

ROBIN HOOD AND THE TEMPLARS



Mave Calvert, October 2009

WAS ROBIN HOOD A TEMPLAR?

Could it be the Robin Hood was one of the legends created by the Templars as a way of passing on secret, and potentially heretical, information in ballads for those with ears to hear? They certainly seem to have encoded information in the geometry of the landscape around their preceptories, and into the geometry and stonework of their Cathedrals, for those with eyes to see.

In a book entitled "Robin Hood and the Lords of Wellow", Tony Molyneux-Smith casts doubt on the theory that the legend of Robin Hood was based on just one man, such as Robin of Loxley. He suggests that the legend of Robin Hood was based on several generations of the Knights **Foliot** who lived at Jordan Castle on the edge of Sherwood Forest during the 12th and 13th centuries.

The village of Wellow lies on the eastern edge of Sherwood Forest, on the A616 which was once the Great North Road or "Kings Great Highway" that ran from Nottingham to Blyth. About a quarter of a mile to the north east of Wellow are the remains of Jordan Castle, now nothing more than an earthwork on private land, but thought to have been a square structure with a tower at each corner. Wellow itself has some unusual features. It is surrounded by a double ditched moat or rampart known as the Gorge Dyke. Remains of a substantial drawbridge over the road can be found to the west. In 1299 the "Community of Wellow" was given its own seal. A 16th century map of the village includes the motto of "Fail Me Never". St Swithin's Church is 12th Century and tunnels have been found from the church in the direction of both Jordan Castle and the nearby Rufford Abbey. There is a triangular shaped village green with a permanent Maypole, which is still used for annual May Day celebrations. Remarkably, the village green was originally the exact shape of an 12th/13th Century iron arrow head, and it pointed directly at Nottingham Castle.

Molyneux-Smith suggests that when Rufford Abbey was founded in 1146 several of the surrounding villages including Rufford, Grimston, Winkerfield, Crately, Westhaw, Alnton and Besthorpe, which were described in the Domesday book of 1086, were cleared by the monks in order to establish the Abbey. He suggests that the new village of Wellow and the nearby castle, which did not appear in the Domesday Book, was then built by Sir Robert Foliot to house the displaced villagers who became the community of Wellow or the legendary "Merry Men".

One of the many ballads about Robin Hood includes the lines:

*"Then there was a fayre castell,
A little within the Wood,
Double ditched it was about,
And walled by the Road"*

Jordan Castle itself was not double ditched but the village of Wellow was. It was also a little within the wood, walled by the Great North road and very close to the castle.

The Foliot pedigree listed in Molyneux-Smith's book starts with Sir Robert Foliot (1110-1165) followed by Sir Elias Foliot (1160-1220), Sir Jordan Foliot (1200-1260), Sir Richard Foliot (1222-1299), Sir Jordan Foliot (1244-1299) and Sir Richard Foliot (1284-1350). Research on the internet gives us three more generations starting with Rainald Foliot (born 1033 in Normandy and came over to England with William the Conqueror), Sampson Foliot (born around 1063 who gave his name to Tamerton Foliot near Plymouth) and his two sons, Rainald Foliot (born 1093) and Richard Foliot (born 1095). Richard was the father of Sir Robert Foliot (1110-1165) who built Jordan Castle.

All these Foliots existed at the same time as the Templars were active and they all were Knights. There is historical evidence to suggest connections between the Foliots and the Templars. According to "The Knights Templar in Kesteven" produced by Lincolnshire County Council, a Helias Foliot donated a mill and cash to the Templars in the parish of Beckingham. Also a Pagan Foliot donated 20 acres of land in Spanby parish, both thought to be associated with the Temple Bruer Preceptory. According to the British History Online website and the Yorkshire History website, the Templars had a chapel at Norton, about 7 miles north of Doncaster, and Jordan Foliot gave 20 acres of land at Fenwick (3 miles east of Norton) in support of the Chaplain at Norton.

Much of what is now South Yorkshire was, in medieval times, covered by the 30 square mile Forest of Barnsdale, in the same way that Nottinghamshire was covered by Sherwood Forest. Today, around 2 and a half miles south west of Norton can be found an area called Barnsdale Bar, the highest point in the area where the A639 Pontefract Road meets the A1 (Great North Road). To the south is Robin Hood's Well. Barnsdale Lodge, Fenwick and Norton were once all part of the parish of Campsall and here there is an ancient Church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. Local legend has it that Robin Hood and Maid Marian were married here. One of the many ballads about Robin Hood includes the lines:

*"My lord, the King of England
Grant me my asking
I made a chapel in Bernysdale
That seemly is to see,
It is for Mary Magdalene
And thereto would I be"*

Assuming this is a reference to what is now the church of Campsall St. Mary Magdalene in the old forest of Barnsdale, then it provides evidence to nicely link the Foliots, Robin Hood and the Templars.

Molyneux-Smith tells us that Foliot is a French name which translates as *Feuille Verte* or "Greenleaf". Rainald Foliot was the Great Grandfather of Sir Robert Foliot who built Jordan Castle. He came over to England with William the Conqueror and was the recipient of large amount of land for services rendered during the Norman Conquest. One of the many ballads about Robin Hood includes the lines:

*"Men call me Reynolde Grenelefe
When I am at home"*

The name "Rainald" sounds very much like "Reynolde" when pronounced and "Greenleaf" is a translation of Foliot. So could this ballad actually refer to Rainald Foliot and his descendants?

The green man has long been associated with Robin Hood and is sometimes referred to as a "foliated" head. Carvings of the Green man appear in many churches and Cathedrals around the country especially in those in the Sherwood area.

It would seem likely therefore that the Foliots were actually Knights Templar. If so, then Jordan Castle, the village of Wellow and its environs were probably built to a Templar blueprint. There is certainly some interesting geometry in the landscape around Wellow which relates to Rufford Abbey and the nearby village of Ollerton.

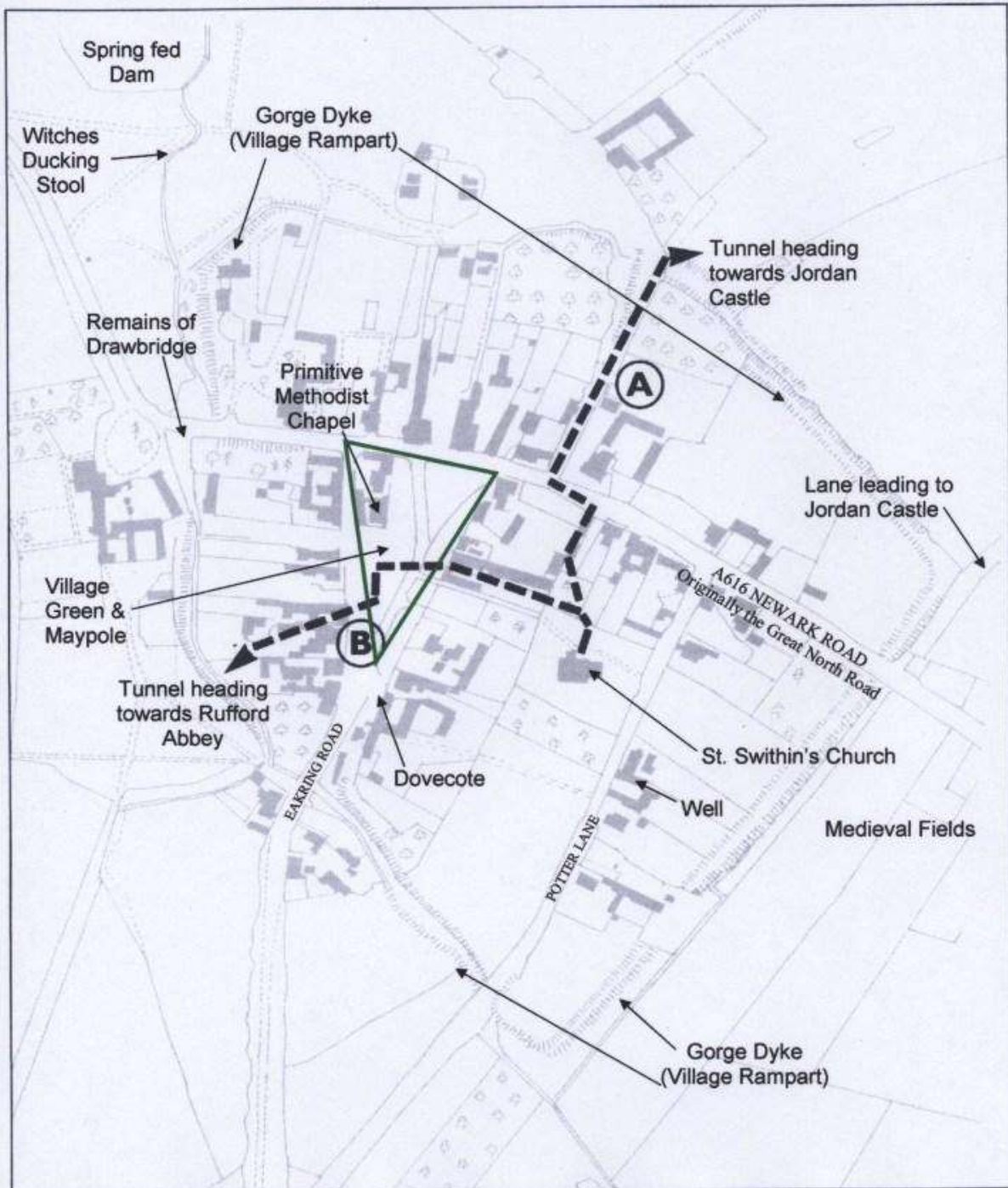
The village of Wellow is within the **Sherwood Forest Pentagram**, the heart of which is the Major Oak in Sherwood Forest. The two bottom legs of the pentagram rest on Newstead Abbey and Southwell Minster. The tip of the pentagram lies at Blyth, where the ancient church was once a Benedictine Priory. The western arm of the pentagram falls on Bolsover Castle. The eastern arm of the pentagram falls on Woodcoates deserted medieval village which was situated near Wells Farm and Babbington Springs Farm some 3 miles east of Tuxford.

If the line which runs from Bolsover Castle to Woodcoates is extended it runs directly to **Lincoln**. One of the places intersected by this is Thorseby Hall. Here there is a courtyard in the centre of which is a statue of Robin Hood with outstretched bow pointing into Lincolnshire.

Lincoln itself is surrounded by a **pentagram** which is roughly the same size as the Sherwood pentagram. It is more subtle in that only two of its arms are clearly marked (Caenby corner and Wragby). However its lines include Stow Minster, the original Cathedral of Lincolnshire, and Navenby, close to the Temple Bruer Preceptory. The interior angles of the pentagram arms are all 36 degrees. It is oriented to true north running exactly in alignment with Ermine Street north of Lincoln. Lincoln itself lies almost dead centre. Extension of two of the lines link in to Newstead Abbey and Blyth Priory Church in the Sherwood Pentagram and the SE arm links to the Boston Stump.

WELLOW

Based on a map in Tony Molyneux-Smith's "Robin Hood & the Lords of Wellow" (1998)



Wellow was originally a fortified village surrounded by a dyke or village rampart with a drawbridge. The village has its own seal, a village green and a maypole. The green triangle shows the extent of the original village green which Molyneux-Smith believes was in the shape of an arrowhead pointing straight at Nottingham Castle. Less than half a mile to the north east stood Jordan Castle built by Sir Jordan Foliot. A mile and a half or so to the south west lies Rufford Abbey. The tunnels (A & B) from St. Swithin's Church were located by dowsers from the East Midlands Dowsing Group in 1997.

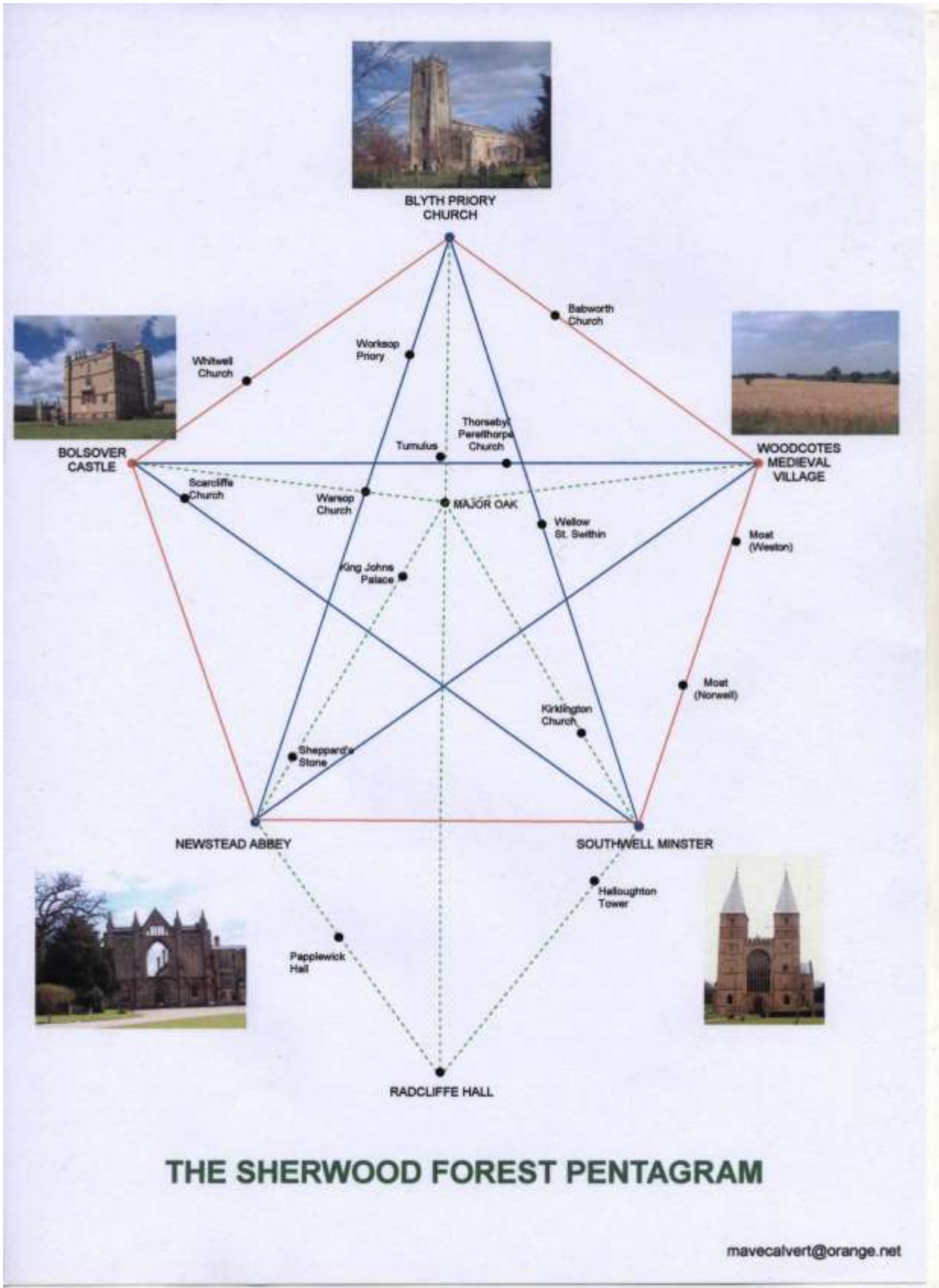
THE WELLOW TRIANGLES



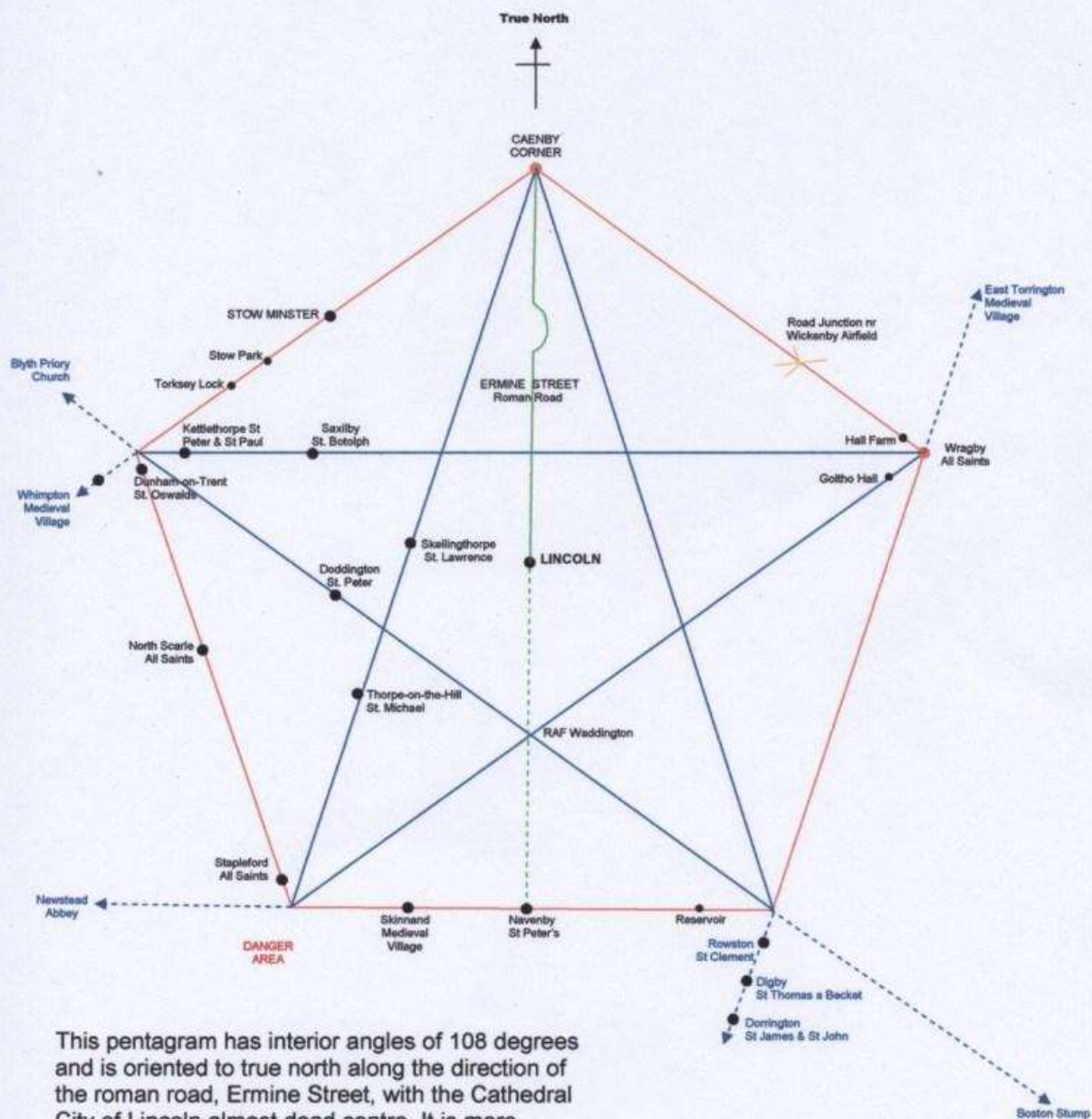
The distance between Boughton St. Matthew and Wellow St. Swithin is 1.5 miles, exactly the same as the distance between Ollerton St. Giles and Rufford Abbey.

The distance between Ollerton St. Giles and Boughton St. Matthew is 1.7 miles, exactly the same as the distance between Rufford Abbey and Wellow St. Swithin.

Connecting Ollerton St. Giles and Wellow St. Swithin then gives two identical sized triangles with inner angles of 45°, 63° and 72°.



THE YELLOWBELLY PENTAGRAM



This pentagram has interior angles of 108 degrees and is oriented to true north along the direction of the roman road, Ermine Street, with the Cathedral City of Lincoln almost dead centre. It is more subtle than the Sherwood Forest Pentagram in that only two corners are distinctly marked. Extending the lines links it into the Sherwood Forest Pentagram and also to the Boston Stump, reputedly the tallest parish church tower in England.

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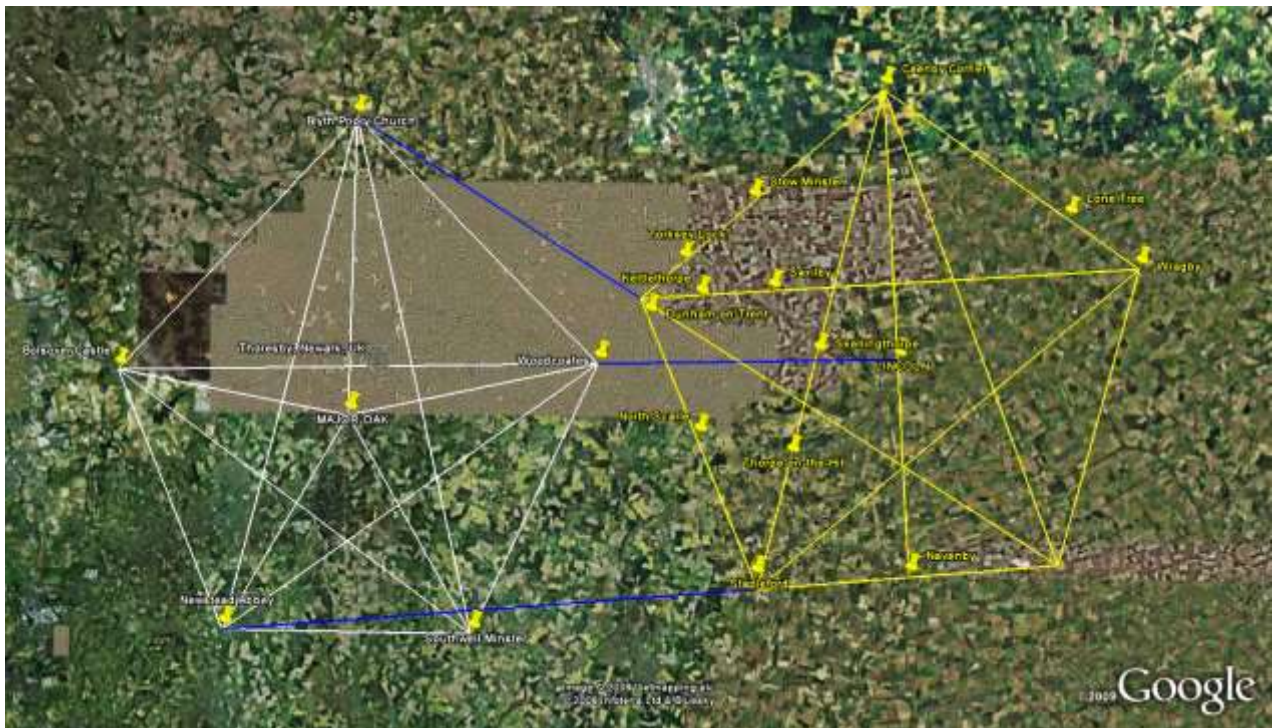
When drawn in Google Earth, the Sherwood pentagram is not a perfect pentagram. However, the Yellowbelly Pentagram is very nearly perfect with its interior angles of 108 degrees, its orientation to true north along Ermine Street, the old roman road, and Lincoln almost at the centre.

There are several links between the Sherwood Forest and Yellowbelly pentagrams:

The line from the SE to NW corners of the Yellowbelly pentagram extends to Blyth Priory Church, the tip of the Sherwood pentagram.

The line from the SE to SW corners of the Yellowbelly pentagram extends to Newstead Abbey, at the SW corner of the Sherwood pentagram.

The line from Bolsover Castle to Woodcoates Medieval village in the Sherwood pentagram extends to Lincoln, almost central to the Yellowbelly Pentagram.

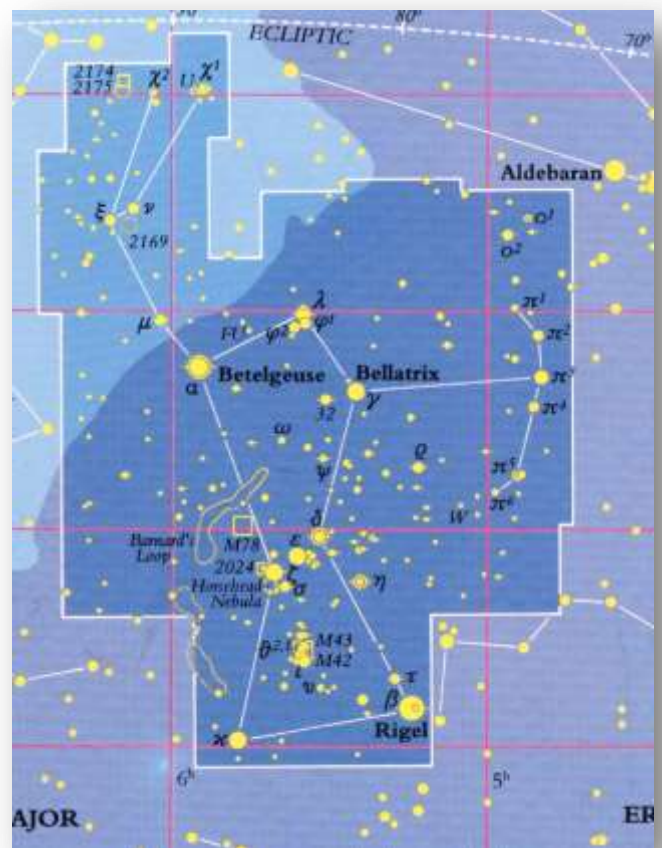


When drawn on the Landranger Ordnance Survey maps both pentagrams fit neatly onto one sheet with the central points of the pentagrams (Lincoln and the Major Oak) being almost central to the map sheet.



It isn't difficult to imagine the figure of Robin Hood, dressed in his Lincoln Green, standing astride Nottingham. The bottom edges of his tunic resting on Newstead Abbey and Southwell Minster, with the tip of his cap touching Blyth Priory Church. The Major Oak and the village of Wellow at his heart. His right elbow touches Bolsover Castle as he draws back his bowstring with the arrow pointing through the deserted medieval village of Woodcoates and directly towards, not Nottingham castle, but **Lincoln**.

And here too we have Orion the Hunter, one of the most notable constellations in the night sky, again with bow outstretched.



If the Templars were responsible for creating the legend of Robin Hood then it is also likely that they had a hand in that other enduring legend of King Arthur, Merlin and the Knights of the Round Table. This legend crops up in Dan Green's Lincoln Da Vinci Code which surrounds Lincoln Cathedral, a statue of Tennyson, author of the Holy Grail poem, and Mary Magdalene.

As well as being the red-breasted bird, ROBIN can be defined as a 'bright flame'. A flame can represent energy. Red is the colour associated with Mary Magdalene, who is said to have worn a red veil and has been outlawed as a whore (a 'scarlet' woman in the 'red' light district). A HOOD is used as a disguise. It covers up the head where knowledge is contained, and the Templars were said to worship a head.

So here we have covered-up knowledge, hidden energy – a green man in the forest, with his mary men, hunting for his red woman, the Maid Mary-Ann, who is hiding in the Lincoln green.

And now I'm beginning to sound like Dan Green...

...another green man hunting for his red lady.

Mave Calvert, October 2009

"A woman who is mad will eventually start raving about the Templars"