

A LOAD OF CROSSED WIRES

By Sparks

From time to time, articles pertaining to gold and gemstone divining have appeared in *Gold Gem & Treasure* magazine and no doubt they have generated much spirited debate. Divining, dowsing, water witching – call it what you will – has its diehard supporters and detractors and it's unlikely the disagreements between the two will ever be resolved.

My first encounter with this method of 'detecting' came about when the country property I owned was in the grip of a four-year drought. By chance or by design, a water-drilling company arrived in town offering free quotes and site inspections, an offer I couldn't refuse. The upshot was that they told me it would be an expensive exercise as my property had a lot of hard rock close to the surface. I was advised by the driller to engage a water diviner to offset the risk.

Being a bit of a cheapskate, I consulted my bible, '100 Tips & Projects for the Farm' and boned up on the half page about water witching. Down at the dry creek I chopped out a forked branch from very a sick looking willow tree, reasoning it would seek out the much-needed water to quench its thirst! After three hours of tramping around my land, the fork stick, held as per instructions, had failed to give the slightest twitch. Maybe a simpler test was the way to go, so I focused the willow stick over a known water source – the septic tank. Still no reaction. Perhaps willows were not partial to that type of water so my next stop was the cattle trough. Again no response. That was when my trusty witching device was hurled into the neighbour's paddock.



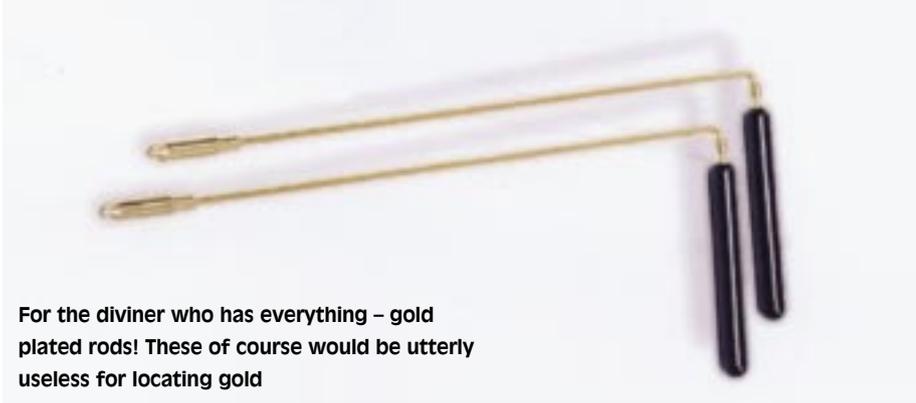
DIRECTED TO THE LOCAL PUB

Upon returning to the house, my partner said not a word but she was wearing her 'I told you so' smile.

The next day, a trip to town and an enquiry at the rural trader's store had me directed to the local pub to find

Divining for gold has had its followers down through the ages

professional water diviner, 'Young' Dooley. The barmaid pointed out 'Young' Dooley, who had to be at least 80-years-old,



For the diviner who has everything – gold plated rods! These of course would be utterly useless for locating gold

washing down his counter lunch with a large ale. I later learned that 'Old' Dooley, his father, had passed on only a few years earlier.

I asked the young Dooley if he could help me out and after he referred to a scruffy little notebook with a blank page, he told me I was lucky as he had a spare hour that afternoon and would only charge me \$45 to find water.

Dooley obviously did not like me following him around so closely while he worked and told me as much, saying I distracted his bent fencing wire divining rods from performing properly, so I sat on my verandah with a cold beer and watched from afar. Thirty minutes or so later Dooley gave a wave to indicate the spot where the water would be. I must have worn a dubious expression because he justified his claim by saying "Just because the crick is dry don't mean there ain't no water and that big red mahogany tree just there is gettin a drink oright but she's deep. I reckon you'll hit the stream at eighty feet and it runs east to west."

Who was I to argue with a professional? So, with \$45 less in my pocket, I watched Dooley drive off in his rusty Valiant leaving me with a cloud of dust and a potential water supply.

After calculating the drilling cost along with the bore casing and pump, I knew it would be out of the question for at least a few months but Mother Nature took pity on me and down came the rain! It bucketed down for six days filling the tanks and the small dam. That was when we decided to sell up and move back to the coast. Three months on and we had a buyer, a couple, with whom we were to become friends, keeping in touch by phone and an occasional visit.

CONCERN WITH THE CURRENT DRY SPELL

It was on one of those visits when the new owners told me of their concern with the

current dry spell and that they had paid an old guy called Dooley to find underground water. I butted in and said, 'I bet he found it near the big mahogany.'

'No. He found a stream running north south about eighty feet down in the top paddock but the driller went to ninety five and it was still dry as a vulture's armpit so I pulled the plug!'

From then on I said nothing other than to offer commiserations for their bad luck.

The second time I encountered the art of divining was in a little town where, for a short time, gold had been the mainstay. Now it's just a collection of shops selling everything from homemade jams and pickles to local works of art. The shop that caught my eye had various divining rods and pendulums priced from \$24.95 displayed in the window, along with faceted crystals, polished stones, new world books and other 'healy feely' items. The proprietor was half the age of young Dooley and, according to the framed certificates on the wall, a member of the Society of Dowser's in America, England and Australia.

After an in-depth discussion as to the virtues of divining, and how it can be used to locate gold, water, gems, cancer and practically anything else, the gentleman, who I will call Mr Dowser, demonstrated to me the method of 'remote dowsing'. Using an ocean chart, a pendulum and a piece of string, he was able to determine the position of sunken treasure in the North Pacific. I was told that the quartz crystal pendulum he used was superior because of the 'known' energy it radiated at various frequencies and, of course, its healing qualities.

Whoa there! Having a background in electronic engineering, I knew this was a common misconception. Crystals do nothing on their own and require an external electrical or mechanical energy to be applied to very thin slices of the material in order for them to perform a

function. Even in the early crystal sets (radios), the galena crystal did nothing other than modify the incoming radio signal. A razor blade and a safety pin will act in the same way.

RAMBLE ON

I kept my thoughts to myself, said nothing, and let Mr Dowser ramble on. "After all," he continued, "crystals are the core of our modern watches, calculators, computers and radio equipment."

When asked why he had not yet retrieved the sunken booty he informed me it was because permission for access had not been granted by the country that had jurisdiction over those waters.

Mr Dowser then willingly agreed to show his divining ability by finding gold if it was there to be found. So, I placed three plastic gold pans upside down in a row, two metres apart on the grassed strip adjacent to his shop, and then produced 5-ounce nugget from my pocket. This obviously concerned Mr Dowser.

I secreted the nugget under a dish at one end and Mr Dowser proceeded to check out each of the three pans with his gold-plated rods. After a number of scans, the rods eventually crossed over above the middle pan. No cigar!

After five more attempts, with me placing the nugget under a different pan each time, Mr Dowser still hadn't won a cigar. On the sixth try however, he struck gold! One out of six when the odds of just guessing where the gold was were one in three.

Mr Dowser then offered numerous excuses as to why the rods would not perform correctly, such as the pans had been subjected to gold before this exercise and caused confusion from the 'residual effect'. When I explained that the pans were new, had never been used before and still had both the price and maker's labels attached, Mr Dowser explained that divining was not just a sideshow to be taken lightly and that my 'negativity' was the major reason for the results.

"Dowser's," he said, "divine to help others and not for what they can gain for themselves." Yeah, right. Perhaps someone should tell that to 'Young' Dooley and why charge 25 dollars for two bent wire rods and not even gold-plated ones? I thanked Mr Dowser for his time and patience and he responded by mumbling something

indecipherable in what sounded like an alien language as he retreated into his shop, possibly to look for treasure in the South Pacific.

DIVINERS AT WORK FIRSHAND

My next episode observing diviners at work firsthand occurred on a goldfield noted for its small nuggets. Here I made the acquaintance of a man adept in the art of finding gold as well as sapphires with a single rod device. This gadget was fashioned from a 500mm length of 2.5mm brazing rod with about 150mm bent at 90 degrees. It was inserted into a brass tube that became a handle that allowed the rod to pivot freely.

Silver-soldered to the extreme end of the rod was a small cup to hold a specimen of the item to be divined. While receiving a lesson on how to use and hold this dowsing instrument, I found the tiniest twist of the wrist would allow gravity to take control and the rod to swing either side making it virtually impossible to interpret whether or not there was anything to dig for.

Apparently this diviner, who I shall call Mr Loser, had not found much in the way

of gold so I lent him a small piece to put in the specimen cup of his dowsing rod. Twenty minutes into walking slowly over tussock-strewn ground, Mr Loser had a slight stumble but managed to regain his composure only to discover that my bit of gold was now somewhere in the grass. Searching the area failed to find my little nugget and the problem he said, was that without a sample in the cup it was a difficult to recover such a small piece.

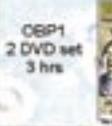
With that I walked across to my truck, grabbed another bit of gold and a piece of electrical tape to secure it to his divining rod. I watched Mr Loser wave his wand around until I could take no more. I then took out my old Fisher Gold Bug (didn't bother to fire up the GP) and had the errant gold in my hand in three minutes flat.

While retrieving my second sample from under the tape, I suggested to Mr Loser that maybe he should keep the gold or whatever in his mouth, as other dowsers are purported to do. That way, should he have the misfortune of swallowing it during a tumble, he would at least know where to find it! And on that note we parted company.

PROVE THEIR SKILLS

What I did find surprising was that Mr Dowser and Mr Loser, both being devout diviners, claimed they were unaware of the invitation by entrepreneur Dick Smith, in association with James Randi, to dowsers to prove their skills. A number of trials have been set up around the country as well as many other parts of the world with rewards of \$20,000 and more to anyone who can show divining successes are more than just chance.

Those who claim to have the ability to divine are most likely honest people who believe in their talent even though it can't be verified. The mind instructing the hands to move the rods or pendulum when the operator believes the sought-after object is there (even though 75 percent of the time it is not) is referred to as the 'idemotor concept'. Yes, I am a sceptic but I would certainly become a supporter if shown that lo-tech wire rods could match the performance of hi-tech detectors. I'm afraid I'm one of those blokes who really needs to be whisked away in a flying saucer, preferably crewed by beautiful alien women, before I can give credence to the stories of other 'abductees'. 

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