

Meyn Mamvro

**ANCIENT STONES & SACRED SITES
OF WEST PENWITH. Issue 3. £1.20**



**LIVING WITH A FOGOOU by Jo May
EARTH MAGIC AT CORNISH SITES
CROMLECHS • FAERY • PAGANISM
LEYS & EARTH MYSTERIES • BOOK REVIEWS**

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There have been some interesting reactions to the articles in MEYN MAMVRO Nos. 1 & 2. In response to the article on the old pagan customs of the area in No. 2, Hugh Miners has written about his memories of the original Beltane events in which he took part as a boy over 50 years ago (see page 20). He was also kind enough to add the following tribute to MEYN MAMVRO: "It is turning into a first-rate magazine and it is both a privilege and a pleasure to contribute to it. So many of the books and papers being churned out today about Cornwall are inaccurate and trivial and entirely miss the real life and mainspring of our people. It is therefore with sincere gratitude that we find so very well-presented and professional a magazine as yours revealing the true Cornwall and the people who spring from her soil." Coming from a man so steeped in Cornish culture and history, that is praise indeed!

Someone else with early memories of the area is Mrs. F. Ellis, now aged 80 and living at Sennen. Her son wrote about various matters including Boleigh (Rosemerryn) fogou where his mother played as a young girl and which she remembers being open **both** ends. A fascinating piece by Jo May at CAER about living with the Boleigh fogou can be found on page 7. Mrs. Ellis also remembers the Sennen well and a holed stone used as a gate post near the Merry Maidens, and there will be full features on both wells and holed stones in future editions of MEYN MAMVRO.

In the Earth Mysteries field we have heard from several people with some most original and interesting ideas on earth geomancy down here. Two of them appear in this edition starting on page 4, and a third, Helen Woodley, will be in MEYN MAMVRO No. 4. One of the contributors, Calum MacIntosh said that our magazine struck a pleasant balance amongst the various topics that could conceivably clamber into an Earth Mysteries magazine: "The writers seem able to be critical without either pontificating or exercising themselves in the time honoured art of backstabbing. From brief reading of literature in this field, I think you can all feel very proud of that particular achievement!"

And proud we are - of the quality of readers we seem to have, the interesting people who seem willing to contribute to the magazine; and to all of you who buy the magazine and have had the faith in us to subscribe for a year. Please continue to write on any relevant topics that interest you, and we shall hopefully build up a collection of knowledge and ideas on ancient West Penwith unparalleled anywhere. Amongst our features this time are the first of a series of 4-page pull-out guides to the ancient sites of W. Penwith, a new occasional column of pagan earthlore, plus an article on the Faery Folk and a review of a major new earth mysteries book on West Penwith. As always our grateful thanks go to Gabrielle Hawkes for the front cover, Jan Adamson for the headings and artwork, and Tony Bayfield for the map work.

Additional copies of No. 3 (and a few copies only left of No. 2) may be obtained from:



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OAKDRAGON COMES TO PENWITH

The sun shone on the gaily coloured tents, all shapes, sizes and colours, like broken pieces of mosaic against the green/brown of a Cornish Spring landscape. The wind blew through the site on a farm near Grumbla under the Sancreed beacon as if to blow away the death of Winter, on a lovely May weekend in 1987. It was the Beltane Dragon Camp, a week-long event celebrating Earth Mysteries in West Penwith, with ancient cultures, shaman work, ecology and inner growth. Billed as "a living university on the green earth," Oakdragon is a spin-off from the old Glastonbury camps, with the avowed aim of stimulating and awakening people, "a participatory journey into a new way of being." West Penwith was chosen to be the first venue of the new venture, and welcomed the awakening dragon with pleasure.

A friendly mix of all ages and kinds of people gathered in the magical landscape of West Penwith for a week of 'tea and metaphysics' in the tents and circle areas! A stone circle had been built in one area of the camp and there were projects, workshops and experiments on labyrinths, leys, dowsing, earth-healing and living the ancient Cornish landscape. There were visits to ancient sites such as Sancreed Beacon to see the panorama of "Gwlas an howlsedhas" - the Land of the Setting Sun, to holy wells for sacred healing, to stretches of the ancient Tinnars Way, and to that most secret, stirring and humbling place - Boscawen-un stone circle. There were talks about the ecology of earth and the astrology of personal growth, there was path-working and maze-walking, there was music-making and ritual chanting. There were pow-wows in the morning when each person spoke freely of his or her views on any subject relevant to the camp and its theme, there were workshops and group activities during the day on tarot and runes and dowsing and meditation and much more besides, and there was spontaneous friendship and conversation around the camp fires at night. It was a special time in a special place "on the toe of Albion; in a megalithic landscape of mystery and power."

The Sunday was thrown open to West Penwith and many came to join in the labyrinth path working with Sig Lonegren from Canada, well-known to ley hunters. The afternoon developed into a pagan wedding festival as the couple were led blindfold around the maze and into the tent where spontaneous music was made in celebration and flowers and love were given. And the rest of the week continued in the same vein in a timeless atmosphere of community and co-existence - an inner growth and development, a sharing of spirit and a learning experience. As a "living university standing firmly on the ground, under the stars, watched by the trees" it both gave and drew power and sustenance from the land of West Penwith.



*Report compiled by the
Editress, Cheryl Straffon,
with help from Hugh
Miners and Palden Jenkins
(Co-ordinator, Earthdragon
Camps). Photograph
courtesy of Laurie Finestone.*

FROM ONE AT THE OAKDRAGON CAMP:-

SO MAY IT BE

Rooted in earth-heart
 Liquid life gushing from eternal source
 You emerge to see the cowed ones
 Wax drips onto aged stone;
 Acrid smoke idly curls
 As the ancestors pray
 "Honour the healing earth. Blessed be. Blessed be!"

Spring sap and new bloom's sweet perfume
 Wash winter sleep away
 And Beltane fire courses through loins
 Resonating with energy.
 Pushing new green from between the old.

Maidens dance the pole,
 Ribbons entwining in rainbow webs
 As new born leaves. Look on.
 Wrapped up in fertile energy
 The panting girls wish for new life
 To be born of them.

Firelit night turns green to orange
 And flesh entwines in love.
 Owl hoot marks deepest dark
 And dream forms walk alone.

Adrian Kewell
 from Hastings E. Sussex.



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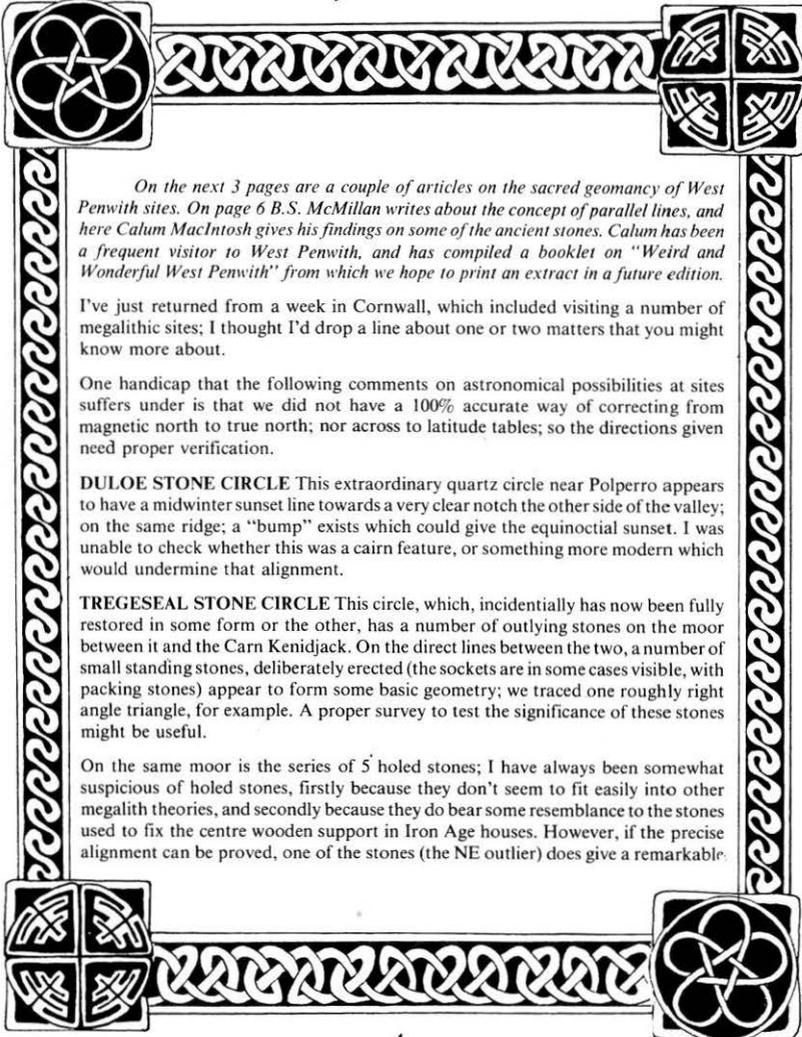
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EARTH MAGIC at CORNISH SITES



On the next 3 pages are a couple of articles on the sacred geomancy of West Penwith sites. On page 6 B.S. McMillan writes about the concept of parallel lines, and here Calum MacIntosh gives his findings on some of the ancient stones. Calum has been a frequent visitor to West Penwith, and has compiled a booklet on "Weird and Wonderful West Penwith" from which we hope to print an extract in a future edition.

I've just returned from a week in Cornwall, which included visiting a number of megalithic sites; I thought I'd drop a line about one or two matters that you might know more about.

One handicap that the following comments on astronomical possibilities at sites suffers under is that we did not have a 100% accurate way of correcting from magnetic north to true north; nor across to latitude tables; so the directions given need proper verification.

DULOE STONE CIRCLE This extraordinary quartz circle near Polperro appears to have a midwinter sunset line towards a very clear notch the other side of the valley; on the same ridge; a "bump" exists which could give the equinoctial sunset. I was unable to check whether this was a cairn feature, or something more modern which would undermine that alignment.

TREGESEAL STONE CIRCLE This circle, which, incidentally has now been fully restored in some form or the other, has a number of outlying stones on the moor between it and the Carn Kenidjack. On the direct lines between the two, a number of small standing stones, deliberately erected (the sockets are in some cases visible, with packing stones) appear to form some basic geometry; we traced one roughly right angle triangle, for example. A proper survey to test the significance of these stones might be useful.

On the same moor is the series of 5 holed stones; I have always been somewhat suspicious of holed stones, firstly because they don't seem to fit easily into other megalith theories, and secondly because they do bear some resemblance to the stones used to fix the centre wooden support in Iron Age houses. However, if the precise alignment can be proved, one of the stones (the NE outlier) does give a remarkable

midsummer sunrise line. You lie down facing the hole; some 30ft. beyond the holed stone is a small boulder; when lying down, the contouring is such that, seen through the hole, this stone then becomes like a cairn on a far horizon; a sort of perspective trick. The orientation was North East.

TREEN COMMON STONE CIRCLE CONTROVERSY As you probably know, this circular arrangement at OS445367, marked as an enclosure, although variously called the Porthmeor Nine Maidens or the Zennor Cirque in Borlase the Second's time, has doubtful status. I'd like to put some possible points in favour of stone circle status.

The argument that it is the retaining wall of an Iron Age settlement seems curious; firstly because it's a bit small for that, and secondly because there is already a major Iron Age settlement a few hundred yards down the road at Porthmeor. As a ring cairn or cairn circle, it would be conversely very big for Cornwall, and seems odd, given that there are several sizeable barrows a hundred yards away on top of a slight hill; i.e., in the most usual sort of terrain for barrows. Terrain wise, it looks right for a circle.

Dowsing reactions (using angle irons) were very strong; in fact, one of two people we had with us who had never used rods before was able to get their first unmistakable response there.

But there may be an astronomical "clincher" if it could be properly measured. If you stand in circle centre, looking roughly North East, there is a low ridge immediately before you; beyond that at OS461385 are visible two pyramid shaped crags, part of the ridge above Zennor (Zennor Quoit is behind this ridge). The pyramid shapes creates a handy V notch between them. If you now walk to the edge of the circle nearest the sea, the contour effect is such that the two crags "drop" onto the hill immediately in front of you, and the V notch is all that remains. From this point, the line appears to be North East, and therefore possibly the midsummer sunrise. What is more remarkable, if this is true, is that you only have to take five more paces seawards and the further horizon vanishes. There are two small stones between this spot and the road; if the rest of it holds together, this could indicate the path taken to arrive suddenly at the sunrise framed in the notch. If this line does work, it would be a delightful piece of "earth magic" enjoyable today; weather permitting.

BOSCAWEN UN CIRCLE There is believed to be a Candlemas sunset line from the quartz pillar through the centre stone; our rough check seemed to support that, but in doing it, we noticed that the quartz block was angled in such a way as to suggest this line; looking towards the bevelling on the upright edge of the centre stone viewed from that angle, the notion occurred that the bevelling was also intentional. The centre stone is now leaning; if restored to the upright, it could well be that the bevel suggests the astronomical line; Further checks around the district revealed that some other stones also seemed to be deliberately angled, including one of the Pipers.

I would be grateful for any observations on the foregoing



Boscawen-Un Centre Stone



Piper N E Stone

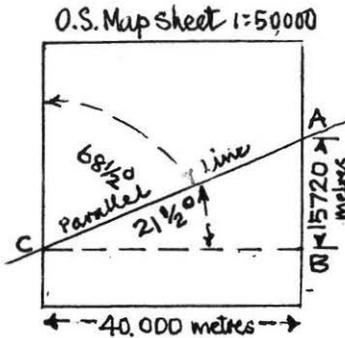
THE PARALLEL LINES

by B.S. McMillan

The Parallel Lines are lines that can be drawn on Ordnance maps, running across Britain from coast to coast with a bearing of $68\frac{1}{2}$ degrees east of grid north. On them can be found prehistoric sites and works as on Watkins leys. But instead of being of random direction and of perhaps ten miles in length, they are all parallel and cover the whole width of the country. In the Ley Hunter no. 102 magazine I related how I discovered them. There are many such lines crossing Penwith and finishing in Essex. Some of them originate in the Scilly Isles.

The diagram (left) shows how they can be identified. A template cut from thin card in the shape of a right angled triangle of the correct proportions is a useful tool.

The parallel lines can be extended from one map to another with the aid of the National Grid. To



$$\frac{AB}{BC} = \text{Tangent of angle } 21\frac{1}{2}^\circ$$

$$= \frac{15720}{40000} = 0.3930$$

check whether two points lie on a line, ascertain their grid references; then the difference between their 'northings' divided by the difference between their 'eastings' must be 0.393 or very nearly so. The full six figure references must be used.

Now let me draw your attention to the map on page 5 of MEYN MAMVRO No. 2. On it draw a line through Tregeseal Chambered Cairn and Tregeseal East Circle. If you will measure the angle this line makes with the printed N.S. line you will find it is $68\frac{1}{2}$ degs. So this line is one of my parallel lines. It coincides with the Tregeseal Ley No. 1 described on page 7 of MM No. 2. But it starts at the Chambered Cairn on Samson Isle at 087880 - 012390, passes through the cairn and circle on the MM map and continues through a standing stone (Boswens), the West Lanyon Quoit and the Mulfra settlement. But it does not stop there. Still on map 203 (1:50,000 scale) it touches Trevarnon Round and the settlement at 161130 - 041150. Then crossing a tumulus at Middle Taphouse, Kit Hill earthwork, an enclosure and Beardown Man on Dartmoor, and various other sites it arrives at the Maldon tumulus in Essex at 583850 - 207250. If

you then draw another parallel line through Carnyorth Circles on the map, it will pass through the little circle in Soldiers Croft. Then check that the northern holed stone is exactly half way between the two parallel lines, and draw through it a third parallel line. It will just brush the western barrow and continue through the gardens on Kenython Hill. The article in MM No. 2 does not say which garden has the fallen stones, but I suggest that a likely place for the missing prehistoric site is on this third parallel line.

Another important line is the one through Stonehenge which starts as a cairn on the Isle of Tresco at 089380 - 015280, passes through Penwith settlements at 141300 - 035700 (Morvah Parish) and 144730 - 037050 (Pennance), and continues through many sites, including Stonehenge, to finish at Stone Point, Essex 624640 - 225640. Altogether my map No. 203 has 35 parallel lines crossing the Penwith peninsula. Limitation of space does not allow me to describe them all, so I will just mention the following:- Pendeen fogou with Bosigran Castle and Zennor Church, Chun Quoit with Men-an-Tol, Chun Castle with Nine Maidens circle, Castle an Dinas with Trencrom Hill, Bartinny Castle with Carn Brea fort Chapel Carn Brea with Castle Kayle, Table Men with the Blind Fiddler, Alsia Well with St. Buryan's Cross, St. Michael's Mount & Nine Maidens (Wendron), The Pipers to Treverven standing stone, Tregiffian Burial Chamber and the Merry Maidens.

My map 203 also shows 14 parallel lines crossing the Isles of Scilly, some of which including the two already mentioned, tie up with the Penwith lines.

Living with a Fogou

by JO MAY

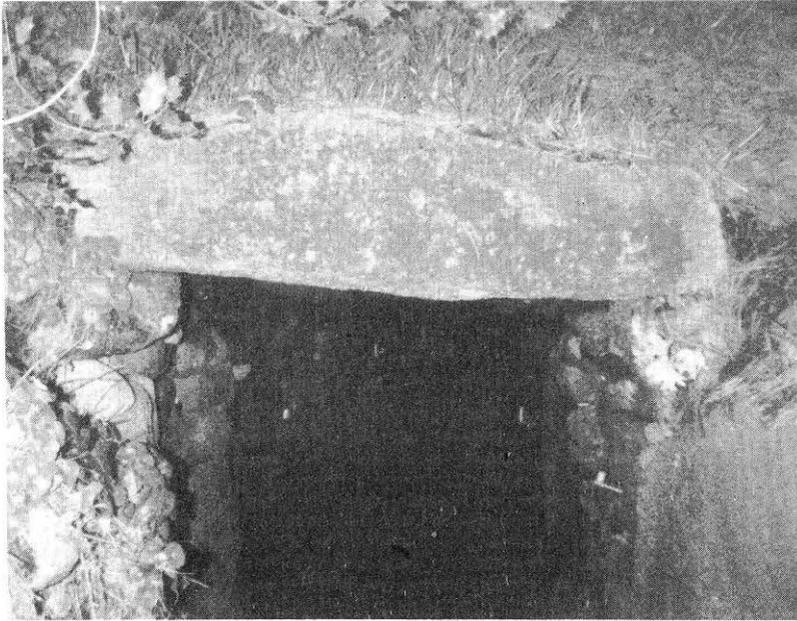
Jo May lives, works and cares for the Centre for Alternative Education and Research (CAER) Rosemerryn near Lamorna in West Penwith, in whose grounds lies the Boleigh fogou, the subject of this article. Jo, who runs the Centre with Judy and Dave Rose, has had 15 years of experience and training in many of the main approaches to personal and spiritual development including Encounter, Bodywork, Gestalt, American Indian and other Transpersonal methods. He helps to run a course entitled "Initiation - Rites of Passage" at CAER as well as co-ordinating other courses on developing human potential. The Centre itself lies in an area of great beauty on the site of a 2000 year old hill fort and in 7 acres of woods, streams and gardens, and the fogou is an integral part of that landscape. Meyn Mamvro is privileged to present Jo's ideas and information on the fogou itself.

Living with a fogou in the garden has convinced me that its secrets will not be discovered by bowling in, taking the odd photograph and peering at the stones. You need to be around it for a while, listen, let its presence work on you, and then it can begin to speak.

The nature of the work we do at Rosemerryn has incidentally enabled a fair amount of research on the fogou, not only by myself, but also by psychics from this and other countries, researchers into altered state of consciousness, and also some of the several hundred people who visit the centre each year for courses concerned with personal growth who also discover the fogou. What emerges is a clearly identifiable pattern involving synchronous imagery, inner voices and visions, and energy effects experienced at a bodily level. These kinds of experiences, in my view, unmistakably confirm the proposition that this fogou was a focal point for spiritual practices. I should be very surprised if this was not true for other fogous also.

Space won't allow me to go into detail. What I shall try to do is pull together a number of experiences from a variety of sources and present the pattern.

The fogou was most probably used for spiritual practices involving death and rebirth, vision quests, healing, inner guidance and soul-making. The reason the fogou is underground is because it is contained in the body of the earth - the ground from which we emerge and to which we return - the Mother. In this respect it is similar to the Native American Kiva, another underground structure for spiritual practice.



Rosemerryn Fogou looking in

The fogou is also located directly on a line of earth energy - a ley line linking the Merry Maidens, two medieval chapels, a Bronze Age burial, four standing stones and the parish church of Penzance. The current of this line appears to fluctuate with the time of day, moon's phases and the season - testable by dowsing. The fogou's location and orientation is not therefore accidental.

Legends associating the fogou with witchcraft confirm this view. Black magic is a distortion and manipulation of white magic for selfish ends. The energy is there anyway. What makes it "good" or "bad" is how you use it. Before we were able to use the fogou for private meditation, ceremony or research, it had to be thoroughly exorcised and cleansed - a testimonial to its former abuse.

The fogou's carving depicts a Celtic god of healing - "Clew an Nemed" which means "Clew of the Sanctuary" - and similar carvings are to be found in Brittany.

Both the snake, or serpent, and the dragon are traditionally symbols for the flow of life force or energy. In Terrific and Yogic disciplines the path to enlightenment coincides with the awakening of energy which resides at the base of the spine and which rises, twining around the chakras as they open. This energy is depicted as a serpent. The massive serpentine landscape temple at Avebury was the site of seasonal invocations to fertility and the life force. The life-giving physician has as a symbol two snakes coiling up a staff. The Aztecs, ancient Egyptians and Druids all revered the snake as a symbol of life-giving power.

The fogou's emblem seems to come from a time when the forces of heaven and earth were held in balance. The spear is held in the right hand - the side of reason, focus and the masculine, and the snake is held in the left - the side of emotion, receptivity and the feminine. These are partly modern associations derived from research into the function of the two sides of the brain. But they also occur worldwide in other cultures with no scientific traditions. So it seems probable that those who made the carving knew about life force and ways to manipulate it.

This is further borne out by a peculiar similarity between the fogou and Wilhelm Reich's orgone accumulator. Reich spent the later part of his life researching "orgone", or life energy. Dr. Reich's experiences in treating patients led him to discover that life energy and the way in which we prevent it from flowing through our bodies, was at the root of psychological disorder. Towards the end of his life he built apparatuses for accumulating energy - orgone accumulators - which he used for restoring vitality to, and healing, his patients.

Orgone accumulators are constructed of alternate layers of organic and inorganic material. Organic matter attracts energy from outside and inorganic matter reflects it back inside. The accumulator works by sucking in and holding energy. A powerful accumulator would have several alternating layers, although one layer is sufficient for it to work.

The fogou is constructed in a similar manner. It was built by cutting a deep trench, lining it with (inorganic) granite and covering the whole thing with (organic) soil.

A well-recorded property of an orgone accumulator is the effect it has on body temperature. After being in one for a few minutes, body temperature rises even when the air temperature is kept constant inside and outside the accumulator.

A similar effect occurs inside the fogou. This has nothing to do with the air temperature. Body temperature rises a degree or two after a few minutes.

The fogou was recently the subject of a survey for the "Dragon Project", an enquiry conducted by associates of "The Ley Hunter" to provide scientific evidence for the possible original purpose of stone circles and other ancient sites.

Choosing West Penwith because of its high density of granite - which naturally has a high level of radioactivity, Geiger counter readings were compared at several stone circles and also in the fogou. It was found that the level of radioactivity inside the stone circles was half that outside. The circles seem to



Rosemerryn Fogou looking out

create a protected space. By contrast, the reading inside the fogou as compared with the outside was double. The fogou seems to act as an accumulator.

The kind of phenomena experienced in the fogou - on several occasions by a number of people simultaneously - include: inner voices giving uncannily pertinent guidance, sometimes forecasting events before they happen; subjective perceptions of powers and presences - usually of female figures, frequently described as "women in white" or priestesses; visions involving fire, symbolic, perhaps, of inner cleansing; visions involving the laying out of the dead - usually bedecked with flowers - in preparation for the soul's journey to another realm; visions of enforced entombment for the purpose of confronting the dark side of the soul in order to re-emerge reborn; experiences of people being "called" to the fogou in order to symbolically "die" or else to collectively grieve someone who actually had died; experiences of waves of peace or comfort, and stilling of inner turmoil.

One possibility seems to be this: the fogou is located in a place of power, linked with other places of power in a landscape that was in former times "worked" spiritually by a people who had knowledge that we have now lost and are only slowly rediscovering - knowledge that may be necessary for our further evolution. The "power" or energy of the place effects human energy fields, accentuating the flow of life force in our bodies and hence the patterns we evolve bodily, mentally, emotionally and spiritually in order to either contain or release those energies. Experience thus gets heightened. There is a possibility too that such places are "edges between worlds" where "other realities" are more easily perceptible.

The whole fort site appears to be under the protection of a "guardian" or "guide", although I think you would need to live here in order to experience this.

Article (c) Jo May Photos (c) Jo May & Cheryl Straffon



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A GUIDE TO CORNISH CROMLECHS

Cornish cromlechs, also known as Penwith Chamber tombs, are a fascinating and - in some ways enigmatic - group of monuments. To start with, archaeologists are not even clear whether their primary purpose was for burial or ritual or something else. And then again, it is not known for certain whether they were originally covered by a burial mound of earth and stones or not. And to compound it all, there is still much debate as to whether part of their purpose at least was not related to astronomical alignments and/or leys.

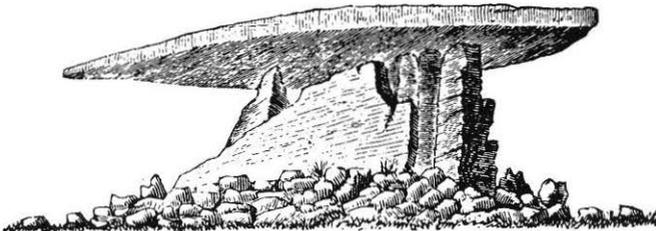
Some confusion exists over their definition. They are described as a form of a chambered tomb, but differ, in Cornwall at least, from other chambered tombs in their construction as well as their sheer size and impressiveness. They are also known as variants of portal dolmens, but as Weatherhill² points out, of the dozen surviving ones, only 3 are true portal dolmens (portal stones forming a simple antechamber or facade), the rest being either simple closed boxes or ruined beyond reconstruction. To add to the confusion they are also called 'Quoits' in Cornwall. This article attempts to sort out some of the confusion and place the extant remains in a context of prehistory and possible geomantic alignments.

Firstly, the name. Commonly called 'dolmens' in other parts of Britain ('dolmen' deriving from the Breton word *tol-men* meaning 'stone table') that name is at least etymologically more accurate than 'cromlech' which, while it has the advantage of being Cornish/Welsh, actually means 'curved place', and was formerly applied to all stone circles in the C19th (indeed it is still in use in Brittany for the enclosures at the end of stone rows). 'Quoit' comes from the Cornish/Breton game of Quoits, presumably as reference to the large 'circular' capstones, thought to have been hurled there by Giants.

The cromlechs/dolmens/quoits were constructed around 3700-2500 BC (middle Neolithic) and whilst some (like West Lanyon) were found to have large deposits of bones buried, others like Chûn have yielded up no remains at all. Barnett¹ says that in the case of the 'closed' sites at least it seems probable that much of the chamber remained empty and that they never contained a large number of artifacts or burials. This would seem to indicate that their use was largely ritual rather than burial. Chûn has the retaining wall of a mound that Weatherhill argues probably did not cover the capstone or facade of the 'tomb', but other examples like West Lanyon were known to be covered completely by a mound (until it was removed around 1800). If this were common, it makes one wonder how many other unexcavated burial mounds might not contain cromlechs within them. Finally, Michell finds alignments for 4 out of the 6 West Penwith Quoits, but none at all for Chûn (but see text over) or Sperris.

REFERENCES

- 1 - Barnett, J. : Prehistoric Cornwall (Turnstone, 1982)
- 2 - Weatherhill, C: Cornovia (Alison Hodge, 1985)



Zennor Quoit seen standing by William Borlase in the mid C18th

WEST PENW

LANYON SW430337 .



Probably the most accessible and well photographed of all the Quoits, and unfortunately the least authentic! It collapsed in a storm in 1815 and some stones were fractured, so that when it was re-erected in 1824 (at right angles to its original position) the capstone - 18½ x 8ft. & weighing 13.4 tons - was placed on only 3 lower uprights instead of the probable original rectangular box chamber. A grave containing "black earth" was found underneath when dug in the C18th by Borlase, who also mentions a mound some 70ft. long in which it was probably once buried. Barnett says that it appears to have continued in use for some time and formed a focal point for later ceremonial activity. It was orientated NE/SW, and Michell claims a ley running through it from Tregeseal Circle (see MM No. 2).

WEST LANYON SW423338



About ½ mile from Lanyon Quoit. West Lanyon lies in a sloping field some distance from the road. Its capstone (13 x 10½ft.) had fallen when it was discovered in 1790 (covered by a mound) and it now lies propped up against one upright. Large deposits of bones were found, and probably bronze and copper objects. It has been suggested that originally it would have been a closed box chambered tomb. Michell (pictured there with the Editress) claimed 2 leys, the main one being an alignment from Tregeseal Circle - Boswens menhir - West Lanyon quoit - Mulfra courtyard houses (featured in MM No. 1). Lockyer (1906) gave a May-day sunrise alignment from W. Lanyon to Boswens.

CHÛN SW402339



The only Quoit still almost perfectly preserved. A closed box chamber supports a 12ft. round capstone weighing about 8.7 tons and standing 7ft. above ground. It stands near the top of a hill crowned by Chûn Castle and is surrounded by a low circular mound which is probably the remains of a former barrow. However this may not have completely covered the capstone. Barnett says there is a midsummer sunset orientation towards Carn Kenidjack (by chance!), but in fact it is fact it is the midwinter sun that sets over the Carn when viewed from the Quoit. Michell found no alignments, but there may be one running from Portheras Common Chambered tomb (391333) through a possible standing stone now used as a gatepost (398336) to Chûn Quoit and on to Treen Common circle (445367).

MULFRA SW452354



Originally it must have resembled Chûn, standing in the centre of a circular barrow, near the top of a hill with fine views over West Penwith (including St. Michael's Mount). The 9½ft. square 5 ton capstone has slipped off the box chamber and now leans against 2 of the remaining 3 uprights. Borlase dug within and, as at Lanyon, found a pit containing black earth. It is visible from the Nine Maidens stone circle, (Boskednan), Zennor Quoit and Chysauster; and Michell found a ley running from the Men Seryfa through a tumulus near the Nine Maidens and a boundary stone (?) to Mulfra Quoit.

WITH SITES

ZENNOR SW469380



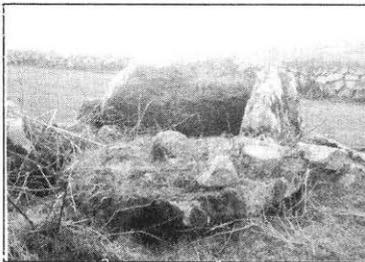
A path leads up from Eagles Nest to this Quoit. Seven huge uprights form a portal together with a facade leading to an antechamber, the chamber itself being sealed. The capstone, a massive 18 x 9½ft. weighing 9.3 tons leans backwards over the chamber, the result of some collapse of a support, clearance by a farmer, and blasting in the C19th. The chamber once stood within a stone barrow, but Barnett speculates that the facade and capstone may have been visible, giving access to the antechamber for ceremonials. Findings include a whetstone and pottery with cord impressions which tend to support the belief that the quoits may have been used by the living as much as for the dead. Michell postulates a ley from Boswens menhir through a tumulus and stone to Zennor Quoit and a cairn on Trendrine Hill. The Quoit is orientated westwards.

SPERRIS SW471382



Re-discovered and excavated in the 1950's, it lies only 400 yds. NE of Zennor Quoit, just below Zennor Carn. Only one upright and 3 fallen stones remain - the capstone is missing. It may originally have had a south-facing antechamber. Excavation revealed a small cremation pit just outside the chamber, itself lying in the low remains of an oval barrow. It is the only instance of 2 quoits so close together, though Sperris is much smaller than Zennor. No leys appear to run through this site.

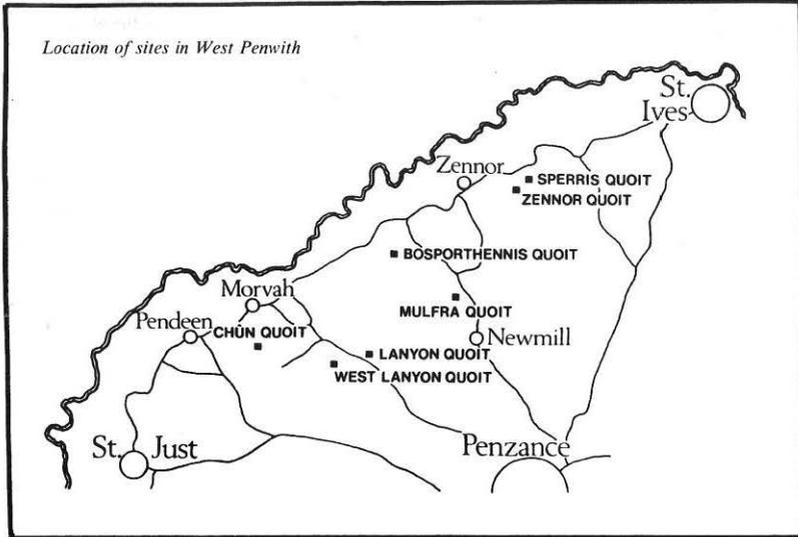
BOSPORTHENNIS SW436365



The remains of this quoit are interesting in that they still lie embedded in an oval barrow. Three of the four upright chamber stones remain and the capstone, now dismantled, has been trimmed for use as a millstone but not removed from site. It is unusual in that it is located in a low-lying site at the bottom of a Valley, unlike all the other quoits which stand on high ground. This, together with its smaller size, makes it a more hybrid version with characteristics in common with barrows and entrance graves.

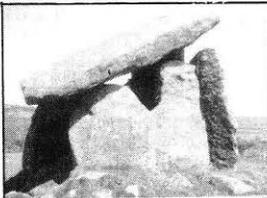
GIANTS GRAVE
(CHURCHTOWN)

Thurston Hopkins, writing in the 1930s, makes mention of a ruined cromlech called "The Giants Grave" near Morvah Church and adds "People still living can remember the rites at the grave for gaining knowledge of the future. Most of the Giants Grave has been removed for mending roads but, such is the persistence of ancient customs, the first Sunday in August is still kept as Morvah Fair." Local memory suggests that parts of the stone may still be found at the corner of an ancient track round the back of Morvah church at approx. SW403356.



SITES OUTSIDE WEST PENWITH

TRETHEVY SX259688



This quoit (which lies on the edge of Bodmin Moor near the Hurlers stone circles) is similar in plan to Zennor with a box chamber and an antechamber at the western end, but is better preserved. The capstone 13½ ft. long & 9ft. wide is smaller than Zennor but at 10.7 tons is thicker and heavier. Near the front of the capstone is a small unexplained hole, though there have been many theories! The tomb was formerly surrounded by a large mound, little of which survives. Lockyer (1906) gave an orientation towards the November (Samhain) sunrise, or in the opposite direction the May (Beltane) sunset.

PAWTON SW966696



This quoit known as the Giants Quoit, lies in a field on the northern edge of St. Breock Down. The capstone 15ft. long & 2½ ft. thick (and at 14½ tons the heaviest of the quoits) rests on a rectangular box only 4ft. above the ground. There is no ante-chamber as at Trethevy.

LESQUITE SX071628

South of Bodmin. A fallen capstone leans against one upright with another at right angles. Nothing remains of a surrounding Barrow.

CARWYNNEN SW650373

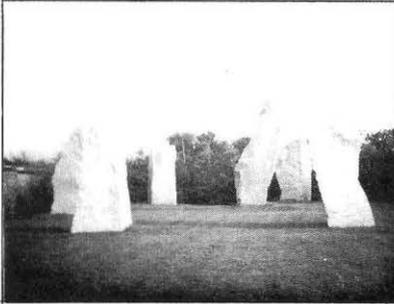
South of Camborne. Also known as Giants Quoit. Capstone stood on 3 uprights. Collapsed in 1834, rebuilt, and collapsed again in 1967. Nothing remains of a surrounding barrow.

DEVILS COYTS SW923619

Near St. Columb Major. Quoit collapsed 1840, broken up 1870. Fragments rediscovered in 1977.

A NEW CROMLECH IS ERECTED IN CORNWALL!

By your megalithic reporter



the reconstructed Lanyon Quoit, and consisted of a gigantic 15 x 10½ft. capstone weighing 18½ tons (making it probably the heaviest of all the Quoits in Cornwall), together with 3 uprights, two of which weighed 3 tons each and the third a massive 10 tons. The stones were hewn from a quarry at St. Breward and brought by police escort to St. Merryn, along with a 45 tone crane, a low-loader and a JCB! There, the site had already been dug by Ed with a little help from the local gravedigger. Three deep pits were prepared to take the uprights which were gently lowered into place by the crane and the sand pounded down by a willing team of helpers. Finally, the huge capstone was swung out over the sight

St. Piran's Day 1987 dawned clear and bright - perfect cromlech-erecting weather! For the first time in perhaps 5000 years, a full-size cromlech was to be put up in Cornwall, at Eddie Pryn's megalithic centre in St. Merryn. Already the proud builder of a massive stone circle (The Seven Sisters, illustrated left), a full-size men-an-tol, a logan rock as well as numerous other stones, Ed was about to cap (stone) the lot with a huge dolmen. As heir to the original megalithic builders, and inspired by some of the same zeal, Ed commented: "This monument is going to be the greatest mystic piece of sculpture in the world!"

The dolmen took the same form as that of



and lowered onto the uprights where it settled firmly, just as the sun was setting and casting its last light on the completed dolmen. For those of us who had been there all day, it was a profoundly satisfying and exciting moment. The 13th extant cromlech in Cornwall had made its appearance, a unique contemporary event that would perhaps reverberate down the next 5000 years when the archaeologists of the 25th century would be arguing over its purpose and meaning.

Afterwards, over a celebratory bottle of wine, I asked Ed what he was calling the dolmen. "The Angel's Runway", he said, "so that the fairies can come in and land, give a couple of shakes of their wings, and be gone again." Magic is still alive in Kernow!



The Faery Folk

BY SU FRENCH

Su French, living in West Penwith with her husband and three children, feels she was drawn here from her previous place living on a boat. She is especially attracted to and sensitive to the ancient sites, and is interested in all aspects of paganism, folklore and mythology. She has done a number of courses in magic ways and meditative techniques, and here explores the nature of some of the 'elementials' said to live within the ancient landscape.

Faery belief has flourished in these British islands since pre-history and in the Celtic countries the belief has lingered on almost to the present day. Here in Cornwall and especially in Penwith the very air seems to vibrate with a spiritual force bred from the years of pagan customs and beliefs.

When the early Christians came to Cornwall from Wales, Ireland and Brittany, they succeeded in blending their new God with the older gods of the druids, but the common people still kept their respect for the Earth and her ancient occupants. Still today, on the lofty vantage points of the hills and the high cliff promontories it is possible to feel watched by some hidden presence. This is a landscape in which an outsider often feels alien and strange, for it is full of the legend of Piskey, spriggan, and the Little People.

Some say that the Piskey came over from Ireland with the saints, perhaps a relative of the Leprechaun, and by all accounts his appearance is similar. Others say they were the souls of old pagan gods, or giants, who were sprinkled with holy water by the Christians and have been shrinking ever since. However they came to be here, stories of his appearance are always the same. He is said to be a strange, wizened little old man, dressed in green and given to good work as well as mischief. Although he was sometimes seen threshing the corn in lonely country barns, his most famous deed seems to be to lead people astray on the bleak windswept moor and misty marshland.

The land of Faery is timeless. It is said that sometimes a year is nine hundred years, or a night twenty years. There is a tale of a St. Buryan farmer, William Noy, who was Piskey-led while going home across Selena moor, about a mile south of St. Buryan. When he was found by his friends after being lost for three days, he told a



strange story in which he had stumbled upon a grand house in the woods, where previously a derelict barn had stood. In the clearing around the house he found hundreds of little people drinking, dancing and making merry. He spotted one who was taller than the rest, and upon trying to talk to her he discovered that she was his sweetheart, Grace Hutchens, who had been found dead on the moor three or four years before. Grace pleaded with William not to eat nor drink of the piskies food, for she had taken a golden plum, which had resulted in her capture and death. Hoping to escape with his sweetheart, William turned one of his hedging gloves inside out, for this was known to break the Piskies' spell, and threw it into the throng, at which the piskies disappeared, Grace included. William felt a blow to the back of the neck and fell where his friends found him, in the deserted barn. He spent the rest of his life searching the moor for the piskies and Grace.

There are many lighter tales of men being "piskey-led" whilst returning home from the pub, eventually arriving back to their wives with a coat turned inside out.

The Spriggans are a different race of faery. They are a grotesque hobgoblin, said to be dour and ugly and able to change shape at will. Faery warriors, they are the guardians of the ancient sites, appointed to protect the forts, barrows and cliff castles where treasure was buried. They haunt the old tumuli and dolmens, the grave sites of Penwith, for it is thought that treasure lay buried beside the people who walked these hills deep in the past. The spriggans were feared, for they were said to be able to bring down storms, and like the piskies were known to steal human children and leave their own ugly, greedy, ill-tempered babies as changelings.

There was a young man who dreamed that treasure lay buried among the rocks on top of Trencrom Hill. One clear summer night he went digging at the spot he had dreamed about. Before very long a fierce storm blew up, and in a flash of lightning the man saw an army of fierce spriggans coming out from under a flat rock and rushing towards him. Needless to say, the young man dropped his tools and rushed down the hillside as though the Devil was after him. He never resumed his search for gold.

In a similar tale, a "miserly man" was searching for treasure on the Gump, near St. Just. It was Lammass Eve, a time well known for faery activity, and as he climbed the Gump he heard enchanting music coming from beneath his feet. He felt compelled to dance to it, and presently the hill burst open and hundreds of faeries poured out. A regiment of spriggans followed and encircled the hill. Great feasting went on, until the man tried to throw his hat over the tiny table and make away with some of the riches he found there. A whistle sounded and before he knew what was happening the man was lying on the hillside bound and gagged by the spriggans. The he lay until morning, when he was able to break the cobwebs which bound him, and totter feebly home.

The Cornish people are known to have a superstitious and sometimes mystical nature. Even the brave, tough miners who dug for tin and copper became convinced that they shared their dripping tunnels, lit only by the glimmer from the candles in their helmets, with the knockers. These were a race of

spirits said to be a cross between ghosts and elves, and were treated with great respect. It was traditional to leave a morsel of food in the mine for the knockers.

In a tale of Bollowal Mine, Tom Trevorrow, a St. Ives man, failed to heed the advice of his companions and leave a portion of his pasty for the knockers. He was cursed by them, and soon afterwards the tin ore which he had been digging over the past weeks was lost in a rock fall, along with all of his tools. Tom escaped with his life, but his bad luck persisted for years, until his wife was able to find a witch who could lift the spell of the vindictive knockers.

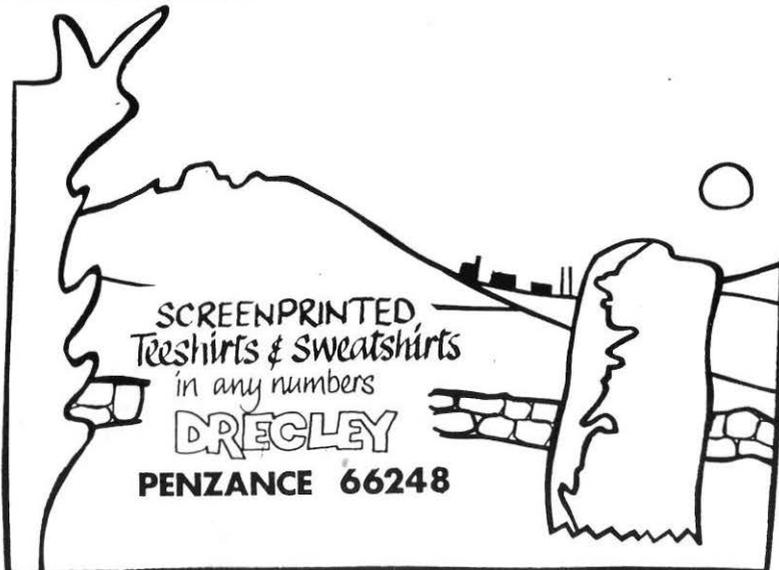
Not all the faery race were fierce or mischevous, however. There are to be found many descriptions of the beautiful Little People, Great in the gifts of music and healing. They were richly dressed in blue and green velvet and lace, and lived in the sheltered glades and secluded cliff sides of West Cornwall. Occasionally some lucky person would stumble upon their fairs or dances in the shelter of the woods or amongst the sea pinks of the cliffs. They were said to be decked with silver bells and were as lovely to behold as a meadow full of flowers. Their faery lights were sometimes seen by fishing boats rounding the lands end. Becalmed fishermen often stayed longer than was necessary beneath the cliffs of a sheltered cove, listening to the enchanting music and watching the sprites dancing in the moonlight.

Times may have changed, but it would be nice to believe that we still share this land with a population of faery folk and little people who watch over and protect our magical landscape. These spirits do not cease to exist just because we no longer see them. Perhaps we have destroyed some of their favourite haunts, but it is still possible to feel their presence when taking a quiet walk among the stones and cliffs and moorland.

References:

1. Popular Romances of the West of England. Robert Hunt.
2. Hearthside stories of West Cornwall. W. Bottrell.
3. The Fairies in tradition and literature. K.M. Briggs.
4. When I set out for Lyonesse.... Cornish walks and legends. Judith Cook.

Article (c) *Su French* Painting (c) *Gill Brooker*



The Sacred Earth

On August 16th/17th this year a Medicine Wheel Gathering (Medhekneth Ros Cuntellow) was taking place at a stone circle on Bodmin Moor, in celebration of a Hopi Indian prophecy. There will be a fuller report of the gathering in the next MEYN MAMVRO, but as an introduction the organiser of the event, (spirit woman Marilyn Spencer), a 'Cornish Indian' writes about her feelings for the earth and hopes for the Cornish peoples.

During the last few years, something rather beautiful has been happening in Cornwall: it came unannounced, and at first barely noticed by us until now. It is a new awareness within ourselves of how we can help restore what was taken away from us - our true Cornish/Celticness. We Cornish, like our Indian brothers and sisters, were once truly free to worship Mother Earth. We gave offerings to our Mother, in thanks for a good harvest, **not** always a young virgin as once supposed. We could heal the sick in our villages, using plants or our own energies. We held ceremonies at our Medicine Wheels (stone circles) just like the Indian peoples did. We **had** to help each other then, or the tribe wouldn't survive. The Cornishman or woman is known for his or her gentle unwarlike ways, which was probably our blessing and our downfall, once again like the Native American. Then came the 'invaders' to our land, the missionary who told us that our ways were sinful and we trusted and believed these invaders. First our old religion went, then our language and our healing powers. Knowledge of the old ways resulted in witchcraft 'trials', and we soon became like our invaders - half blind. We Cornish have been brainwashed for so long - anything to do with the old ways was supposed to be devil-sent, or we were 'out of our minds', scorned, laughed at. Not any longer; now the young come to us to be made aware of what they can do for world peace, and they went to see Cornwall as it used to be. Not, I may add, in the material sense, but a close knit friendly society, where our young do not want to leave the village to seek employment 'up country'.

We hold an Indian Pow Wow (get-together) in Cornwall in June, and it is one of the most emotional experiences I have had. For one week, everybody goes all out to help and understand each others beliefs - and it works. People wept when it was over, people were healed of illness, some found their true path in life. Again, to a so-called 'normal' person, I may seem odd holding an Indian - or Celtic - ceremony, high on Helman Tor amidst bitter cold winds at the Winter Equinox, but our ancestors did many years ago. We gave thanks to Earth Mother for all her bounty, also we acknowledged the life recommencing under our feet, quietly and unnoticed just as it always has done. The energy felt by us all was truly amazing. There is a good ley line at Helmen Tor and it's even more energetic now, there to be used by all who need this natural resource. I am a woman of the stones, so I find the title of MEYN MAMVRO - "Stones of our Motherland" - so apt. I use stones (i.e. crystals) in healing work and I'm also drawn to stone circles, as I know of the ancient energies they contain. I have dowsed the Trippet Stones on Bodmin Moor, finding one half positive and the other half negatively charged. It was strange to see how folk who walked about the circle moved immediately to be on the 'positive' charged side (without knowing why they did!) Some ancient memory recall, one wonders?

I hope a lot more of you will emerge from under your stones, and walk in beauty alongside us. You aer much needed, you Cornish Indians, people of peace. We could be the next missionaries, but this time no culture will die because of our words and deeds. There will be no persecution of people because of their ways of healing or worship. It will be one big, loving, caring tribe, who treat our Earth Mother with the respect she so richly deserves. After all, with no earth to walk upon, there is no planet to walk upon, no place for our young to be born upon. Walk in love and beauty - Cornish style.

OLD PAGAN CUSTOMS

by Hugh Miners (past Grand Bard of the Gorseth)

The article "Paganism in West Cornwall (2)" by Cheryl Straffon which appeared in Issue 2 of MEYN MAMVRO brought back many memories of a boyhood spent in a Penwith which is both timeless and utterly changed from those far-off 1920's. In spite of the railway and the coasting-vessels which made regular voyages to and from Penzance harbour, Penwith was largely still isolated from the rest of the country and the sterile, clinical materialism of the English conurbations affected us but little. Instead, we continued to live in a settled rural style which owed much to the Celtic (and earlier) paganism of which the article wrote, blended with an almost equally earthy Methodism, a mixture which produced a rich spiritual milieu for whose loss we are surely the poorer, today, in spite of our washing machines, satellites and the like.

More specifically, I am reminded that we never (and I mean never) referred to the sycamore tree as such; it was always 'May' and I admit to having been annually somewhat confused at having to refer to 'may blossom' on the hawthorns. I do not recall ever applying the term 'May' to any other bush or tree although I could not go so far as to contradict Hunt ("Popular Romances of the West of England") in that respect.

May Day in Penzance was certainly greeted by our blowing of our cheap tin 'may horns' and a most satisfying noise they made! But, we harked back to an earlier practice, too: one which is described by Rees. I recall being shown by an older boy how to make a 'feeper', a straight twig, some 4 or 5 inches long, cut from the May, and partly-hollowed to form a whistle. Alas, the pleasure in the skill and the sense of accomplishment associated with the production of a feeper was outweighed by the far greater satisfaction derived from the much louder noise made by the may-horns and the latter eventually almost obliterated the older and more primitive feeper. I say "almost" because one or two worthy Penzance people have kept alive the ancient craft of feeper-making, and the old, old practice whereby boys and girls came into the town on May morning blowing their freshly-made wooden whistles continues to this day.

Incidentally, the may-horn was arbitrarily banned from Penzance by an autocratic Chief Constable in the 1950's acting, so it was said, in response to complaints of excessive noise disturbing the sleep of a number of Penzance people who had newly-settled in the town and who had no earlier association with the old custom. This is the kind of attitude and action which can only antagonise the local population and is to be thoroughly deplored. One can only wonder for how long the 'excessive noise' made by the players accompanying the Obby Oss, or the band leading the Furry Dance will be tolerated (or in those cases, does the cash-flow they generate from the many visitors to Padstow and Helston respectively more than compensate for the loss of a couple of hours sleep!)

I must take up a point on one of the statements in the article, namely that "the only (Midsummer bonfire) in W. Penwith is on top of Chapel Carn Brea". I myself attended a fine Midsummer Bonfire at Bull Point last year, and there was certainly another at Trewey Common near Zennor. Both Madron and Penzance Old Cornwall Societies regularly hold these ceremonies and the latter is particularly well-attended, whilst St. Ives O.C.S. sometimes keep up the practice on Rosewell Hill.

I first took part in such a ceremony in 1930 or 1931 I would say. We youngsters gathered in groups in Penzance and walked to Madron Cairn to witness the lighting of the bonfire built by then infant Penzance O.C.S. It was a fine day's evening and as the fire died down we linked hands, boys and girls, and danced around the glowing embers. Occasionally a boy would pluck up enough courage to leap across the red hot ash (I don't remember a girl doing so) thus following a custom and a purpose age-old in time.

As the ashes cooled we left the scene and now, mainly paired, girl and boy, we walked back to Penzance and lined the railings on "the Prom" in order to see the lighting of an old fishing-boat, loaded with tar, which had been pulled out from Penzance Harbour into the Bay. A thrilling and magnificent spectacle she made and it was only the call of an even more primitive instinct which eased us boys away from the Prom in order to walk our girl-friends home - the long way of course!

The article rightly says that the custom of lighting the Midsummer Bonfires is observed by the Old Cornwall Societies, but I cannot understand why, after about 60 years, it remains the province of these societies. Their role was to revive a very ancient custom which had almost died out, but originally it was something which, surely, belonged to **everyone**. It should still, and I have often, in the recent past, tried to persuade, for instance, Young Farmers Clubs, to organise their own ceremonies. It is no reflection on the members of the OCS's to say that, for the most part, they are elderly and attend either out of a sense of habit or duty, or, not being Cornish, they are curious to learn what the ceremony is about and is like. That's fine, as far as it goes, but if these bonfires are going to continue to be lit, younger people must be sufficiently interested to carry on observance of the custom, and I do appeal, again, to members of the YFC's and others to organise and run their own bonfires: they can be excellent reasons for organising social gatherings, and the same remarks apply to the Crying the Neck ceremony.

It would be tragic if these ancient customs and ceremonies, once of such vital meaning and importance to the people of this land, were to be allowed to die. We should be the better, rather, if they could once again be invested with some of their original purpose and meaning, for they marked and heralded the changing seasons and showed man's utter dependence upon the natural forces, which with all our sophistication, still ultimately rule.

Editor's Note - Some local Pagan-orientated groups do still light bonfires on the hills at Beltane, Solstices, etc. but of course these are limited to their members. As an insight into the last remnants of these pagan customs we are printing an account by William Bottrell in "Stories and Folklore of West Cornwall". (1880)



The Lady of the Flowers at the Midsummer Bonfire Celebrations. Photograph courtesy of The Old Cornwall Society, St. Just.

Our bonfires, torches, and tar-barrels, with the peculiar hand-in-hand dance around the blazing piles, remind us of ancient times when similar customs were regarded as sacred rites by our forefathers; and it would seem as if some vestiges of these time-honoured religious notions were still connected with Midsummer bonfires in the minds of old-fashioned people, living in remote and primitive districts, where the good folks still believe that dancing in a ring over the embers, around a bonfire, or leaping (singly) through the flames, is calculated to ensure good luck to the performers, and to serve as a protection from witchcraft and other malign influences during the ensuing year.

Many years ago, on Midsummer's eve, when it became dusk, very old people in the West country would hobble away to some high ground, whence they obtained a view of the most prominent hills, such as Bartinney, Chapel Carn-brea, Sancras Bickan, Castle-an-dinas, Trecrobben, Carn Galvar, St. Ann's Bickan, and many other beacon hills far away to north and east, which vied with each other in the their Midsummer's blaze. Some of them anxiously watched for a sight of the first fire. From its position, with respect to them, they drew a presage of good or bad luck. If first beheld in the east it was a good sign. We would gladly go many miles to see the weird-looking yet picturesque dancers around the flames on a carn, or high hill top, as we have beheld them some thirty years ago.

We are sorry to find that another pleasing Midsummer's observance, which also appears to be ancient, has almost died out. Yet within the memory of many who would not like to be called old, or even aged on a Midsummer's eve, long before sunset, groups of girls, of from ten to twenty years of age, neatly dressed and decked with garlands, wreaths, or chaplets of flowers, would be seen dancing in the streets.

One favourite mode of adornment was to sew or pin on the skirt of a white dress, rows of laurel-leaves, often spangled with gold leaf. Before Midsummer small wooden hoops were in great demand, to be wreathed with green boughs and flowers for garlands, to be worn over one shoulder and under the opposite arm. Towards sunset, groups of graceful damsels, joined by their brothers, friends or lovers, would be seen "threading-the needle," playing at "kiss-in-the-ring," or simply dancing along.

BOOK REVIEW

JOURNEY TO THE STONES - MERMAID TO MERRYMAID

by Ian Cooke (Men-an-Tol Studio, 1987 - £11.50/£7.50)

A book that offers genuine new insights into our megalithic ancestors and their society is a great rarity indeed - I can only think of a handful in the last 20 or so years. To that select group should now be added the name of Ian Cooke from the Men-an-Tol studio in W. Penwith (and erstwhile contributor to Meyn Mamvro No. 2). His new book "Journey to the Stones" is a 100% must for anyone interested not only in the ancient sites in W. Penwith, but also the whole nature of the people who built those stones, to get, as he says "under their skin by suggesting their social, religious and cultural settings." Thus on one level the book is an extremely good guide to 9 walks around W. Penwith linking together some 46 sites. But it is much more than this, being a fascinating and thought-provoking insight into aspects of Neolithic, Bronze Age and post-Roman pagan and Celtic societies. The two strands are cleverly interwoven throughout the book without sacrificing either the clarity of the walks or the depth of thought in the ideas.

For example, the variety of topics covered in the Introduction alone includes the development of Neolithic society through the matriarchal line (what Ian calls 'Daughters of the Moon'); the function of cromlechs (he points out that many of the quoits have small openings through which relics could be passed and their forecourts would have been an ideal arena for the enactment of fertility ceremonies "symbolising a stage in the natural life cycle through which every living thing has to pass before rebirth and a new life"); the numbers of stones in circles (he postulates that they relate to the number of clans or family groupings within each tribe that erected a circle); as well as the development of metal working, changes in climatic patterns, and the alterations in societal infrastructures from female to male based. Although one might disagree with some of his inferences (for example, on sacrifice) there is a real feeling that he has put himself back into those ages and is not just viewing prehistory from the perspective of an academic C20th study, which makes a very refreshing change from most books.

There is a fascinating chapter on the astro-archaeology and symbolism of sun and moon worship where it is obvious Ian feels a strong attraction. It is a chapter that should be read by all who wish for a deeper understanding of the Goddess in her three-fold existence, clarifying the real meaning of the relationship between the Sun God, the Moon Goddess and Mother Earth. Further chapters follow on other related topics, such as Mermaids, whom Ian correctly places in the context of pagan Goddess



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The Mermaid of Zennor (Lino-Cut)

worship (or as he calls them 'merry maidens of the sea') - "today the powerful image of the Goddess in Her form as shape-shifting Merrymaid, dispensing both sexual favours and suffocation by water to Her male admirers has been cosmetically treated"; on the symbology of number - in particular 'nine' (as in the Nine Maidens) with its esoteric meaning of the triple moon goddess (virgin, woman and hag) "each stage of which passes through the three stages of existence, out of the past, through the present and into the future, as they merge into one another during the spiral of immortality"; on the mythology of the year's sun cycles (Bran as midwinter sacrifice, midsummer and the Green Man) and the seasons of the moon - Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane & Lughnasadh; on chapels and holy wells (showing the significance of the association of severed heads into wells in pagan times - "the head was believed to be the seat of the human soul, whose energy had strong phallic connotations of masculine virility, and its use was thought to strengthen the powers of the 'female' water and to assist in the rebirth of the deceased"); and on fogous, ley lines (earth energies), stone circles, torcs, Celtic crosses (which are shown to be pagan in origin, the cross having been used for thousands of years, principally with the sun symbol especially when contained within a circle) and the early Christian church which was "firmly rooted in local pagan traditions and carried on many of its beliefs and ceremonies which were a reflection of the Celtic culture of the area."

All these topics are well illustrated with Ian's drawings and lino-cuts (see mermaid illustration above) and are woven around a structure of eight detailed walks to the ancient sites plus a final one linking all eight together (although unfortunately some of the standing stones given, such as Chapel Carn Brea & the Boscawen-un outliers are no longer there). Clear maps and some beautiful photographs accompany the walks, which also contain nuggets of information and ideas on the sites: for example, that there may originally have been 3 stone circles at the Merry Maidens; that Boscawen-un centre stone has 2 carved axe-heads visible only during midsummer sunrises; that Bosiliack Barrow has a midwinter sunrise alignment akin to Newgrange; that the 12 & 13 cupmarks on Tregiffian Barrow may symbolise the sun/man & moon/woman and relate to the Arthurian Round Table (12 + 1) & witches covens (13); and that Bollowall Barrow (Carn Gluze) was a "virtual necropolis, keeping watch on the sun and moon as they 'died' each night and day below the western horizon). In fact the whole book is a mine of information and ideas, a book to dip into, to go back over, to study in depth, to take with you on walks, to check out its ideas, to follow up its leads. It is the complete book of the main ancient W. Penwith sites, and, more, it is crammed full of love for the Earth and a deep understanding of the ancient man's sensitivity to landscape and skyline. With 'Journey to the Stones' you are there, back in a Neolithic, Bronze Age and Celtic world and Ian Cooke has taken us there with great skill and insight. (C.S.)

The Piper's Tune

(Possibly) the last chapter on the Carn Eanes standing stone! (pictured above right). Regular readers will re-call previous details from MEYN MAMVRO No.'s 1 & 2, but for others the story so far is that a mystery menhir appeared near the top of Carn Eanes (384338) after contractors working for Geevor mine had been clearing the site. It was noticed at the time (1986) by, among others, MM readers John Maunder who contacted the geologist at Geevor to ask about it, and Mary Hendy, wife of the ex-mayor of St. Just, who wrote to the Cornish Archaeological Society about it. However, we have now unearthed (!) what we believe to be the full background story, known only to a few people until now. The impetus behind the discovery and erection of the stone lies with the Fountain Group of Lelant, a group of dowisers who carry out healing rituals for the earth at selected sites in W. Penwith. One of these was at Carn Eanes after the ravages of the quarrying operations there, and it was as a result of dowsing this site that they discovered the existence of the stone underground, which they believe to be an original prehistoric menhir subsequently buried. They then got in touch with the Geevor sub-contractors and asked them to bring the stone to the surface and erect it, which they subsequently did. So, we may have a genuine 'new' standing stone on the landscape of W. Penwith, and it appears to be on a possible ley running from the stone through the lost Morvah standing stone at 408352 and Bosphorthennis Quoit (436365) to a tumulus at Pennance at 454376.

Another possible discovery of a (once) standing stone has been found by MM reader Joan Godfrey of Newlyn, who has come across a stone lying face down in the farm lane (4425/2815) past the stile leading to the second field from the Tresvennack Pillar (4418/2788). She wonders if this might be the second Tresvennack stone, mentioned in Vivien Russell's survey as being originally in the neighbouring field at 4426/2793 approx., but if so it would have been moved across two fields to the lane. MM has visited the stone, and although it is difficult to distinguish, being covered by the earth of the farm track, it is certainly large, though with its wide girth at the bottom not perhaps a typical shape for a menhir. But if it is a menhir, it does, as Joan says, seem a shame as tractors etc. regularly go over it.

She has also found what might be hut



circles near Kerris and wonders if they could be the remains of the Iron Age village contemporary with the Iron Age roundago on the hill above.

West Penwith was abuzz this Summer with the news of the discovery of 3 Bronze Age gold bracelets on Rosemorran Farm near Gulval, near where Dr. Gilby mentioned the lost fogou in MM No.2. Farm worker Tony Richards unearthed what he thought were 3 old curtain rings tucked inside each other, but which subsequently proved to date from the middle Bronze Age (1000-600 BC). The priceless bracelets were deemed at Coroners Court not to be treasure trove (intentionally hidden) and thus belong to the owner of the land Barrie Rodda who expressed a wish that they remain in Cornwall. This is the second Bronze Age gold discovery in W. Penwith this century: in 1931 a gold hoard consisting of 2 torcs, 4 bracelets and 2 gold bars was found near the top of Badgers Lane on the Tinnors Way.

Pictured below are the 3 Rosemorran bracelets, photographed especially for MEYN MAMVRO.



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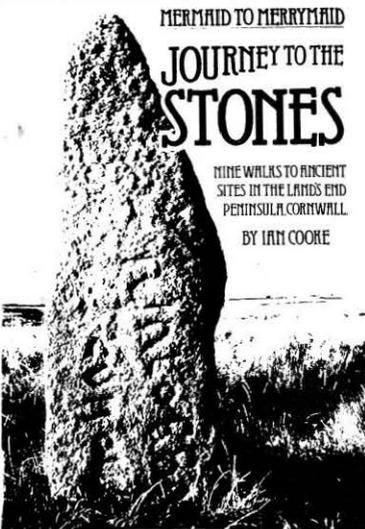
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