

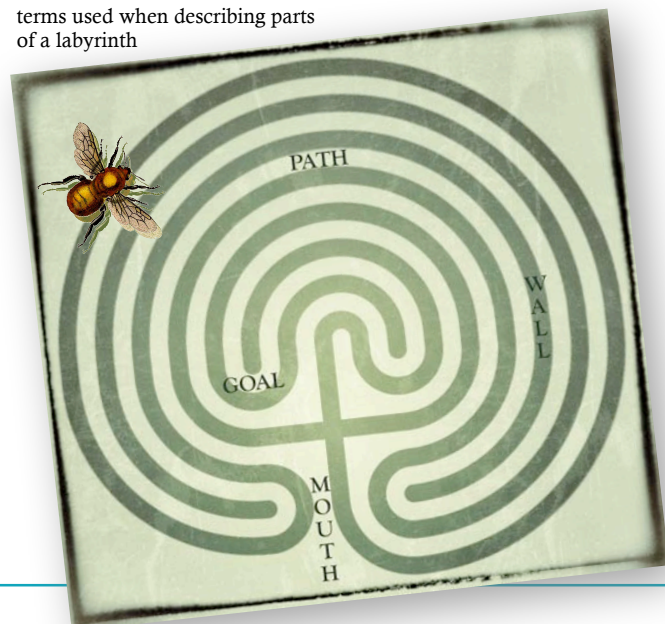


**T**ry to imagine the landscape of Essex 3,000 years BC. On the land where Talliston now stands. Neolithic tribes built a stone circle, grave and chambered barrow for an unknown chieftain. Those same stones are still in evidence, though now an eighteenth century Anglican rectory house has been built on the land, its Gothic Revival gardens, irrigation channels and pathways newly restored in 1848 after decades of neglect. And it is into this setting that we began to build a working solar and lunar calendar.

### Why an almanack?

From its first origins, Talliston was created as a world apart, so it seemed only natural that the house and gardens have their own calendar. Traditionally, an almanack is an annual publication containing astronomical data and various statistics, such as the times of the rising and setting of the sun and moon, eclipses,

Back to basics: the various names and terms used when describing parts of a labyrinth



hours of full tide, festivals of churches, and more. When searching for the right house for the project, only those that faced the western setting sun were viewed, as temples built with this orientation were the ones associated with matters of mortal time. In the ancient calendars, the new year began on the first day of the dark half of the year – and the new day began at dusk – mirroring the cycle of life and death, both in the mortal and agricultural worlds. So, we had our cosmic alignment and we had our starting point. Next was the story...

### The earth-fast stone

In our imagined mythology, the old rectory house was built on an all-but-lost Late Neolithic stone circle. Though once consisting of over forty stones, set in three rings, now only the earth-fast stone, a pair of tall sarcens and a few outlying stones remain. Upon the back of the standing stone is carved an simple labyrinth, marked with thirteen hollows, representing the thirteen locatles within the house and gardens project. This obelisk marks some ancient sacred space, a male symbol of power and worship. Known locally as the 'Tallis Stone', it is from this moniker that the house gains its name. While the front of the stone is plain, upon the back and added at some time after the original was placed here, is a labyrinth marked with thirteen holes; twelve upon the lines of the winding paths, and one outside and unconnected with the central pattern. The combined design of the Vegetable Patch and Cottage Garden also follow a labyrinth layout, allowing the entire to be walked in meditation (something not altogether alien to the Western church).

### Walking the labyrinth

Labyrinths have been in use for over 4000 years and the ancient practice of circling to the centre is one that clears the mind, offers insight and calms people in the throes of life's transitions. There are no dead ends within the labyrinth, just as there is no



Planning the solar and lunar labyrinth involved marking a hexagonal circumference every 33° to align with the rising of the moon in the evening sky.

failure in life, only continuous progress and improvement. Symbolically, labyrinths represent the aspects of time's passage, spiritual growth, connection to source, emergence and evolution. Just as we make pilgrimages in the outer world to nourish and replenish ourselves, so too can we make pilgrimages to the inner world through the landscape of the rooms in the house, to find inspiration and healing.

The design of Talliston is set around the Tree of Life, World Tree or Yggdrasil, while the labyrinth is itself in the form of a stylised tree with the entrance forming the trunk. The associations of each room are:

- First Room: The Labyrinth. Self identity, life force, ancestral roots.
- Second Room: The Hall of Mirrors #1. River of Time. First transition.
- Third Room: The Watchtower. Hearth and home, security (father).
- Fourth Room: The Voodoo Kitchen. Everyday life, values, childhood (mother).
- Fifth Room: The Boathouse. Partnerships, unions, contracts.
- Sixth Room: The Fountain Courtyard. Health, luck, destiny.
- Seventh Room: The Cabin. Solitude, ordeals, secrets.
- Eighth Room: The Starhouse. Creativity, self-expression, friends.

- ---: The Hall of Mirrors #2. River of Time. Second transition.
- Ninth Room: The Haunted Bedroom. Fears, reality, sex and death.
- Tenth Room: The Room of Dreams. Dreams, imagination, births.
- Eleventh Room: The Office. Career, social success, money (possessions).
- ---: The Hall of Mirrors #3. River of Time. Third transition.
- Twelfth Room: The Treehouse Sanctuary. Conscious mind, outer journeys, spirituality.
- Thirteenth Room: The Tipi. Subconscious mind, inner journeys, rebirth.

*The Talliston Almanack will begin its cycling through the celestial calendar at midday on 6th October 2015.*

