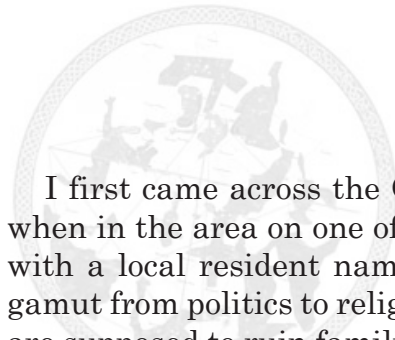




Background and Personal Connection



I first came across the Glastonbury Zodiac in the late 1970's when in the area on one of many visits. I had been taking lunch with a local resident named Gwen. Our conversations ran the gamut from politics to religion, magic and other taboo topics that are supposed to ruin families and end friendships. Nonetheless I found Gwen a stimulating conversationalist and her perspective on the strange atmosphere of her home town was insightful and often humorous.

I happened to mention at one point my interest in star lore, which brought an excited response. She told me there was a zodiac in the land around Glastonbury and that it was the real story behind King Arthur's Round Table, which, she hastened to add, should really be called Gwenevere's Round Table since it came to Arthur's court through their marriage. And did I realise that I was being introduced to the Table of the Grail by Gwenevere of Avalon!



I encountered the idea of the Zodiac again on another visit to Glastonbury in 1982. (It would later become a tradition of sorts for students of Gareth Knight to meet at Glastonbury in the weeks before attending magical events at Hawkwood College in Gloucestershire.) That year, just before I arrived, a new shop had opened on Glastonbury's High Street. It was called Helios Books. Helios Book Service had been started by Gareth Knight and John Hall in the 60's. Gareth had sold his share of the business to Hall who kept it strictly as a mail order operation, until selling out himself. When Helios Books appeared in Glastonbury it still had much of the marvellous stock of used books that John Hall had built up over the years.

I went there with a friend from Canada who proceeded to purchase piles of these useful and sometimes rare books. Having rather less funds at hand, I settled for a small pamphlet by A.R. Heaver entitled *Somerset's Pre-historic Zodiac Circle* (Avalon Research Centre, 2nd ed. 1966).

Heaver's pamphlet was a summary of the work of Katharine Maltwood, who had first happened upon the Zodiac in 1925 while living nearby in the Polden Hills. The idea of a stellar map imprinted on the land intrigued me and I spent many a day looking out over the Somerset levels from the top of Glastonbury Tor trying to spy these great figures. I can't say I had much conscious success at that time other than to get the general positions of some of the effigies. On further visits since then, in addition to Glastonbury, I went to a number of other important sites in the Enclosure, including Butleigh, Wimble Toot, and the Church of Mary Magdalene near Kenton Mandeville.

In 1986 I visited Somerset again just before I was initiated by Gareth and his magical group into the "Greater Mysteries." While there I met with some friends who were staying at Little St. Michael's, the retreat house at Chalice Well, across the road from Dion Fortune's old home at Chalice Orchard. It was usual for magical people who worked in the line of Dion Fortune to sign the guest book at Little St Michael's which we did, using our mystery initials.



In any case, one evening in those days on the threshold of the Greater Mysteries, we decided it would be a good idea to do a semi-formal magical working in the “Upper Room” that was set aside in the retreat house for meditation and spiritual work. I decided on intuition to read from Dion Fortune’s book, *Avalon of the Heart*, and to focus on her Vision of Avalon, which is her vision of a great procession of spiritual presences that could be characterised as Titanic, Faery, Atlantean, Arthurian, and Arimathean crossing the Realms.

This impromptu visionary ritual began with a reading of Dion Fortune’s experience, recorded in the same book, of the great mist known as the “Lake of Wonder” that rises from Faery springs to cover the land around Glastonbury. Only higher elevations, hills and knolls remain visible above this sea of mist. The relevant passages describe a ritual walk through the mist only to come out on the Tor under clear sky. The mist swirls below, and then as it clears, *“long rifts began to open ... and we saw Butleigh Woods for a moment, wrapped in deepest shadow.”*

This was followed by a recitation of the Vision of Avalon:

“Through the valleys of Avalon moves an invisible pageant in an endless procession. The darkness before the dawn is shot through by the magic of Merlin the Atlantean.”

The great procession appears, and includes among others the figures of King Arthur, Guinevere, the Lady of the Lake, and Joseph of Arimathea.

“And after all these follow three maidens robed in white, and amid them a glory that is not of any earthly fire - a glory long gone from men because of their wickedness, caught up to the heavenly city of [S]arras, some say, but others, buried among the green fields of Glastonbury.”

In the midst of this work a great deal of power built up, accompanied by a violent thunder and lighting storm. I was startled initially, to say the least, but soldiered though.



Persistence proves its worth, and in this case was personally fruitful in opening up a great many important insights and realisations that would resonate for years to come.

For the moment I note two key images in the work cited above: the wood at Butleigh and the three ghostly maidens. As will become evident in the following pages, these are central to the mystery of the Glastonbury Star Enclosure.

Also of note were insights that had to do with the Mysteries of the Bear which interlaced with some pre-initiatic visions I had been having in the months before. These were then ritually confirmed during the initiation ceremony with Gareth and his group at Hawkwood College, where I was given a magical archetype to work with that was closely associated with the bear and the stars. The bear is of course, the emblem of the polar constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor (the Big and Little Dippers) and also the totem of King Arthur, whose name is related to *arth*, the Celtic word for bear. In an interesting twist I later also worked extensively with the Arimathean Mysteries, which provided a foundation of inner contact and inspiration for the cycle of work I began in the mid 1990's, and which subsequently became known as the Magi Group.

Little did I realize that 21 years later I would find myself on Vancouver Island, where Mrs Katharine Maltwood had spent the latter part of her life, researching the mysteries of the Glastonbury Star Enclosure which she identified with the Round Table that was so closely connected to the legendary cycles of King Arthur and Joseph of Arimathea.

As if this was not enough, I found, hidden in plain view on the grounds of the University of Victoria, a scion of the Glastonbury Thorn brought over by Katharine Maltwood. The tree continues to flourish and beneath it, on an old copper sign, you can still make out the inscription:

The Holy Thorn of Glastonbury grafted from the Staff of Joseph of Arimathea that budded in 60 AD.



These strange happenings, ranging over many years culminated when, on the day after starting my research at the University of Victoria, I made a special journey to “The Thatch” which was John and Katharine Maltwood’s Vancouver Island home. The Thatch (which has been renamed) is now a restaurant, and I thought it would be poetically and magically significant to go there for lunch in order to assess my recent experiences, and discoveries.

I arrived, opened the door and was about to step inside when I felt the strongest urge not to cross the threshold, but to take my meal in the garden, even though it was drizzling rain. No doubt seeing me hesitate in the doorway, the restaurant manager came forward asking if I needed help. He raised an eyebrow as I asked about sitting outside, but acquiesced without comment. By the time the waitress arrived, the rain had stopped and sunlight peeked through the clouds.

Now there are times when I have the Sight (which I attribute equally to my Scottish heritage and my magical training) and thus I was not surprised to sense a strong, luminous, female presence sitting near me. I experienced a most powerful feeling of joy, a real happiness and sense of recognition from this spirit, who appeared as a young, attractive woman, wearing a scarf over her head. I felt sure this must be Katharine Maltwood.

This was confirmed next day, when I returned to my research in the special collections department of U Vic’s McPherson Library, and the librarian greeted me with the news that he’d discovered some new uncatalogued items in the Maltwood collection. Among these was photocopy of a chapter from a book of local ghost stories. The article was headed *Sign of the Zodiac at Royal Oak* and tells the story of the Royal Oak Inn which had been built by Colin and Florence Forrest in 1939. However, as World War II quickly diminished the tourist trade, a year later the Forrests sold the Inn to John and Katharine Maltwood. The article goes on:



The Maltwoods did not continue the restaurant, but renamed it “The Thatch” and installed their large art collection in the house. Katharine died in 1961 John died four years later.... Upon his death, the house and its contents were bequeathed to the University of Victoria as a museum. Among other things, John's will clearly stipulated that the house should never again be used as a restaurant.

In 1978, the Maltwood collection was taken from “The Thatch” and transferred to the purpose-built Maltwood Museum and Gallery on the main University of Victoria campus.... The Maltwood house and property were subsequently sold to the Municipality of Saanich, which leased it for use as a restaurant. The name “The Thatch” was dropped. The house became a restaurant called “Chantecler,” a favourite place for fine dining.

In light of such flagrant disregard of the Maltwoods’ wishes, it's not surprising that “Chantecler” became the scene of many a haunting.

So Katharine Maltwood haunts her old home. My initial “meeting” with her in the garden now made sense, being away from the restaurant atmosphere she so deplored. Here too is where the scion of the Glastonbury Thorn had stood before being moved to the grounds of the University.

I have returned to the Thatch (currently named “The Fireside Grill”) many times and never again felt resistance to going inside. And if you should ever get the chance to visit there, and you are fortunate as I have been, you may see a young woman, her hair covered by a white scarf, sitting quietly in the garden or standing at the railing of the loft that overlooks the great room.

In the course of preparing these papers on the Glastonbury Zodiac, I have read Katharine Maltwood’s personal correspondence, examined her maps, studied her notebooks, her carefully annotated editions of the *High History of the Holy Graal* and her handwritten revisions of her own published works. I have handled her wonderful models of the land and the stars, and have pieced together the sections of a hitherto unknown massive eight-foot diameter contoured map of the Somerset Enclosure with the stars overlaid on it.



I mention all this to show how strange the workings of magical life are and how things come along that lead one along a certain path of experience and spiritual service. In the 21 years between my initiation into the Greater Mysteries and my encounter with Mrs Maltwood, I have visited numerous sacred sites in Europe and all across North America, many of which are tuned to stellar, solar and lunar rhythms that interlace with deep UnderRealm energies. I have had the opportunity to participate in groundbreaking and original work at these sites and have gained a practical knowledge of how they work on inner levels – a knowledge which, combined with my magical connections to Glastonbury and intimate familiarity with the work of Katharine Maltwood, gives me reason to believe that despite the current spate of books and websites on the subject, which are largely repetitive, often inaccurate, or hampered by authors' own pet theories, I may have one or two things of interest to say about it all.

