

On a journey...

I pick up 'The Sun and Serpent' one morning at breakfast and continue reading it until midday. I need to go to Cornwall to investigate these veins of Earth's energy. For me this project is not so much about the places of great prehistoric and medieval interest that the lines flow through there, but tuning into the magnetic pathways. Things start happening very fast. I speak to Shola, who books her ticket over from Germany for the day after next and we agree that it's "Cornwall" this weekend.

Alexi hasn't had much time to settle in after returning from Peru and decides not to join me to meet Shola in London. The V&A museum was scheduled, but we're more pulled to the Tate

our dialogues. Many would probably not follow us, but most sentences end in guffaws of laughter. Pointing the car south out of Stroud, at the last minute I make a spontaneous turn off the roundabout leading to the M5 for Bristol, so we end up going cross country along the Cotswold Way, for the first leg of the journey. Passing one of England's ancient burial sites, a long barrow at Uley, there's a unanimous decision to stop. Five minutes later we are bending down to crawl in through the tunnel of the tomb to a blocked off section at its back end. This is the first adventure and we're in good spirits.

Nearby we eat at the site of another long barrow where there's a parking lot and picnic benches.

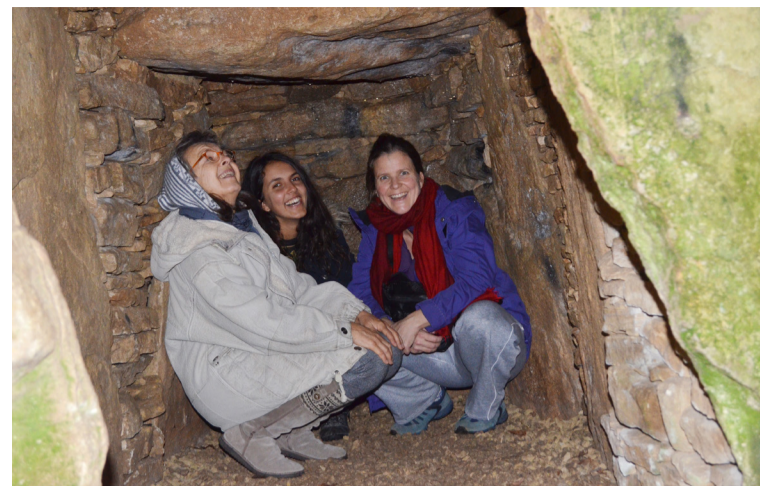
'Sun and Serpent' again. There's a mass of information with village names, churches, descriptions of crossing fields and points on hillsides. These are not run of the mill tourist sites with sign posts from the road, ticket booths and gift shops. We are going to have to don our wellies, brave the mud of the fields and trample across boggy moors around here to find what we're looking for.

Next morning, we set off for Land's End in a fine drizzle. We are fighting with the light, as at this time of year, it's already getting dark at 4pm. We're almost there, but when we catch a glimpse of St Michael's Mount sticking out of the sea a little way off the coast, the waves crashing high against its lower rocks, we gasp and want a photo stop. This is a not just a major union point on the St Michael and Mary lines we're following, but a master crossing place with another that traverses the whole of Europe from Skellig Island in Ireland to somewhere in Israel.

Alexi pulls the car into a little parking area, windscreen wipers full on to manage the now pouring rain. This is the first braving of the elements. Jamyang battles to hold our large umbrella in the fierce wind, while I click a few pictures of this most intriguing of islands. Satisfied with the photo shoot, we get back into the car to go off to the little nearby town of Marazion from where the boats cross to the island, wondering if there'll be any crossings today in such stormy weather. The key turns in the lock and the lights on the dashboard show up, but nothing else fires up. The car is dead.

Alexi finds the road side assistance manual from the glove compartment, but I know that the company will not fix it, but only tow it to somewhere in the UK, and that's that. We need to get the car working, not to go home. The café is open. We send Alexi to flick her eyelids in there. We need help from the angels! She returns with a young woman, who rattles off all sorts of knowledgeable sounding things about car mechanics. We try this and that and in the absolutely pouring rain, push the car around the parking lot, while I sit at the wheel trying to jump start it by releasing the clutch with the car in gear.

It doesn't work. Someone else



Shola, Alexi and Susan inside Uley Long Barrow, Cotswold Way near Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK

from the café fetches their vehicle. A huge white van parks up in front of us. A fellow jumps out and links his battery to ours with the leads. Nothing. Dead. It's not the battery. He's just saying goodbye, telling us to call roadside assistance and sorry not to have resolved the problem, when another fellow manifests out of the passenger seat of the van and dives out of the rain into the driving seat of our car. He says we can start it by pushing it backwards in reverse and releasing the clutch. It's apparently the starting motor hitting a tooth in its cog that's not working. We push backwards this time and hurrah, it starts! We are elated, soaking wet, but elated! He tells us it may happen again, but we now know the method to start it!

To be sure we won't miss the boat over to the island, we go to check the timings, a massive pre-conception that ends up displaying its own sense of humour to us. In the town I keep the car running while Alexi and Shola go off to get the information. Fifteen minutes later they return. The island is only open on Tuesdays and Fridays in the winter. Today is Saturday! This is a real disappointment to miss the jewel in the crown of the line, but we resign ourselves to the fact that we have at least seen it from afar and experienced a great force of hu-

man kindness within its energy field range.

Off to Land's End. The weather is getting worse by the minute and by the time we reach the huge complex of tourist buildings to accommodate the millions of visitors that come to this south westerly most point of the UK each year, there's a gale raging



Susan and Shola picnicking on top of The Cotswold Way, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK

outside. We need to find a place called Carn Les Boel, the very first point on the line, just a little around the cove from Land's End. Donned head to toe in waterproofs and wellies, we run across to the information centre. It's shut. Mother Earth is pulling us into her stream, but we're going to have to work hard to overcome the initial tests of this quest.



'The Spider' by Louise Bourgeois in Tate Modern Gallery, London

Modern. It's my second time in a week and this time I notice it's been housed in an old factory building. That's why the exhibition halls have names like 'Boiler Room' and 'Turbine Hall'. I am equally enamoured as last time and now doubly convinced that my work fits in here. I'm boring through my psychological block here. We visit the permanent exhibits and I'm taken by a huge metal sculpted spider by a French artist, representing the mother figure. I can relate to it as a mother to my own children, as well as to my own mother.

The next morning we leave early for Cornwall, but first pass by Mummy in the respite home. It's a jolly occasion and a flowing conversation in dementia realm ensues, not much stranger than some of the silly conversations we get into as a family where we trick each other into philosophical corners and bend words into their double meanings, or different languages, playing a fluid game with

Although the sun is out, we are the only people here and have to fight with the wind to fill our bowls with Jamyang's homemade rice and vegetables straight out of the pots from home. I remember sitting at this bench eating an ice-cream in mid-summer here, the Welsh mountains and River Severn easily discernable in the distance from this vantage view point at the top of the Cotswold escarpment.

The journey down the M5 and on to where we're staying in Cornwall already takes us past several signposts leading to places that are on this most intriguing of energy lines running from Land's End to East Anglia; Glastonbury, Wellington Monument, Crediton, Belstone pass fleetingly by to remind us of our up and coming quest. In the next 3 days, we're going to visit as many of the points on the Cornish section of the lines as possible. We could spend months on this, but have to focus. That evening I tuck into



Shola, Alexi and Susan with St Michael's Mount in the background, Cornwall, UK