



Ridings Dowser
*REPORT OF DERBY UNIVERSITY'S
"NATURE CONNECTIONS FESTIVAL"*
2016

It started with a phone call:

Way back in early Winter in 2014 the BSD office received a call asking if someone could help for an event that was taking place in Derby University next September. I was asked if members of Ridings Dowsers could take up the challenge and in usual fashion we did.

What is it about, we curiously asked ourselves, all we could deduce was several interested people were getting together on a common theme involving nature and meeting at a large field next to one of the university complexes.

Despite getting there very early to set up the large stand area, we had a great time teaching people of all ages throughout Saturday.

We are invited back:

There were rumors that this one event may not continue as the exhibitor stands were fairly limited, but this was not to be the case. Early in Spring, 2016, Bev Reardon, the coordinator, asked if we would could attend for Friday and Saturday 9th & 10th September. The diary was free, which makes a change, but I was a bit worried about getting eight volunteers to teach dowsing on a Friday, a working day. But again, in true fashion and an attitude of “what the hell” I emailed the University to say we would be there.

We are back:

There were many highlights of the two-day visit to Derby, and in no particular order, the introduction of well-known naturalist Chris Packham to the event was, for the second year, a good crowd puller. Lots of exhibitors were displaying their wares and many were very interactive, especially with the children.

Lots of music and singing kept a jolly tune throughout the two-day period and despite a well-organized agenda, the weather played its part, altering timings and meeting locations. But all went very well with many people and children saying how happy they were coming to the event.

The evenings were also catered for; a talk about Chris Packham’s new book, *“Fingers in the Sparkle Jar”* gave an appraisal of Chris’s life since childhood and how his love of nature grew through the years. And yes, I did buy the book, wow, what a read!

On the Dowsing Stand:

Ridings Dowsers volunteers are very familiar with the way we set up our stand, catering for tangible and intangible targets. The use of poles, bottles, ropes, trees, people, labyrinths, and more are always our objectives as they cater for people of mixed abilities. The course usually takes around 15 minutes to complete, as a beginner.

There were mixed abilities of people visiting the stand; children, who usually have not much problem, teenagers, who are usually quite successful, adults, again quite good responses. What was encouraging was the presence of some of the University lecturers and staff having a go at dowsing. Doctors, Professors going away with a 'how did that happen' thoughts and what are the feelings I got from the Labyrinth!

So, did Chris Packham visit the stand? He came to our stand in 2015 and said he had seen a dowser dowse something near his home. This intrigued him he said, but time does not allow me to dowse at this time.

After the usual pleasantries and quick chit chats with the members of the Ridings Dowzers team he said he wanted to have a go at dowsing. I did not give him a second chance to change his mind, the rods were in his hands within seconds, ready for the off.

So how did Chris do with his challenge along the dowsing course; I would like to tell you but, as the doctors say, we have customer confidentiality, so it's between him and I.

A final thanks to Sally, Dave, Kate, Hannah and Trisha for helping and putting the seed of dowsing into many minds over the two days.

Bill Holding.

Ridings Dowzers.