

## **Glyn Davies and Glastonbury**

*This paper was originally written for those in the Saros network, and I've adapted it slightly to accord with 'Soho Tree' which documents the arising of the Soho Cabbala Group, and the different teaching lines which sprang up from this. My motivation for researching it was to try and ascertain contacts which Glyn Davies may have had, and which influenced his own work. Glyn had strong connections to Somerset, both in his family background and in adult life, as discussed elsewhere.*

Did Glyn have a special contact in Glastonbury, in esoteric circles? We know that he made visits to the area in the 1960s and possibly earlier.

My impression from knowing Glyn at first hand, and from visiting Glastonbury with him in the early 1970s, is that he did have one or more particular contacts at Glastonbury. At first I thought that these were likely to be in the Dion Fortune 'Inner Light' network, but apart from Glyn's knowledge of their practices, and his fondness for the view from Dion Fortune's old home near Chalice Well, there are no strong leads to back this up.

## **Ronald Heaver**

However, recently (2017) I have come across the life of Ronald Heaver (1900-1980), a reclusive but highly significant figure in Glastonbury. Perhaps he could have been one of Glyn's contacts, and an important one, though not his main teacher, who was 'John Smith', a farmer in Yorkshire. But very possibly Heaver was a source of genuine contact with inner work, and Glyn may have gained insights and ideas from him. I have no proof of this except that the man, the place, the timing, and the affinities accord very strongly. The account which follows may act as a signpost to a significant link to the tradition passed down through the Soho Group.

Heaver was a Kabbalist, and described as an 'Old One; his admirers saw him as the last of a line, who didn't seek fame or money. In his book, *'The Hidden Adept'*, R. J. Stewart identifies Heaver as one of the few initiates coming from the source of 'perennial philosophy'.<sup>i</sup> Heaver's main task from about 1960 was running what he and his partner Polly called 'The Sanctuary of Avalon', operating from an old store room at their home, Castle House in Keinton Mandeville, near Glastonbury. Heaver himself was partially paralysed, and spent the last years of his life bed-ridden, due to a flying accident in WWI.

The Sanctuary of Avalon was run in total silence and apparently no word was ever spoken aloud in it. The altar was very simple, with a Celtic Cross and a Tibetan dorje.<sup>ii</sup> It could seat a max of 12 people, and visitors were encouraged simply to sit, and wait to see what was revealed to them. Bob Stewart was himself initiated there in the early 1970s. He says that in discussion with Heaver afterwards, he was encouraged to drop any attachments to the visions that he saw, but rather to penetrate to the heart of the experience, which was the sensing of a particular group of 'spiritual elders' in the space.

From the themes that Heaver showed a strong interest in, I have selected those which do resonate with our own.

**Kabbalah** His favourite text was *Aesch-Mezareph, Purifying Fire* which is associated with Von Rosenroth's Kabbala Unveiled; the words are engraved on his tombstone.<sup>iii</sup>

**Ancient Fire Temples** – He considered himself to be in the tradition of the ancient Fire Temples of the Middle East, and then as a member of the line of the priest **Melchizadek**; his ‘spiritual name’ was **Zadok**.

**Joseph of Arimathea** (who had a special relationship to Glastonbury) and the **Archangel Michael** were also spiritual points of reference for him **Prophecy** was a significant strand of the lineage he belonged to.

**The Holy City, Jerusalem** Heaver was involved in an initiative to place the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem in safe custodianship; he is also said to have spent a 3 day vigil in the tomb there without food or water. Jerusalem as a Holy City held meaning for him. His affiliation with Israel stretches further, but isn’t relevant here.

### **Silent meditation in a holy space**

‘A silent vigil helps us in learning to adopt the objective standpoint of an observer so that ultimately the identity of this Silent Witness as our own Higher Self or Soul becomes known and we are able to command the unruly elements of lower mind/consciousness to be still. As a means of practising the presence of GOD a silent vigil thus offers an open door to the development of cosmic consciousness for all who participate in it.’ A. R. Heaver 1969.

**Prayer Days** - as well as helping to set up national Prayer Days during the war, Heaver often operated by setting a specific day/time for those in his network to meditate together at a distance.

**Earth Zodiac** – Heaver was involved with the teaching about the Glastonbury Zodiac, aka ‘The Star Temple’, and was an adherent of sidereal astrology. Heaver’s astrology and possibly his philosophical schema emphasised the interplay between twelve and thirteen, a theme that some of us have worked on over the years.

**Heaver’s Esoteric Contacts: W. G. Gray** – Bill Gray was an esotericist and ritual magician, well-known for his books. Glyn knew Bill Gray personally, and as Gray was a regular visitor to Heaver’s Sanctuary, it seems possible that they met there.

Of the Sanctuary, **W. G. Gray** said: ‘My immediate impression was that I had entered a vast Cathedral which pressurised me from every remote point...almost nothing to look at from the material angle, but the spiritual structure of the location was overwhelming... It seemed to reach into the deepest recesses of one’s soul and clean every trace of corruption out of them...it appeared to be cleansing and filling human souls with light and hope. The strong sensation of vastness and Inner Space was quite unique and I could scarcely credit that my body was factually sitting in a small back room of a Somerset house.’<sup>iv</sup>

Other regular contacts of Heaver’s, who were also known personally by Glyn, were **Peter and Eileen Caddy** the leaders of Findhorn, and **Sir George Trevelyan**, founder of the Wrekin Trust and often called the ‘Founder of the New Age’.

All the people who write about him say what a significant figure Heaver was, but how little known to the world at large – he was indeed a hidden source of influence in Glastonbury. He is always described as kind and compassionate, wise and insightful. ‘Like many of the older generation adepts, ARH did not wish to repeat himself or answer simplistic questions when

there were deeper matters to be dealt with. His more esoteric conclusions and intimations were given verbally, with great economy of words and succinct phrasing...” “He was of that generation of esotericists and mystics that inherited their vocabulary from a ‘hidden’ tradition.” (pps 184 & 188 R.J. Stewart)

I leave this study of Ronald Heaver as a marker, as a sign of a possible contact for ‘our line’ in Glastonbury, but one that we cannot yet prove.<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> *The Hidden Adept and the Inward Vision: The Story of Ronald Hever, Polly Wood and the Sanctuary of Avalon* – R. J. Stewart (R. J. Stewart Books, 2012)

<sup>ii</sup> See photo in *Ronald Heaver: the Man and the Mission of Albion*, a collection of memoirs about and tributes to Heaver published in 2014. Heaver was ecumenical, although having a strong preference for esoteric Christianity and the line of Joseph of Arimathea.

<sup>iii</sup> The text and brief intro to ‘Aesch Mezareph’ can be found at Adam Maclean’s Alchemy website <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/aesch.html>.

<sup>iv</sup> *The Old Sod: The Odd Life and Inner Work of William G. Gray* – Alan Richardson & Marcus Claridge (Skylight Press, 2011) pps. 114-5

<sup>v</sup> So far, we have not found evidence that any other members of ‘The Group’ visited Heaver; he was unknown to Keith Barnes, and Bob Gilbert does not think that Alan Bain knew him.