

Autumn Equinox 1970

A memoir from the diaries of John Pearce

Wed. 23rd September 1970. When I arrived all the pubs and Cafes in Glastonbury were closed and I felt very thirsty. I went to the Chalice Well, but it too was closed.

I went up to the foot of the Tor where it was pitch dark. I could hear voices, American accents and youthful laughter. I found a field on Chalice Hill where long grass showed it was probably free of grazing animals, and made my bed under the stars with my head towards the Tor and feet towards the pole star, which was quite clear, and soon fell asleep. I woke in the small hours when the moon rose, and again at a sound - a black cat stalking up to me, which ran off when I looked, the moon shining down on it like a torch.

Thurs 24th Sept 1970. I woke late, face down on "the holiest erthe in Englande", in the luxury of pure air, rich long grass, and definitely feeling an indescribable presence. The sun was well up. Otherwise alone. I said a prayer, borne of the imagination of my limbs and the womanly swelling of the hill. (I should have added 'Nevertheless, not my will but Thy will be done').

There was nothing to eat or drink. I climbed the Tor and circled St. Michael's Tower, becoming aware there were people inside it. One bearded figure sat on the low wall in the threshold and addressed the others with a quiet conviction and sideward glances across the land and into the distance. The sun shone hot through the clouds. I descended the Tor to the town, falling a few times on the shiny turf.

Refreshment - beer, coffee and a salad bun, then bought the Guardian to read in the Abbey ruins. The Holy Thorn was covered with dark blood-red berries, but at the top long sprays of new white flowers grew out from the dense mass.

The sun was hot and bright, and the ruins were deeply shadowed in front of it. I read the paper - a civil war in Jordan; 'THE MOST VICIOUS WAR OF ALL', read the headline. I concentrated on this and tried to relate the surrounding peace and stillness with the conflict. To project, as it were, a sense of compassion. It seemed it would be no miracle that this 'presence' I felt would be available to help. I had no thought that the struggle was wrong or wicked, but had an imperfect image of Jesus suffering with those involved, and even sharing in their grim successes. His compassion even allowed the conflict to go on, because what was needed was awareness.

The sun made the grass golden and the shadows purple. In the crypt of St Joseph's chapel I pretended to look closely at a rather crudely carved crucifix, while I did some sort of Kabbalist exercise - a 'Middle Pillar', or maybe just a Stop, and prayed to be cured of my nervousness. I seemed to be having more success with an even pulse. I was in no sort of neurotic gloom - actually feeling very alive.....

I visited Wells Cathedral with a sense of elation, and resolved to become a confirmed member of the Christian Church - though very much in the particular way I then saw it: I found no darkness in, or opposition to, the 'thought form' from which such a cathedral had crystallised - the site having been sacred long before the cathedral was built. The hope and future of the world lay in this 'thought form' which I assumed to be "Christianity."

I did not really want to go back to Glastonbury, but had decided to do so in order to be on the Tor at 8 p.m. the time Tony would begin a meeting back in London. Ascending the hill again, all was quiet. The meeting in London would be starting. The Tower was quiet and I now felt no presences there. To the North West the misty air was lit by the town lights. To the East it was cold and grey-black. Not a speck of light could be seen either on the earth or in the sky. So I commenced the Kabbalistic Cross - **'Atoh Malkuth Ve Gedulah Ve Geburah, Le Olahm Amen'. 'To Thee the Kingdom the Glory and the Power, for ever, Amen.'** For a moment came a real sense of expansion, knowledge and confidence, stillness, and destiny. In the grey emptiness my cross stood, founded on solid ground. Then, coming from where the hill sloped sharply down in front of me, I thought I heard a sharp 'crack', and fancied I saw an electrical spark. Bewildered, as if in a mist, I could not tell whether it was some night creature. I sat down and indulged in more psychic exercises, possibly inwardly vibrating or whispering the name **'Hesus'** - a usable form of the name 'Jesus' suggested by Alan Bain.

A figure stole up beside me. 'My name's Peter, what's yours?' (In the convivial darkness on top of Glastonbury Tor it would not have occurred to anyone I might not want to be interrupted.) Settling himself beside me he said, 'A fabulous place isn't it?' and 'This must be the highest point around here'. Evidently American, he had come here alone. He told me there were a lot more people inside the Tower. He himself was short-haired and gently spoken, and sat quietly beside me, and we allowed the silence to continue. Then two other, longer-haired, blokes appeared, and I was introduced. They seemed somewhat affronted that I did not propose, as they had assumed I would, to spend the whole night up there. I yearned for a quiet tent in the fields below. It was very cold.

After a bit: 'Hey Pete, you're missing out on a great scene. The whole place is beginning to light up in there'. Someone had seen part of the inside wall begin to glow. Then someone else had noticed a second glow higher up. I asked when they had seen the lights, wondering if it had anything to do with my 'spark' or my ceremonial activities. He said 'What do you mean when? It's there now!' I expressed eager surprise, so he said 'come and see' - with that air of conclusive finality that some Hippies have (as if the pitiful fall of the human intellect to their level is all part of God's plan for the world).

So I followed (to see this thing which hath come to pass) and sure enough, on the wall within St. Michael's Tower was a pale phosphorescence, and, some ten or fifteen feet up, a second patch of light. There were a number of people sitting on the floor in the darkness (giving their silent assent to various fatuous assertions). Our companion fondled the metal railings within which we'd climbed: 'Man, you can really feel this place. You can feel the vibrations.' I, who remained just outside the threshold, and the others within, gazed up at the light patches on the wall. It was quite apparent that the cause was the misty light from the town below, faintly projected through the windows and the doorway. My shadow was cast on the wall in the lower light patch, and moved as I began to depart. The people within sat in respectful silence. 'It looks as though something's really getting ready to happen' said our Master of Ceremonies.

I quietly left the gathering and resumed my place for a while looking East, towards London where Tony Potter's meeting must be in session, later descending the hill, losing the path and falling over as before. I settled on the so-called moor, next to the

River Brue. There was sufficient light from the town filtering through the mist for me to be able to eat, drink some bottles of beer and pitch the tent. It was very cold. Cows were vocal throughout the dark night, and I heard a few phrases played on a flute in some archaic mode coming from the direction of the Tor, but closer. The tune sounded ancient, timeless.