

THE RITUAL CYCLE • CELTIC CROSSES  
HERITAGE UNDER THREAT • LEYS •  
DRUIDIC ALTAR STONES • NEW BOOKS

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# Meyn Mamvro

## Stones of our Motherland

EARTH ENERGIES • ANCIENT STONES • SACRED SITES • PAGANISM • LEYPATHS  
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Our account in the last MM of the correspondence over paganism in 'The Cornishman' has provoked some interesting responses. One of our subscribers, the Rev Harper, vicar of Paul, with whom we have had some useful contact about crosses, believes that both paganism and Christianity "have a common reverence for the created world and we can learn from each other". On the other hand, Sandra Rowell, wife of the vicar of Pendeen, has produced a booklet about midsummer celebrations, claiming that they owe very little if anything to paganism! For an accurate account of the meaning of the festival see the article on pages 16-20 of this edition. There does seem to be some confusion about the pagan origins of festivals. The Feast Days in Cornish parishes which commemorate the "date" of their Celtic founding saints are a reminder of their pagan origins. Most dates fall on or about the old celtic festivals, and some feast days have legends associated with them recalling their pagan origins. However, others have degenerated into simply church services or secular binges, and unfortunately, many have fox hunts as a focal point of the week. This provoked a letter to 'The Cornishman' from Gwendolen Barter in Kent in which she compared the barbarous practice of foxhunting with the Spanish fiestas and concluded - "It not all this reminiscent of pagan rites rather than Christianity?" Local pagan and MM reader Diana Marsun immediately replied, putting the matter straight - "Pagans in fact hold a deep regard and respect for all life, be it human or animal... and try to live in harmony with the elements, the land, animal life, the planet and humankind, which does not cohere to the taking of life in the name of sport."

Meanwhile, even some Christian ministers are becoming aware of the growing movement back to the roots of our native faith. The vicar of St Elwyns Church at Hayle Fr. MacDonnell is reported as saying that most of his flock are lapsed, neo-pagan or just plain indifferent! Perhaps he should have brought them to some sacred sites in West Penwith this past Summer which were all buzzing with life. At Beltane there was maypole dancing and music on Carn Bosavern organised by MM, and at the Summer Solstice there were numerous celebrations at ancient sites, including an open ritual by Kevin & Ingrid Carlyon at the Nine Maidens, followed by a debate on Radio Cornwall the next day with 2 vicars. 'The Cornishman' described the ritual in a front-page report: "Witches and pagan worshippers of the earth formed a circle inside the ancient stone ring. Shadows from the dying sun etched out the features of the bleak moorland surrounding them. The wind whipped in from the sea and tugged at their robes. Together, by ritual, they attempted to call ancient magic from the earth. With the ritualistic use of chanting, candles, wine and other assorted accessories, the little group of about two dozen tried to commune with the forces of nature. At each of the four main points of the compass, the elements of earth, air, fire and water were called to attention. Then, after a salute to the setting sun and the rising moon, incantations and prayers for healing were spoken by anyone who wished to do so. These tended to be ecological pleas and requests for peace." The article finished by explaining the meaning of what they do, and disassociating themselves from the evil side of "black magic". "They said that their aims were all good, centered on love of the earth and positive energy."

## Ancient Sites Under Threat

Much concern is being expressed locally about the development and management of ancient sites in West Penwith. The Peninsula Voice in July/August did a special feature on the situation, including contributions from Meyn Mamvro. There are 3 main areas of concern at present -

- 1) The ruined fogou at Chysauster. English Heritage had threatened to bury it rather than repair it. Both Peter Pool and Craig Weatherhill have complained vociferously about this, Craig making the point that "those who would know best are those whose heritage it belongs to - the Cornish, not the people in Bath or London." English Heritage say nothing can be done until money is available.
- 2) Bosullow Trehyllis courtyard house settlement. The land on which this stands was recently purchased by John Lawry who has applied to English Heritage for permission to fence it off and prevent public access. MM has been told by the CAU that permission will be given. Meanwhile Mr Lawry himself attempted to order us off the site when we were casually visiting it, and was seen giving other visitors an accompanied tour as a self-appointed guide. The site is a rare gem - a peaceful unexcavated site, known to a few discerning visitors, and, until now at least, a pleasure to visit. If you object, please write to English Heritage and tell them so.
- 3) Other popular sites like Chun Castle. There is a plan afoot to develop some 50 or so local ancient sites for tourism, presumably with explanatory plaques, guided footpaths, and promotion and marketing. This raises the whole question of whether these sites should "belong" to any one group or organisation, and what input the local people who actually use and care about these sites are allowed to have. MM's views on all this is expressed in The Pipers Tune on p.24 of this issue.



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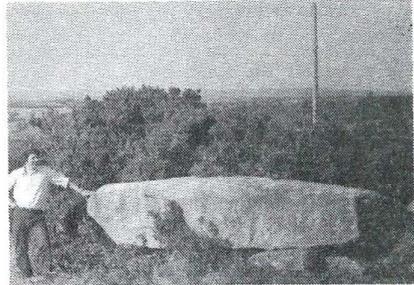
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# Lost and Found

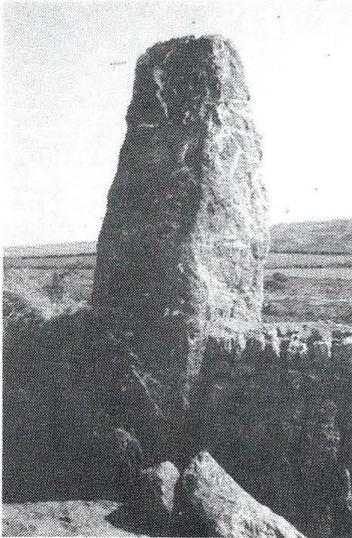
In the article on stones in the Merry Maidens area in MM6 (p.5) there was mention of a lost stone listed as 'Boleigh' by Vivian Russell in 1959 (St Buryan menhir 15). This stone has now been rediscovered independently both by MM contributors Tony & Su Bayfield, and by reader A. Inwards. It lies at 4382 2475 in the corner of a large field well hidden in bracken and completely overgrown by ivy, though it is actually marked on the 1:2500 OS map (SW 32/42) as a dot, and on the 1:25000 map as Recumbent Standing Stone. It can be measured at some 13ft long and menhir-shaped, and were it not for modern-day bracken and field walls the 2 Pipers would be visible from it to the right and left. As the MM6 article mentioned, there is a tradition of a 3rd Piper standing stone originally somewhere near to the existing two. It is possible that this could be it, though if it has not been broken off its 13ft, including the part below the ground, would make it some 3 - 5ft shorter than the Pipers.

Another candidate however lies at the edge of another field just across the lane at 4374 2455 (pictured right), and interestingly enough this is on the site of the lost Tregunow circle mentioned in MM7 p.3, one of the 3 possible stone circles in the Merry Maidens area. It would be nice if these stones could be re-erected again - any offers?



"The menhir hunter & his fallen prey!"

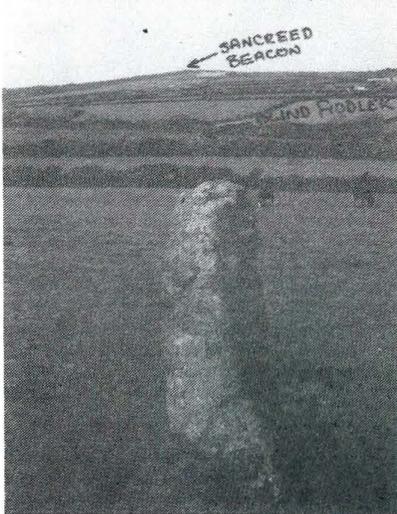
In fact West Penwith has this past Summer been blessed with the erection of a 'new' standing stone. It was found lying in a hedge when the driveway to Wheal Buller farm was being widened beside the B3318 north road between Newbridge and Pendeen at 4025 3185. MM spoke to the landscape builders who found it and they said that they decided to place it upright in the hedge where it is clearly visible from the main Penzance-St Just road (see picture left). It was manoeuvred into place on some other stones and is some 10ft high with 5ft more below ground, the base 3ft across tapering upwards. It may well be an authentic menhir as it stands at the bottom of Boswens Common on whose top there was formerly a stone (cairn?) circle - Dry Carne - and over the top of which stands another menhir (4001 3290), all 3 sites being roughly in line. At any rate it is a pleasant task to record that standing stones are still being erected and not destroyed.



## Into Alignment

We have received an interesting letter from Rick Walker, formerly of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, in response to the feature on leys in MMS. In it he says that the evidence for leys, in the sense of alignments of ancient sites, should certainly be considered by archaeologists. "I feel personally that any archaeologist who denies the existence of large scale alignments such as those in West Penwith must be acting in an unprofessional manner. Like you, we are left in some doubt as to the uses of these monuments and we theorise and speculate endlessly on their use and how we could prove certain hypotheses. We are however left with the obvious fact of these alignments, and I find this one of the most impressive aspects of extant early landscapes." This is a most positive statement indeed to come from the archaeological establishment, and more than welcome at a time when the archaeological evidence for leys seems to be growing fast (see for example "Lines on the Landscape", the new book by Paul Devereux and Nigel Pennick).

The probable leys in West Penwith are of course well documented, but other possibilities still turn up. An intriguing suggestion comes from reader A. Inwards who has found a couple of leys intersecting at the Runnel Stone, a rock outcrop a mile or so off the south coast of W. Penwith (3696 2009). One ley from Boscawen-un Circle through Trevorgans standing stone has a 7.9m only deviation and the other from Faughan stone through Kerris standing stone has a 5m only deviation. Mr Inwards comments: "Are there any keen divers among your readers who might care to search the Runnel Stone for a possible megalith?"

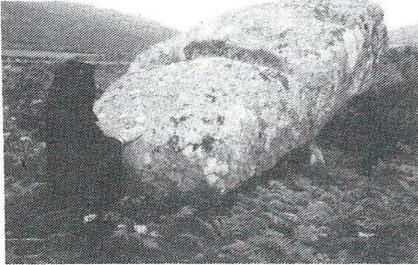


Another possible ley runs from King Arthur's Table stone (see p.7) through Boscawen-un circle, (4122 2736) a stone at Trenuggo Farm, (4275 2795) to the Drift Stones (4370 2830). The Trenuggo Farm stone is in a field on the opposite side of the road to the Blind Fiddler standing stone, and together they form a perfect visual alignment up to the top of Sancreed Beacon (see photo). The farmer in whose field it stands claims it is not ancient, but farmers are not always to be trusted in these matters!

Finally, there is another stone near the edge of a field at Kelymack near St Just (3727 3033), not documented elsewhere. Stones such as these may simply be relatively modern rubbing posts (though this one is not in the centre of the field); but equally they may be more ancient, unnoticed in the past by antiquarian writers. This one has a possible ley, running through it, from the nearby Tom Thumb Rock (3682 3061) (see opposite page), going to Boscawen-un field menhir (4149 2762) - 6.8m deviation.

## Penwith Altar Stones

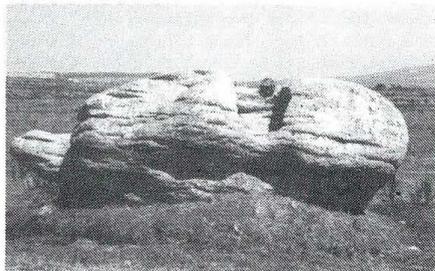
Scattered all around the West Penwith peninsular are large natural stones, probably glacial erratics, some 100sq ft or more in area, and weighing many tons. These stones are distinguished by having what Dr Borlase (1796) called 'rock basins' in them. Borlase believed them to be artificial, though they are of course natural, but some of Borlase's speculations about their use by 'Druidic priests' may contain an essence of truth. He believed that they used them for catching rain and snow water for purifications and sprinklings in the performance of the rites of their Pagan worship, water being thought of as particularly pure and sacred. Certainly they seem, to exist in significant places, and some have pagan folklore attached to them.



One such is the **GIANTS ROCK** (4538 3880) in a field to the north of Zennor Church where legend says that anyone touching it nine times at midnight would become a witch. Another is **CARN VRËS** (3868 3223), the rock of judgement, overlooking the Tregeseal stone circle. Its proximity to the circle, and, as Buller (1842) points out, the fact that it is the only rock of its kind on the whole of Tregeseal common, seems to indicate it may have had sacred importance. Another group can be found at **BOSWORLAS** (3788

"Becoming a witch at the Giants Rock" 3066) near St Just Radio Station. These are immense granite stones with several rock basins, and are visible from the Kelynack stone mentioned on p.3. Not far away there is the **TOM THUMB ROCK** (3682 3061), about which there is a curious legend that seems to have a certain ring of authenticity. Supposedly at St Just Feast, on or about the 1st November which is the old Celtic festival of Samhain, the

first stranger into the town would be wined and dined and made to feel like "a king for the day". Then at sunset he would be taken to the Tom Thumb Rock and there be sacrificed by having his throat cut, the blood running down into the basin. The legend could simply be dismissed as a remnant of Borlase's unproven theories of Druidical blood sacrifices were it not for the fact that it is a perfect re-enactment of the ancient pagan motif of sacrifice at the festival of Samhain to ensure



"Having throat cut at Tom Thumb Rock"

the fertility of the crops for the coming year. Even as late as this century it used to be the custom for people to perambulate out to the rock after church on Sundays, as though there were some deep folk memory of a processional route there.

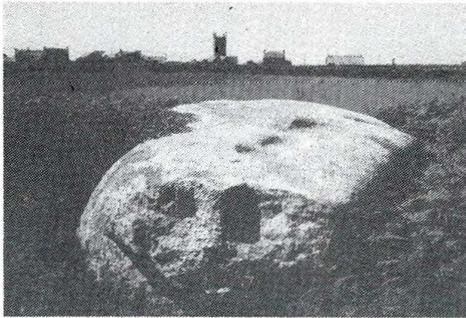
## THE KELYNACK ALTARS

Close to the Tom Thumb Rock are what MM reader Rory Te 'Tigo believes to be the **KELYNACK ALTARS** (3721 3029), and near Sennen is **KING ARTHUR'S TABLE** (3599 2540) recently re-discovered by him. The following account by him describes his excitement at finding these altar stones.

"Visible from the St Just to Kelynack Bridge road there is a large rock on the left-hand side of the road, just before the Roseudian Guest House. The rock stood out to my eye because it appeared to be a large flat table with an outcrop chopped off at the east side, and small boulders laid on top for no other reason than to hide its surface. So during 1988, I decided to investigate closer. Unlike Tom Thumb's Rock, which may have been purposely transported to its present site, this 'Table' seems to be indigenous to its place, the site coinciding with a break in the slope of the hill towards Carn Bosavern and the Cot Valley stream. The stone visible from the road appears to be badly defaced on the eastern side, its former overall shape not unlike a horse or other animal buried up to its stomach in the ground, or even a Giant's Divan, but its original shape could have been anything. This decapitation could have been natural or the result of Christian religious fervour.

From the heavily-overgrown footpath my sight was drawn by a further rock about 10 to 15 metres along the path and approximately 5 metres further up the bank. The top appeared to be more or less boat-shaped and all covered by a thick matt of ivy. Careful prodding with my boots revealed that the matt was not hanging over a too-deep dip. When I tried to lift it in order to examine the stone itself, a shallow dip, not unlike a bathing or slaughter tub, was revealed, though I have to admit that due to its thickness I was not able to lift the vegetation very far. Towards the south-eastern end of the rock there appeared to be a natural spout, and as it might have been the natural beginning of the stone decaying into something not unlike a seat (as found on Tom Thumb Rock), I made a special effort to lift the living blanket at this spot to investigate. To my amazement the spout appeared to be artificial, as right behind it the stone showed an outcrop, making two little channels coming from east and west and leaving towards south after joining. Whether there were two different dips or basins on the stone, or whether there is just a knob on it to block off the outflow slightly I cannot say. One would have to cut off all the ivy to say more about this basin and I could not bring myself to tear off the blanket of cover at this place.

As there was a second much flatter stone towards the field with white thorn growing in between, I climbed it and cut a hole into the thicket, as an animal track going under the thorn bushes suggested a possible "proto fogou" (as at Carn Euny in the rock outcrop overlooking the settlement). But after sliding down the earthy side of the stone into the gap I had created and crouching down between the two rocks, nothing was revealed except some 50cm wide gap between the two stones all filled with black-thorn bushes and the roots of the ivy that covered the basin on top of the larger rock. The cleft is approximately 1.2 metres deep where I lowered myself into it, and appears to prove that the stones are geologically on the spot of origin.

KING ARTHUR'S TABLE

This large and prominent rock was first mentioned to me by someone who had read Claudia Cluesvanreden's book "Stone monuments of the Western Hemisphere" I read the book myself in 1980, and subsequently found the stone quite where its situation was described in the book. I seem to remember that the upper southern tip of the stone was still in place, which nowadays seems unlikely as the amount of lichen visible

on the broken surface could not have grown in 8 years. But then the 1981 summer was a very peculiar time anyway, as I appeared to fall in and out of one time-loop after the other. What I do remember is that the corner protruded quite some way into the field-path blocking it for the farmer's machinery. It was flat on top and curved up from below, having at least 3 cup-marks possibly for grinding and mixing potions and paint on its top. I have subsequently looked for the missing corner all over the area, but it was not to be found, and is now I presume on display in someone's garden.

Looking at the stone from the east, where it stands in a prominent position where a footpath meets the lane from Seaview Caravan Park, it resembles a Dragon's mouth or a chameleon's beak, the seat facing towards Tregeseal Stone Circle and Kenidjack Carn, just visible on the horizon. Walking around the stone from the west, along its eastern side, there is a very easy way of mounting it by a hedge on the north side. Stepping on the stone one immediately notices the small array of drillholes underneath in this pattern:- (right)

Subsequent exploration of the soil right underneath the chair cut into the north-east face revealed a great amount of ferrometalic debris, and a peculiar large bone hip-cup. An attempt to disturb the electromagnetic fields around the stone had apparently been undertaken. The presence of 2 horseshoes and the hipbone made it look as if some rite had been involved.



There are two quite distinct features of the Table. One is an oval seat, large enough to hold a full-size person, but smaller than in the Tom Thumb rock. The bottom of the seat is smooth from ancient and modern use, but the seat base does not quite drain itself of rainwater. The other feature is a figure of eight shaped-indentation, i.e. - two equal-sized round dips in the surface.

There are a number of ley-lines running from the Table (KAT), for example:

- 1) KAT-Boscawen-un circle-Trenuggo stone-Drift stones-Bryan Rock (see p.4)
- 2) Trevilley Cross-KAT-site of Whitesands Bay cairn circle-crossroads-Tregeseal stone circle
- 3) Carn Les Boel\*-KAT-Carn Grean hut circles-crossroads-Men-an-Tol-Wicca pool
- 4) KAT-Penrose farmhouse (haunting legends)-St Buryan Church-Penmenor Cross-Merlin's Island off Mousehole
- 5) KAT-crossroads-Gun Rith menhir-site of Boleigh circle-Kenvil Point.

\* For significance of this rock see MM9 p.5

© Rory Te 'Tigo

## *Spirits of West Penwith*

Elliott O'Donnell (1873-1964) was one of Britain's foremost ghost hunters publishing over fifty books on ghosts and the occult, most of which are now out of print. Today his books aren't all that popular since there is a heavy emphasis on the "horror" aspect of hauntings and some of his views on certain topics, such as spiritualism, are rather controversial.

At the turn of the century O'Donnell lived for a time in St. Ives where he set up a small private school. He didn't seem very impressed by St. Ives mainly on account of the inhabitants who he described as being primitive. Frequently visitors to the town would be greeted by stone throwing mobs and driven away. To make matters worse – or better, perhaps, if you're a ghost hunter – the house where he was living was haunted. It was a fairly new house situated on the edge of a quarry. Each night footsteps would be heard ascending the stairs and walking along the corridor to his room where they would stop outside the door. There would be a loud crash on the upper panel of the door and then silence. If the door was opened nothing would be seen and all attempts to trap the entity were unsuccessful.

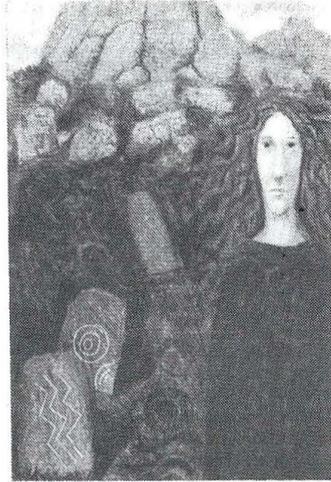
One evening O'Donnell was approaching the house when he saw some bizarre being emerge from the quarry and walk towards it, abruptly vanishing when it reached it. This was, he believed, an elemental spirit (i.e. a spirit which has never inhabited a human body) which, possibly disturbed by the building of the house, had started haunting it. O'Donnell left it a short while later.

The moors of West Penwith are, according to O'Donnell, haunted by these type of spirits. In "Dangerous Ghosts" (Rider & Co. 1954) he writes:-

"The lonely moors and hills that constitute the hinterland of St Ives are much haunted, not only by the ghosts of old-world people but by elementals, as grotesque in appearance as are the fantastically fashioned rocks and boulders amid which they prowl and glide at night".

Anyone who wanders over these places by day could well believe that O'Donnell was right. In one of his earlier works he suggests that these elementals were responsible for an abnormally high number of mentally subnormal inhabitants of the area! I must confess that I do not believe I've seen any of these elemental spirits in my wanderings in West Penwith although there is a sinister, brooding atmosphere not just on the moors behind St Ives but on the Gump and some parts of the cliff path. There was one occasion, though, when I did sight something that I thought at the time was rather peculiar. I was approaching St Ives from St Just and was driving past a farm entrance on the left of the road. All of a sudden a most bizarre animal ran out of the farm entrance and scuttled across the road. In appearance it resembled a tail-less red setter though it was rather taller than that type of animal and I got the impression that it was something most strange. Perhaps I was wrong and it simply was a tail-less red setter and the rest was due to my imagination! One never knows!

Has anyone else ever seen anything strange of that nature in West Penwith?



There have indeed been many other experiences by people of spirits in West Penwith. Many of these of course go unreported, as people are sometimes reluctant to go 'public' on such matters. But Meyn Mamvro knows of several anomalous sightings of elemental spirits and strange animals, of which the following are a few examples.

Spirits seem particularly to haunt the Moors and the ancient sites. One person I know who does a lot of walking on the Moors told me he hears and sometimes sees spirits whom he believes are the elemental forms of our dead ancestors. Jo May in his article "Spirits at Ancient Sites" (MM4) speaks of the guardian spirits of the wells at Carn Euny and Sancreed, at the fogou at Rosemerryn, and the tall spirit at Bartinney Hill. This latter sighting was incidentally confirmed to me quite independently by someone else who had not read Jo's article. Evans Wentz (1911) has written extensively of the beliefs in elemental beings in Cornwall and elsewhere, which he thinks were the diminished figures of the old pagan divinities of the early Celts. And J.T. Blight (1876) speaks of the "shadowy regions of fairyland, the little people, lost souls and spirits of the dead" that walk by night on the Gump on the Penwith Moors (see MM2 p.6). 19th folklorists Hunt & Bottrell collected many examples of such spirits in Cornwall, and a selection may be found in Tony Deane & Tony Shaw's book "The Folklore of Cornwall".

Deane & Shaw also gave several examples of sightings of strange beasts in Cornwall, including a spectral black dog seen by many people at Botterell and Berriow, a phantom black dog who appeared to a group of wrestlers on Whiteborough tumulus, a phantom white hare whose appearance forewarns of accidents in the mines, and a bear-like creature "with huge fiery eyes" who walked straight through a closed gate, seen at St Blazey by a Samuel Drew out poaching one night. Other modern sightings of anomalous creatures have included an unidentified creature at Botallack (near St Just) a few years ago, and in 1986 on a stormy night of the summer solstice when we were driving back from Lanyon Quoit we ourselves saw there an unidentified animal, resembling perhaps a hyena or a jackal, making a leap across the road, illuminated in the flash of brilliant lightning. More recently there have been another rash of sightings of the "Morvah puma", as it has become to be known. It was first spotted in Oct 88 by a Penzance couple who described it as about 2ft in length with a head two-thirds the size of a football. More sightings followed, including one at Zennor, and it was spotted again in March 89 by Jeanette Ratcliffe of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit. The strange thing about all these sightings, as indeed of all such "anomalous animals" is that the animals are either unknown, or puzzling, and are never actually captured or found.

So what are these anomalous spirits and creatures seen with frequency by sane and sober people over the years? To try to find an answer we shall be looking in the next MM at other 'strange sightings' in Cornwall, including a water monster, a bird man and some UFOs. Are they perhaps all aspects of the same elemental force?

(C.S.)

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### THE SUN AND THE SERPENT

Meyn Mamvro is organising a talk by PAUL BROADHURST with slides on the Dragon Line Earth Energies featured in his new book.

Thursday 30th November in Penzance. Venue to be announced -

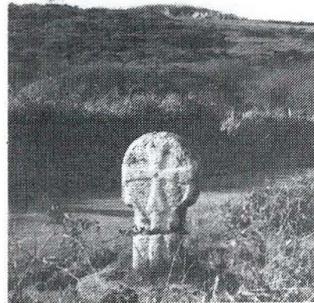
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# Crowsow Kernow

(The Crosses of Cornwall)

Hidden in overgrown hedges, nestling beside wayside stiles, lurking in churches and on churchyard paths, the crosses of Cornwall are a delight to discover and a constant surprise when found. They have such variety, both in design and appearance, and their very antiquity seems to speak to us across the ages. Some, like Boskenna\* and Trebehor with their carvings of figurines that look pre-Christian, are enigmatic in appearance; some beside stiles like those at St Levan Churchyard and Brane Churchpath are like wayside guardian shrines; yet others are in beautiful settings, like the Vellansaga cross\* surrounded by daffodils in Spring, or Boswarthen cross (pictured right) on a lonely road under the hills near Madron Well. Others cluster together, like the 9 crosses that encircle St Buryan on the roads and pathways leading out from the village. Some crosses, like the one in Sancreed Churchyard\* have intertwined Celtic motifs that Dexter ("Cornish Crosses, Christian and Pagan" - 1938) suggested were serpent designs. The cross in Morrab Gardens Penzance (Market Cross) is also decorated with squares on the shaft and one face that Dexter describes as "presumably pre-Christian and pagan". The side of the shaft also has a curious human figure with a tail, and the cross on Paul Churchyard wall has 5 round bosses on the back that the Vicar suggests could have been fertility symbols. And in the middle of a meeting at two roads at Crows-an-Wra stands a fine cross\* about which Dexter said: "Crows-an-Wra means 'the witches cross', and the witch is generally the successor of the pagan priestess; perchance we have in the name a folk-memory of pagan rites once celebrated at this monolith, the head of which forms a crude wheel - a sun-symbol."



Interesting finds are still being made. Down at Cape Cornwall near St Just there stands St Helens Chapel, an ancient Celtic saints dwelling. A few years ago the farmer ploughing the field discovered an old cross buried in the ground, and placed it on the Chapel. The then vicar decided the cross should be in the church,



perhaps believing it was the old cross from St Helens Chapel which had been thrown down the vicarage well by a previous vicar.\*\* However, the farmer, not to be outwitted, reclaimed his cross one night and cemented it back into place on St Helens Chapel (pictured left), where it stands today, looking over the wild Atlantic waves from whence came the old Irish Celtic saints who perhaps erected or adapted many of these crosses over 1000 years ago.

(C.S.)

\* Pictures in Guide to Crosses - 1 feature in MM6 p.11-14.

\*\* It could not have been the same one, as the original had a Chi-Ro symbol on it (see MM7 p.10). Incidentally, the present vicar Rev Leach has told MM that the well was drained a few years ago but no cross found.

## Guide to the Crosses of West Penwith

Part 2

by Su & Tony Bayfield

MM6 gave details of over 30 crosses in West Penwith. This feature completes the picture with a further 30 + listings. Parishes given are the original ones.

**BRUNNIC CARN** 5038 3600 Lelant. At the side of the road on what was once an island in a small pond, stands a round-head cross on a tall shaft. The well-preserved decoration of Latin crosses on front and back, extends down the shaft.

**WHITECROSS** 5249 3439 Ludgvan. An enormous cross-head mounted on two stone slabs stands beside the A30 in the village of the same name. This annually whitewashed cross bears an equi-armed relief cross on one side and with part of a figure on the reverse. —>



**TREGENDER** 5213 3375 Ludgvan. Also on the A30, one mile SW of Whitecross another cross is set high on a hedge. On this beaded cross-head is carved a Latin cross with an inscribed Latin cross on the reverse.

**LUDGVAN CHURCHYARD** 5050 3303. In the churchyard is to be found a tall churchyard cross, a smaller Latin cross, the churchtown cross, and also a cross-slab.

**TREASSOWE** 4973 3375 Ludgvan. Set over the lintel of a doorway in a ruined building beside Treassowe manor house is a round cross-head. This is decorated with a Christ figure in relief and surrounded by a bead.

**ROSEMORRAN** 4765 3256 Gulval. Mounted high on a hedge behind the farmyard is a round-headed cross on a short shaft. On the front is a Christ figure, while on the back is carved a Latin cross within a bead.

**HEAMOOR** 4609 3137 Madron. In a niche beside the pavement on the road to Madron is a large cross-head bearing an equi-armed cross in relief, surrounded by beading.

**BOSCATHNO** 4544 3150 Madron. Beside the old church path from Boscathno to Madron, hidden in bushes, is a mutilated Latin cross with broken limbs. There was formerly an inscribed design on one side which is no longer visible.

**PARC-AN-GROWES** 4470 3055 Madron. Halfway along a footpath from Parc-an-Growes ("Field of the Cross") to the St just road and almost lost in a hedge is a shovel-shaped cross bearing no visible decoration.

**TREEIFE** 4526 2964 Madron. This Latin cross, formerly from Paul Down, is now erect in the private grounds of Trereife manor. It is now less than its original length of six feet. —>



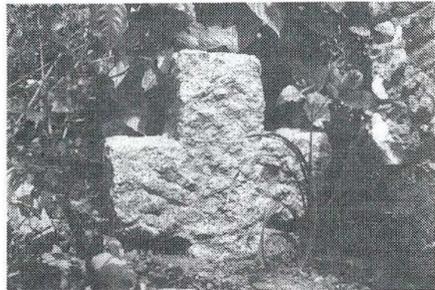
**NEWLYN CHURCH** 4615 2909 Madron. Mounted on a shaft in front of Newlyn Church, is a short Latin cross head decorated with a roughly-carved figure. Previously it stood opposite the church but was originally uneathed from a field at Treereiffe.



← **PAUL CHURCHYARD** 4644 2708. Situated on top of the wall near the churchgate is a well-preserved, four-holed cross-head. On the outward-facing side is a very fine Christ figure, while on the reverse are five pronounced bosses.

**PAUL CHURCHTOWN** 4654 2703. Mounted on a square base near Paul church is a round-head cross and shaft, decorated on both sides with relief Latin crosses. This cross was found in the vicarage hedge in 1878 near where it now stands.

**MOUSEHOLE** 4677 2673 Paul. In the garden of a house named "Springfield", there was formerly a worn, Gothic-type cross-head, similar in appearance to the cross-head at Kerris. However it disappeared, presumed stolen, a few years ago, but incidentally a different Latin cross-head has recently been uncovered in the hedge of a house named "Harlowe", a few doors away down Paul Hill. →



**HALWYN** 4625 2646 Paul. South of Trevithal and north of Halwyn, near a stile on a churchway track, can be found the large head of a Latin cross set in a base, now almost hidden by brambles.

**KEMYEL DREA** 4617 2537 Paul. In a field near Kemyel Drea, standing against a hedge, on what was once an old churchpath, is a small Latin-shaped cross, again, almost obscured by vegetation.

**KERRIS** 4434 2717 Paul. Standing on a lawn in front of Kerris manor is a tall Latin cross mounted on a large stone base. This cross which has been broken and repaired across the shaft originally came from Carnelanga. Nearby on a garden wall is a very worn triangular cross-head.

**LOWER DRIFT** 4378 2876 Sancreed. At the foot of a wooded slope close to Drift Dam is a rough granite slab with a heavy relief Latin cross on each side. It was found c.1850 when clearing a field and rolled down the hill to its present position where it was fixed for preservation. This cross is difficult to locate, especially in summer when it is camouflaged with moss and ivy, but it is well worth searching for.

**TRENUGGO HILL** 4280 2764 Sancreed. On the roadside, in the hedge, near the summit of Trenuggo Hill is a round-head cross and shaft. On the exposed side is an incised, equal-limbed cross inclined to the left. This early example is in a good state of preservation, but is obscured by vegetation in summer months.

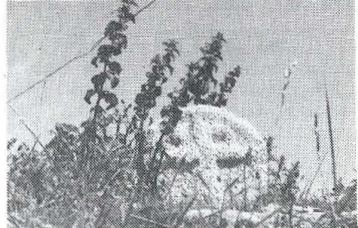
**HIGHER TREVORIAN** 4154 2647 St Buryan. Located high on the hedge at the entrance to the drive to Higher Trevorian Hotel. A plain granite cross-head decorated on one side with a relief cross and on the reverse with an inclined, incised cross. A cross next to a stile in old Trevorrian farm lane (4157 2601) is now missing.

**CHYOONE 4220 2470 St Buryan.** This large Latin-shaped cross-head stands in situ on its base on the left-hand side of the road from the churchtown to Boskenna Cross. The NW-facing side depicts a curious little figure which Langdon thought looked more female than the usual Christ figure. On the reverse is a small Latin cross in relief.

**TREGURNOW DOWN 4393 2442 St Buryan.** Hidden within a triangle of hedging alongside a bend in the track to Tregurnow and very overgrown in summer months. An early granite slab cross, standing in situ, is decorated front and back with very worn relief Latin crosses.

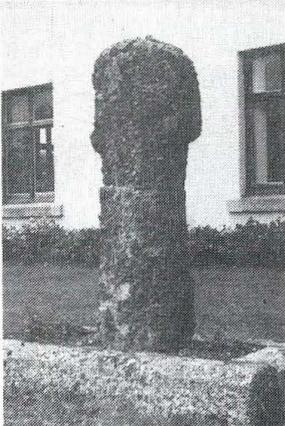
**PENDREA 4061 2534 St Buryan.** On the left-hand side of the road from Buryan to Land's End stands a round-head cross on a short shaft and mounted on a granite base. On the front are worn remains of a Christ figure, while on the reverse is a Latin relief cross.

**ESCALLS 3613 2667 Sennen.** In private grounds at Carn Towan is a granite slab cross decorated with a large, deeply-sunk Latin cross. This was originally situated in a field to the south-west of Escalls.



**NANQUIDNO 3644 2913 St Just.** On the track to Nanquidno farm set high on a hedge is a round cross-head on a granite base. A Latin cross formed by background sinkings with bosses between the upper limbs decorates the cross-head. It is thought to have been brought from the ancient chapel at Nanjulian.

**LESWIDDEN 3965 3008 St Just.** Opposite the entrance to Leswidden stands a rough granite slab, socketed into a base, which is thought to be the remains of a cross.



**KENIDJACK 3645 3177 & 3649 3179 St Just.** Two crosses stand in the grounds of Boscean Hotel, one originally from Trevorian in Sennen parish. The crosses are similar in that they are both decorated with Latin crosses in high relief extending down the shaft.

**POROTHERAS 3828 3424 St Just.** Within the churchyard at Pendeen stands a mutilated cross and shaft in a large stone base. On front and back is a Latin cross in relief. This cross was originally positioned at the Portheras road junction.

**TOWEDNACK CHURCHYARD 4890 3807.** Beside the south porch is a small round-head cross and shaft, bearing a relief Latin cross on front and back. This cross was originally from Coldharbour and then taken to Tredorwin, before being removed here. There is also a decorated cross-slab beneath the bench in the porch.

**HALSETOWN 5047 3882 St Ives.** On a low garden wall beside the Nancledra to St Ives road is a round cross-head which is very worn and defaced.

**PENBEAGLE 5078 3988 St Ives.** A very worn old cross and shaft stands at what is now the entrance to a new estate at the top of the hill above St Ives. This once had a small incised cross on the front which is now indistinguishable.

**ST IVES CHURCHYARD 5182 4052.** A tall lantern cross, sculptured with figures on all sides stands in the small churchyard near the pier.

c 1989 Su & Tony Bayfield

# St Michael's Mount Crosses

by Anne C.M. Long

There are four stone crosses on the Mount, each is unique, both in sculpture and surroundings.

The most elusive of these is a granite lantern cross (SW 5149 2988) on a tall slender shaft, glimpsed first by the castle visitor through the trees on the left of the steep uphill climb to the main castle entrance.

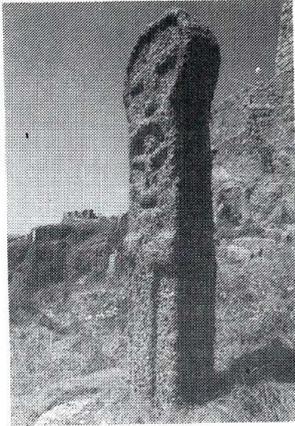
The whole of the granite parts of this cross are covered in a 'fur' of grey/green long-haired lichen, a fancy pyramidal top and collar having been added with 18th century coloured cement, which also makes up the detailed decoration of the adjacent Lady Chapel building. The lantern head has a Latin cross on one face and single figures under a triple-headed canopy of the other three faces. The figures are so weathered and lichen covered that they cannot easily be identified - they could be monks, kings, or saints, staring out over the centuries.\*

The cross stands on a precipitous granite outcrop beneath the Lady Chapel, which was built in 1478. Around the beginning of the century this cross was brought from Redruth and given to Sir Edward St Aubyn by the Rev. H.M. St Aubyn. It looks very stately and aloof, yet distinctly like a granite version of an old-fashioned gas lamp!

Not far from this cross, on the edge of a higher terrace overlooking the sea is a small wheel-headed cross. (SW5161 3001). It was removed in the spring of 1890 from a field called 'Cross Ball' at Trevean near St. Erth, but why is not known. Perhaps it was the exceptional beauty and fluid carving of this unique monument that attracted the then Lord St Leven to it. This dainty cross, only 4' 4" tall is very weathered and covered in the same grey-green lichen as it's companion cross, and the surrounding carpet of ivy is creeping up the shaft. The side facing the sea has a Latin cross in a pear-shaped recess. The side facing the castle has an outline of the crucified Christ - peaceful in death. The most interesting details though, are the unique carved heads seen in profile on either side of the Christ figure, where the chambered shaft expands into the cross-head. They are seen full-face, edge-on to the cross, and look like heads found on some Norman fonts in local churches. Similar heads have always featured in Celtic symbolism, and could point to an even earlier date at the beginning of Celtic Christianity. There is a 1½" diameter hole in the top of the cross, use unknown.



\* There is a similar lantern cross head, very worn, perched on a carved boulder in Gulval Churchyard.

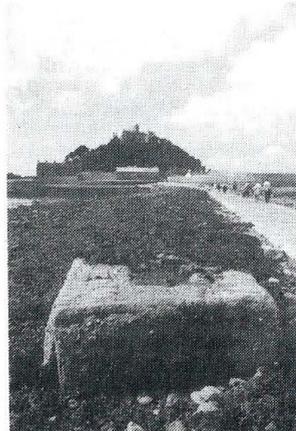


equal-limbed (Greek) cross in a circular recess. In the panel below this is a small figure of Christ, alive in crucifixion – the legs slightly apart, the feet on a small ledge, also in a circular recess. Finally a broad Latin cross in high relief, reaches to the base of the cross. The side facing the rocky outcrop at the base of the castle, has a broad, full length Latin cross in high relief.

There is a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter hole in the top of this cross, for what use is unknown, but perhaps there is a clue in some Irish crosses that have similar holes.

On the balustrade, outside the main North door of the Church (SW 5145 2985) is a late medieval lantern cross-head, made up of six to eight pieces, carefully joined together consisting of a perfectly carved crucifixion scene, a Madonna and child, and a king and a monk.

Finally, on the east side of the causeway about three quarters of the way to the Mount, is a large square granite cross base, known as 'the cross', it is 5'5" x 4'8" and is over 2' high, the socket for the cross is 18" x 23". The cross has long since disappeared, but was said to have been over 7 foot tall, and could be seen above the waves at high tide (the water here is only 7 to 8 feet deep) It is said to have been broken down during a severe storm in about the year 1750. What the cross looked like is not known, but how impressive a guardian it must have appeared, on the causeway to such a sacred site as the Mount!



*The author and editor wish to thank Lord St. Levan for his permission to visit and photograph these secluded and almost inaccessible crosses, and for helpful information.*

*Photographs in crosses feature p.10 Cheryl Traffon; p.11 Su Bayfield; p.12-15 Anne Long.*

# The Ritual Cycle

BY CHERYL STRAFFON

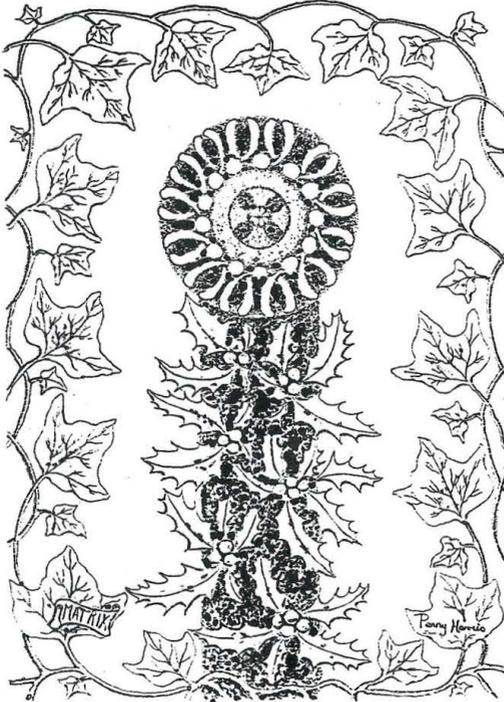
*In MM6 there was an article on The Celtic Year, looking at the 4 great Celtic festivals - Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, & Lughnasad - and their remaining traces in Cornwall. This second follow-up article looks at the other 4 great festivals of the ancient round - Winter Solstice (Yule), Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice and Autumn Equinox, making the 8 festivals of the annual ritual cycle.*

The rebirth of the sun takes place at the **WINTER SOLSTICE** which is the shortest day - either Dec 21st or 22nd (it varies from year to year depending on precise sunrise and sunset times). The ritual surrounding this day/night is to do with anticipation of that re-birth and the joy and celebration when it occurs. As such it was taken over by Christianity which at this time celebrates the birth of the Son, Jesus Christ, an almost exact parallel to the birth of the Sun God. As Barbara Smoker says<sup>1</sup>: "The Christian nativity scene is originally pagan - representing the re-birth of the sun-god on earth." The concept is nicely summed up in the seasonal song "Light" by Aeolian Songspell:

"Then born from the night of long shadows  
Warm grows the light of the sun,  
Strong grows the oak from the holly  
As the earthyear turns and wakes the newborn one."

It was the first indication that winter would come to an end and that the animal and plant life on which humanity depended for its existence would flourish anew. So everyone celebrated, and above all it was an occasion of religious rejoicing.<sup>1</sup> This rejoicing included the Celtic midwinter bonfires and the burning of the Yule log, or mock/block as it was called in Cornwall, usually ignited with a piece of the previous year's log, sometimes with the figure of a man on it,<sup>2</sup> perhaps a folk memory of the Sun God himself. "The placing of the Yule log on the fire on Christmas Eve and the appearance of the little Christmas tree the next morning, Christmas fires, and the lighting of candles perpetuate other pagan customs, encouraging the sun in its weakest hour with their heat and light."<sup>1</sup>

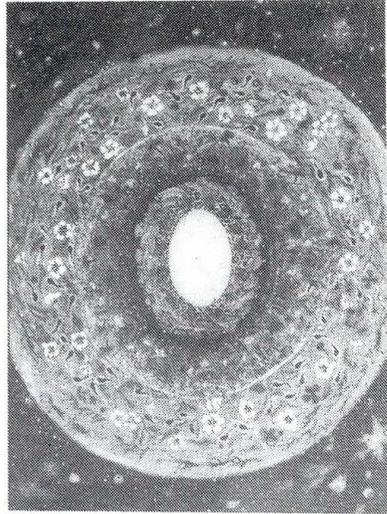
Other aspects of Christmas also owe their origins to pagan customs, such as the evergreen plants, symbols of immortality or the continuity of life. The holly was known as the 'witches tree', a memory of pagan times, the mistletoe was the sacred plant of the Druids and is even now not permitted to be taken into churches, and the ivy was home for the wren who was hunted at Christmas, a folk custom supposed to bring fertility to the fields and good luck to everyone. The wren was the totem symbol for the Celtic God Bran, Lord of Midwinter, and its sacrifice was supposed to bring fertility "a natural part of the life-cycle where death leads to new birth through the ceaseless round of the seasons."<sup>3</sup> The ceremony of Hunting the Wren was prevalent in all Celtic lands, and in Cornwall it continued until this century as a



general bird-shoot on St Stephens Day (Dec 26th) and in Penzance on "Feasten Monday", the day after Advent Sunday, the time of Madron Feast Day.<sup>4</sup> Feasting on special kinds of meat at this winter time is pagan in origin and symbolism - even the mince pies at Christmas (originally looked upon with disfavour by the Church as having been derived from the consecrated cakes of pagans, formerly baked in a coffin-shaped pastry case) and the flaming sun-shaped Christmas pudding have pagan roots. Over-indulgent eating and drinking at this time was an important symbolic gesture - after the first lean winter months the sun had been reborn and good times were ahead. Perhaps even local festivals like Tom Bawcock's Eve at Mousehole on 23rd December where star-gazy pie is served are ancient memories of the ending of the period of famine, and the old custom of wassailing (encouraging the apple orchards to bear fruit again in the forthcoming year) is still practiced in Bodmin and Truro over the Christmas/New Year period.

Thus, Christmas or Yule, to give it the original Nordic pagan name, was originally the mid-winter festival. Yule, meaning the wheel (the universal solar symbol) signified the turning point of the year when the sun was checked on its downward movement and began to roll back like a wheel.<sup>1</sup> It was the time when the "earth is reborn with the light that has found her", and the theme of death and rebirth was commonly featured in the Guise or Geese dancing that used to take place in Cornish villages over the Yuletide period, the last having taken place in St Ives & St Just before World War II. A variation of this could still be found however in St Ives as recently as the early 1960s when the "Cock Robin Boys" were still active, causing mischief on Christmas Eve; the time and the name are both significant - the winter solstice/Yule is traditionally the time when the robin gives way to the wren, as indicated above, and 'licensed' foolery has always been a part of all ritual festivals.

The days of increasing light next become symbolically important at the **SPRING EQUINOX**, one of only two times in the year when day and night are of equal length. This is on March 20th/21st, which is actually the earliest day on which Easter can occur. Easter itself, named after the pagan goddess Eostre (the Dawn Goddess), is obviously a Christianisation of the old Equinox festival, being calculated by the first fullmoon occurring on or after March 21st. The association of Eostre with the daily birth of the sun eventually made her the symbol of re-birth in general, hence the current use of eggs at Easter to symbolise the birth of a new annual cycle. Remnants of this can be seen in the old custom at Polperro where the inhabitants rose very early on Easter Day "to see the sun dance", and the rebirth of light from dark is well illustrated in these lines from Aeolian Songspell:



"Now is the light and the darkness in balance  
And the Goddess walks in the path of light.  
See the sun stir the seed of the morning  
And the green world wakes to the song of....changes"

A spring festival takes place about this time in Cornwall, that of hurling. This custom was once a feature of most village feast days and is believed to have originated as a pagan festival in honour of Spring. Nowadays, it is held mainly in St Ives and St Columb Major, where it takes place on Shrove Tuesday and the following Saturday week. The match consists of a challenge between the Town men and Country men for the silver ball, an obvious sun symbol, especially as it was originally coated with gold.

T.F.G. Dexter suggests a number of festivals and customs around this time have pagan origins, for example Hall Monday (the day before Shrove Tuesday) was called Nicky Nan Night when boys prowled around the streets and furtively carried away objects. Dexter suggests those "imps of darkness" may be folk memories of pagan deities, and the date and time of the night point to a moon-festival associated with fertility. And in Penzance on Shrove Tuesday the people went a-trigging (i.e. picking up shellfish on the edge of the tide), the "last fragments of some broken-down pagan ritual connected with the cult of the Great Mother"<sup>5</sup> Many Saints Days and feast-days which occur around this time are associated with Celtic gods and goddesses: for example, Tan (St Agnes) - a fire god; St Teath - protectress of corn; (G)Wenmap - horse goddess; Endellion - sea god; and Grade, Creed and Sancreed which may be aspects of the goddess Ceridwen. Of Sancreed Dexter says: "It has a feast on whit Sunday, a moon-date and a time of horse worship. The Church itself is in a circular enclosure... and it seems as though both church and vicarage are on pagan sites."

After the Spring Equinox, the hours of light get longer than the hours of darkness until on June 21st, the longest day, the **SUMMER SOLSTICE** is celebrated. Perhaps the most well-known of the pagan festivals nowadays, thanks to the shenanigans at Stonehenge, it is a time of maximum power and energy.

"Twelve times round the stones we dance  
 When the sun is still above us,  
 Seven spirals unfurl their force  
 And the sleepers awake beneath us.

Dragon lines across the earth  
 Come alive at the Summer Solstice,  
 Horned hunter thunders the ground  
 And the sky at the Summer Solstice." (Aeolian Songspell)

The horned hunter referred to is Herne, God of the woodlands and groves. In another guise he is the Green Man, the spirit of the vegetation, at this most fertile time of the year. On Oak Apple Day (May 28th/29th) in Looe and in other parts of East Cornwall it was the custom to wear an oak leaf, and in St Germans there was a ceremony around a large walnut-tree, both surely memories of Herne and the Green Man. Yet paradoxically at the height of his powers the Green Man would be sacrificed in order for the fertility of the cycle to continue. This was symbolised in the idea of the Lord of the Waxing Year now being usurped by his twin brother the Lord of the Waning Year. At the time of the most potency of the sun, the days are about to get shorter as the power of the sun lessens.

This was the time when bonfires were lit on all the high places and hilltops of Cornwall (this still takes place in selected spots on June 23rd), youths paraded through the towns with burning torches which they swung around their heads in a circular motion, tar barrels were lit in the streets, cattle were driven deosil (clockwise) towards the sun, and young couples leapt through the flames to ensure good luck and fertility. The ashes of the fire were regarded as magic charms against misfortune and the 'evil eye', although to reach full effectiveness some living creature must originally have been consumed by the flames, a remnant of the sacrificial theme. Certain holy wells were supposed to be endowed with special powers of healing at this time, and the importance of water in the midsummer rituals was carried over into Christianity when the date was dedicated to the beheaded John the Baptist - ceremonially killed on demand of Salome's mother. "Fire, giving off heat and light in imitation of the sun, is thus closely associated with water at midsummer, so ensuring the two essential requirements for continuing plant growth."<sup>6</sup>

Also at midnight on Midsummer Eve all the witches in West Cornwall used to meet at Trewa near Zennor to renew their vows. This was obviously a memory of the actual pagan midsummer solstice ritual. Zennor still possesses the Witches or Giants Rock, which if touched nine times at midnight in one version keeps away ill-luck and prevents people from being "over-looked" (ill-wished), and in another version turns the supplicant into a witch herself! Clearly the power of witches, that is, practitioners of the Old Craft, was thought to be most potent at this time. This is still remembered at St Cleer in East Cornwall where since time immemorial there had been an annual ceremony on 23rd June (St John's Eve) called the Banishing of the Witches, which in years past consisted of crowning a bonfire with a witch's broom and hat while a sickle with a handle of newly-cut oak was thrown into the flames.

The worshipping of the sun on the hill tops is still reflected in the old name for St Michael's Mount, Din-sul (sun-hill), St Michael being the successor of the sun-god. Furthermore, of the 18 former parishes in West Cornwall no less than 12 have feasts or fairs on or about dates of sun-worship. Some of these, as we have already seen, are at the time of the Spring Equinox; others, such as Pendeen's midsummer festival with its history of making loud explosions on high hilltops, are obviously remnants of midsummer solstice celebrations; and yet others occur at the AUTUMN EQUINOX, on or around September 21st, 22nd or 23rd, the other period of equal day and night.



At this time the Lord of Light is giving way to the Dark Lord who in his other guise as the God Bran will rule the winter months. It is a time when the harvest has been gathered in for the coming Winter months, and to celebrate this the old Cornish custom of Crying the Neck has been revived. It is now a sedate event, but originally the reaper who cut the last sheaf of corn - the neck - would run as hard as he could to the farmhouse where he would try to enter and kiss the maid, a remembrance of the original fertility motif of the festival. (See articles in MM2 p.20, MM4 p.19). The neck would be hung up and decorated for it was supposed to contain the spirit of the harvest, the Goddess herself:-

"The Goddess bids her love farewell,  
The sun fades from the sky,  
Alone within the hollow hills  
She sleeps but never dies  
In the season of repose.

She was the dreamseed of the Spring,  
She was the ear of corn,  
And brown, she waits in a furrowed field  
For life to be reborn  
From the season of repose." (Aeolian Songspell)

And so the cycle turns and we move round to the deep dark days of the Winter Solstice when again the Sun will be reborn and bring life back to the Earth Mother. The ritual cycle ends, but never ends.

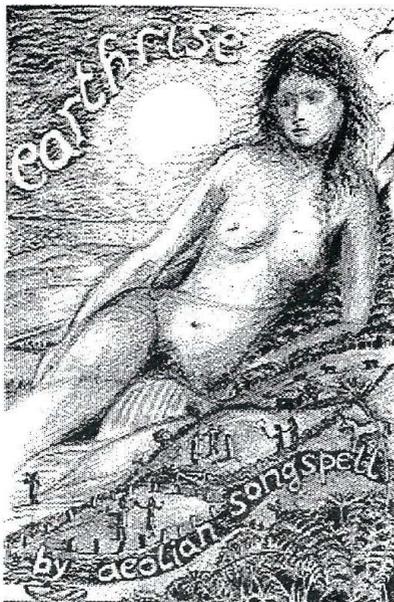
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- 6 - Journey to the Stones: Ian Cooke (Men-an-Tol Studio, 1987)

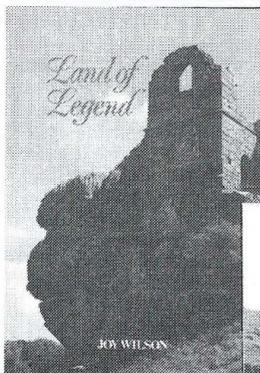
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Drawings © Penny Harris

The back page of this edition features the wheel of the ritual year, drawn by Barry Millard who is also responsible for MM's cover design & headings. A 1990 Celtic calendar is available from mid-September 1989 from him at Argyle House, 4 Mennaye Road, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 4NY @ £4.50

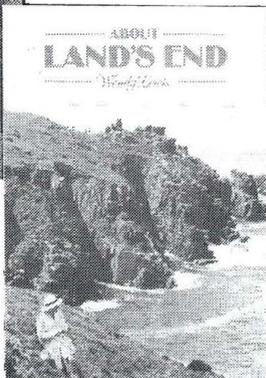


'Earthrise' is the second tape by Aeolian Songspell, talented duo Mike Woolf and Rachel Garcia. The first one 'Ancient Dream' consisted of 8 songs for the pagan year (see MM6 p.20 and previous article). Many MM readers who purchased it and loved it will be eagerly awaiting this follow-up, with the cover again by Gabrielle Hawkes (left), MM artist and contributor. This new tape consists of a further 10 songs, exploring a variety of themes and ideas, from 'Dance of Fools', an upbeat celebration of "the rites of June", to the reflective song for 'Gaia', the Earth Mother, and the mysterious 'First Came the Unicorn'. As before, the production is impeccable, and the words and music pure magic. Both tapes are priced at £5.95 each and are available direct from 21 Cremorne Road, London SW10 ONB. Cheques/POs payable to Rachel Garcia.



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## BOOK REVIEWS

New books on Celtic matters continue to be published regularly. Most cover general areas like Celtic festivals and calendars, tree worship, magical alphabets, Gods and Goddesses, fairies, animals and mythical beasts etc. Legends and myths from early Irish and Welsh texts are re-told and interpreted, but very few of these books take any sort of look at Cornish materials. Although more fragmentary and aural in nature, the collections of Cornish folklore are nevertheless just as pertinent, as Meyn Mamvro has often revealed. On the one hand, there are writers like **KALEDON NADDIR** 'Celtic Folk and Faerie Tales', (Rider 1987 £8.95) who has some good insights, but relies largely on shaministic insight rather than source material. **CAITLIN MATTHEWS**, on the other hand, in 'The Elements of the Celtic Tradition' (Element Books, 1989 £4.95), does have source material but seems unaware of Cornish examples. For example she mentions the lost Breton land of Ys but ignores the Cornish Lyonesse, and gives examples of myths of Celtic festivals from Irish, Welsh and Scottish sources while ignoring Cornish ones (see article on p.16-20 of this MM & MM6 p.16-19). Most writers could well do with reading **BOTTRELL'S 'Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall'**, first published in 3 volumes in 1870-3, a veritable treasure house of Celtic folklore myth and legend. A selection from Vol II of the trilogy has just been republished in a facsimile edition by Llanerch Enterprises (£5.95). Perhaps one day an enterprising Cornish publisher will reprint all 3 volumes!

Two recent books from Aquarian Press do at least incorporate some Cornish material. **MURRAY HOPE'S 'Practical Celtic Magic'** (1987, £5.99) also gives some Irish/Welsh legend, but has other ingredients including initiations, ritual prayers and invocations. Hope comments that "Cornwall is a veritable repository of the old Celtic arts", and the chapter on music and dance in Celtic magic is particularly relevant as it deals in some details with the Padstow Obby Oss, including the suggestion that the Teaser represents the masculine polarity and the Horse the feminine (cf - Epona, Rhiannon, Magog horse dieties). The other book 'Celtic Mythology' by **WARD RUTHERFORD** (1987, £5.99) is more academic, incorporating archaeological and literary evidence of the Celtic peoples "from Druidism to Arthurian legend". There is a suggestion that King Arthur, if he existed, was a Cornish rather than a Welsh leader, and the Tristan and Iseult legend is given Cornish provenance.

This legend forms the basis of a new book by Cornish writer **JOY WILSON** entitled 'Cornwall - Land of Legend'. (Bossiney, 1989 £2.95). The legend is retold in full in a readily accessible form, full of dramatic incident, "a tale of love and adultery, magic and betrayal." It occurred to me what a wonderful Cornish film it would make! The rest of the book is devoted to a tour of the places in Cornwall associated with the story, mainly around the Truro, St Austell and Fowey areas, but also north to Tintagel and west to Penwith and Scilly. This is Celtic material at its popular best - an unusual subject, different from the familiar legendary rehashes, well-researched and interesting. It sheds light on the detail of a little-known legend that ought to be part of the common heritage of all Cornish peoples, and which deserves the wider currency this book has given it.

(C.S.)

# Spirit of Cornwall Past

DAAPHNE DU MAURIER

*Dame Daphne Du Maurier died peacefully in Cornwall at the age of 81 in April this year. Her books were much loved by millions of readers but it was in 'Vanishing Cornwall' (1967) that she especially caught the mood and mystery of our special land. This following extract, reproduced by kind permission of her Estate, will be particularly relevant to Meyn Mamvro readers.*

Religion, to the Cornish, is bred in the bone, taking varying forms through successive generations. The first settlers, like most Mediterranean peoples, worshipped the Earth Mother, the fertility goddess who brought life to the world. The granite rocks and stones thrown up by nature in a million million years were her handiwork. Beneath them she presided, mysterious and dark, having power over all things inanimate and living.

Rocks and stones, hills and valleys, bear the imprint of men who long ago buried their dead beneath great chambered tombs and worshipped the earth goddess. Nowhere else in England do these symbols of eastern ritual stand, but here in Cornwall the tombs are with us still. Great slabs of granite, weather-pitted, worn, with another mighty slab, tip-tilted, to form a roof; these were the burial places of priests, perhaps of queens. Set in the high places, amidst scrub and gorse, the treasures they once contained long rifled by barbarians and the bones scattered, they stand as memorials to a forgotten way of life and once-living cult. Sometimes today the setting is incongruous - a small field, perhaps, with a line of bungalows nearby. Yet age has not destroyed their majestic

beauty, nor plough and tractor tumbled the foundations. The stones, like the natural granite cast up from the earth by nature, defy the centuries. To stand beside them, whether on the heights of West Penwith, amongst the bracken of Helman Tor or in the little field above St Cleer, is to become, as it were, an astronaut in time. The present vanishes, centuries dissolve, the mocking course of history with all its triumphs and defeats is blotted out. Here in the lichened stone is the essence of memory itself. Whether it was priest or chieftain, queen or priestess, who lay here once, prepared with solemn rites for the passage to the underworld, belief in immortality was theirs, Man's answer, from the beginning, to the challenge of death.

These, then, were the first tombs of Cornwall; but scattered throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula are other stones and other chambers, barrows and trenches, mounds and circles, so that it might be said that death, like the sea, is ever present. There is always a reminder, on some ridge or hillside, half-concealed perhaps by thorn or bracken, that stillness waits.

Later generations, with the guilt engendered by Puritan or Methodist upbringing, thought all standing or leaning stones were persons frozen by the merciless hand of God for dancing on a Sunday, Or so at least they told their children, though perhaps they knew better. For although, in those early days, they might not connect death and burial with the mounds and the old tilted stones in field and furze they sensed that the place held magic, and whatever dwelt there under a brooding sky should be placated. Instinct, infallible, bade them place a hand upon the mound or stone, and spit. If the stone had a hole in it, like the Mên-an-Tol near Lanyon, the wisest thing to do was to crawl through it nine times against the sun. To crawl against the sun "backened" disease. The isolation that kept Cornwall from the rest of England thus preserved an ancient lore, an intuitive perception of things past.





The recent reconstruction of the stone maze on St Agnes, Isles of Scilly, by Don Wilkins, Paul Broadhurst, Hamish Miller & Ed Pryn (reported in MM8 p.24) has ruffled a few feathers. Earth Mysteries investigators Jeff Saward (editor of the former mazes magazine Caerdroia) and Nigel Pennick (of Valknut Publications), who have both had articles published in MM, were concerned at what they believe was the "destruction" of the original maze by the four. Their objections have been supported by Jeanette Ratcliffe of the Cornwall Archaeological Unit who has been leading a team studying the sites on the Scillies for several months. She told MM that she was "appalled" when she heard about the reconstruction, and added "unfortunately at the time it was not a scheduled site or else we would have considered a prosecution". She did admit that fortunately the late C19th patterns has "coincidentally" been retained, and that, judging by early photographs, the rebuilt maze is broadly of the same size and shape as the original. This is perhaps a tribute to Don Wilkins' skill as a dowser. He was recently featured on 3 BBC TV networked programmes, dowsing on the Scillies and elsewhere, in particular at the Old Man of Gugh standing stone on the islands. He made an interesting suggestion that whoever put the stone there knew what they were doing as there was a very powerful energy line coming from it, which an old fisherman often used to 'home' in on intuitively when he got lost in the mist. Don is one of the country's foremost water and energy dowers and his dowsing of the original shape of the Scilly maze would have been very accurate.

But this controversy does bring into focus the difference in emphasis between archaeologists, some EM researchers (who for once are lined up on the same side!), and those who feel the sites are living monuments, which should be used not only for investigation, nor just for plundering for pot sherds or the bones of our ancestors. This point is made by Paul Broadhurst in an open letter about the argument: "The archaeological importance of ancient sites is only one aspect of them. They are places where the spirit is strong, places that change perceptions and allow one to communicate with whichever particular God is interpreted as the great Creative Intelligence. What was a sad neglected place (Scilly maze) has been transformed into a centre for people to connect with the natural forces of the planet and the spirit of the ancient people who originally used it".

There is a body of opinion that the stones do not "belong" to the archaeologists, or English Heritage, nor are they fossilised in time, and that it is a less than adequate response to threaten prosecution when people want to reconstruct them to make them whole again (as did a group of local builders in W. Penwith who were concerned at the delapidated state of some of the sites on the moors and were willing to put their time and resources into renovating - under proper supervision - what they considered to be their heritage). To pagans too, the sites are sacred because they were built by their ancestors whom they respect, probably for spiritual or magical purposes, and because they continue to be used today by people who can tune themselves into the special energies of the sites. Perhaps there is a lesson in all this for the future - that all interested parties should get together and listen to each others points of view before acting unilaterally or laying down the law about the sites, which for many people are living sacred places which need protecting.

(C.S.)

## EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

MEYN MAMVRO now exchanges with the following magazines which we consider are all worthy of support:

## EARTH MYSTERIES &amp; SACRED SITES

THE LEY HUNTER - National mag of Earth Mysteries (Annual sub:4 issues £6) PO Box 5, Brecon, Powys, Wales

NORTHERN EM (Annual 3 issues £2.95 single £1.15) - Rob Wilson, 103 Derbyshire Lane, Sheffield 7

GLOUCESTER EM (Annual 3 issues £5 single £1.50) GEM, 49 Moorend Rd., Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos GL53 0ET

TOUCHSTONE - SURREY EM. (Annual 4 issues £2) J.Goddard, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey

EARTH - EM, Fortean, Pagan (Annual 6 issues £5, sample £1) Paul Bennett, 20 Stonegate Rd, Thorpe Edge, Bradford

THE FOUNTAIN - Journal of Fountain International, dedicated to earth healing & dowsing. (Annual 4 issues £6, unwaged & OAP £3.20). Box 915, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1TW

VALKNUT PUBLICATIONS SAE for full list to Nigel Pennick, 142 Pheasant Rise, Bar Hill, Cambridge CB3 8SD.

STONEHENGE VIEWPOINT (Annual 8 issues \$16) 2821 De La Vina Street, Santa Barbara, California 93105 USA

RILKO (Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation) (Annual 2 issues £5.50) 10 Kedleston Drive, Orpington, Kent BR5 2DR

ASH (Albion's Sacred Heritage) Eastern England based (Annual 4 issues £2.50. Sample 75p) Claire Capon, 20 Barnardiston Way, Witham, Essex CM8 2EQ

MEYN MAMVRO is available on annual subscription - 3 issues £4.50 (inc p & p) from 51 CARN BOSAVERN, ST JUST, Nr PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR19 7QX. MM11 due out Spring 90 will include a special feature on sacred wells.

All back numbers are now sold out, but photocopies can be done as a special service to subscribers and regular readers upon request at £1.50 each.

Our thanks the Earth mag (see above) for recent good reviews - e.g. "for those who enjoy the warmth of megalithic structures, MM just has to be about the best - you like the stones? You like the leys? You'll love this mag!"

## PAGANISM

THE CAULDRON - Pagan journal of the Old Religion (Annual 4 issues £4 single £1) Mike Howard, Caemorgan Cottage, Cardigan, Dyfed, Wales SA43 1QU

THE PIPES OF PAN & Pagan Parenting Network Newsletter (Annual 3 issues £3 + 50p). Pagans Against Nukes, Blaenberem, Mynyddcerrig, Llanelli, Dyfed, Wales

WOOD AND WATER - A Goddess Inclined Eco-Pagan Magazine (Annual 4 issues £3.40) 77 Parliament Hill, London NW3

DALRIADA - Celtic clan pagan journal (Annual 4 issues £4.50 single: £1.25) Clan Dalriada, Dun-na-Beatha, 2 Brathwic Place, Brodick, Isle of Arran

THE SCOT-IC PAGAN - Scottish paganism (Annual 4 issues £3.50 Sample £1) Robert Watson Jnr, 16 Glen Kinglas Rd, Greenock, Inverclyde, PA16 9NW

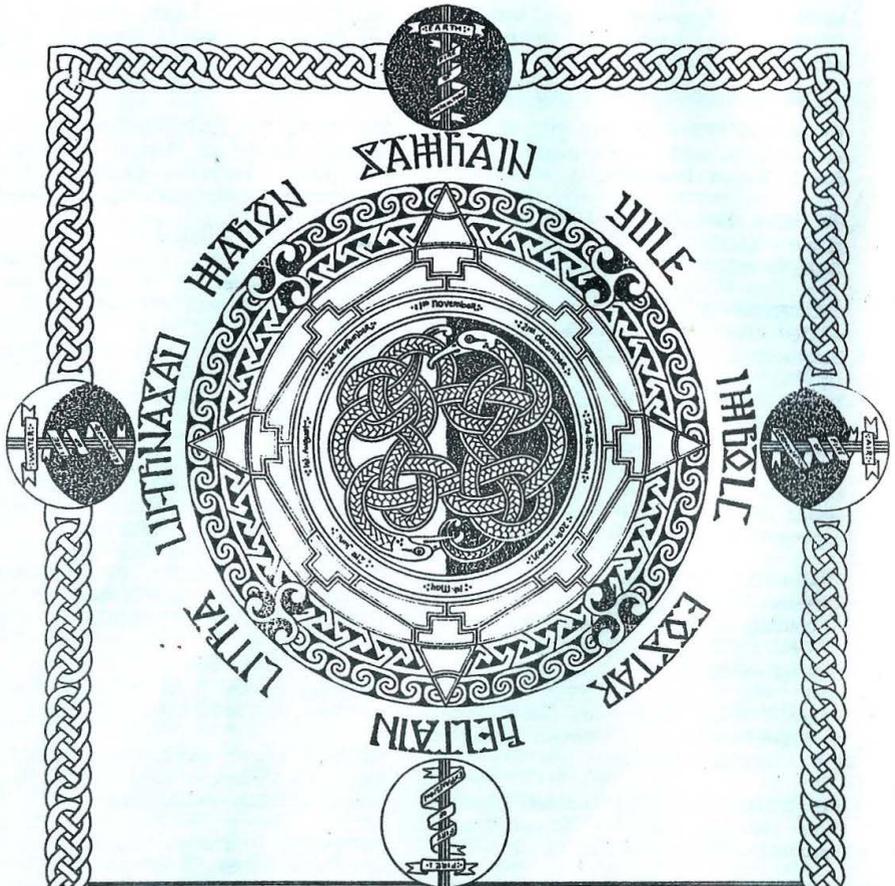
CIRCLE NETWORK NEWS - US pagan scene (Annual 4 issues \$17/Sample \$3) Box 219, Mt. Horeb WI 53572, USA

THE DEOSIL DANCE - New Age of Paganism (Annual 5 issues £5.50) Noddfa, Llithfaen, Gwynedd, Cymru LL53 6NN

QUEST - Pagan magic mag. (Annual: 4 issues £5.00/Single copy £1.50) Marian Green, BCM-SCL Quest, London WC1N 3XX

MOONSHINE - Modern pagan philosophy (Annual 6 issues £6 sample £1.35) Also EARTHWISE - paganism, politics & ecology (Annual 10 issues £5 sample 65p) 498 Bristol Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6BD

BELTANE FIRE - New Earth Magic mag (Annual 6 issues £3 sample 50p) 16 Cross St. St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6DP



# THE CELTIC YEAR

The four lunar festivals are related to the movement of the moon, they are five festivals & ceremonial bonfires are lit, these five festivals are: Samhain, Imbolc/Oimek, Beltane and Lughnasad. The five festivals are distinctly female in nature relating to the triple goddess in all her guises: virgin, mother, crone and lastly death!



the four solar festivals derive from the apparent movement of the sun and they are: Yule (winter solstice), Ostara (spring equinox), Litha (summer solstice) and Mabon (autumn equinox). The equinox-solstice group is associated with male gods.

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