



# Modern Calendar Buildings

Nick Champion

# The calendar house

- Matthew Beckett: 'The principle of the calendar house is that the number of external doors, windows or panes of glass, chimneys, or staircases or other elements should total either 4 (the number of seasons), 7 (days in a week), 12 (months in a year), or 365 (days in a year)'.
- Beckett, Matthew 'The Calendar House: A history', *Country Life*, 2 January 2013, <http://www.countrylife.co.uk/property/article/530609/The-Calendar-House-A-history.html#hZlyrUgCCmZFpVw4.99> [accessed 3 July 2013]
- See also: **Matthew Beckett** '[Make a date: the strange world of the calendar house](#)'
- <http://thecountryseat.org.uk/2011/02/16/make-a-date-the-strange-world-of-the-calendar-house/> [accessed 20 May 2014]
- Origins: one possibility is that the idea developed out of more complex Hermetic/magical strands in Renaissance architecture.
-

# Problem in Archaeoastronomy

Within the field as a whole there is an overwhelming emphasis on ancient, medieval and non-western culture. Such material is valuable! However, what about the modern world?

Archaeology is as much concerned with the present as with the past.

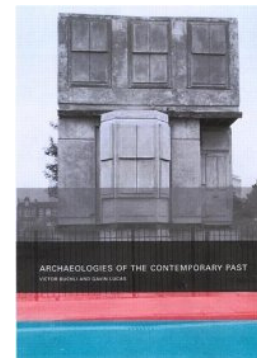
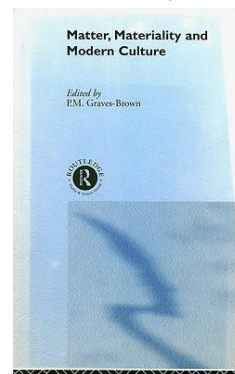
Therefore there is room to open contemporary studies

The sources I have used include:

Buchli, Victor, *The Archaeology of Socialism*, Oxford: Berg, 1999.

Buchli, Victor, and Gavin Lucas, *Archaeologies of the Contemporary Past*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2001.

Graves-Brown, P.M. (ed.), *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*, London: Routledge, 2000.



# Questions of Function

- **Michael Schiffer (Schiffer, Michael B., *Technological Perspectives on Behavioural Change*. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson and London, 1992, pp. 9-12)**
- Schiffer identified three main types of function:
  1. technofunction, the utilitarian use of a thing;
  2. sociofunction, for example the way in which a thing reveals the social status of its owner;
  3. ideofunction, or the way in which a thing symbolizes abstract ideas, values or beliefs, such as religious artefacts.
- Then Avon Tyrrel House has a clear ideofunction: to embody the calendar, and therefore space and time.
- **Beth Preston (Preston, Beth, 'The Functions of Things' in P.M. Graves-Brown, (ed.), *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture*, London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 22-49, (p. 30)**
- Preston argued that there is a binary distinction between
  1. a proper function, an object's primary intended use,
  2. a system function, its additional unintended uses: for example,
- a chair's proper function is to be a seat, but a system function is to be stood on in order to change a light bulb.
- Avon Tyrrel's proper function was to be a family home. Now it is to be an outward bound centre.
- Is its use as an outward bound centre a system function?
- Or is its proper function to magically instil comic harmony into the lives of those who inhabit it?

# Context

- in China, 'The universe was conceived not as an object independent of man, but as a counterpart of and mirror of human society'. Xiaochun Sun ('Crossing the Boundaries between Heaven and Man: Astronomy in Ancient China', in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Astronomy Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Astronomy*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. 425)
- There was a 'patterned mirroring' between sky and earth' in native North American cosmology.
- Trudy Griffin-Pierce (*Earth Is My Mother, Sky Is My Father: Space, Time and Astronomy in Navajo Sandpainting*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 63),
- *A good cosmology...is good for its adherents.*
- Mathews, Freya, *The Ecological Self*, Savage, MD: Barnes and Noble, 1991, p. 109.
- (this begs the question – what is a 'good' cosmology, and is what is good for one set of adherents no good for another?)
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Background: Architecture and cosmology. If all cultures have a cosmology, does all architecture embody a cosmology?



## Background: traditions of cosmic architecture: cosmopolis, cosmopolitan, cosmogram

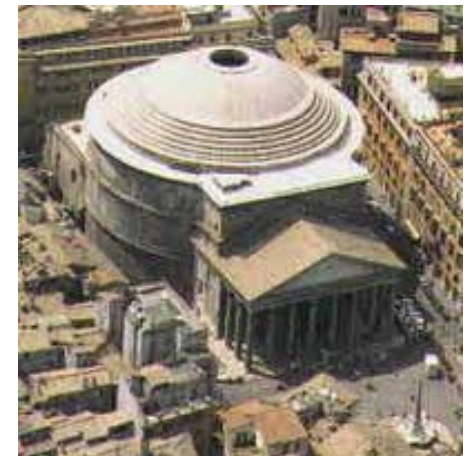


# Context: classical traditions of solar architecture

- 'Nero's "solar" kingship and the architecture of Domus Aurea'
- [Robert Hannah](#), [Giulio Magli](#), [Antonella Palmieri](#)
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/1312.7583>



- 'The role of the sun in the Pantheon's design and meaning'
- [Robert Hannah](#), [Giulio Magli](#)
- <http://arxiv.org/abs/0910.0128>



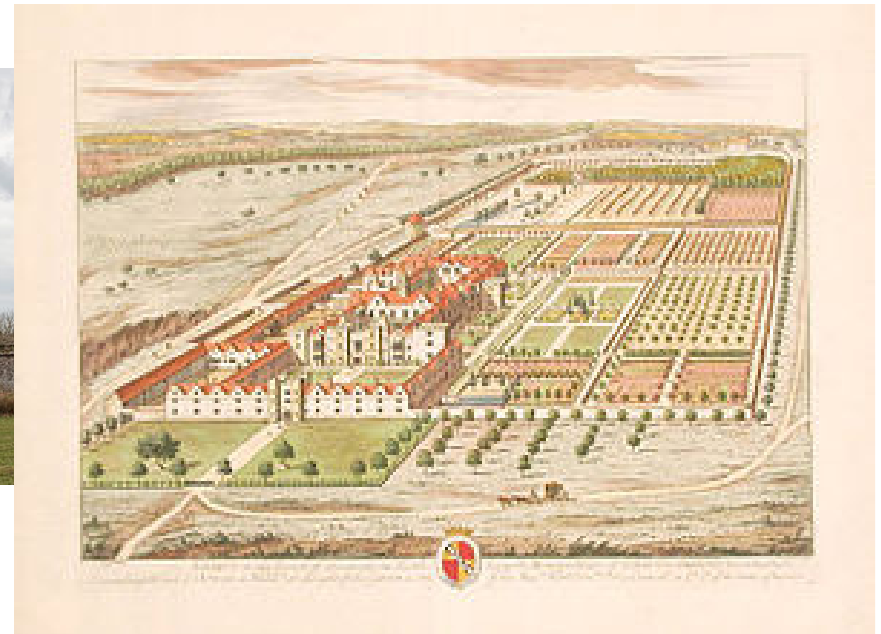
- *‘As with Khafre’s other temples, symbolic meaning has been seen in the numbers of columns (24 – perhaps one for each hour of the day and night), statues (10 or 12 – perhaps one for each hour of the day) and various chambers.’*
- Richard H. Wilkinson, *The Complete Temples of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p.118

# Knole House, Kent

left 2009, right 1709

The earliest known claimed example

Built in 1604, by one of queen Elizabeth I's courtiers, Thomas Sackville, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Dorset. 365 rooms, 52 staircases and 7 courtyards.



# Scout Hall, Halifax, Yorkshire

- at Shibden, near Halifax in Yorkshire,
- built in 1681 to a design which features 365 panes of glass, 52 doors and 12 bays.



# Boughton House, Northamptonshire,

- constructed by the first Duke of Montagu in the 1680s-90s, current home of the Duke of Buccleuch.
- contains 7 courtyards,
- 12 entrances,
- 52 chimney stacks and
- 365 windows.



# The Grand Hotel Scarborough,



- *The Grand Hotel is a large hotel in Scarborough, England, overlooking the town's South Bay. It is now a Grade II\* listed building that is owned by Britannia Hotels, and has undergone a £7 million refurbishment. The hotel was designed by the Hull architect Cuthbert Brodrick, and when completed in 1867 was one of the largest hotels in the world, as well as one of the first giant purpose-built hotels in...*
- *(thanks to Bernadette)*
- *[http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&gs\\_nf=1&cp=13&gs\\_id=17&xhr=t&gs\\_upl=&bav=on.2,or.r\\_gc.r\\_pw.r\\_qf,cf.osb&biw=1278&bih=681&wrapid=tljp1330593188703024&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=grand+hotel+scarborough&fb=1&gl=uk&hq=grand+hotel&hnear=0x487f254b19e38abb:0x69546c0179a47ac7,Scarborough,+North+Yorkshire&ei=pj1PT7yQAcXMhAefx6nhCw&sa=X&oi=local\\_group&ct=image&sqi=2&ved=0CCQQtgM](http://maps.google.co.uk/maps?hl=en&gs_nf=1&cp=13&gs_id=17&xhr=t&gs_upl=&bav=on.2,or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf,cf.osb&biw=1278&bih=681&wrapid=tljp1330593188703024&um=1&ie=UTF-8&q=grand+hotel+scarborough&fb=1&gl=uk&hq=grand+hotel&hnear=0x487f254b19e38abb:0x69546c0179a47ac7,Scarborough,+North+Yorkshire&ei=pj1PT7yQAcXMhAefx6nhCw&sa=X&oi=local_group&ct=image&sqi=2&ved=0CCQQtgM)*

# The Grand Hotel

- ‘Originally constructed in 1863, it was one of Europe's first purpose-built hotels, with a design based on the concept of “time” - 4 towers to represent the 4 seasons, 12 floors for each month, 52 chimneys for the weeks and 382 bedrooms for the days of the year.\*\* This is a beautiful example of grand Victorian architecture and completely dominates the surroundings like a true masterpiece.’
- <http://www.scarboroughgrandhotel.co.uk/>
- \*\* This is a direct quote from the hotel website.
- There are not, of course, 382 days in the year. Have more
- bedrooms been added since the original design?



# Buildings by Cuthbert Brodrick in Leeds

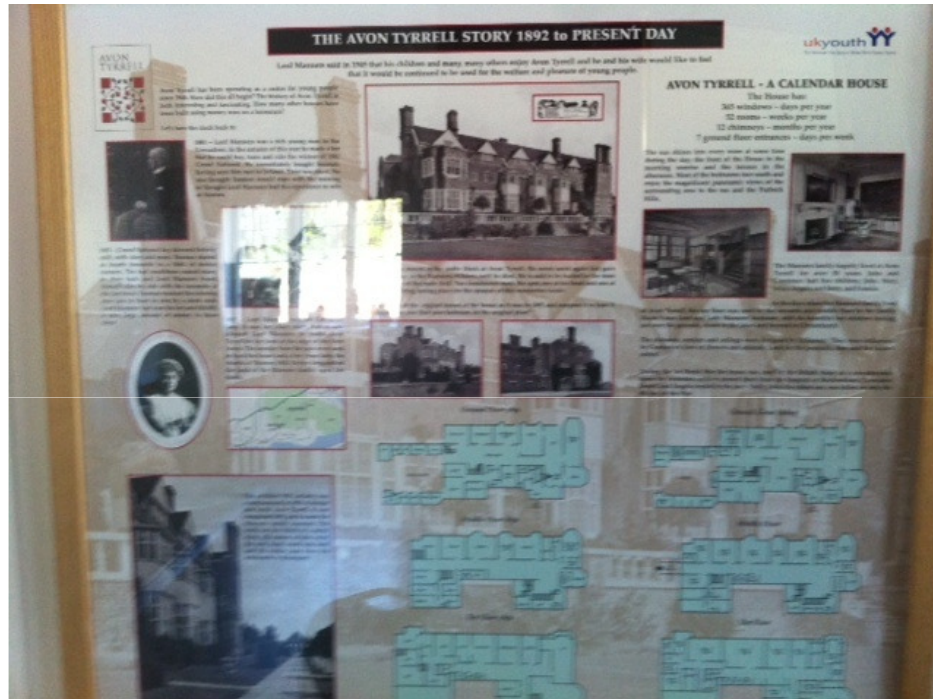
- Town Hall 1858 (similar to Congress buildings in Buenos Aires and Washington DC)
- Corn Exchange 1860 (similar to the Pantheon in Rome)
- Mechanics Institute 1860 (later Civic Theatre, now City Museum)



# Avon Tyrrel House: a 19th c Calendar House in England



# Information in the House



Michael Schiffer: sites undergo post-use and post-occupational modification by diverse formation processes.



<http://www.tangoalchemy.co.uk/Autumn%20Retreat%20Avon%20Tyrrell.pdf>

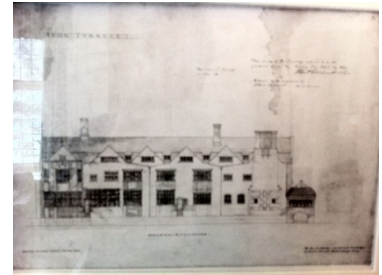


**TangoAlchemy - Autumn Tango Retreat**  
*The third Edition*  
**Avon Tyrrell** Friday-Sunday 19-21st October 2012

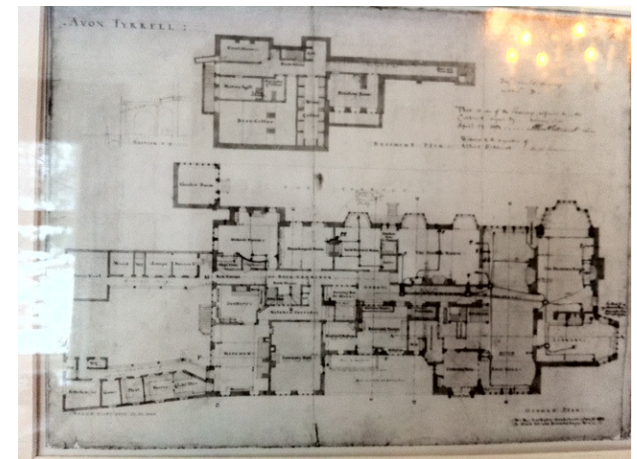
By popular demands, the Tango Retreat returns for the autumn at Avon Tyrrell with our all time Favorites teachers Fausto, Stephanie, Eduardo and our new addition Sophie Millner. Again we will have the exclusive use of this magnificent grade I listed building plus more options for



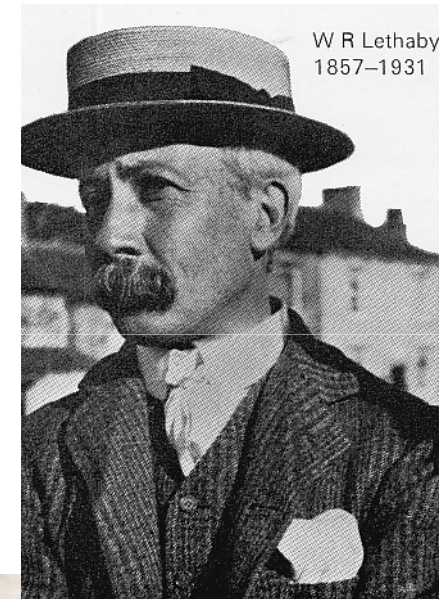
# Designed by W R Lethaby 1882



- Described by display information in the house as a calendar house
- 365 windows, one for each day of the year
- 52 rooms, one for each week of the year
- 12 chimneys, one for each month
- 7 ground floor doors, one for each day of the week
- The sun shines through
- every room



# Who as Lethaby? Blue Plaque at Lethaby's home, 20 Calthorpe Street, London



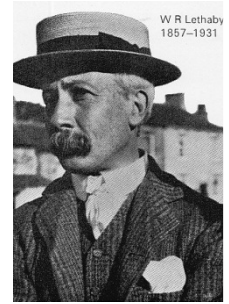
# Lethaby 1857-1931



- Later generation to Brodrick
- Influenced by John Ruskin and William Morris (Arts and Crafts Movement)
- helped to found the Central School of Arts and Crafts, London 1884.
- a founder-member of the Art-Workers' Guild (1884).
- 1894 Art Inspector to the Technical Education Board London County Council



# Lethaby set out his ideas in a number of books:



- 'Built in a free style without historical referents'
- (I disagree)
- Challenged distinction between craft and design
- Arts and Crafts Movement
- *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth* (1891)
- This was a universalising, eclectic text in the style of Frazer's *Golden Bough* or Campbell's *Masks of God*
- *Mediaeval Art* (1904)
- *Architecture: An Introduction to the History and Theory of the Art of Building* (1912)
- *Form in Civilization: Collected Papers on Art and Labour* (1922)

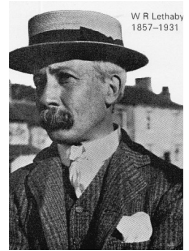


# W R Lethaby - 122-124 Colmore Road, Birmingham

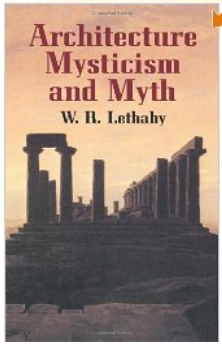


- COLMORE ROW 1. 5104 City Centre B3 Nos 122 and 124 SP 0686 NE 33/19 21.1.70 GV 2. 1900, by Lethaby and Ball for the Eagle Insurance Company. Stone with a little brick. Four storeys; 5 bays. Ground floor with a large 5-light mullioned and transomed window and symmetrical doorways left and right with simple 2-light windows and sculptured plaques above. First, second and third floors each with uniform sash windows between pilasters. The 3rd floor windows with a **frieze of Romansque derivation in their heads and alternating semi-circular and triangular pediments above**. Attic storey with chequer work pattern in which are set **plain blank discs and, centrally, an eagle**. Original metal doors and much of the interior furnishings and fittings remain.

# Lethaby



- Nikolaus Pevsner: Lethaby was a precursor of the early modern movement
- Peter Fuller: Lethaby was the 'English John the Baptist of the Modern Movement'.
- Peter Fuller, 'William Lethaby: Keeping art ship-shape', in Blackemeyer, Sylvia and Theresa Gronberg (eds), *W.R.Lethaby 1857-1931: Architecture, Design and Education* (London: Lund Humphries 1984), p. 33.
- Fuller: Lethaby straddled two traditions:
- one which resisted what it saw as the degrading effects of industrialisation and capitalism by creating buildings which elevated the aesthetic life of the urban masses. (In this Lethaby was closely associated with William Morris and the 'Arts and Crafts Movement')
- Fuller fails to specify the second, but implies (p. 38) that it is what he calls 'an untenable' position regarding Lethaby's reverence for symbolism.



# Essentialism



Fuller: *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth* is 'in one sense...a characteristically odd and often highly confused text'.

Lethaby's thesis, as summarised by Fuller (p. 38) is that: 'there is a natural symbolism of architectural forms rooted in what is common to human experience in all cultures and at all times: because the men of Egypt loved the same sky that we also love, and shared the same need for shelter from the elements, we can appreciate their roofs and pyramids.'

'WHEN the earth, or rather the wall of mountains surrounding the utmost bounds of ocean, was the foundation of the solid sky, some contrivance was necessary to account for the disappearance and return of the sun'.  
*Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, [1892], p. 175

Date & Time: Sun Jan 20 10:09:39 GMT 2013

Position: +050.8018° / -001.7383°

Altitude: 217ft

Azimuth: -142° -2524mils

Elevation Angle: +00.0°

Horizon Angle: -11.4°

Zoom: 1X







PRIFYSGOL CYMRU  
Y Drindod Dewi Sant  
UNIVERSITY OF WALES  
Trinity Saint David



## Facing East: photo with theodolite app on I Pad

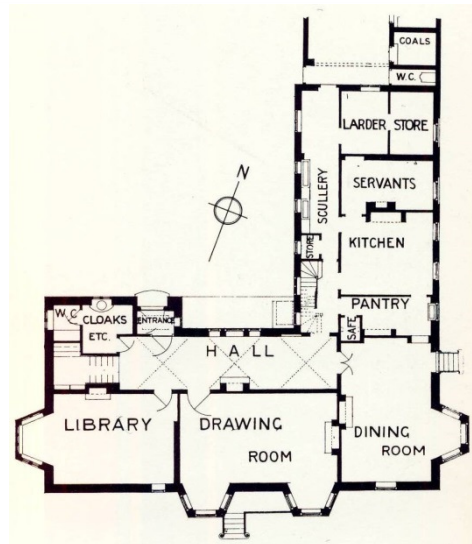
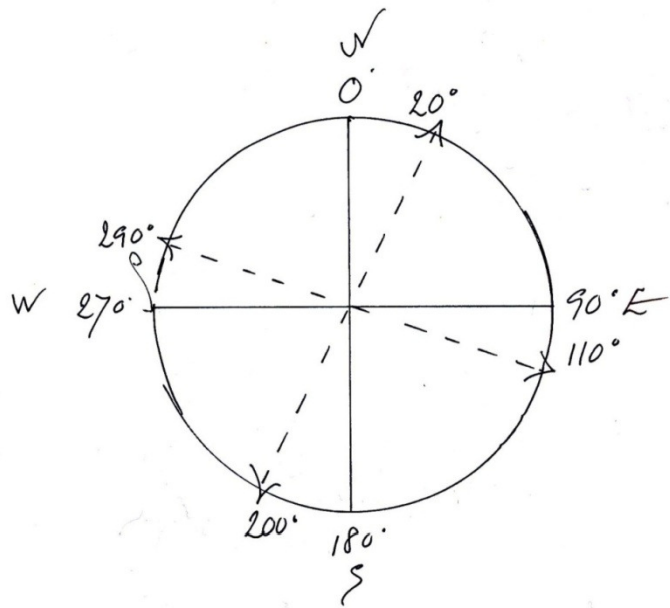


# Facing north, west, south



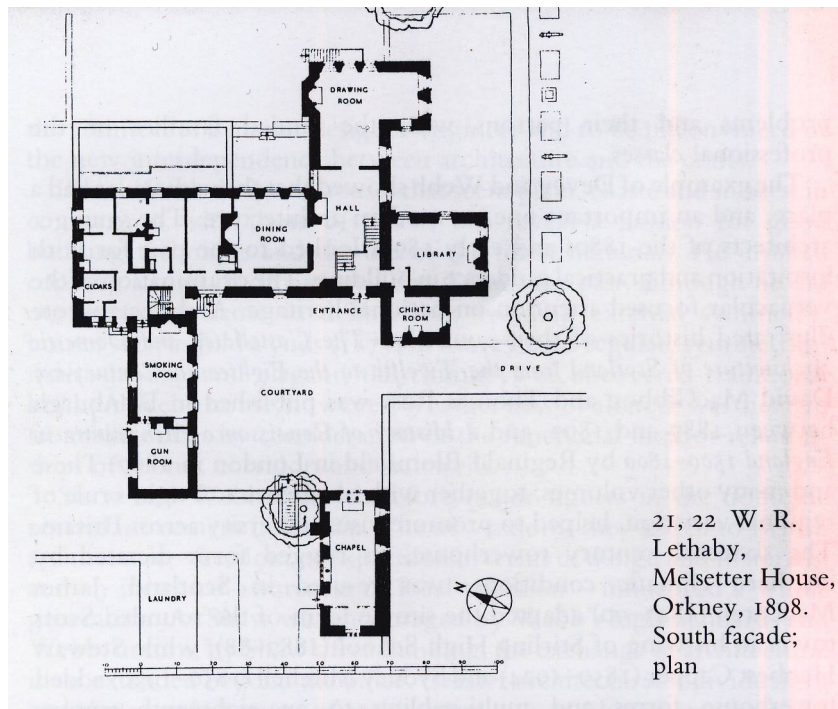
Date & Time: Sun Oct 21 10:18:10 BST 2012  
Position: +050.8014° / -001.7376°  
Altitude: 246ft  
Azimuth/Bearing: 290° N70W 5166mils (True)  
Elevation Angle: +00.4°  
Horizon Angle: +00.2°  
Zoom: 1X



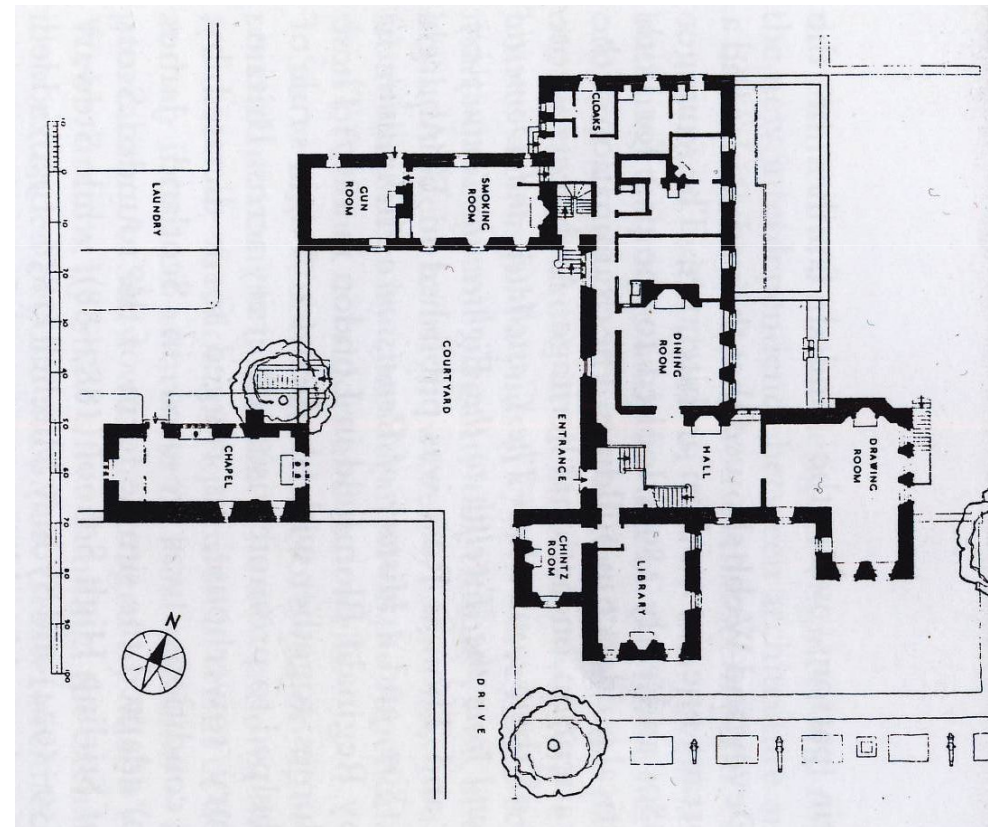
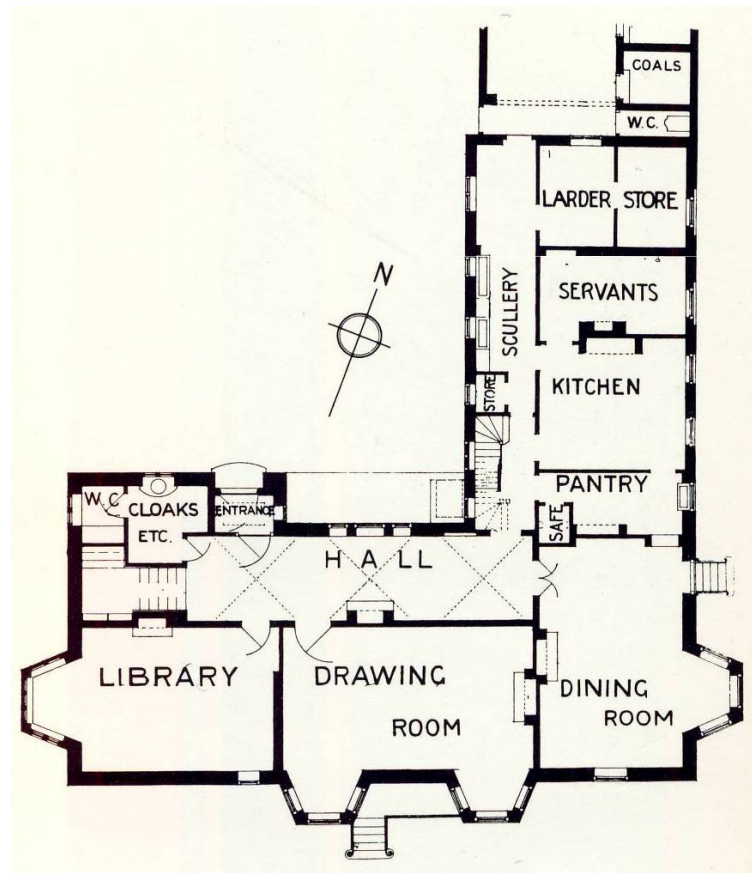


- Using the theodolite app on my I Pad, the front door appears to face azimuth 20 degrees.
- My measurements need to be repeated.
- This is not exact enough to indicate any celestial intent and there are no obvious horizon features.

Melsetter House, Orkney (completed 1900), rear facade faces south  
Cumming and Kalan pp. 38-9; see also Devy p. 69

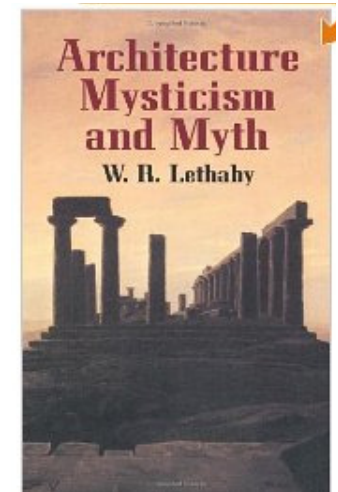


# Avon Tyrrel House and Melsetter House compared.(Davey pp. 68, 69)



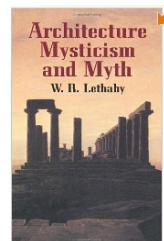
## *Lethaby: Scepticism about modern science*

- ‘IF we erase from the mind absolutely all that science has laboriously spied out of the actual facts of the material universe, and ask ourselves what would have been the thoughts by which man attempted at first to explain and image forth the natural order, we may put ourselves in sympathy with notions that at first seem absurd. We may see that the progress of science is merely the framing and destruction one by one of a series of hypotheses, and that the early cosmogonies are one in kind with the widest generalisations of science—from certain appearances to frame a theory of explanation, from phenomena to generalise law.’
- *Architecture, Mysticism and Myth*, [1892]. p 9



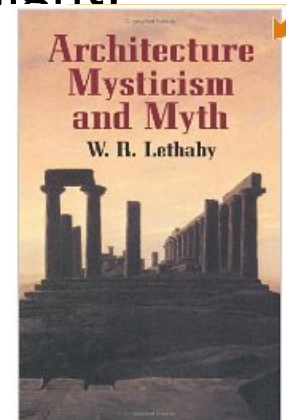
# *Lethaby: Universality – the World Tree*

- The unknown universe could then only be explained in terms of its known parts; **the earth, shut in by the night sky, must have been thought of as a living creature, a tree, a tent, a building; and these each form the world system to peoples now living.** 'Given the data,' says Herbert Spencer, as known to him, the inference drawn by the primitive man is the reasonable inference.'
- A tree with wide over-arching branches must have formed an apt and satisfactory explanation, for legends of a world tree are so widely distributed; we meet with them at the dawn of record, and they still strike their roots where wild in woods' the savage runs.
- **The Chaldean inscriptions describe such a tree as growing at the centre of the world; its branches of crystal formed the sky and drooped to the sea.** The Phœnicians thought the world like a revolving tree, over which was spread a vast tapestry of blue embroidered with stars...All the East knew of such a tree; in Japan the gods broke their swords against it in vain; in Greece its memory seems long to have survived as the olive of the forest of Colonas...In the Norse system a vast tree, the world-ash, rises in the centre of the earth, its branches forming the several heavens of the gods, its roots strike deep into hell...Maori science still represents such a tree as rising to the heavens, 'that dark nocturnal canopy which like a forest spreads its shade,' its mighty growth first forced asunder Heaven and Earth. Such an idea is probably very uniform at a certain early stage of civilisation—'The fundamental conception of these myths,' says Lenormant, which never appear in perfection except under their oldest forms, represents the universe as an enormous tree.' Its trunk transfixes the earth, projecting upwards into heaven and below into the abyss, the heavens revolve on this axis, and may be reached by climbing the stem.

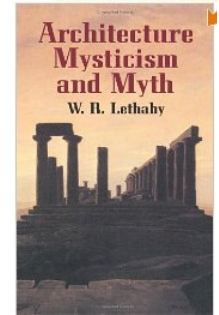


# *Lethaby: Astronomy.....*

- p. 237: It was the same in Assyria, as astronomical tablets have made evident. **'Twelve months to each year, three hundred and sixty days in number, as recorded.'** The course of the sun through the stars was partitioned according to the twelve months—the twelve signs of the zodiac—and these, sub-divided by their thirty days, gave the three hundred and sixty degrees, the basis since for all angular measure; the day was divided into six parts, each subdivided by sixty, and the same for the night. as is still the case in Japan.



# *Lethaby: The Sun*



- p. 175: **In the Veda:—'The dawn shone with brilliance and opened for us the doors that open high and wide with their frames.'**...In Babylonia the same scheme is shown, in such texts as the invocations to the rising sun, given in Records of the Past,' and by Lenormant, of which the first is curiously like Hesiod. 'He opened great gates on every side; he made strong the portals on the left hand and on the right; in the centre he placed luminaries. The moon he appointed to rule the night and to wander through the night until the dawn of day.'
- **'Sun, thou shinest in the lowest heavens: Thou openest the bolts which close the high heavens: Thou openest the gate of Heaven.'** Or:—**'In the great door of the high heavens in the opening which belongs to thee.'** Steps led up the sky from the east gate and descended to the west (Lenormant). Dr Hayes Ward in the American Journal of Archæology (Vol. 3), shows some dozen Babylonian seals, with intaglios of the Sun-god passing through the double-valved gate of the East and beginning to climb the mountain of the sky. The gate has two guardian figures.
- To the Egyptians, the sun was The Opener. The gates to the grave land are often mentioned in the Book of the Dead, and are figured on the tombs.



# Context - Reverence for the Sun

- J.M Turner, 1775-1851, 'The Sun is God'



# Context: John Ruskin

- Major supporter of Turner
- *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849)
- Seven moral categories vital to and inseparable from all architecture: sacrifice, truth, power, beauty, life, memory and obedience.
- Truth to nature central to art.



John Ruskin: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Boston: Dana Estes & Company,  
1849

Architecture must unite technique and imagination to unite body and soul and role  
back the degenerate tide of materialism

- **‘What is true of human polity seems to me not less so of the distinctively political art of Architecture. I have long felt convinced of the necessity, in order to its progress, of some determined effort to extricate from the confused mass of partial traditions and dogmata with which it has become encumbered during imperfect or restricted practice, those large principles of right which are applicable to every stage and style of it. Uniting the technical and imaginative elements as essentially as humanity does soul and body, it shows the same infirmly balanced liability to the prevalence of the lower part over the higher, to the interference of the constructive, with the purity and simplicity of the reflective, element. This tendency, like every other form of materialism, is increasing with the advance of the age; and the only laws which resist it, based upon partial precedents, and already regarded with disrespect as decrepit, if not with defiance as tyrannical, are evidently inapplicable to the new forms and functions of the art, which the necessities of the day demand. How many these necessities may become, cannot be conjectured; they rise, strange and impatient, out of every modern shadow of change. How far it may be possible to meet them without a sacrifice of the essential characters of architectural art, cannot be determined by specific calculation or observance’.**



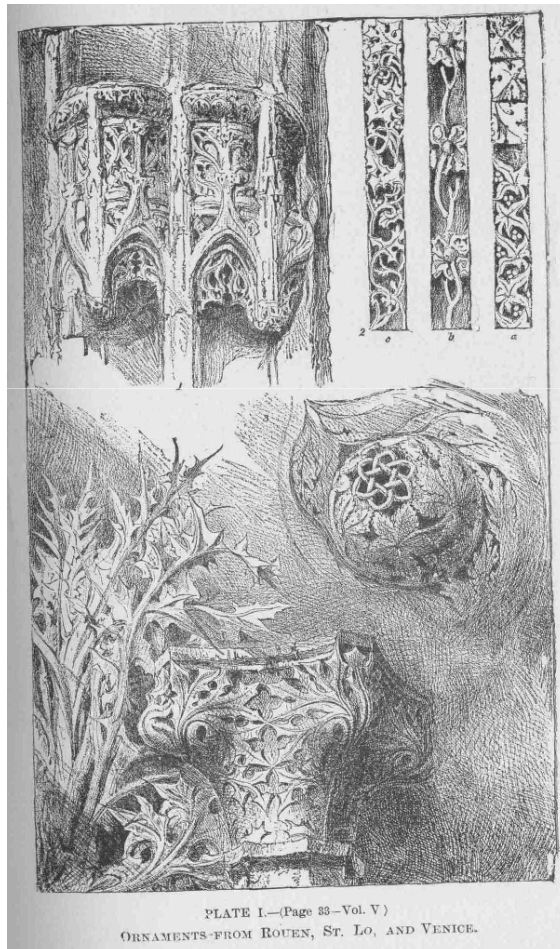
John Ruskin: *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Boston: Dana Estes & Company, 1849

Architecture should be based in man's nature, not his knowledge

- P. 10 There is no law, no
- [Pg 11] principle, based on past practice, which may not be overthrown in a moment, by the arising of a new condition, or the invention of a new material; and the most rational, if not the only, mode of averting the danger of an utter dissolution of all that is systematic and consistent in our practice, or of ancient authority in our judgment, is to cease for a little while, our endeavors to deal with the multiplying host of particular abuses, restraints, or requirements; and endeavor to determine, as the guides of every effort, some constant, general, and irrefragable laws of right—laws, which based upon man's nature, not upon his knowledge, may possess so far the unchangeableness of the one, as that neither the increase nor imperfection of the other may be able to assault or invalidate them.
- *(Does this take us into debates on enchantment)*



*The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Boston: Dana Estes & Company, 1849  
Architecture contains the memories of individuals and cultures



- P. 33
- 'They are but the rests and monotones of the art; it is to its far happier, far higher, exaltation that we owe those fair fronts of variegated mosaic, charged with wild fancies and dark hosts of imagery, thicker and quainter than
- [Pg 34] ever filled the depth of midsummer dream; those vaulted gates, trellised with close leaves; those window-labyrinths of twisted tracery and starry light; those misty masses of multitudinous pinnacle and diademed tower; **the only witnesses, perhaps that remain to us of the faith and fear of nations. All else for which the builders sacrificed, has passed away—all their living interests, and aims, and achievements.** We know not for what they labored, and we see no evidence of their reward. Victory, wealth, authority, happiness—all have departed, though bought by many a bitter sacrifice. **But of them, and their life, and their toil upon the earth, one reward, one evidence, is left to us in those gray heaps of deep-wrought stone. They have taken with them to the grave their powers, their honors, and their errors; but they have left us their adoration'.**

# Context: The Arts and Crafts Movement

- 'This was a movement unlike any that had gone before. Its pioneering spirit of reform, and the value it placed on the quality of materials and design, as well as life, shaped the world we live in today.'
- **The origins of the Movement**
- In Britain the disastrous effects of industrial manufacture and unregulated trade had been recognised since about 1840, but it was not until the 1860s and 1870s that architects, designers and artists began to pioneer new approaches to design and the decorative arts. These, in turn, led to the foundation of the Arts and Crafts Movement.
- The two most influential figures were the theorist and critic John Ruskin and the designer, writer and activist William Morris. Ruskin examined the relationship between art, society and labour. Morris put Ruskin's philosophies into practice, placing great value on work, the joy of craftsmanship and the natural beauty of materials.
- By the 1880s Morris had become an internationally renowned and commercially successful designer and manufacturer. New guilds and societies began to take up his ideas, presenting for the first time a unified approach among architects, painters, sculptors and designers. In doing so, they brought Arts and Crafts ideals to a wider public.'
- The Victoria and Albert Museum, **'The Arts & Crafts Movement'**
- <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-arts-and-crafts-movement/>



# Context – the 1890s-

Holbrook Jackson

*The Eighteen Nineties,*

p 27

epoch. But what will for one thing differentiate it from any predecessor is the new complexity, the new subtlety, in apprehension, in formative conception, in imaginative rendering."

It was an era of hope and action. People thought anything might happen; and, for the young, any happening sufficiently new was good. Little of the older sentimentalism survived among the modernists; those who were of the period desired to be in the movement, and not mere spectators. It was a time of experiment. Dissatisfied with the long ages of convention and action which arose out of precedent, many set about testing life for themselves. The new man wished to be himself, the new woman threatened to live her own life. The snapping of apron-strings caused consternation in many a decent household, as young men and maidens were suddenly inspired to develop their own souls and personalities. Never, indeed, was there a time when the young were so young or the old so old. No family, were its record for solid British respectability established on no matter how secure a basis, was immune from new ideas; and if the bourgeoisie of the Eighteen Eighties were inspired to throw their mahogany into the streets, as we have been assured they were by Max Beerbohm, their successors of the Eighteen Nineties were barely constrained from doing the same with their most cherished principles. Decadent minor poets sprang up in the most unexpected places. The staidest of Nonconformist circles begot strange, pale youths with abundant hair, whose abandoned thoughts expressed themselves in "purple patches" of prose, and whose sole aim in life was to live "passionately" in a succession of "scarlet moments." Life-tasting was the fashion, and the rising generation felt as though it were stepping out of the cages of convention and custom into a freedom full of tremendous possibilities.

There were misgivings in more directions than one, but these had small effect upon the spirit of the first half of the decade. The experimental life went on in a swirl of song and dialectics. Ideas were in the air. Things were not what they seemed, and there were visions about. The Eighteen Nineties were the decade of a thousand "movements." People said it was a "period of transition," and they were convinced that they were passing not

# Intellectual and Artistic Context - Comparative Dates

- 1770s Translation of Persian Zoroastrian texts
- 1780s-1820s development of idea that changes in forms of religious worship reflect observation of precession
- Late 18<sup>th</sup> - Early 19<sup>th</sup> c English encounters with India deepen
- 1840s first excavations in Assyria
- 1875 Theosophical Society
- 1886 Symbolist Manifesto

# a 19th c Sun Temple in Southern England??

- If Avon Tyrrel house was a Sun Temple,
- Did Lethaby intend it to actually be magical – have agency?
- If, as Fuller suggests, Lethaby thought symbolism actively prompted spiritual well-being then the answer is yes.
- Is it a world tree,
- an axis mundi?



# My hypothesis

- Lethaby wished to assist the urban masses by creating beautiful architecture
- BUT
- beautiful architecture assisted the urban masses because symbols had a magical power in a Neoplatonic sense.
- His symbolic mission paralleled his engagement in education.



# Discourse – whose?



- ‘a place comes explicitly into being in the discourse of its inhabitants, and particularly in the rhetoric it promotes’.
- Berdoulay, Vincent, ‘Place, Meaning and Discourse in French Language Geography’ in Agnew, John A., and James S. Duncan, *The Power of Place*, London: Unwin Hyman, 1989, p. 135.
- Or, in the case of a building constructed with magical intent, do the inhabitants come into being through the discourse of the building?

# Methodology:

## Kim Malville on 'Thick Description'

- 'Geertz aims both to describe and explain behavior as well as the multiple reasons behind that behavior. Thick description emphasizes the emic (as opposed to etic) significance of social action and emphatically seeks an explanation. As Geertz (1983: 58) comments, "**The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to.**" Applied to archaeoastronomy, Geertz's approach should lead the investigator to go beyond a sunrise marker as a standalone feature of the archaeological record, but use it as a signifier that can lead one into the intricacies of a culture. A deeper understanding of the culture should be the primary goal of an investigation in archaeoastronomy and cultural astronomy.'
- J. McKim Malville, 'Reading Alien Landscapes Thick Versus Thin Descriptions', in N Campion, F.Pimenta, N.Ribeiro, F.Silva, A.Joaquinito and L.Tirapicos (eds), *Stars and Stones: Voyages in Archaeoastronomy and Cultural Astronomy – a Meeting of Different Worlds* (Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, forthcoming 2014)
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# Kim Malville on 'Thick Description' 2

- 'These four examples are presented that display some of the dangers etc labeling, i.e. imposing meaning from outside the culture: sun worship, equinox alignment, solar observatory, research station. **Surya puja is not a case of sun worship but a ritual in which the sun is seen by participants to be prostrating himself to Lord Shiva. The temples of Khajurao can be properly interpreted only if one knows the details of the solar-lunar calendar and pilgrimage traditions in the area**'
- J. McKim Malville, 'Reading Alien Landscapes Thick Versus Thin Descriptions', in N Campion, F.Pimenta, N.Ribeiro, F.Silva, A.Joaquinito and L.Tirapicos (eds), *Stars and Stones: Voyages in Archaeoastronomy and Cultural Astronomy – a Meeting of Different Worlds* (Oxford: British Archaeology Reports, forthcoming 2014)



# A research project:

- 1. Visit other calendar houses; Read about their architects; Consider possible origins for calendar houses
- 2. Contact historians and archivists for each house, or local historians
- 3. Explore the broader cosmological impact of 19<sup>th</sup> c discoveries of near-eastern history, gothic and romantic reverence for pre-Renaissance past, on culture.
- 4. Consider whether there was practical engagement with such knowledge/wisdom rather than just use as artistic metaphor/inspiration



# My methodologies

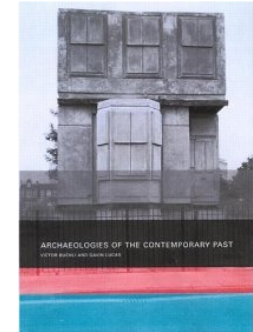
- **Evidence:**
- Folklore: the tradition of calendar houses
- Text: primary sources - Lethaby's books; Ruskin, Turner
- Phenomenology: Being in the house
- Survey: Its orientation
- 
- **Method**
- Literary interpretation: secondary sources on Lethaby
- Phenomenology: scholarly texts on phenomenology
- Contemporary Archaeology:
- Survey: so far – I Pad theodolyte



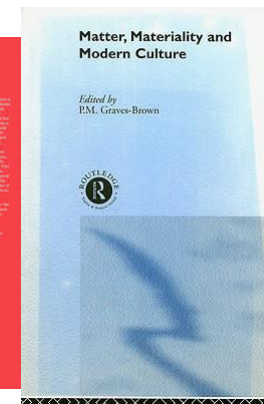
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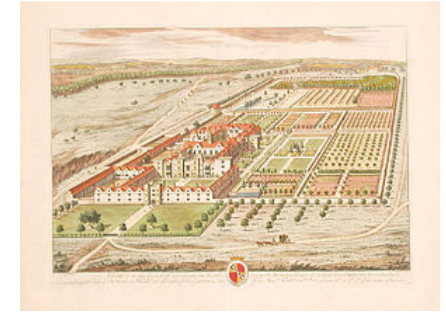


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# Conclusion



- Calendar buildings represent a genre of modern astronomical architecture which has so far not been studied, which were designed to create stronger communities precisely because of their astronomical connections, and indicates scope for further investigation. Within this context Avon Tyrrel appears to have had intentionally magical qualities.

