar and Nuthampstead. (Nuthampstead at top, Ongar at bottom).

Scale one quarter of an inch to a mile.

Cambridge is at top, London at bottom left.



2.9 GOGMAGOG The old British solar/lunar giant pair, collectively known as Gogmagog, occur in the proximity of three known zodiacs. North of Nuthampstead are the chalk figures (now barely visible) discovered by T.C. Lethbridge on the Gogmagog Hills. On the slopes north-east of Glastonbury Tor in the Somerset zodiac are two old oak-trees, massive but decaying, known as Gog and Magog or the Druid Oaks. North-east of Kingston, at the Guildhall in the City of London, are two carved figures of Gogmagog that used to be carried in processions. In each case the nearest zodiac sign to the giants is Capricorn, which may indicate a midwinter date for a festival involving the sun and moon; however May Day and Midsummer are also connected with Gogmagog.

About ten miles from the centre of the Ongar zodiac, beyond the Capricorn sector, is the outer London suburb of Hainault and the few remains of the once vast Hainault Forest (which once belonged to Barking Abbey). Here the B174 road crosses Hog Hill, Hog being a recorded variant of Gog as is shown in T.C. Lethbridge's book on the Cambridgeshire figures. To the southwest of the hill there stood until 1820 a giant oak called the Fairlop, the site of an annual feast that survived after the tree was felled until 1899. The Fairlop Fair is said to have been instituted by one Daniel Day in 1720 as a way of making rent-day more pleasurable for his tenants; there is every indication that it was much older. One feature of the fair was a procession of carriages built like crescent-shaped boats, as shown in a contemporary woodcut, drawn by horses from Wapping to Hainault; Magog rode in a horse-drawn chariot and Lethbridge pointed out that her Egyptian counterpart, Isis, was often depicted in a crescent ship. A map of 1777 shows a (permanent?) maypole about a mile from the Fairlop Oak at Barking Side, standing then at the edge of the forest.

There seems to be enough circumstantial evidence here to suggest that the Hainault Forest was the centre of another local Gogmagog tradition, though it would take a piece of recorded folklore to complete the picture. If the guess is right, another 'coincidental' zodiac connexion will be more firmly established.

Gog and Magog make another appearance within the Ongar zodiac, though in a very different guise. This may not be relevant, but it is worth recording: a floor slab in Blackmore church preserves the memory of Simon Lynch, the Royalist rector of Runwell (a place of legends not far away in SE Essex), who "for fearing God and the King was sequestered, prosecuted and persecuted to the day of his death by Gog and Magog". Whatever was meant by that, the giants' names were thereby recorded in the area in 1660.

2.10 WITCHCRAFT Essex still retains some of the notoriety it attained in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the total number of indictments for witchcraft in the county outnumbered that for any comparable area at 473; Kent produced 132, the second highest total. The first English trial of ordinary women indicted as witches took place at Chelmsford, a few miles from Ongar, in 1565 and set the pattern for many later cases. Matthew Hopkins, "Witchfinder General", was an Essex villain and began his lucrative career in the county.

Some of the victims were doubtless innocent people unloved by neighbours; others may have been betrayed by those with political or financial ambitions. But the testimony of many of the accused indicates that witchcraft was a living belief and that, as Dr Margaret Murray showed, it had its origins in Paganism, dressed up by the Church as Devil-worship. Its survival in Essex, as in the Pendle area of Lancashire and elsewhere, was due to the isolation of the agricultural communities from the sophistication of the towns (and to poverty); forests were still widespread and roads were poor, so the traffic between the two worlds was minimal.

The charges laid against two women from the Ongar area in 1570 probably represent the then-current beliefs concerning witchcraft as well as any other case of the period. 'Goodwife' Malter of Theydon Mount (Sagittarius) was accused of bewitching two sheep and a sow belonging to one neighbour and of sending a 'speckled bird' to another in order to ruin milk and butter. Anne Vicars of Navestock (Capricorn) was said to have bewitched a woman who suffered a disfiguring sickness as well as two others who argued with her and subsequently had trouble with their eyesight. There was, of course, nothing uncommon about disease

in humans, sudden death of animal, or trouble in the dairy, and these two women (with others) may have been scapegoats for any such calamity - but why were they selected? When Anne Vicars resorted to 'cursing and banning', she was working by non-Christian principles and would be seen as loyal to the old religion (as many of her neighbours must have been). Such allegiance was probably enough for the judge, who nevertheless made a note that "he did consider there was much idle gossip in the stories" when he committed the two women to the Assizes.

Whatever the real nature of their offences, they were each sentenced to one year's imprisonment, a comparatively light penalty for the times. A thorough search will no doubt turn up other cases of witchcraft within the zodiac area, for the relics of pre-Christian belief were the heritage of all rural dwellers; it will be more difficult to determine whether these 'witches' had a more specific connexion with the zodiac.

2.11 THE PILGRIMS' WAY

The modern A128 road from Ongar to Tilbury was used in mediaeval times by pilgrims on their way to the shrine of St. Thomas (Becket) the Martyr at Canterbury. There are remains of a wayside chapel of St. Thomas in Brentwood near where this road crosses the A12. A little north of Brentwood and south of the zodiac the place name Pilgrims' Hatch marks the site of a forest-gate on the route; it is also, coincidentally, a gate for pilgrims travelling north into the zodiac. It is likely that the pilgrims' way joined a road north of the zodiac to Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and Walsingham, Norfolk, two popular East Anglian shrines; if so, the Roman Road to Bury would have been the most direct.

Becket's contemporary, Richard de Luci (see next heading) once controlled the centre of the zodiac through which the pilgrims' road passed, a fact which may account in part for the choice of route. Becket, as a surrogate 'divine victim', may be compared with St. Edmund and identified with the zodiac Archer; if the connexion is valid, it is no surprise that the road to the Christian martyr's tomb also traverses the pagan victim's temple. The link between terrestrial zodiacs and the 'sacred king'/'witch-cult' is not clear, but evidence for it is beginning to accumulate.

2.12. RICHARD de LUCI

In the middle of the 12th century, the most important man in the Ongar area was Richard de Luci, a baron who still considered himself a Norman first and an Englishman second though 100 years had passed since the conquest. He was lord of the Hundred of Ongar as well as the manors of Chipping Ongar, Greensted and Stanford Rivers. Ongar owes its prefix to a market (cleping) held in the castle bailey and founded in the 12th century, most probably by de Luci. (The modern High Street follows the line of this outer bailey and presumably that of the market street). De Luci fortified the castle around 1155, became Sheriff of Essex in 1156, was visited at Ongar by Henry II in 1157, was appointed as co-Chief Justiciar (with the Earl of Leicester) in 1162, and during the King's absence in Normandy in 1166 acted as Lieutenant of the Kingdom.

His highly successful career is an indication of his loyalty to the King and of Henry's respect for his talents as an administrator and judge. He was, in fact, the second most powerful person in the England of his time. He is said to have been responsible for the appointment of Thomas a Becket as Archbishop of Canterbury, though for his support of the King in the famous 'quarrel' he was excommunicated. Following a busy political life, he became a canon at Leones Priory in Kent, which he had founded, and died there.

This argument depends on acceptance of Margaret Murray's interpretation of the murder of Becket as the substitute 'divine victim' of the old pagan religion, dying in the King's stead. If it is allowed that Henry II and most of his barons were adherents of the old religion, then it is also likely that de Luci was well placed in its hierarchy and was himself a candidate for the role of substitute victim. He took over the King's duties in his absence, and was instrumental in setting Becket up for martyrdom, as though this were his 'insurance' against having to accept the surrogate's destiny himself.

De Luci's three manors between them contained the zodiac figure of the

Archer, a fact which may be more than coincidence. The archer was identified by Katherine Maltwood as a 'dying sun god' figure, personified by Arthur in the west. But the Archer seems to be both executioner and victim, the identity of opposites being a fundamental principle of what is known in India as karma, and also a tenet of the 'Druidic' philosophy that seems to be associated with both the old religion and terrestrial zodiacs. De Luci was granted these estates because he was a possible 'divine victim', and his temporal power, justified by his personal ability, was the price he asked for being in this dangerous position. As it happened, Becket showed his death-wish plainly and was duly despatched in 1170 when the seven-year cycle demanded a sacrifice. De Luci was spared and perhaps encouraged the martyr's cult which brought pilgrims through his market-town, lying as it did near the zodiac figure of the sacrificial victim.

Further interesting connexions are shown by puns on the name de Luci. The family badge was three lucres or pikes, and the ravening pike would make a suitable alternative for the zodiac Whale, which has its head (possibly with open jaws) at Chipping Ongar. The Whale in the Somerset zodiac is regarded as the Archer's doom.

Margaret Murray suggested that William Rufus's favourite oath, "By the face of Lucca!", was a reference to the northern god Loki, Latinized as Luce or Luci. Richard de Luci therefore bore the name of the chief god of one of his liege's predecessors, perhaps the chief god of the old religion as practised at the time. The name also recalls the Latin lux = light, a word that is retained in the name of St. Lucy (Santa Lucia). Her feast day is December 13, but before the calendar reform of 1752 was closer to the winter solstice, as indicated by the jingle "Lucy-light, shortest day and longest night". The festival was celebrated with blazing lights and a generous distribution of food and drink; these are the Pagan elements of Christmas, once the season of Misrule of which the figurehead was Loki. The circular argument returns us to the divine victim, in whom the Pagan god was incarnate at Midwinter.

2.13 THE WARDSTAFF In the Middle Ages, the Hundred of Ongar had a customary annual ceremony analogous to the beating of bounds in a parish. First recorded in 1331, the following information about the Wardstaff ceremony comes from a report of 1543-6. On the Sunday before Hock Monday (which falls in late April or early May) the Hundred Bailiff cut a willow wand in Abbess Roding Wood and took it to Rookwood Hall. After dining, he continued to Wardhatch Lane near the manor of Longbarns in Beauchamp Roding, where the Lord of Rookwood Hall and his tenants waited to answer a roll-call. A night-long vigil was held 'to watch and keep the ward in due silence so that the king be harmless and the country scapeless'; the following morning the Lord cut his notch in the staff to record the execution of the watch. All the places so far mentioned are in the extreme north of the Hundred. From here, the Wardstaff was carried around the Hundred in a sunwise direction, with eight more night-watches at sites including Fyfield (Three Wants), Lambourne (Hall), Chigwell, Theydon, Garnon and Magdalen Laver.

The area of the zodiac lies largely within the Ongar Hundred, the exceptions being the villages on the eastern side. The Hundred also includes parts of the former forest to the south-west, and it is notable that the old Forest boundary effectively delimits the zodiac's south-western rim. The Wardstaff ceremony, therefore, may be considered as a sunwise procession around the zodiac circle and adjacent forest lands, and it is not impossible that its origins are older than those of the Hundred.

The ceremony was of sufficient importance to leave a memory in place-names. Wardhatch Lane has been noted above; in the section on Aquarius, reference is made to the Wetstaff Brook, a name Dr Reaney derived from a stopping-place on the circuit. The reasons for the choice of the various sites for the nine watches are not recorded, doubtless because they were already buried in the past when the 16th century account was written. If the derivation of Wetstaff is correct, two of the watches were held on or near the heads of the Lion and Unicorn; it is possible that other sites had similar zodiac connexions. It is clear that the responsibility for the watches lay with the principal landlords of the district,

and that their ritual duty was performed to ensure the security of the monarch and realm. The feudal obligation of the Norman aristocracy to provide such security had been carried out, when necessary, by the more 'practical' means of raising troops; this ceremony has echoes of a pre-mediaeval practice, continued even after major changes in land ownership. The equation of the King's personal safety with the security of the kingdom goes back at least to Saxon times, possibly to the beginning of the concept of kingship itself. The use of the willow staff and the characteristic lunar number nine also seem to suggest an early date for the ritual, pointing to a culture to which the moon was at least as important as the sun.

These scattered clues are all that remain of a ceremony that played an important part in the calendar of the mediaeval inhabitants of the Ongar area. While speculation about the unrecorded history of ritual must be an uncertain business, it seems better to offer a guess than to leave the question completely unresolved. In The White Goddess, Robert Graves dates the Celtic willow-month (Saille) as extending from mid-April to mid-May, the season in which Hocktide later fell. In this month (I conjecture) the pre-Saxon zodiac dwellers cut a willow wand as the staff of their ruler, the protege of the Lunar goddess, and carried it around the 'year' in nine nights to ensure the King the continued favour of the goddess during the coming year; the night-long vigil would have meant the moon was visible, and it is likely (according to the principles of sympathetic magic) that the circuit took place between New and Full, when the moon (and hence the monarch) was growing in strength.

If there is anything at all to this theory, then it is possible that some parallel ritual once took place on other terrestrial zodiacs, probably at Hocktide; it would be interesting to know whether this is so.

2.14 PARISH BOUNDARIES

Concerning the boundaries of Essex parishes, most historians who have dealt with the subject are agreed on two points: that they are some of the oldest features of the landscape, preceding Hundred divisions, and were retained unchanged for centuries until the drastic reorganization in the 1930s; and that, in the main, they coincided with manor boundaries. This second point is as important as the first; in Suffolk, for instance, parishes of the same name are differentiated by the name of their patron saint, whereas in Essex the Norman tenant's surname is a common addition, indicating that the parish began as a parcel of land belonging to one owner, who often endowed the church. The most common method of marking the boundaries is shown by the number of small ponds and pollard trees that still occur on the line, often at a corner or meeting-point of three parishes. Fords and bridges also tend to lie on a boundary, and in many places a stretch of lane or track will run together with the boundary. These features are a sign of the conservatism of rural areas, where change is often slow to arrive and opposed when it does - a fact which should give earth mysteries students cause for thanks.

The relevance of parish boundaries to the zodiac is difficult to determine; there are cases of boundaries running along part of the outline of a figure, as well as instances of boundaries dividing figures in 'significant' places. On the other hand, in many places the boundaries 'ignore' figures altogether. Streams and lanes used in drawing the outlines obviously provide useful demarcation lines for parishes, and the fact that the two often coincide may have no further significance than indicating antiquity. Perhaps the examples below will demonstrate the nature of such coincidences.

Fyfield parish is so shaped to just contain the Lion's head and body, but no part of the legs, hindquarters or tail; its northern boundary is a green lane that draws the underside of the figure.

High Laver parish contains the head and shoulders of Virgo, Magdalen Laver the body and sleeve, North Weald the skirt and legs; the various boundaries touch the top of the head, the hem of the sleeve (marked by streams) and the knee; on the map there is an air of purpose about this arrangement.

The Dove is contained in the northern part of Bobbingworth parish except for part of one wing which is 'clipped' by an outlying part of Moreton; (many parishes hereabouts have such extensions and even detached 'islands'). Greensted is a long, fairly narrow parish which contains the arm + shoulder of the Archer, as well as the 'arrow'. The Archer's face lies in a corner of Bobbingworth, but otherwise the

figure is contained neatly in Stanford Rivers parish (which encircles Greensted to some extent).

Pisces is mostly contained in the northern part of Doddington, except that the head of one fish and the tail of the other lie in the parish of Blackmore - topped and tailed for the table?

Concerning Blackmore, a further note is needed: the parish boundary has been changed a number of times by 'trading' hamlets with High Ongar. The present western boundary runs almost straight but for a narrow extension that runs up to the road at Nine Ashes, presumably a concession allowing rights (of access or tithe?) pertaining to the hamlet. It also happens that the road marks the outline of the Aries figure, the bulk of which lies in Blackmore, suggesting that the original parish boundary was along that road (so containing more of the zodiac figure).

The relevance of the name Marden Ash, at the boundary of the two Ongars, has already been discussed in the Pisces section. The course of the River Roding provides an obvious boundary along its length, not only at Marden Ash, and most of it does mark various parish boundaries. But as the river also runs through the middle of the zodiac, crossing the opposing signs of Leo and Capricorn, it also marks the 'boundary' between the two halves of the year, divided at midsummer and midwinter.

2.15 RELATIONSHIP OF SITES

Alignments of churches and other 'ley-type' sites seem to be thin on the ground in this area. However, there are traces of a network of inter-site relationships involving an angle of about 31° ; one possible significance of this seemingly-odd angle is that it has a tangent of approximately $3/5$.

A line through the churches of Navestock (Capricorn), Greensted (Archer) and Moreton (Virgo) has an orientation of 2° W of grid north on the map; as this mean deviation of True from Grid North over the map area is $1^{\circ} 45'W$, this line is very close to a true meridian. The following angles are measured from the line, using South instead of North as the prime cardinal point.

Greensted ch.	- Stapleford Abbots ch.	$31^{\circ}W$ of S
Latton Priory	- Greensted ch. - Thoby Priory	$62^{\circ}E$ of S
Greensted ch.	- Ongar Castle (centre of mound)	$93^{\circ}E$ of S
Greensted ch.	- Four Wants (crossroads, Ongar)	$124^{\circ}E$ of S
Four Wants	- Blackmore Priory (arm of moat)	$62^{\circ}E$ of S
Moreton ch.	- Stondon Massey ch.	$31^{\circ}E$ of S

At Stapleford Abbots, the angle between the lines to Greensted and Navestock churches is also about 31° ; however, the 'isosceles' triangle thus formed is not exact.

This is very slender evidence on which to base conclusions, but there are two 'coincidences' which may strengthen the case. First, the centre of the 'system' is Greensted church, possibly the true focal point of the zodiac and certainly the oldest sacred site yet identified in the area. Second, the three priories lie on the parallel lines running $62^{\circ}E$ of S ($62^{\circ}W$ of N); they were all 12th century Augustinian foundations and are the only three mediaeval religious houses in the immediate area.

The avenue of trees leading from Greensted to Ongar Castle, mentioned under the St. Edmund heading, is almost parallel to and slightly north of the $93^{\circ}E$ line, suggesting a link between the angular relationships and the trajectory of the Archer's arrow. The 'target' seems to be the hilltop camp at Danbury, about 15 miles eastwards; this is one of the highest points in the county and the church (built within the earthworks) is a notable landmark. For what it's worth, the easterly orientation also suggests a sunrise-line, perhaps sighted from Toot Hill which is just west of Greensted.

Little work has been done on the metrological aspect of the zodiac - to record all inter-site distances in various units is lengthy (and monotonous). However, measurements relating to the 'vesica' (see 1.12) seem to show the use of the (modern) Statute Mile, which is something of a puzzle. This is one of the questions awaiting a more thorough survey of the area.

2.16 AS ABOVE, SO BELOW

In her pioneering work on the Somerset zodiac, Katherine Maltwood showed that the terrestrial figures corresponded very closely with the chart of the respective constellations, and that both the Celestial North Pole and the Pole of the Ecliptic could be identified on the ground as twin centres of the zodiac. In order for the earth-star correspondences to work, the terrestrial zodiac must be very nearly circular (though the ecliptic itself is not a perfect circle). One would not expect Nuthampstead, with its elongated vesica-type plan, or Pendle, with its unique arrangement of 'jigsawing' figures, to show such correspondences, but I wondered if they existed at Ongar, which is more-or-less circular. By the rather inaccurate method of re-scaling a map to match it with a tracing of a star-chart, I found that there is a fair degree of correlation.

If Polaris, at the Celestial North Pole, is equated with Four Wants crossroads in Ongar, and the pole of the Ecliptic with Greensted church, then the path of the Ecliptic passes through all the figures in the outer part of the zodiac, and some of the stars of the appropriate constellations fall on their respective figures.

Most striking are the correspondences of earth-figures and constellations for Virgo and Pisces. In addition to the zodiac signs themselves (i.e. those lying on the Ecliptic), the stars of Hercules coincide with the shoulder and head of the Archer, and the stars of Draco's head with his outstretched arm; this follows the Somerset pattern.

The line that passes through the North Pole and the Pole of the Ecliptic marks out the solstices on the calendar, although in relation to the stars it is 'displaced' by one month; that is, the cusps are Scorpio/Sagittarius (winter) and Taurus/Gemini (summer), both one month earlier than those used in astrology. The reason for this is, I suppose, the oft-mentioned but seldom-explained 'Precession of the Equinoxes'. However that may be, the line has already been 'drawn' on the Ongar zodiac as the 124°E of S line, mentioned in the last section. If the astronomical correspondences are right, which is by no means certain, Greensted church is again indicated as a main focus of the zodiac, corresponding with the ecliptic centre.

These sections (2.15 & 16) have been left until the end of the survey because they are the most difficult to check. Whereas the speculations on the link between the 'sacred king/victim' cult are grounded, however loosely, in historical and anthropological fact (and are therefore open to argument by referring to the source material), the vague conclusions about geometrical and astronomical patterns in the zodiac are based on even vaguer methods of working. That the 'patterns' are largely subjective need not, of course, disqualify them from further consideration; but neither can they be taken as proven.

CONCLUSION

In the Introduction, I borrowed the idea that geomancy is a heresy in the eyes of 'science'. Heretics and outlaws have made proverbial the advice: 'you might as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb'; this paper began as a lamb, a straight account of another terrestrial zodiac, but has become a speculative sheep. The justification for this is in the common desire to interpret data, to discover a meaning, not to accept unexplained evidence at its face value. This is the basic drive behind the re-evaluation of received wisdom in many fields of knowledge, a development that is clear in the study of archaeology and history over the last century or so. The 'fringe' ideas in these pages have been taken from the works of people for whom the drive to interpret has produced revelations (see Bibliography); I have merely tried to apply some of them to the zodiac(s). The intention has been to put forward suggestions for consideration rather than to draw definite conclusions - but a lack of caution in one section may throw doubt upon the whole; hence the division of the survey into two parts. Ultimately, though, it must stand (or fall) as one heretical whole (such are the times) - an apologetic note on which to end.

Erce, Erce, Erce, Earth Mother, may the Almighty Eternal Lord
grant you fields to increase and flourish, fields fruitful and healthy,
shining harvest of shafts of millet, broad harvests of barley.....
Hail to thee, Earth, Mother of Men! Bring forth now in God's embrace,
filled with good for the use of men.

(Part of a Christianized Anglo-Saxon charm)

Note: Page 17. Section 2.10:WITCHCRAFT.

The Justice of the Peace who committed the two witches to the

Assizes was Sir Thomas Smith, one time Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth I. He was known as a staunch Protestant and a scholar of wide learning and insatiable curiosity. Rebuilding Hill Hall at Theydon Mount (Sagittarius) in a style derived from the Continental Renaissance, he chose to adorn the walls with life-size paintings of scenes from the legend of Cupid and Psyche. The story, found in the Golden Ass of Apuleius, was very popular in the 16th century; it centres around a series of 'impossible' tasks, like those of Hercules, set by Venus for Psyche. It is odd to find a judge of witches, even a lenient one, displaying obviously pagan themes openly on the walls of his house in that time, but his epitaph suggests a 'dual personality':

"What Y'earth or Sea or Skies conteyne, what Creatures in them be,
My Mynde did seeke to know, my Soule the Heavens continually".

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The Journal of Geomancy, quarterly organ of the Institute of Geomantic Research usually carries articles on Terrestrial Zodiacs. To date, Pendle, Ongar, Lamanche, Nuthampstead,Pumpsaint are among those discussed. Journal is 60p + p&p to non-members, free to members from 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD.

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No doubt everyone could nominate books for such canonical lists; these are just the particular volumes that I have found most useful for this work. -23-

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