

# The Chesterton Annex

So-called because the only human-compatible portion of the underground complex (found just north of Little Horwood, Buckinghamshire) has this quote by GK Chesterton on one wall (at the orders of Winston Churchill, and he never would say why):

*I knew no harm of Bonaparte and plenty of the Squire,  
And for to fight the Frenchman I did not much desire;  
But I did bash their baggonets because they came arrayed  
To straighten out the crooked road an English drunkard made,  
Where you and I went down the lane with ale-mugs in our hands,  
The night we went to Glastonbury by way of Goodwin Sands.*

The nonhuman portion of the Annex, however, is a good deal more topologically interesting, and impossible to navigate by anybody who is more than three feet tall. Recent advances in drone technology have allowed the British government to finally adequately map the area, which is apparently a three-dimensional crazy-quilt of passageways, gently pulsing 'buildings,' bizarre-looking floating objects that move with purpose and glow faintly blue, and a general hum of activity that seems to center around a slowly spinning globe of liquid metal that occasionally flickers with the obligatory lightning flashes that one gets with this sort of thing.

The Annex is thus incredibly bizarre, genuinely confusing -- and, as far as Her Majesty's Government can tell, completely harmless. Purposely so, it seems: the RAF discovered the place as part of a 1940 investigation trying to figure out why Fighter Command was getting extraordinarily accurate reports of German bombing sorties from a place that didn't have a radar station. By the time that they determined that the answer was "Something inside the Annex is somehow transmitting the reports to us." it was several years later and the situation was well on the way to being merely weirdly normal. Again, somehow.

It's not as if whatever-they-are inside the Annex are ever hostile, or even standoffish. The British government has been sending in machines to record the interior since 1941, with no ill results; and the Annex's floating objects have even silently provided samples of the building materials used. Turns out that said materials can't be shot, blown up, corroded, burned, frozen, or pretty much anything else. The best that human technology can do is temporarily *dimple* one a little, via physical impact.

It would all be very frightening, except that the Chesterton Annex never seems to do anything scary or alarming. It's

just a bunch of machines and artifacts off doing their own thing, while somehow managing to be both polite and incomprehensible neighbors. British scientists have been trying to figure out how to talk to the inhabitants of the Annex (including trying to figure out whether there are inhabitants, or whether it's all one personality, or whether it's just a really sophisticated automated response system) since the 1960s: so far, their best success was in figuring out that when an Annex floating object grabs a sugar packet and waves it around, it's more or less asking for more sugar.

The human portion of the Annex has been keeping samples of various elements and compounds around and available ever since. Not that they know what the Annex needed sugar for, or indeed anything else, but it still seems to be the sensible tactic to take. After all; you never know when your country may be subject to air attacks again...

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