

Mave Marian, The Sherwood Dowser

## ADVENTURES OF A SHERWOOD DOWSER PART 4 - SOUTHWELL TEMPLAR MINSTER & THE GHOSTS OF TREES

Having had several adventures exploring the SW tip of the Sherwood Forest pentagram around and about Newstead Abbey, I turned my attentions to the SE tip some 12 miles due east at Southwell Minster. Here I found various links between the two places including a brass eagle lectern that had been fished out of a lake at Newstead Abbey and a house lived in by the poet Byron who once owned Newstead Abbey. I also felt that the area where the High Altar and Chapter House of Southwell Minster now stand was once a sacred grove in the forest surrounding a Holy Well.

Situated in the centre of a small sleepy market town in the heart of what was once the heavily wooded Sherwood Forest, Southwell Minster is the Mother Church of Nottinghamshire. It was originally the southern capital of the Diocese of York but was awarded Cathedral status in 1884 and became a Diocese in its own right.

In 1108 work began to replace an earlier Saxon Minster that had long been a place of pilgrimage housing the relics of a Saxon Princess, St Edburga, Abbess of Repton in Derbyshire (20 miles SW of Newstead Abbey) and daughter of Ealdwulf, King of the Angles, who died around 700CE. In 1959 a substantial Roman Villa complex with an Anglo Saxon cemetery above it was found around 100m east of the present Minster.

The new Norman Minster, built from local cream-coloured sandstone with distinctive pyramidal spires capping its twin towers, was completed around 1150. It had independent status and owed allegiance to none but the Pope, just like the Templars whose hallmarks are all over Southwell. The floor in front of the High Altar contains Templar symbolism and panes of 16<sup>th</sup> century glass in the lower part of the East window behind it come from the Temple Church in Paris which was demolished in 1808. A Celtic style cross containing the Templar Motto of IN HOC SIGNO VINCES stands in the grounds to the SE of this window. 100m to the NW of the Minster is a timber-framed coaching Inn dating from 1463, aptly named the 'Saracen's Head', alluding to the Christian Crusades to the Holy Land to oppress the Saracens that were led by Templars.

Around 1234 work started to extend the Norman Minster eastwards almost doubling its footprint and enclosing a Holy Well which was incorporated into a courtyard and then filled in and roofed over in 1764 because a drunken clergyman apparently fell in and drowned. The well is now inaccessible to the public. Part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century extension included an octagonal Chapter House right next to the Holy Well. The Chapter House and the corridor leading to it are world-renowned for being adorned with intricate carvings of foliage, fruit, animals, mythical creatures and green men, perhaps testimony to it having been built on the site of a sacred grove deep within Sherwood Forest.

A Sycamore tree in the grounds turned out to be a Beacon Tree. These trees broadcast energy aerially over a radius of 2-3 miles in much the same way as a mobile phone mast. I had understood from Paul Syrett's "Wisdom of Trees" talk that Beacons Trees were usually Oaks or Yews. However, dowsing suggested that this Sycamore had self-seeded where a great oak had once stood. Paul Syrett of the Slimbridge Dowsing Group had also said that Beacon Trees are associated with a nearby spring or Well and this tree was only 60m SE of the now enclosed Holy Well.

Morris Dancers are known to have performed in Southwell Minster at Whitsuntide (now the late May Bank Holiday) for at least 900 years and this became part of the annual Southwell folk festival with many performances taking place in the Minster. I attended one several years ago and the wonderful acoustics of the Minster created a truly magical experience with the earth energies expanding and dancing along. I dowsed an Energy Ley (energetic tube or cable running in a straight line one metre above ground level) from the Beacon tree passing through the area in the Minster where the musical performances take place and terminating at a stone pillar that dowsed as being where a tree once stood. Perhaps this Energy Ley transmits the energy built up during performances and services to the nearby Beacon tree which then broadcasts it throughout the surrounding area?

One of my other quests was to find out whether the lines that make up the Sherwood Forest landscape pentagram on a map are actually Energy Leys and if so, whereabouts they all meet. The answer turned out to be Yes, and the meeting point was a Chestnut Tree in the western end of the grounds around 100 metres from the Beacon Tree to which it was connected by yet another Energy Ley.

I couldn't leave without visiting the manor house in Southwell where the poet Byron had once lived. Here he connected with me again, thanked me for my help over the last few weeks (See Adventures of a Sherwood Dowser Parts 1, 2 & 3) and told me he had a gift for me. That gift turned out to be one of understanding about how trees and earth energies are connected, which was something I had been musing over with fellow Dowzers for the last few months. The ghost of Byron showed me that the earth energy vortexes (dowseable spirals connected to underground water) that I have been working with for many years are actually the ghosts of trees.

The captions below the photographs illustrate my Southwell adventure:

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<https://dowsingsherwood.wixsite.com/website/dowsing-sherwood>



IMAGE 1 - Welcome to Southwell Minster, Cathedral and Parish Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Archbishop's Palace Southwell . . . or should it be the sacred grove devoted to the Divine Feminine in the heart of Sherwood Forest?



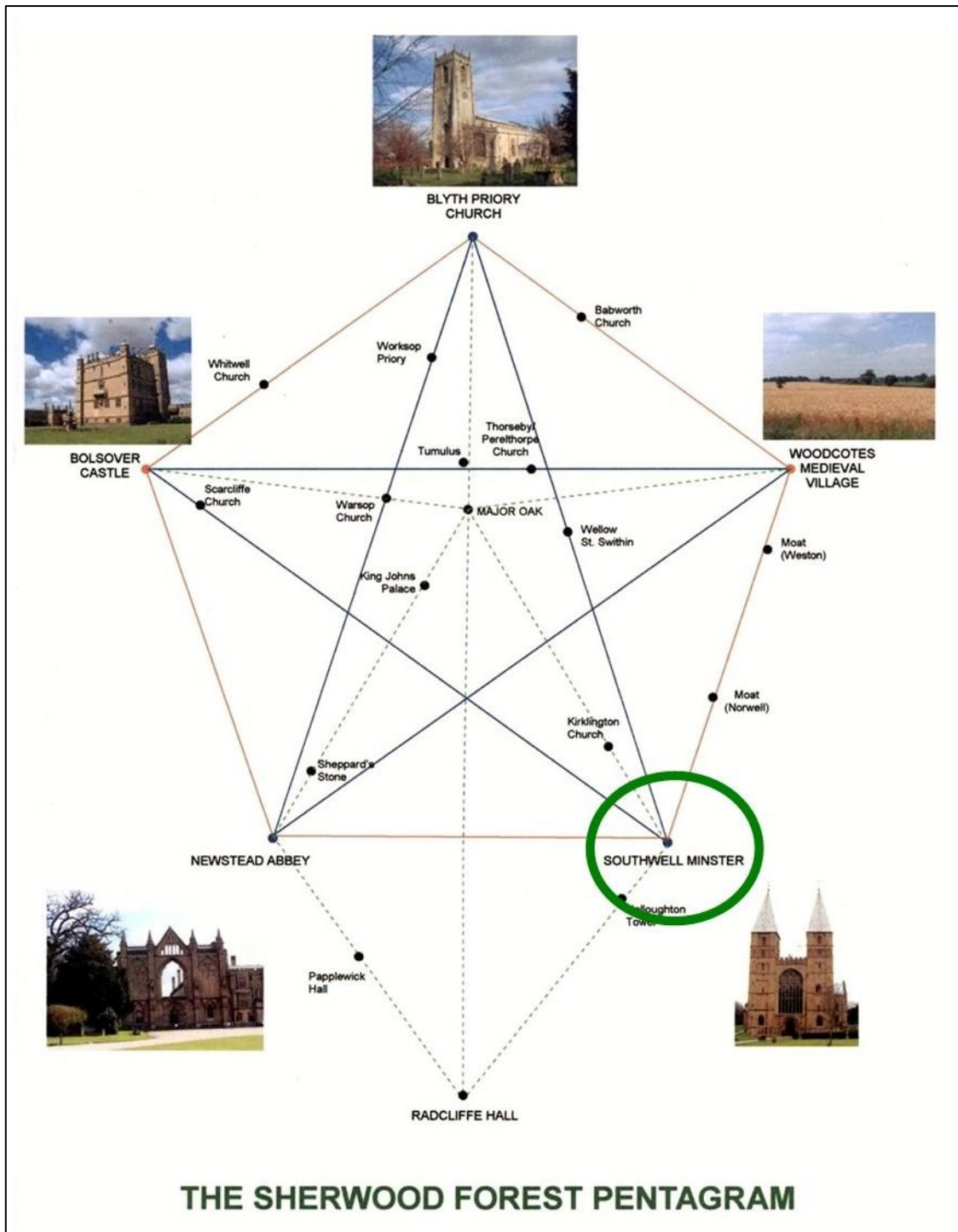


IMAGE 2 - The Sherwood Forest landscape pentagram with Bolsover Castle in the west, Blyth Priory Church in the north, Woodcoates deserted medieval village in the east, Southwell Minster in the SE and Newstead Abbey in the SW. The Major Oak, which is the guardian tree of Sherwood Forest, is in the centre. The green circle shows the location of Southwell Minster.



Image 3 - The 13<sup>th</sup> Century Chapter house at Southwell is world-renowned for its exquisitely carved leaves, fruits and flowers from fields, hedgerows and forests with animals such as goats, hares, birds and dragons peering out of the foliage alongside several Green Men. Was it carved at the behest of the Templars as testimony to the sacred grove which once stood around the healing well now located next to the Chapter House? Somehow the carvings managed to survive both the Reformation and Civil War virtually unscathed despite Cromwell's men stabling their horses in the Nave of the Minster.





IMAGE 4 - The floor in front of the High Altar and below the East Window is normally covered by a carpet. In the centre is the Templar motto of the Lamb of God or Agnus Dei carrying a flag in its cocked foreleg with a Templar cross on it (inset). This is surrounded by a Templar cross and enclosed in multiple circles. The four smaller circles surrounding it show the four Evangelists which equate to the four directions and elements of more Pagan traditions. The four lower panes of stained glass in the window behind the High Altar date from 1528 and came from the demolished Temple Church in Paris.



Image 5 - A tradition dating back to 1109 was for Morris dancers to walk and dance the 14 miles from Nottingham to Southwell at Whitsuntide in a ceremony known as 'The Gate to Southwell' to bring Nottinghamshire's contribution to the upkeep of Southwell Minster, known as the 'Southwell Pence'. This seemed to have ended at the Reformation but was resurrected in 1981. However, it sadly ceased in 2014 as the required road closures were too expensive to police. This inspired an annual folk festival with many of the artists performing in the Minster.





IMAGE 6 - As I walked out of the Car Park, I was captivated by energy of this beautiful Sycamore which turned out to be the Beacon Tree whose job it is to broadcast energy aerially around the surrounding landscape over a radius of 2-3 miles, in a similar way to how mobile phone masts work. Dowsing suggested it had seeded in the stump of an ancient Oak that had been felled and the energy of the tree reached upwards around 36 times its height and downwards 215 times its height.



Image 7 - I dowsed 8 Energy Leys emerging from the trunk of the Beacon Tree at one metre above ground level and radiating away in straight lines. They were around 5cm in diameter and felt a bit like electricity cables. Most of them connected with other trees in the vicinity, but a couple went into the Minster. This Sycamore tree was the same tree my friend and I had connected with when we visited here on the May New Moon in 2012 (See Adventures of a Sherwood Dowser - Initiation).



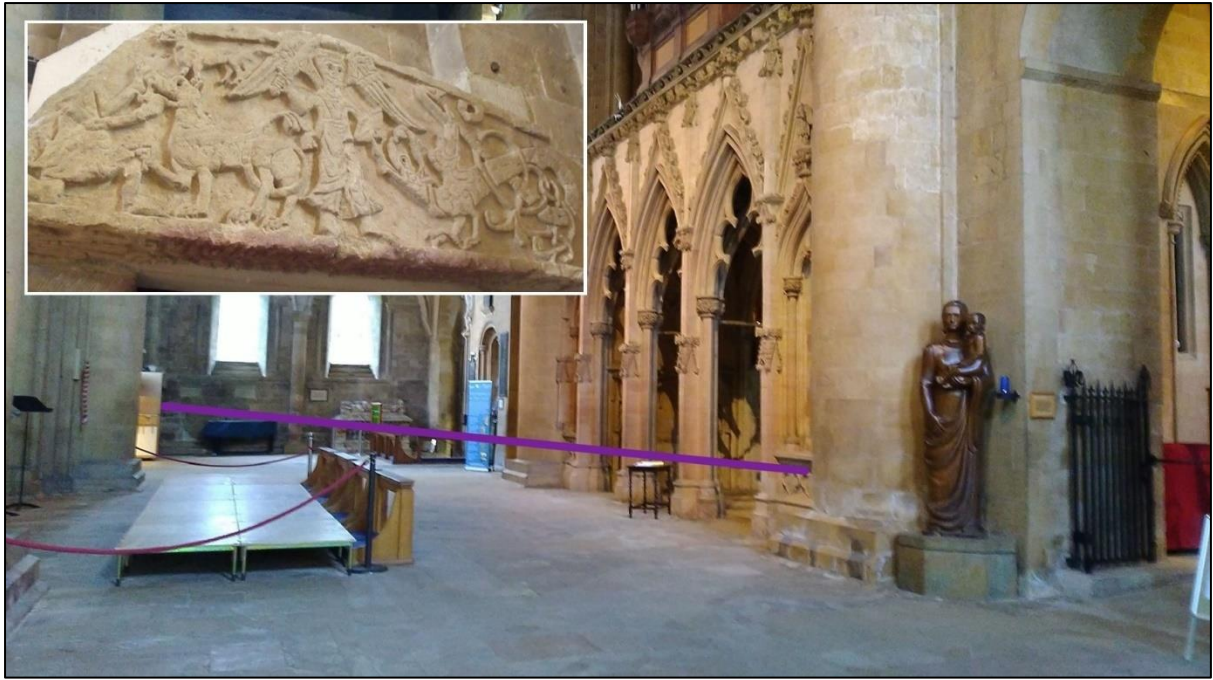


IMAGE 8 - One of the Energy Leys (purple line) radiating from the Beacon Tree entered the Minster in the corner of the North Transept beneath a Saxon carving of St Michael warding off a dragon (inset). It passed diagonally through the Crossing terminating at a pillar at the entrance to the Quire and below the organ which dowsed as being where an important tree once stood. This is the area where Morris dancing and many musical performances take place energising this Energy Ley. I wondered if this high vibrational healing energy then gets transmitted to the Beacon Tree to be broadcast across the surrounding landscape?





Image 9 - As well as the 8 Energy Leys radiating from the trunk of the Beacon Tree, I could perceive 8 Arcs above ground and 8 below (left) which seemed to radiate outwards for some distance. One of the times when a Beacon Tree broadcasts its energy is during the 20-minute period leading up to Solar Noon which was at 13:10 that day. At 12:50 a large energetic toroid (donut) shape rose up above the Beacon Tree (right), looking like a halo, and spinning very rapidly anti-clockwise. Perhaps this is how the Beacon Tree broadcasts its energy?



Image 10 - One of the other Energy Leys radiating from the Beacon Tree (purple line) passed through the Minster and terminated at this multi-trunked Yew Tree which stands on a small mound in the SE corner of the Minster grounds. Standing between the multiple trunks felt like being in a portal but the path alongside it is used as a shortcut by local residents to access the town centre, so I didn't get chance to stand there quietly to explore the portal.





Image 11 - The Energy Ley (purple line) that came from the Beacon Tree, through the Minster and terminated at the multi-trunked Yew Tree also passed through this monument. Standing on a base of three steps like traditional calvary crosses, it was adorned with Celtic, Templar and Masonic symbolism including the motto of IN HOC SIGNO VINCES (By this sign you shall conquer) which was used by the Templars.





IMAGE 12 - This beautiful Chestnut Tree with a slight twist in its trunk turned out to be where the four lines (shown in green) making up the SE tip of the Sherwood Forest Pentagram met. They were hollow energetic tubes, similar to the ones radiating from the Beacon Tree. When I played Tim Wheater's 'Gayatri Mantra' they all became energised. The Chestnut Tree was also connected to the Beacon Tree by another Energy Ley (shown in yellow). I have dowsed similar phenomena at each of the tips of landscape pentagrams that I have found in Malta and the Isle of Man.

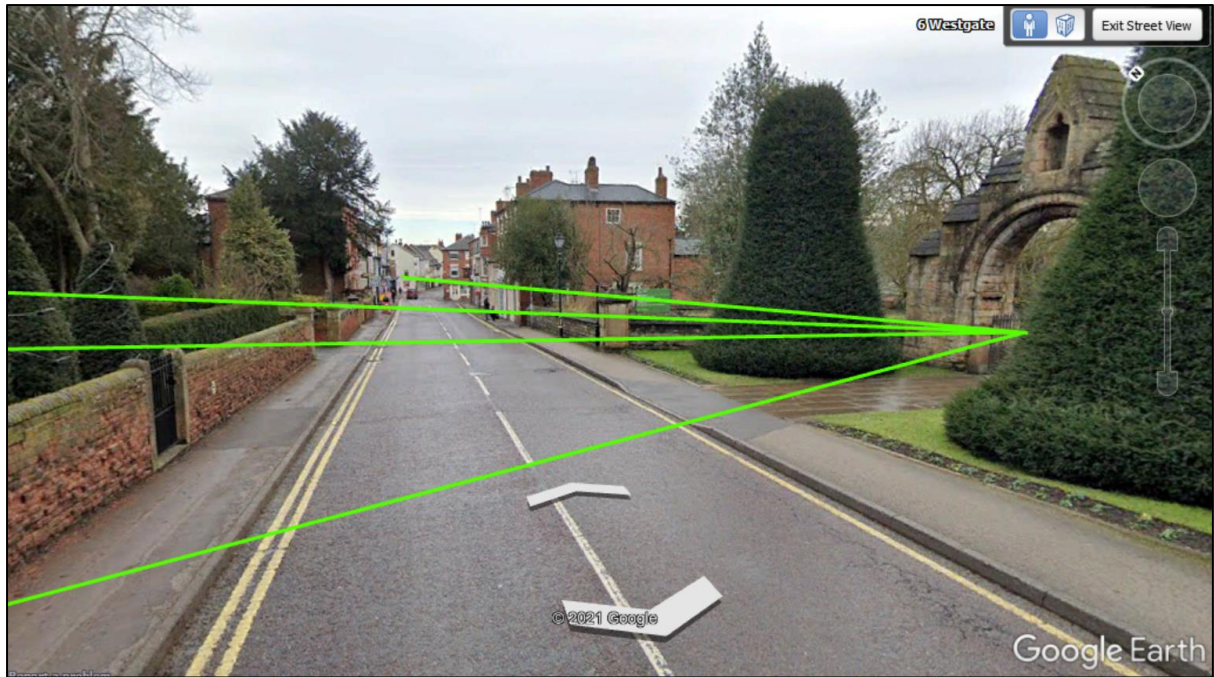


IMAGE 13 - The Pentagram lines radiating from the Chestnut Tree and crossing Westgate shown in Google Earth Street View. It is possible to dowse energy lines in Google Earth Street View. Just hold your dowsing tool or finger in front of the computer screen and use the arrows on your keyboard to move along the street. Your dowsing tool will react in the same way as it would if you were walking along the street.



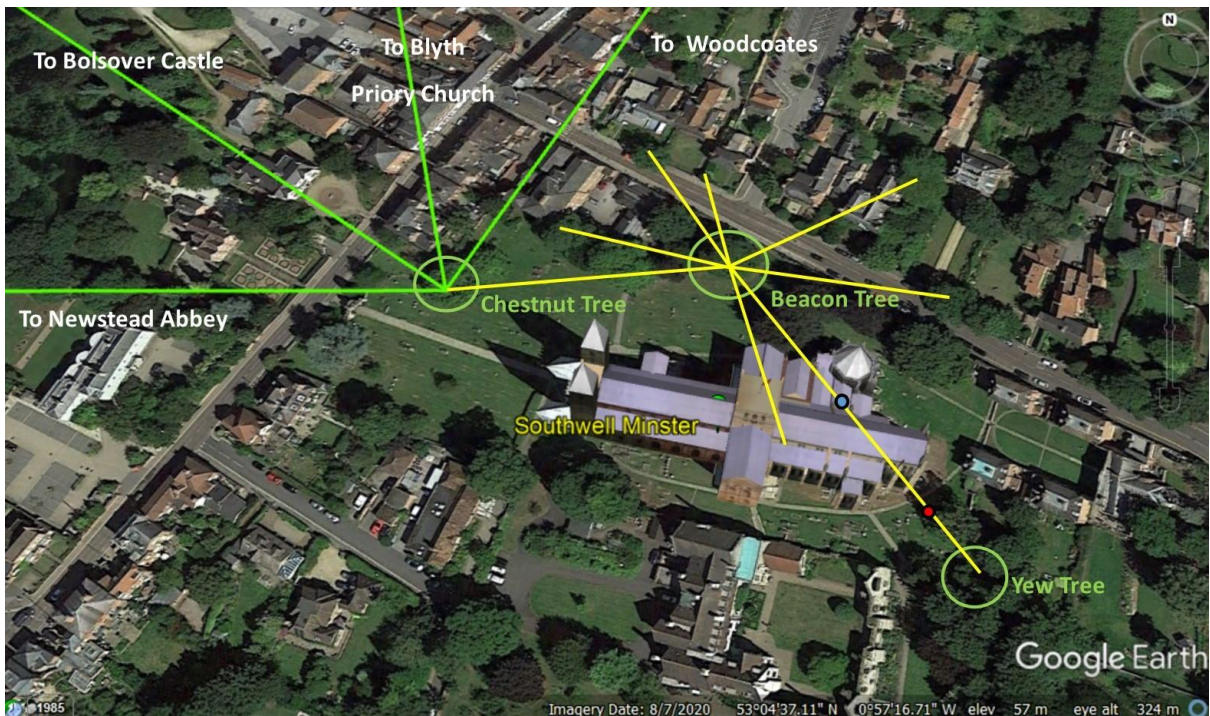


IMAGE 14 - Aerial View of Southwell Mister showing locations of the Beacon Tree, Yew Tree and Chestnut Tree. The pentagram lines (green) radiate from the Chestnut Tree in the directions of Newstead Abbey (W), Bolsover Castle (NW), Blyth Priory Church (NNW), and Woodcoates Medieval Village (NE). The 8 Energy Leys radiating from the Beacon Tree are shown in yellow. One connects to the Chestnut Tree. Another connects to the Yew Tree in the SE corner of the grounds passing through the Holy Well (blue), Chancel area of the Minster and the Templar style monument (red). The rest all connect with other trees in the vicinity, apart from one which terminates in the crossing of Minster at the large column that dowses as being on the site where an important tree once stood.



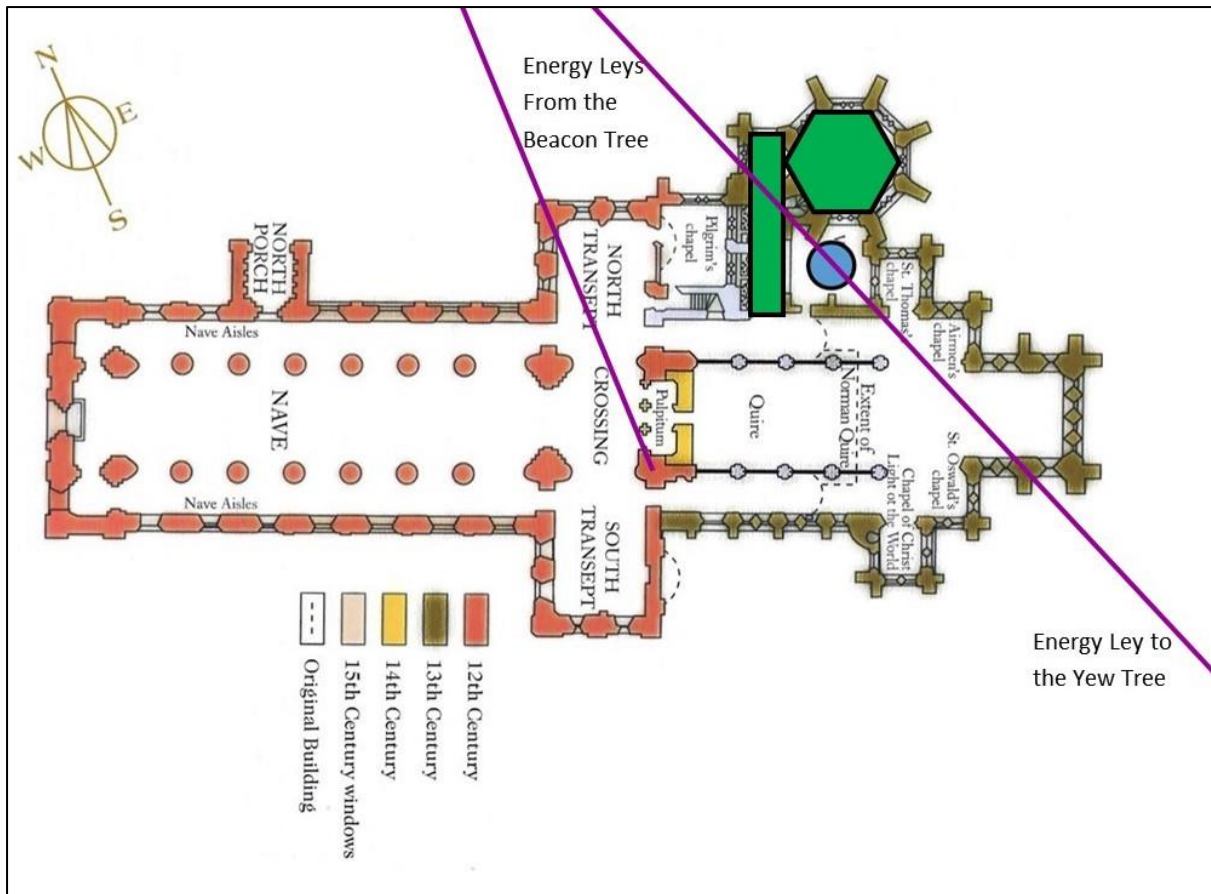


Image 15 - Plan of Southwell Minster. The blue circle is the location of the Holy Well, not far from the Pilgrim's Chapel. Green is the Chapter house and vestibule leading to it where all the carved stone foliage is. The two rows of circles along the Nave and Quire mark the locations of the stone columns which dowsing suggests were once an avenue of trees. A low flattened energy line, similar to the ones I have dowsed on ancient trackways, flows between them. The purple lines are the two Energy Leys coming from the Beacon Tree.



Image 16 - Looking west along the Quire from the High Altar. Is it possible that the stone columns holding up the roof were where an avenue of trees once approached the sacred grove? They all seemed to dowse as being sited where trees once stood. The bench heads in the Quire have particularly fine wood carvings of foliage and woodland animals in profusion reminiscent of the stone leaves of the Chapter House.

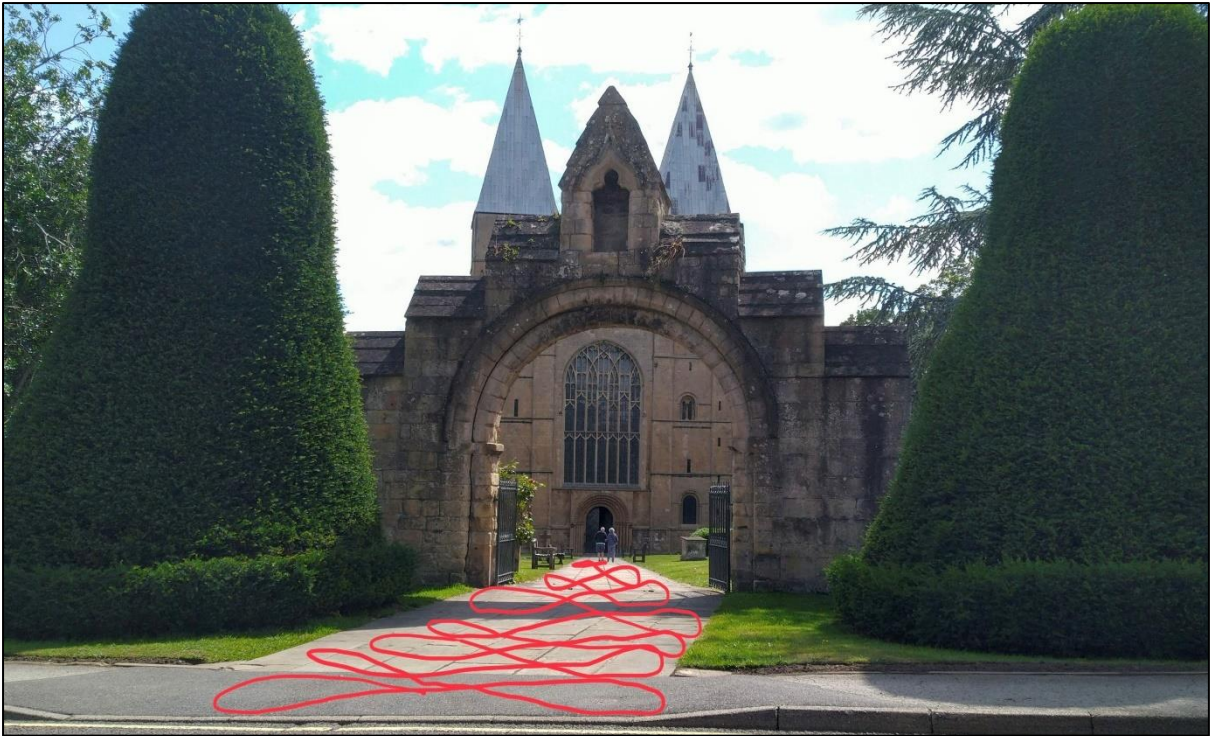


IMAGE 17 - I dowsed this flattened energy which was the width of the path travelling from west to east through the archway from Westgate, in through the west door of the Minster, along the Nave and through the Quire, flowing between the stone columns that may have been where an avenue of trees once stood. Unlike Dragon currents that have spiralling spherical energies radiating from a core one metre above the ground, this one was only about half a metre high and felt like a series of flattened infinity symbols. It is similar to the energy that I have dowsed along ancient trackways and Drovers' roads. I wondered whether it was the energy signature of an ancient route through the forest to the sacred grove where the Holy Well that Southwell took its name from was located.



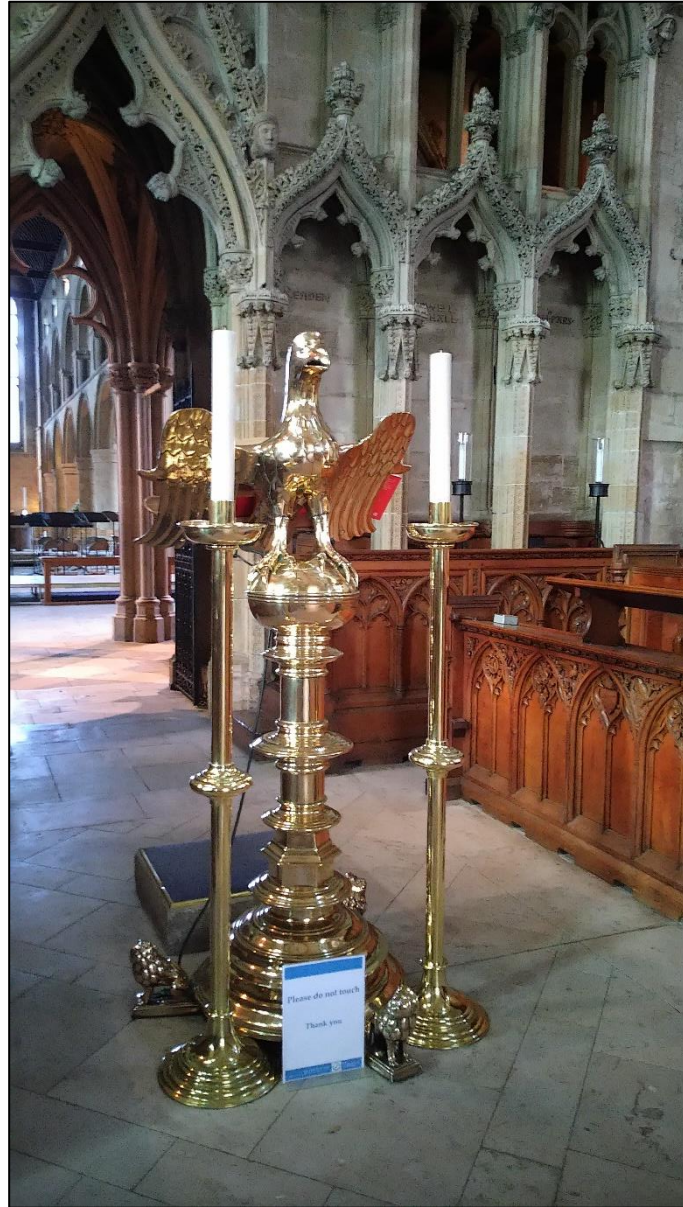


IMAGE 18 - There are several connections between Newstead Abbey and Southwell Minster, the two southern tips of the Sherwood Forest landscape pentagram. One connection is this brass Eagle Lectern which now stands in the Quire at Southwell. It was retrieved from a pond at Newstead Abbey after the Monks threw it in to stop it being taken away at the Dissolution of the Monasteries.



IMAGE 19 - Another link between Newstead and Southwell is Burgage Manor where the poet Byron, who's ghost seemed to have been directing my recent adventures, lived for a while. I sat on a bench outside the house and connected with Byron again. He thanked me for encouraging more nature spirits to return to Newstead and for helping to cross over the spirit of his first love Mary Charworth (see Adventures of a Sherwood Dowser Parts 1, 2 & 3) and said he had a gift for me. It turned out to be a gift of understanding about how trees and earth energy vortexes are connected.





IMAGE 20 - Opposite Burgage Manor was a war memorial. Byron encouraged me to dowse it and to ask whether a tree once stood there. I found it was standing in a spiralling earth energy vortex which was associated with underground water. There was one spiral rising from the ground getting wider (blue) and another spiral of the opposite polarity moving towards the ground in the opposite direction (red). When I asked whether a tree once stood there I was told Yes, several trees had stood on this very spot and the spiralling energy vortex had been created by the underground water being sucked upwards by their tap roots.



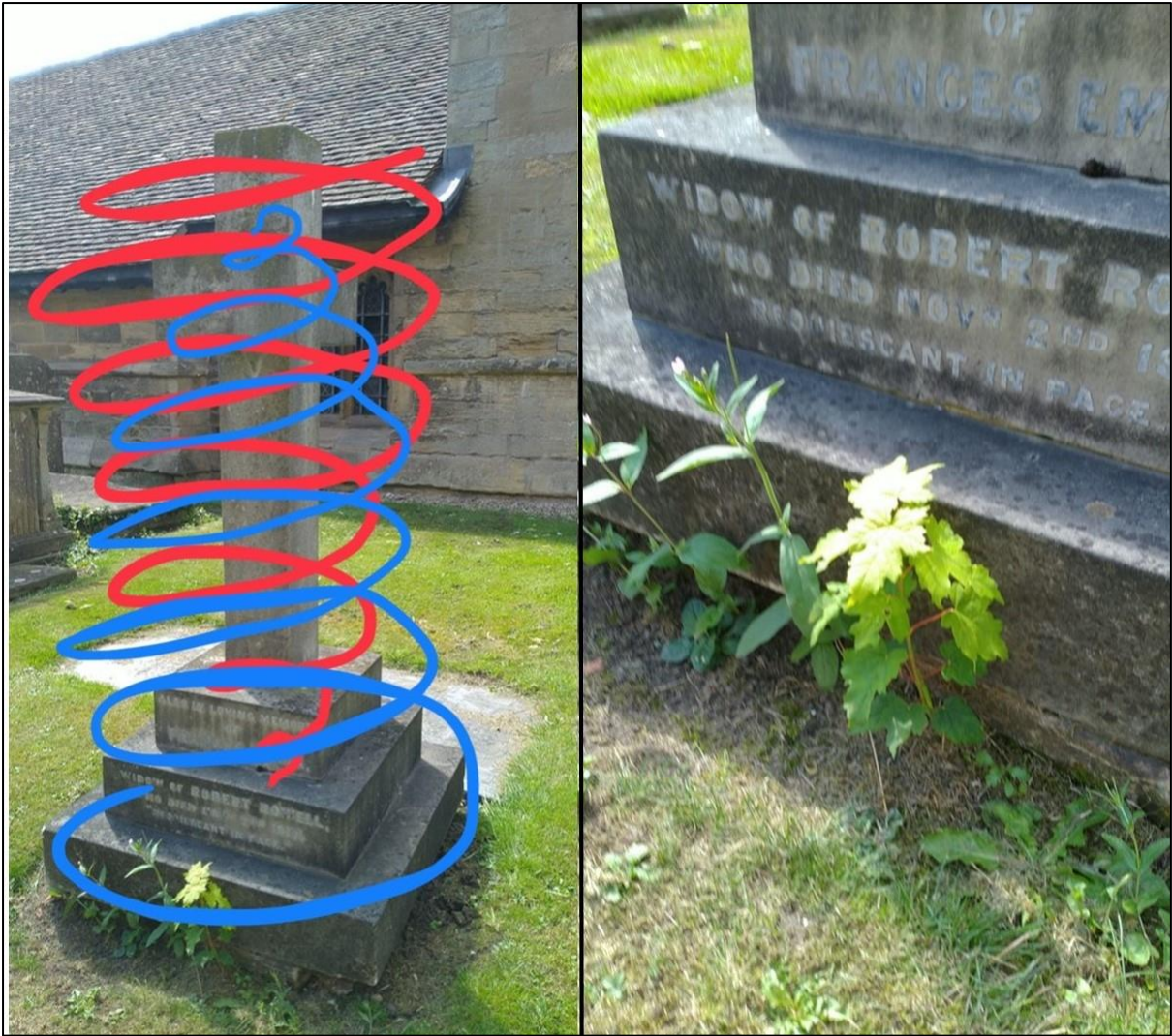


IMAGE 21 - Back in the grounds of the Minster I started to wonder whether all of these spiralling earth energy vortexes that I had been working with for many years were where trees once stood. So, I set about finding more of them to ask the question. This calvary cross style grave marker dowsed as being sited in an earth energy vortex (spiral) where a tree once stood. As if to emphasise this a sycamore sapling had started to sprout alongside it.

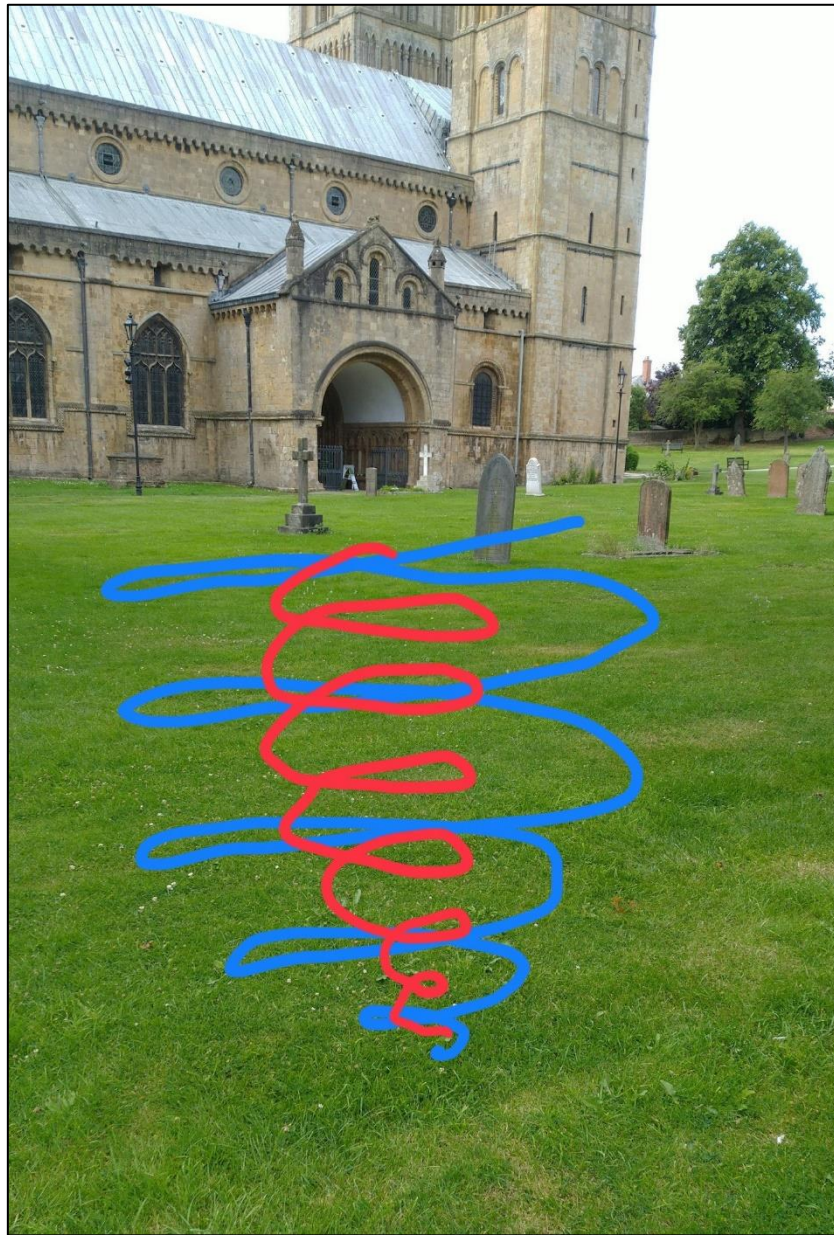


IMAGE 22 - This Earth Energy Vortex had no grave marker sited in it, but it did dowse as being where a tree once stood. As there was nothing there, its energies did not emerge above ground level until I started interacting with it, at which point they started to become active. When I stood in it, I felt its energies rise up around me and merge with my own aura. When I played Tim Wheater's 'Gayatri Mantra' on my phone the energies became very active and I could feel myself swaying around as if I was dancing to the music. I then realised that I was interacting with the ghost of a tree.





IMAGE 23 - On the August New Moon of 2021 I visited the elderly friend who had accompanied me on the New Moon visits to each of the tips of the Sherwood Pentagram back in 2012 (see *Adventures of a Sherwood Dowser - Initiation*). This year our task was to meet at subsequent New Moons and place various items on a map of Sherwood Forest to energise each tip in turn via the Beacon trees. That day was the turn of the SE tip and Southwell. I told my friend about connecting with the ghost of Byron. We then felt a presence in the room and she realised it was Byron who said "Don't doubt, it is true". My friend was able to call on her spirit helpers and together they sent Byron's ghost to the light where he was met by his first love, Mary Charworth, and his beloved Newfoundland dog, Boatswain.



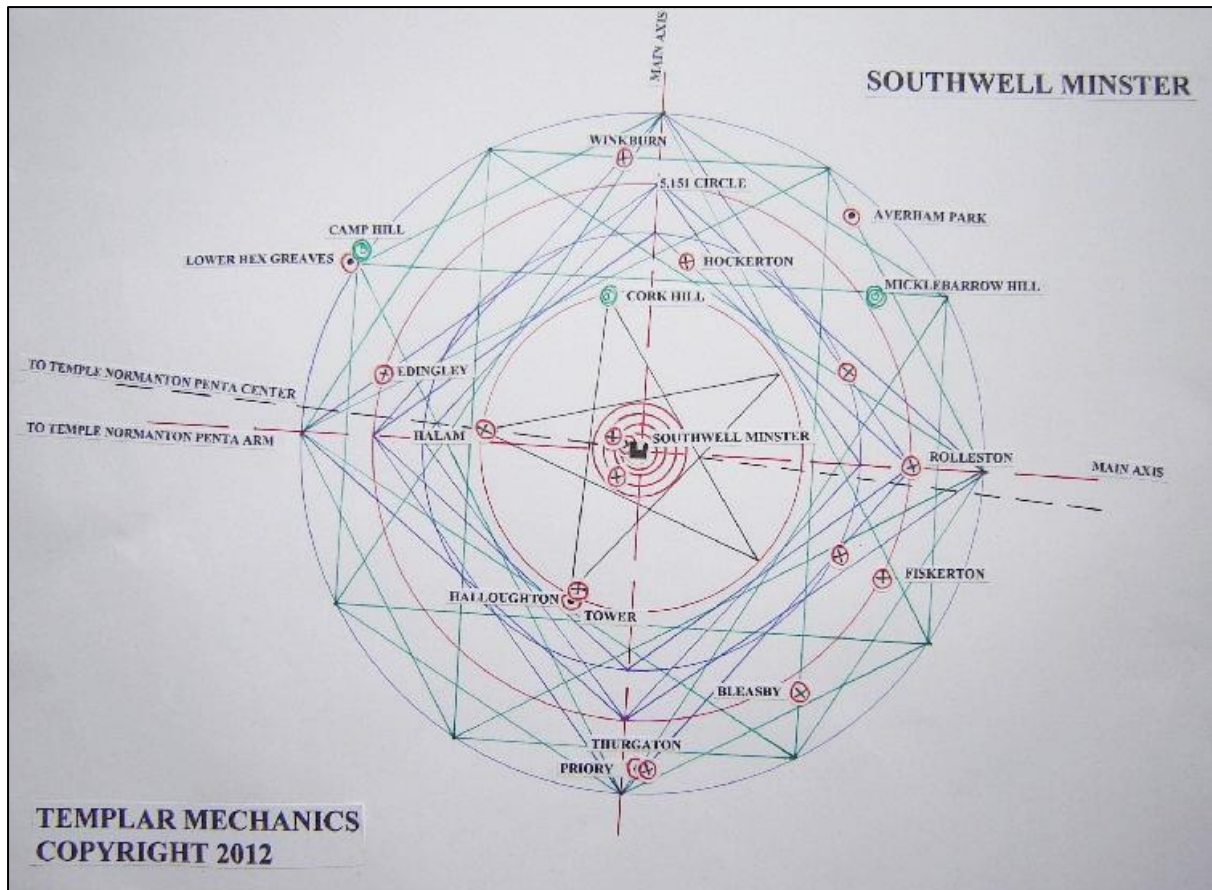
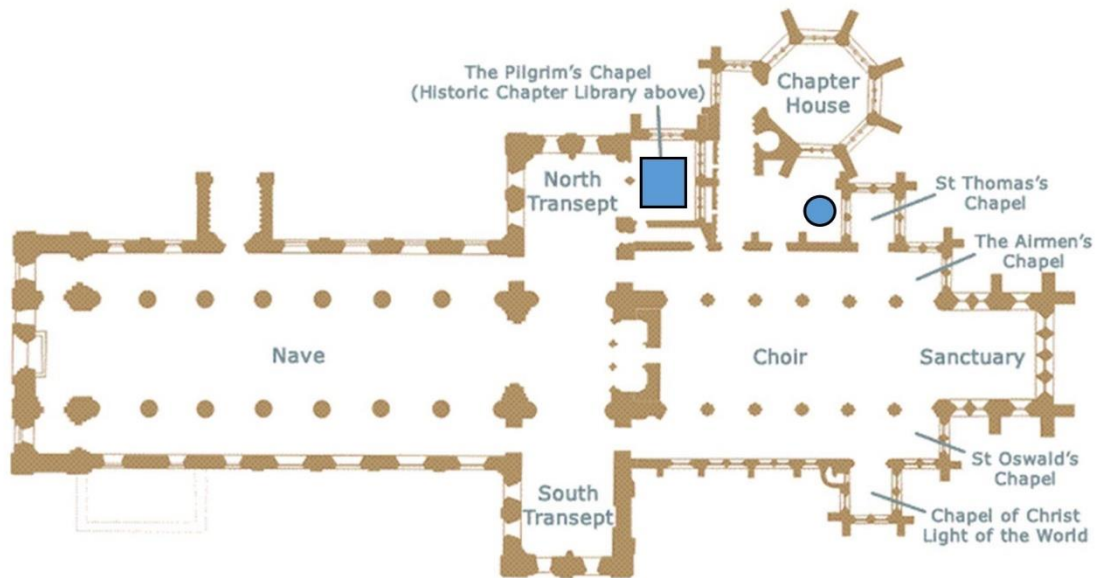


Image 24 - In 2012 I mentioned my suspicions about Southwell Minster's Templar links to Tony Peart of Templar Mechanics who has found complex landscape geometry around many Templar Preceptories. He had a look at Southwell and found it too displayed Templar geometry. This is his graphic of a smaller pentacle surrounding Southwell with links to similar geometries he has found.



**Image 25** - On a subsequent visit to Southwell Minster some weeks later I was told by one of the Churchwardens that The Pilgrim's Chapel (blue square) which is located east of the North Transept and opposite the location of the Holy Well (blue circle) was once used for total immersion baptisms, adding further weight to the theory that this may once have been a sacred grove around a Holy Well - the South Well.



**Image 26** - I recently discovered that in May 2021 the main altar area of Southwell Minster was scattered with 5,000 hand-shaped metal leaves in an exhibition called "The Leaves of Trees - A Reflective Memorial". Little did those who organised it realise that this was also a reflective memorial of the sacred grove that was here 2,000 years ago, before buildings gradually replaced the ancient trees and enclosed the Holy Well. The trees themselves may have gone but their energy remains holding the memory of the once sacred open space accessible to all.