

Ley Lines and Rosslyn Chapel

Some people believe that powerful but invisible forces channel energy and spiritual power across the land: an energy which can be felt by those in the know. An energy which links places of spiritual importance across the country – joining them together with spiritual power.

These are called ley lines, and those who believe in them think that you can map them like any other feature of the Earth. Some claim that at least one such invisible line of energy passes straight through the site of Rosslyn Chapel itself. In fact, they say, that is why the Chapel is built where it is.

Some claim to feel this line's energy in the Chapel itself. They believe that Rosslyn Chapel's existence and many of its important features are linked to these lines of spiritual power. Some have further claimed that the particular line of energy which passes through Rosslyn is called the Rose line. Furthermore, they suggest that Mary the mother of Jesus was known as Mary of the Rose and so the Chapel's name is linked with the name of Mary and her descendants. Indeed, such people say that the name of the Chapel suggests that the Rose Line, or descendants of Mary, is what the Chapel is all about. In more recent times, a fictional story associated the Rose line with Mary Magdalene rather than the Virgin Mary.

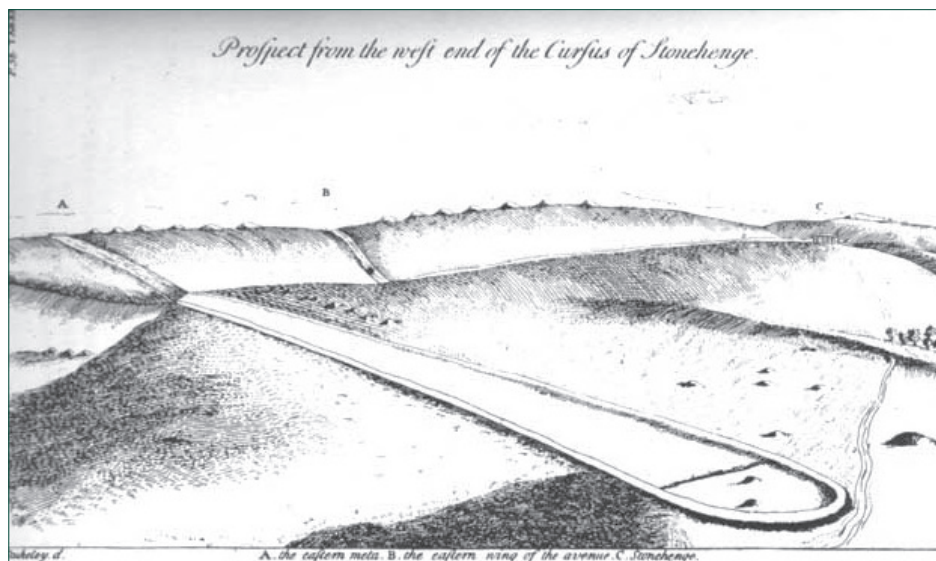
Could the Earth give out such energy in regular patterns? Could some people be able to experience this energy? Does this physical energy have some kind of spiritual element? Is this the reason why Rosslyn Chapel is where it is? And what of the link to the Rose? Could this be a link with Mary and her descendants? Or is all of this simply superstition: beliefs which can never really be proved or disproved?



Mary, mother of Jesus was also known as Mary of the Rose.



Some people believe that Rosslyn Chapel is linked to the energy which emanates from ley lines.



The Stonehenge Curvis resembles a ditch or trench and is linked to ceremonial ritual.

The origins of Ley Lines

The concept of ley lines first emerged in Europe in the 1920s. English Antiquarian Alfred Watkins first described them in his book, *The Old Straight Track*, published in 1925. Watkins observed that straight lines could be drawn between ancient henges, barrows, cursuses and other mounds or burial sites, and argued that these represented waymarkers which allowed people to orient themselves when travelling from place to place.

They were like beacon hills, as you could see from one point to the next. His ideas were not accepted by archaeologists because the markers were not all created in the same timeframes, and trade routes would not be able to run along straight lines – too many rivers, hills and other obstacles.

Watkins was very frustrated by their scepticism. In fact, if you followed some of these ancient tracks, they do twist and turn, but return to the straight lines that Watkins identified. His ley lines may have used physical landmarks that were created in different eras, but many had been built on much earlier sites of significance. Watkins encouraged people to go out walking with map and compass, to identify ancient leys in their local area, and this became a popular pastime.

Essentially, Watkins was identifying how ancient people marked safe tracks across landscapes. Each ley was relatively short, the next marker visible from the first. He clearly showed how an ancient traveller could make his way across country by following shorter 'leys' or tracks, marked end-to-end by important markers – churches, high burial mounds or cairns.

It is also known that Neolithic people created straight banks or ditches, called a cursus. These are thought to have been for ritual or ceremonial purposes. In recent times, the finding of arrowheads and sporting implements suggests that they may have been the sites of competitions, or a proving ground for young men as they move into adulthood. Others believe they were laid out along astrological lines, and were for religious purposes. The most famous cursus is at Stonehenge.

Other tracks identified as leys were known 'corpse routes', straight tracks where the dead were taken for burial. It is not surprising that these routes in particular attracted stories of supernatural experiences such as ghost sightings, given the nature of the cargo being carried there. The marking points would logically be churches or burial places along the routes. Many of these tracks were later adapted by the Romans to create the straight Roman Roads.

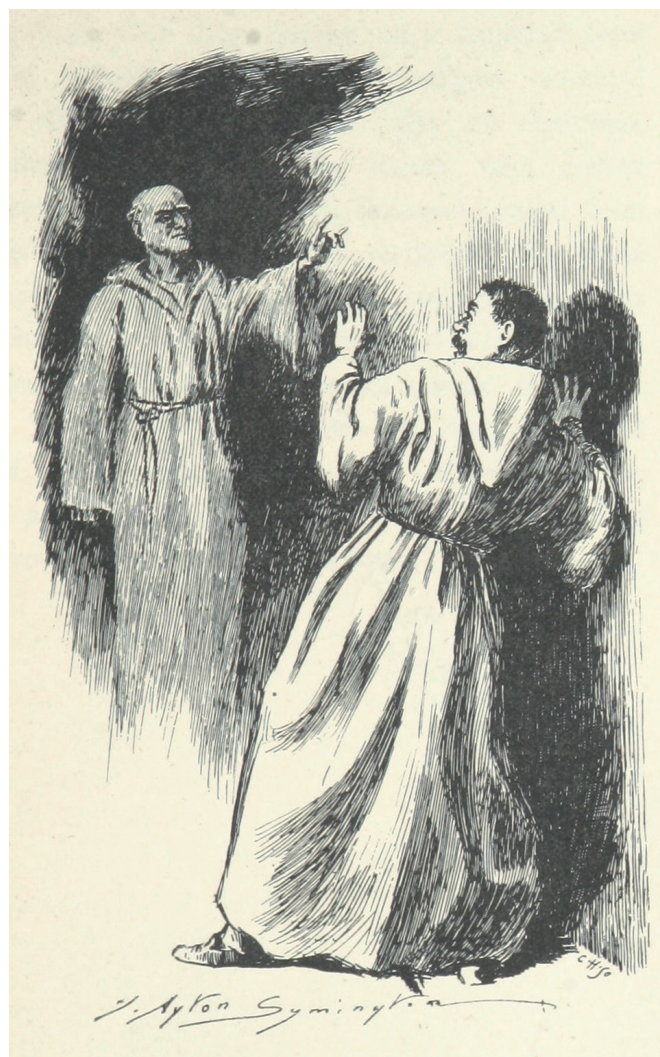


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It wasn't until the 1960s and the emergence of the 'Earth Mysteries' movement, that other theories were attached to the concept of ley lines. In 1961 Tony Wedd suggested that they were laid down by prehistoric societies to connect with alien spacecraft. Shortly after that, John Michell's *The View over Atlantis* took this theory a step further. He revived earlier theories that there might be a spiritual dimension to ley lines. There was a traditional Korean belief that evil spirits could only travel in straight lines. In China, straight roads were avoided so that evil spirits would have difficulty moving around. Michell went on to establish a 'Ley Hunter' community to identify and map ley lines. It was directly as a result of Michell's publications, that the idea of 'Earth Energy' was created. He also was the first to suggest that dowsing could identify such energy lines. Nothing could be further from Alfred Watkins' original concept of ancient waymarkers.

Another key feature in the study of ancient roads was the significance of crossroads. It was traditional to erect a marker at the crossroads, and this was seen by some to have spiritual significance. It was common to use a crossroads as a burial place, for suicides or to bury witches that had been executed. As unconsecrated ground, it was believed that the evil or restless spirits would disperse along the various straight roads that ran from the crossroads, and would not remain trapped in one place.

Crossroads became an area of interest for paranormal investigators, who collected sightings of ghosts and other events along ancient leys. The belief that restless spirits move along straight lines grew in popularity during the folk revival of the 1970s, when people eagerly sought out old folk tales and ghost stories. One typical example of this involves what became known as 'black dog lines'. Ley enthusiasts saw straight lines along which stories of a ghostly black dog haunting travellers were common in many different areas of the UK. At Rosslyn we have our own Black Dog story, which tells of a hound killed with his master at the Battle of Roslin, and who haunts his killers to this day.



Sightings of ghosts and other phenomena were associated with ancient ley lines.

So, in recent times, the existence of a ley in a particular location encouraged belief that ghosts and spirits were likely to be encountered. It formed part of the geomancers' belief in Earth Energy, which could be plotted in gridlines around the Earth, and searched for with dowsing rods and other devices. Could hot spots of Earth energy release spirits and other manifestations?

Ley Lines and Rosslyn Chapel

Some people who enter Rosslyn Chapel seeking energy lines will gravitate to the North East corner, where a vortex is said to be found. A vortex is thought to be an area of concentrated energy emanating from the earth. This is said to be found at a point where ley lines cross. People say they feel a tingling, or a vibration. Others believe that the vortex is a portal for spirits. A point on the Chapel floor where two ley lines are said to cross are also a magnet for geomancers. They feel warmth, sometimes cold, some report feeling vibrations throughout their bodies. A knight on horseback is reported galloping along one of the ley lines as it runs by College Hill House. And grey lady ghosts have been seen walking in and around the Chapel and Castle.



Some people claim to feel patterns of energy within Rosslyn Chapel, but there is no empirical evidence to prove this.

To date, none of the current Rosslyn Chapel staff have encountered such phenomena, but they are aware of visitors who feel warmth or vibration in certain parts of the Chapel. For that reason, if a visitor to the Chapel asks us, we are happy to show them the areas that tend to attract our more esoterically minded visitors.

However, there are no maps that definitively show ley lines crossing Rosslyn Chapel, and ghost sightings abound all around this area, not necessarily along straight lines. The 'vortex' is not in the place where the ley lines are said to cross in the Chapel. So nothing is quite what it seems.

Every Earth Energy explorer who comes here, tells a different story, each convinced that theirs is the correct interpretation of the Chapel. None can be verified in any scientific way. As long as a theorist does not seek to impose their interpretation on everyone, or to disrespect the experiences of our Chapel's own staff, we are happy to welcome all views. It's all part of the intangible cultural heritage of this ancient monument!

Written by Joe Walker and Fiona Rogan

Further Reading

The Old Straight Track by Alfred Watkins,
1925 Reprinted 2017 in www.heritagehunter.co.uk

Ley Lines: The Greatest Landscape Mystery,
by Danny Sullivan, Green Magic, Somerset 2004

Ley Lines in Question. T Williams and L Bellamy,
Littlehampton Book Services Ltd 1983

Explore the website: www.spookygeology.com

www.rosslynchapel.com