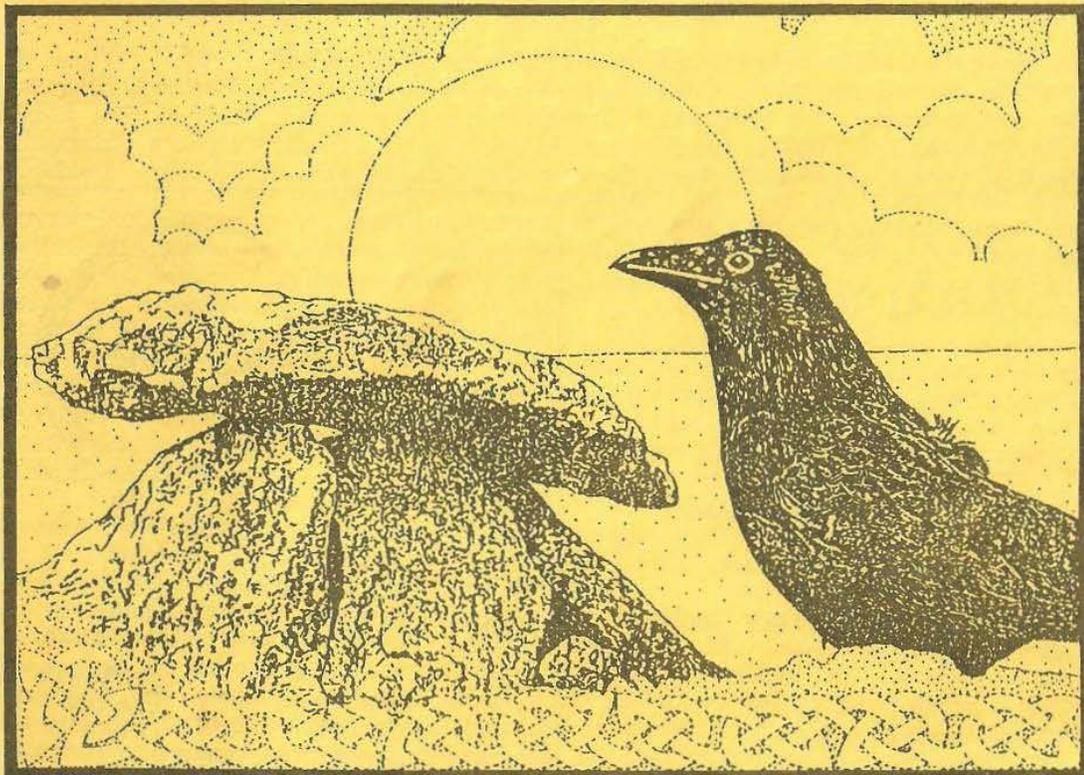


No.18      SUMMER 1992      £1.50



# meyn mamvro

ancient stones and sacred sites in cornuall



**CROMLECHS • BRAN THE BLESSED  
EARTH MYSTERIES • PAGANISM •  
COURTYARD HOUSES • BOOK REVIEWS**

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## VISIONS AND JOURNEYS

35 Fore Street, St Just-in-Penwith,  
Cornwall TR19 7LJ. Tel: 0736-787268.

### SUMMER 1992 EXHIBITIONS & DISPLAYS

13Apr - 9May ANDREW FAWCETT  
"From Cornwall to Easter Island"

11May - 23May MIXED EXHIBITION

25May - 27Jun APPLETREE CRAFTS  
Crafts & paintings

29Jun - 30Jul JUNE HICKS  
Etchings and paintings

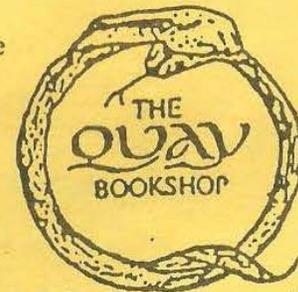
1Aug - 29Aug GABRIELLE HAWKES  
Major exhibition of new work

31Aug - 1 Oct LEE STEVENSON  
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# Meyn Mamvro

## Stones of our Motherland

EARTH ENERGIES • ANCIENT STONES • SACRED SITES • PAGANISM • LEYPATHS  
 CORNISH PRE-HISTORY & CULTURE • MEGALITHIC MYSTERIES • LEGENDS & FOLKLORE

Cornwall seems to be increasing her 'alternative' activity, with several new groups and events happening this previous winter and spring. A very successful New Age Festival was held in a Perranporth hotel last November, attracting many stalls, workshops and people. A number of events and talks in aid of Mount Kylash School attracted many people, especially some talks given by Rose Lewis on Sacred Sites of Tibet. The Cornish Crop Circles Group was formed (see page 5) and the Earth Mysteries Group continues to flourish (see page 4). Harmony Pottery continued their seasonal celebrations (see page 3), and a major article on this will appear in the next MM. And there are also other centres and Groups organising regular events (see page 3 for some details). It seems as if Cornwall is becoming a centre for alternative spirituality, without (thankfully so far) the kind of New Age superficiality that has been spawned in some other places.

Meanwhile, Meyn Mamvro itself received a very nice (unsolicited!) testimonial from the Institute of Cornish Studies, whose President, Professor Charles Thomas, wrote to the members as follows: "I wonder how many of our Associates see, or would like to subscribe to, this thrice-yearly periodical, described to me recently (and quite rightly) as 'the most lively journal in south-west Britain'. Meyn Mamvro caters for the whole range of alternative archaeology and earth mysteries, and covers the 'straight' archaeological scene in Cornwall, and has now published a series of most valuable up-to-date surveys of different classes of ancient monuments. Comment is unrestrained but very much to the point, and every district could use a watchdog of this kind. Fervent readers include myself, as well as the staff of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, and we are quite happy to share the pages with adherents of PAN. Ancient sites and stones belong to everyone, or, if you accept the arguments of Peter Fowler, to nobody; but it is interest, not neglect, that will preserve them. Strongly and warmly recommended, always a good read, and small journals deserve a subscription-list so that they can continue." Gee, thanks!

Finally, as Summer unfolds, the revived Mazey Day midsummer celebrations in Penzance continue to excite opposition. A reader of 'The Cornishman', David Reed of Madron, wrote complaining that "like many Christian folk we were angry by the way this pagan festival was foistered onto everyone... Paganism is not Christianity in any shape or form. In fact the Bible says that God is a jealous god and will not tolerate any other god (Mother Earth, Sun, Moon and stars included). We therefore urge all Christians to boycott Penzance next Mazey Day and each successive one until this deplorable event is cancelled." MM replied to this as follows: "What an extraordinary letter from David Reed about Mazey Day 'pagan festival'! I doubt that many pagans would have recognised it as such, although of course the midsummer celebrations were pagan in origin. In fact if the organising committee would like some advice on how to make it more pagan and authentic we would be only too happy to oblige! Incidentally, Mr Reed might be interested to learn that most of his Christian festivals are only adaptations of original pagan ones, including Christmas/Yule & Easter/Eostere. Pagans by-and-large do not complain bitterly about this (they continue to celebrate in the old ways) so why should some Christians get so angry and resentful about other faiths than their own. Perhaps because as Mr Reed admits, his God is a jealous and vengeful deity, not a tolerant and loving one!" We received much support for this, particularly from Christians who were eager to disown David Reed's attitude! In fact they were quite mazed by it!

## FOOD FOR THE MIND AND BODY

*ROBIN ELLIS' article "Serpent Dreaming" in the last MM (no.17) brought about some interested reactions from readers, many of whom commented on other sacred places in Cornwall that seemed special to themselves. His comments about the cafe at St Nectan's Glen also led to this response from SUSAN LAWS*

"Whilst enjoying immensely the article by Robin Ellis, it having evoked happy memories of all too infrequent trips to Cornwall, I felt I must take strong issue with his condemnation of the commercialism of St Nectan's Glen. For I on several occasions have been one of the "tourists" this beautiful place has attracted. I have been privileged to see the landscape there in many moods, all of them magical. Always visitors have been well-behaved and respectful and (I'm sorry Robin) the cafe provided welcome refreshment to those of us in need after the climb - after all we are not all young and in good health!

Much as some of us would like to keep these special places of power more private, it's as well to remember that commercialism and the tourist are the filling in Cornwall's bread and butter. The secret surely lies in finding and maintaining a balance for all concerned. We must all learn to give to the landscape as well as taking from it, and I for one would argue that the energy emanating from children's laughter and play and the joy and enthusiasm radiating from most visitors does indeed replenish the sacred power inherent in places such as St Nectan's and not detract from it one iota. Meditation is good for the soul of the person doing it but is not necessarily good for the site being used!

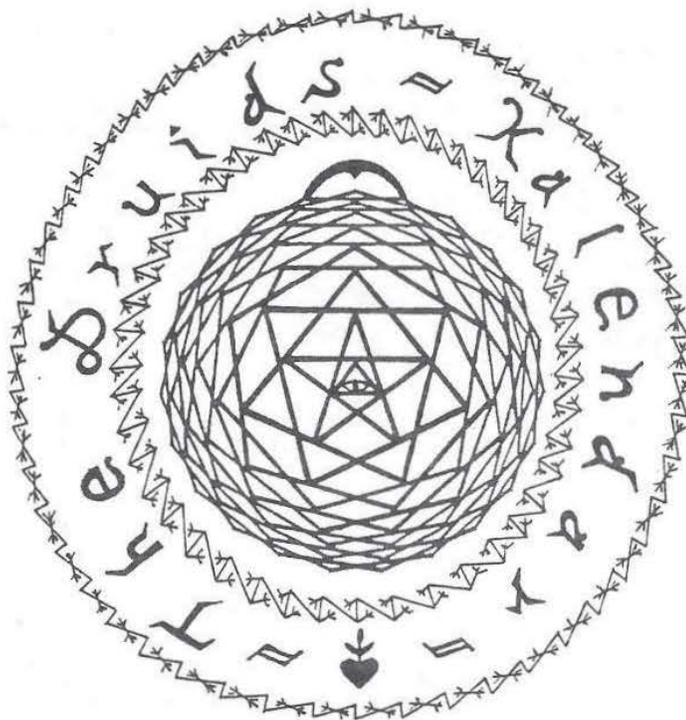
There are many levels of perception and we should be careful of judging and acting on behalf of others who we believe do not perceive as well as ourselves. For those fortunate enough to live in Cornwall I say: go find yourselves a special site away from the crowds and take pity on the tourists. Allow them to enjoy Cornwall's magical sites on their own level, for after Summer has passed most will have returned to a barren city landscape and will only have their memories to remind them!"

*This letter seemed to raise a number of important points which ROBIN ELLIS takes up as follows:-*

"Susan is of course just as entitled to her opinion as I am, but being a 'loner' I certainly prefer places peaceful and quiet, though the Goddess preserve us from ever having a situation where only an 'occult elite' is allowed to visit 'sacred places'. I do however take issue over the cafe at St Nectan's Keive! Being of a rotund shape I don't think I could be accused of not enjoying my food. However, having a cafe on top of such a sacred waterfall and then charging an admission fee to see it is a bit profane. Just recently a small group of mystically inclined people who were rather poor (in financial terms only!) travelled down from Leamington to the north coast of Cornwall to see its wonders (partly on my recommendation), and were prevented from visiting St Nectan's Glen from fear of the expense.

It would be nice if the cafe was located in that row of houses as you follow the path down into the woods. They'd probably get more custom there. In Rocky Valley there is a little cafe located just before you cross the stream into the wild part. After all, I'm sure you would not object if the people at Boscawen-un farm were to set up a little cafe there. But how would you feel if they set it up within the circle itself?! If the cafe doesn't last, is there a possibility of setting up a trust to buy the waterfall and preserve it as a holy place, like the Chalice Well trust?"

*Untouched sacred places, or cafes for the tourist? What do you think? Write to MM and let us know whether or not you feel a degree of commercialism is acceptable at these sacred places so that everyone can enjoy the amenities.*



**MAY DAY EVE** (Thurs April 30th)  
Maypole dancing on Carn Bosavern, St  
Just-in-Penwith. Details 0736-787612.

**MAY DAY** (Fri May 1st) from 10am -  
Padstow's Obby Oss celebrations.  
from 8pm - Harmony Pottery Beltane  
festival (see back page for details).

**THREE WELLS WALK**(Sun May 3rd if fine)  
Annual 11 mile (easy) walk to sacred  
wells in West Penwith. 0736-787612.

**ALBION RISING** - St Michael Line Rally  
(May 2nd-4th) Traversing the "Michael  
Line" by car, starting St Michaels  
Mount, and on through Cornwall. Details  
1619a London Rd, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

**SUMMER SOLSTICE** (Sat June 21st) from  
8pm - Harmony Pottery (see back page)

**MIND, BODY & SPIRIT FESTIVAL** (Sat  
July 11th) 10-6.30. Truro City Hall.

**LUGHNASAD** (Sat 1st Aug) from 8pm at  
Harmony Pottery (back page for details)

**TINNERS WAY SUNSET/FULL MOONRISE**  
13 mile walk across Penwith moors (if  
fine) on Sunday nearest to full moon in  
July or August. Details 0736-787612.

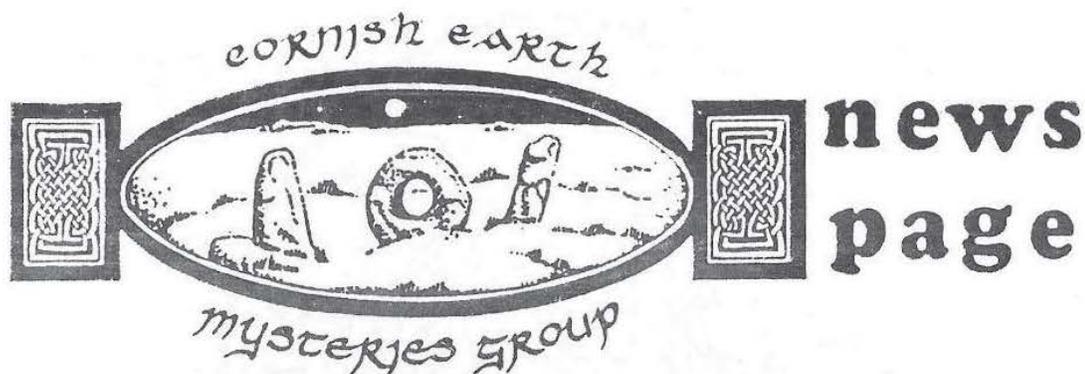
**WOMEN'S RITUAL GROUP** meets new &  
full moons. Camborne area contact  
Marjorie (0209-713838). West Penwith  
area contact Cassandra (0736-810809).  
Also Goddess workshops, self-healing  
groups, etc - details 0736-787612.

**HARMONY POTTERY** Wheal Rose, Scorrier,  
Redruth (0209-890581) Regular 1992  
workshops include mask-making, healing,  
astrology, divination, etc. SAE details.

**WELLBEING CENTRE** Old School House,  
Churchtown, Illogan, Nr Redruth runs  
regular new age workshops & events.  
Contact Denise on 0209-842999.

**RESEARCH & ENLIGHTENMENT CENTRE**  
King's Avenue, St Austell (0726-74843)  
has regular talks & discussions. 1992  
programme includes Cosmic Law (June  
10th), Astrology (June 19th), UFOs (July  
8th), Colour Dimensions (July 15th), Hopi  
Indians (Aug 19th), Unseen World (Sept  
16th), Mantra Meditation (Sept 23rd),  
Symbols in Art by Courtney Davis (Oct  
21st), Crop Circle update (Nov 4th), &  
Eddie Pryn's stone temple (Nov 11th).

**KIT HILL HEALING CENTRE** (also Fountain  
& White Eagle) John Barrett, Elm Cott-  
age, Kit Hill, Kelly Bray, Callington.



Earth mysteries have been given wide coverage on Radio Cornwall over the last few months. Firstly, MM editor Cheryl Straffon was interviewed about some of the site research undertaken by the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group, in particular the dowsing patterns found at the Merry Maidens (reported in MM17 p3). Then TLH editor Paul Devereux was interviewed about the Dreamteam work going on at some ancient sites in Cornwall and elsewhere (see below). Finally, there was a "Cornish Mysteries" week, with interviews each day: George Bishop gave a report on last year's crop circles (see MM17 p5), Paul Broadhurst talked about the Michael Line (see MM9 p4-6), and Holy Wells (see MM5 p20-21), Hamish Miller about energy dowsing (see MM5 p3-5), and Craig Weatherhill about stone circles (see MM12 p4-15) which he mentioned were still used today by "the pagan religion that worships the Earth Goddess". He added that he had attended a ritual there himself which was "a very beautiful ceremony".

The Earth Mysteries Group continued with their monthly meetings in Penzance In January Paul Broadhurst gave an illustrated talk on holy wells, the secret shrines of the Cornish landscape. In February Cheryl Straffon gave an illustrated talk on the ritual use of ancient sites, and how the sacred sites of Cornwall would probably have been used for connecting with the earth spirit and Goddess of the land. In March Paul Devereux talked on sacred sleep: how ancient peoples used certain sites as dream incubation chambers to gain visions for healing and understanding. He also mentioned the Dreamteam work going on at selected sites today, whereby volunteers undertake to sleep at the sites and have their dreams recorded. And finally in April Professor Charles Thomas rounded the season off with selected reminiscences of a field archaeologist in a talk entitled "Holes in Space and other Fortean Items".

A programme of field events and site visits has been arranged for the summer months to which all are welcome. Full details from Andy Norfolk, The Cottage, Launderers Hill, Crowan, Camborne, or phone 0209-831519.

**FURTHER AFIELD** There are Earth Mysteries Groups in other parts of the country, most of whom organise field trips and/or talks and discussions. For further details please contact the following:

**London E.M** Rob Stephenson, Flat 6, 136 Bravington Rd, Queens Park, London W9.

**Surrey E.M** Jimmy Goddard, 25 Albert Rd, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey.

**Northern E.M** John Billingsley, 10 Jubilee St, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W.Yorks.

**Gloucester E.M** Danny Sullivan, PO Box 258, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 0HR.

**Mercian Mysteries** Bob Trubshaw, 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leics.

**Lincolnshire** Jane & Bob Dickinson, Glebe Farm Hse, Fen Rd, Owmby-by-Spital, Lincs.

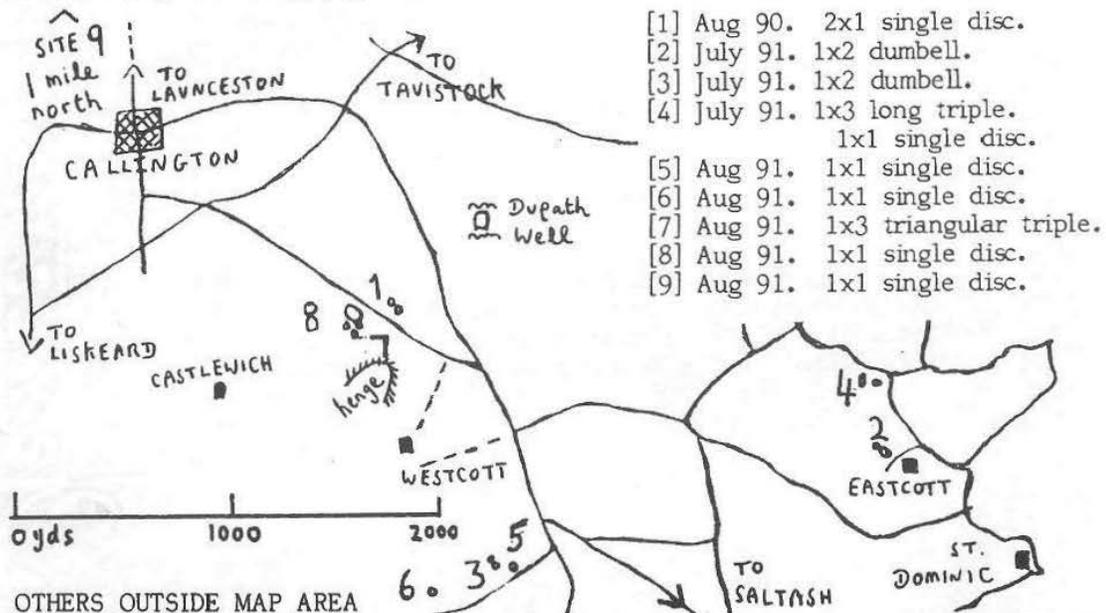
**Essex Earthlink** Carole Young, Phone (0702) 523092. Meetings in Westcliffe-on-Sea.

# CROP CIRCLE NEWS

Samples of corn from the crop circle that appeared in a field at Trebulsue near Newquay in 1991 (see MM16 p5) have now been analysed by local botanist Kay Larsen. He found that the cellular structure of the stalks had been distorted, so that on the outer side of the bent nodes there were much larger cells than normal, indicating that some huge force acting in a unidirectional fashion (perhaps in a spiral form) had altered the structure of the cell wall and expanded the cells. He suggests this force could have been microwaves, producing intense and local heat concentrated on the sap of the nodes, and causing the kinking or bending so typical of crop circle stalks. What appears to have happened is that a normal growth process has been diverted and the time factor massively compressed by a wave force sweeping around the stalks in a defined sequence. What that force actually was remains unknown as yet, but perhaps this year will produce more evidence.

Another anomaly in the circles that appeared in Callington last year (1991) (see MM17 p5) has been noted by archaeologist Charles Thomas who found that in several of the circles, evidenced most strongly in the centres, there were minor compass deflections of the order of  $5^{\circ}$  -  $10^{\circ}$ E from magnetic north. In each case the deflection followed the direction of the lay of the stalks. He comments: "The inference I make is that the process of crop-circle formation in these cases appears to have produced a local magnetic anomaly. There may also be a suspicion that the magnetic field is created at the time of formation and decreases through time." It is interesting to note that magnetic anomalies have also been found at some stone circles, for example at the Altarnun stone circle on Bodmin Moor.

What the 1992 season produces in Cornwall remains to be seen, but to aid circle watchers a map (below), compiled by local researcher George Bishop, gives the location of the 1990/91 crop of circles. Those interested in the phenomena should contact the Cornish Crop Circle Group secretary Barbara Davies at Old Stables, Lescrow, Fowey (0726-833465).



#### OTHERS OUTSIDE MAP AREA

[10]Treyone Farm, Downderry. July 91. 3x1 triple. [11]Treninnow Farm, Millbrook. July 91. 4x1 singles. [12]Unknown farm, Polbathic. July 91 2x1 singles. [13]Unknown farm, Polperro. July 91. 1x1 single. [14] Trebulsue Farm, Newquay (see above).

# Cromlechs

## SACRED SITES FOR THE LIVING

by CHERYL STRAFFON

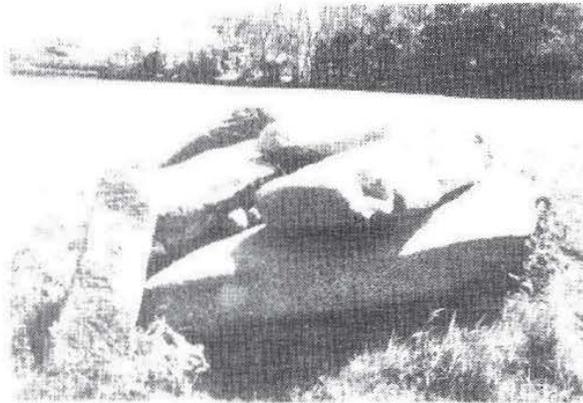
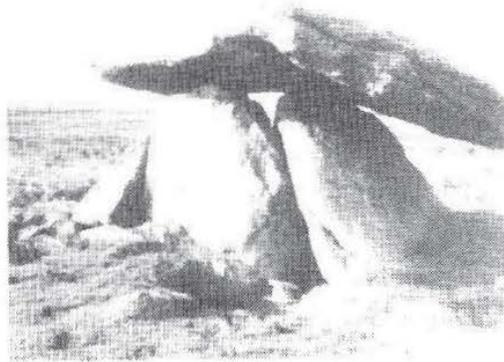
Cornish cromlechs, also known colloquially as quoits, are a localised form of portal dolmens (found also in west Wales, Ireland & SW Scotland), and may be some of the earliest chambered tombs in Great Britain. At their simplest they are no more than a closed box with a capstone, such as Chûn and Mulfra Quoits in West Penwith. Some may have two portal stones making an entrance, such as Zennor Quoit in West Penwith and Trethevey Quoit near Bodmin Moor. Great effort was expended on building them, more so even than on the dwellings. The capstone of Zennor Quoit alone is a massive 18x 9ft and weighs some 9½ tons. More than 100 people would have been needed to erect it.

So what was their function? Current archaeological thinking suggests two complimentary possibilities. One, that they were territorial markers. Many Penwith sites - Chûn, Mulfra, Zennor, Lanyon - are on relatively high spots where they could be seen by neighbouring tribes as the focal point of that area. However, there are serious problems with this theory. Some, such as Bosporthennis and West Lanyon, as well as those outside Penwith, were on relatively low-lying ground, and two at least, Lanyon and Zennor, have a neighbouring quoit very close to them (West Lanyon and Sperris) which would argue against territorial supremacy. Even those obviously on hilltop sites - for example Chûn and Mulfra - are not on the hill top itself where they could be best seen, but just over the brow of the hill.

The second generally accepted theory is that they were dolmens for the dead, communal tombs that provided a focus of worship within the tribe. The problem with this is that there is no evidence of systematic burial within the cromlechs: in some, particularly the closed sites like Chûn, there have been no remains found at all; others, like West Lanyon, have yielded large deposits of bones but research elsewhere shows that often these bones do not belong to one individual but come from various bodies deposited at different times.

It therefore seems more than likely that tombs were not intended merely as repositories for the dead, but rather were built as houses in which the spirits of the dead would continue to live for a long time. "In this way the sharp dividing line between the elders of the living and the ancestors of the dead was blurred and softened. The dead were housed in large tombs and looked out over the fields that their sons and daughters would farm, advising and protecting their descendants."<sup>1</sup> John Barnatt<sup>2</sup> comments that the only burials in the portal dolmens appear to be ritual dedications rather than stored bones.

With these comments in mind, let us turn to the existing Cornish cromlechs to see if we can deduce any pattern in their construction and use. One problem is that relatively few sites are completely undisturbed: some like Carwynnen near Troon, Camborne, have collapsed at least twice (1834 & 1967) and now consist of only a jumbled heap of stones. The Devil's Quoits near St Columb collapsed in 1840 and was broken up 30 years later - when re-discovered in 1977 only fragments remained. And the Giants Grave near Morvah was removed for mending roads sometime in the 1930s when it was already ruined. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Chûn Quoit is almost perfectly preserved, its capstones still in place. Trethevey and Pawton Quoits are also well preserved, with their capstones on top. The rest stand - or lie - somewhere between these two states: Lanyon fell in 1815 and was re-erected inaccurately and the wrong way round in 1824. West Lanyon's capstone lies propped up against one upright. Mulfra's capstone has also slipped off the box chamber but is in relatively good preservation. Lesquite near Bodmin is in a similar state, as is Zennor in West Penwith. Sperris and Bosphorthennis consist only of fallen stones: Sperris' capstone is missing, and Bosphorthennis has been trimmed for use as a millstone. So the information we can gain from the sites is better in some cases than others.

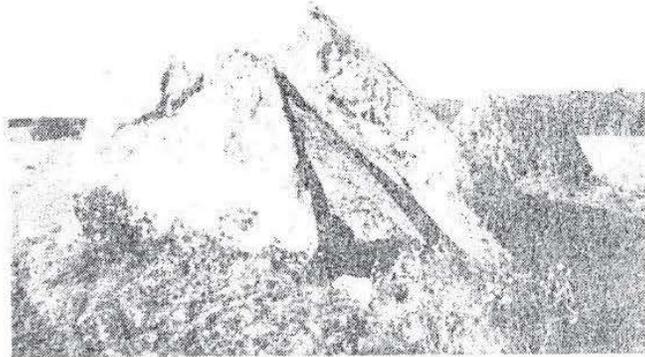
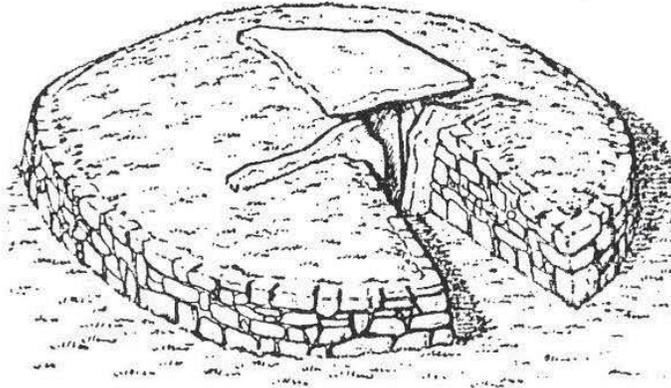


*The best and the worst - Chûn (above) and Carwynnen (below)*

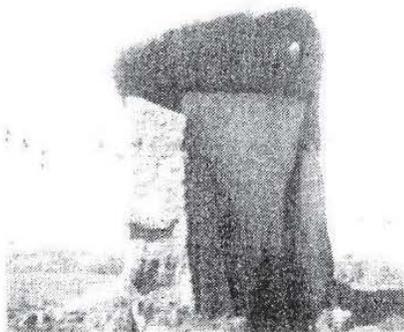
<sup>1</sup> from "Atlas of Prehistoric Britain" - John Manley (Phaidon, 1989)

<sup>2</sup> "Prehistoric Cornwall" - John Barnatt (Turnstone, 1986)

The first thing to notice is that most were originally surrounded by a mound or barrow: Chûn, Mulfra, Lanyon, West Lanyon, Zennor, Sperris, Bosporthennis, Lesquite, Carwynnen, and Pawton all have evidence of this. However, these mounds may not have covered the top of the capstone: the only clear indication of large mounds are at Pawton, Lanyon (originally 70ft long), and West Lanyon (which was still buried up until 1790). Although Bosporthennis still lies in the remains of a mound it is much less elaborate, and the more elaborate portal dolmens like Zennor and Trethevey clearly indicate that they were meant to be seen (see diagram right). In both, the antechamber (portal stones) was designed as the focus of attention. Here would probably have been the sacred area where rituals connecting the living with the dead were performed. Additional evidence for a ritual area outside the cromlech may be found at Sperris where excavation revealed a small cremation pit just outside the chamber, which Barnatt describes as a "dedication deposit".

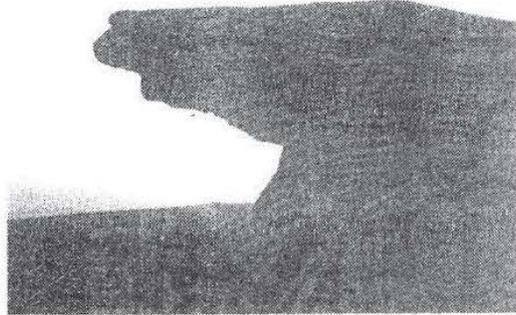


*Zennor Quoit reconstruction (above)  
and as it is today (below)*



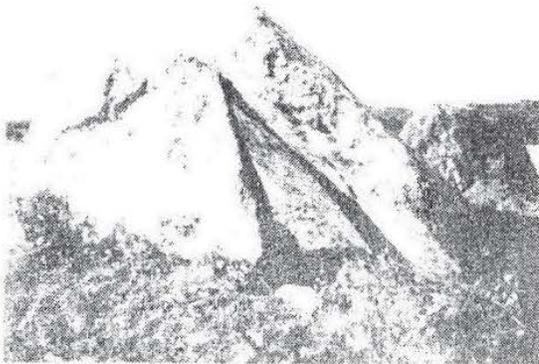
Do we have any other pointers to the possible use of the sites in the cromlechs themselves? There are interesting hints in some of them. Chûn has a cupmark on top of the capstone, and Mulfra too may have one or two. These could have been libation indentations where offerings to the dead spirits, perhaps of milk or honeyed mead, would have been poured - there is evidence of similar use in megalithic tombs in Brittany and Ireland. Trethevey Quoit (left) has a small hole in the capstone which could have served a similar purpose and there is also a gap in the portal entrance stone which could have been a gateway for the living to communicate with the dead. Zennor too has a narrow antechamber entrance.

Ceremonies for or with the dead often involved solar and lunar alignments, as at Newgrange in Ireland, Gavrinis in Brittany, and Maes Howe in Scotland. Do we have any evidence for this in Cornwall? Indeed we do. Zennor and Trethevey Quoits, both incidentally with portal stone antechambers, both face east-west, the direction of the rising and setting equinoxial sun. The Beltane sunrise would have risen over West Lanyon when viewed from Boswens menhir. Lockyer believed Trethevey was orientated towards the Samhain sunrise, or in the opposite direction the Beltane sunset. And perhaps most spectacular of all, still visible today, is the midwinter sun setting in a notch of Carn Kenidjack when viewed from Chûn Quoit (pictured right). This would work equally well as a midsummer sunrise over Chûn Quoit when viewed from Carn Kenidjack, the sun representing the power of rebirth for the ancient spirits within the cromlechs

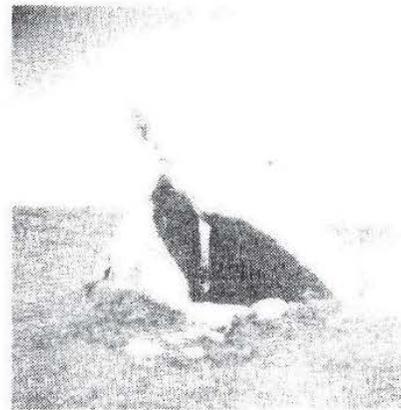


What picture then can we gain from all this? Probably that cromlechs were the focal ritual activity for the tribes communion with the spirits of the dead ancestors. Fires were lit outside the quoits where rituals were performed prior to the placing of sacred bones in the chambers. The dead would be honoured regularly particularly at significant times of the year, by giving offerings to the tombs, and by communion with the spirits of the dead. Possibly the shaman or shamanka of the tribe would, in an ecstatic trance (and the mushroom shape of Chûn may be relevant here) let his/her spirit mingle with that of the dead within the chamber in order to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the tribe. The cromlechs were not mausoleums where the dead were locked away: rather they were the dwelling places of the spirits of the ancestors of the tribes, spirits that were as alive to the people as their own souls. Death and life were as one in the cromlech.

*Article & photographs (c) Cheryl Traffon. Drawing (c) Craig Weatherhill.*



*Lesquite Quoit*



*Mulfra Quoit*

*AFTERWORD on cromlechs together with map of sites and locations overleaf...*

## AFTERWORD ON CROMLECHS

Cromlechs, dolmens, quoits, entrance graves, chambered tombs. Stone chambers that are found all over West Penwith, places for the dead – and the living. Strange places standing sentinel on the high moors, or tucked into the corner of a field. Some denuded of their earth coverings, they stand gaunt and stark against the primitive landscape; others covered in with earth mounds lie hidden and secretive, awaiting discovery. There are 2 main sorts: the cromlechs (Cornish for "curved place"), otherwise known as dolmens (Breton for "stone table"), and called colloquially by the Cornish themselves 'quoits' after the giants of old who hurled their capstones around while playing the ancient game. And then there are the entrance graves, chambered barrows often large enough only to let one person inside. To crawl into Chapel Carn Brea and see the full moon rise over the hill, framed by the entrance of the barrow is a moment of pure magic. To stand in Carn Gluze and look out over the Atlantic ocean, watching the sun set beyond the Scillies is a moment of pure peace. To stand at Mulfra and watch the sun rise over the Penwith hills until it illuminates the whole of Mounts Bay and St Michael's Mount before the mist descends is a moment of absolute joy. And to climb the hill at Chûn to the Quoit to see the summer sun set red in the sea one side and the pink full moon rise over the tip of the Lizard at the other is a moment of complete integration. So must our ancestors have seen all these things, thousands of years ago at these sacred sites.

So why are the sites so sacred? Perhaps because they were tombs for the dead, and their spirits still linger around them sometimes in the Celtic twilight. But perhaps more than this, because they were built as houses in which the spirits of the dead would continue to live for a very long time. To the ancient peoples, there was no division between the physical and the spiritual, they were all as one; and death was viewed as part of the continuation of life. The dead were there to be talked to, their wisdom to be drawn on by the shamans, their presence to sit over the fields and dwellings of their sons and daughters. It is in these places that we can sense the continuity of a very ancient life in the land of West Penwith. Go and listen to them and they will speak to you still.

*The extract above comes from the new Meyn Mamvro booklet THE EARTH MYSTERIES GUIDE TO ANCIENT SITES IN WEST PENWITH, which also gives full details of all cromlech sites in west Cornwall. Further information on page 15.*

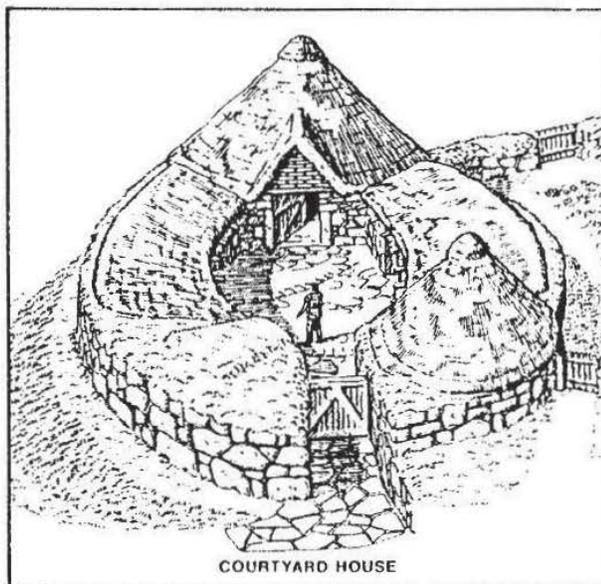


### LOCATION MAP

- 1 Chûn (SW402339)
- 2 Lanyon (SW430337)
- 3 West Lanyon (SW423338)
- 4 Mulfra (SW452354)
- 5 Bosporthennis (SW436365)
- 6 Zennor (SW469380)
- 7 Sperris (SW471282)
- 8 Carwvnnen (SW650373)
- 9 [Devils Coys] fragments (SW923619)
- 10 Pawton (SW966696)
- 11 Lesquite (SX071628)
- 12 Trethevy (SX259688)

## GUIDE TO COURTYARD HOUSE SETTLEMENTS

Courtyard House settlements are unique to the West Penwith area. Dating from the Iron Age (1st Century BCE), they consist of living quarters, workshop, stores and byre all within a single self-contained unit. These units are huge structures, roughly oval in plan, averaging 80ft in length by 58ft wide. A paved entrance passage, often turned away from the prevailing south-westerly winds, leads into a central, presumably unroofed courtyard, around which are a variety of rooms partially built into the thickness of the massive exterior wall which was probably some 7ft high. On one side was the stable or byre, and on the opposite side a long narrow room, perhaps the workshop or store. Between the two, and directly across the courtyard from the house entrance, is the largest room, circular or oval in shape, which was set aside for the living, eating and sleeping needs of the family. There may be other rooms too, and some of the living rooms have a back door leading out the house. Most of the courtyard house sites are village groups with, on average, 4 or 5 houses each. These village sites flourished throughout the Romano-British (Celtic) period until they were peacefully and gradually abandoned 2nd - 6th centuries C.E (A.D). The following guide lists all the known extant and destroyed sites in SW map area.



COURTYARD HOUSE

BOJUTHNO, Newbridge (417326) Destroyed. Single house in a small field; seen by W.Copeland Borlase in 1971. Present fields preserve fossilised field system.

BOSCREEGE, Newmill (465338) Scanty remains of probable courtyard house, trial dug by Vivien Russell and Peter Pool 1960. Destroyed c.1975.

BOSIGRAN EAST, Zennor (428370) 1 courtyard house and possible remains of 2 more, one of which, a stone mound, may contain remains of a fogou. Nearby is a well-preserved round. Contemporary fields preserved on present farm and coastal slope.

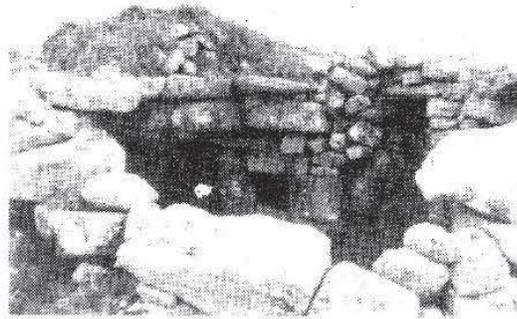
BOSIGRAN WEST, Zennor (423371) 3, possibly 4, courtyard houses (2 of which are well-preserved), and a round house, fairly widely scattered in fields fossilising contemporary field system. Bosigran cliff castle is only 500 yards to the west.

BOSILIACK, Madron (437343) Remains of a single courtyard house 200 yards SE of Greenburrow Engine House, Ding Dong.

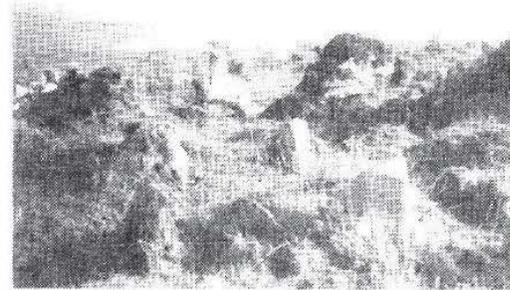
BOSWARVA, Madron (429330) Four widely-spaced courtyard houses and three round houses in varying states of preservation, on S slope of Boswarva Carn. Well defined terraced fields. Very overgrown site.

BOSWEDNACK, Zennor (441383) Wreck of a single courtyard house in the terraced fields above Boswednack Cliff. Some round houses in vicinity.

BOSPORTHENNIS, Zennor  
(438361) At least three courtyard houses, possibly as many as five, in a widely-scattered settlement within contemporary fields and containing a possible above-ground fogou (the "Beehive Hut" pictured right) and a doubtful round



BOSULLOW TREHYLLYS, Madron (409342) Four, possibly five, courtyard houses and at least 13 round houses, surrounded by well-preserved paddocks and garden plots. Small above-ground fogou with creep passage connects with one of the courtyard houses. Adjoins S side of Tinner's Way and originally straddled the trackway. Unexcavated and in extremely good condition, but access now limited by the landowner.



BOTALLACK, St Just (368330) Dr Borlase's "Botallek Circles" appear from his drawing and description to have been the foundations of 2 courtyard houses and a round house. Destroyed long ago.

BOTREA, Sancreed (404308) One well-preserved courtyard house with a single round house to the NW. Well preserved field system remains in surrounding rough land.

CARNAQUIDDEN, Newmill (466355) Single large courtyard house in a recently enlarged field. A number of scheduled round houses nearby destroyed in 1984, without prosecution of the landowner. A few remain.

CARNELLOE, Zennor (445384) Possibility of a courtyard house suggested by Hirst. There is a partly sunken enclosure, but not very suggestive of a courtyard house. Surrounded by a large fossilised field system.

CARNE HOUSE, Morvah (407351) Probable courtyard house in southern corner of an overgrown croft. Scheduled in mistake for the larger Croftoe settlement nearby.

CHYCANDRA, Crows-an-wra (385277) One probable courtyard house and one round house beside ancient trackway at southern foot of Chapel Carn Brea.

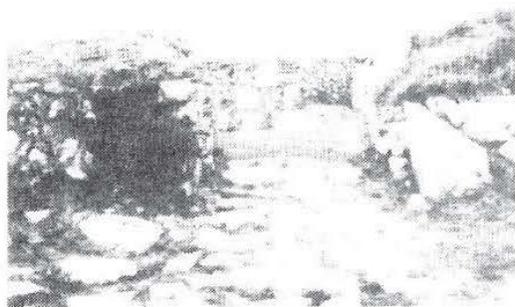
CHYKEMBRO, Zennor (447371) 1 almost circular courtyard house, 4 or 5 round houses and a small enclosure (corral or remains of another courtyard house?) on brow of hill. Large field system to north; strip-like fields (Romano-British?) to south.

CRANKAN, Newmill (461364) 2 courtyard houses in large terraced field system containing at least 3 round houses. To west of courtyard houses, and immediately above quarry, is a round.

CARN EUNY, Sancreed  
(402288) Four untypical courtyard houses and five round houses in an interlocking group (illustrated right), replacing a timber-built settlement that was 400 years older. Superb multi-phase fogou connects with the most northerly courtyard house. In care of HBMC (English Heritage) and excavated in the 1960s.



CHYSAUSTER, Newmill  
(472350) Eleven, probably twelve, courtyard houses; nine of them in a tight, apparently planned, group with attached garden plots. Very large field system along hillside, containing round houses (partly destroyed c.1984). Ruinous fogou to south of main village. Five courtyard houses and one round house excavated. Partly in care of HBMC and the best-preserved settlement.



CROFTOE, Morvah (403348) 4 courtyard houses, 2 forming a semi-detached unit. In low-lying position close to head of stream. Part of one house excavated 1922.

FOAGE, Zennor (466379) Single courtyard house found by Hirst c.1930, since destroyed. Further huts existed at 466377, and a possible fogou at 467378.

GOLDHERRING, Sancreed (415324) Single courtyard house inside earlier round, surrounded by terraced fields. Also one round house. Excavated 1958-1962.

GREENBURROW, Madron (432344) Ruin of a courtyard house in contemporary fields and among mining remains. Discovered by Cornwall Archaeological Unit in 1984.

HIGHER BODINNAR, Newbridge (415324) Very large complex of courtyard houses and round houses, some in an interlocking group. Totally destroyed, except for traces of "Giant's Holt" fogou and the remains of a round.

KEIGWIN, Morvah (402 342) Isolated courtyard house in pasture field N of Chûn Quoit. In very large field system, best preserved to the west.

LANYON, Madron (426342) Wreck of a courtyard house on brow of slope above a terraced field system in moorland, containing 2 round houses. A sinuous, well-defined bank runs S from the courtyard house towards Boswarva Carn.

LOWER BOSCASWELL, Pendeen (377348) Present stunted remains of fogou probably connected with remains of a courtyard house whose shape is partly preserved by ancient field walls defining tiny paddocks.

MULFRA VEAN, Newmill (453349) At least 3 courtyard houses in heavily overgrown site at southern foot of Mulfra Hill, which also contains an excellent field system. The site, straddling a sunken track of great antiquity, almost certainly contains other structures. One courtyard house partially dug 1954.

NANJULIAN, St Just (362289) At least 3 courtyard houses, some round houses and a possible fogou inside an irregular enclosure. Extensive terraced fields. Small trial dig in the 1940s. Sometimes called "Nanjulian Hendra".

NORTH BOSPORTHENNIS, Zennor (437367) Pair of stone mounds on either side of a small walled enclosure. E mound found by Hirst to contain remains of a courtyard house long room. The W mound might have contained a fogou.

PORTHMEOR, Zennor (434371) 3 courtyard houses, 8 round houses, paved courts and roadways inside a secondary oval round. 3 round houses and a further courtyard house, adjoined by above-ground fogou, outside round. Excavated 1933-35.

ROSEMERGY, Morvah (417364) Series of small contiguous enclosures within terraced fields might be a courtyard house adapted for later agricultural use.

TREDINNICK, Newmill (443351) Indistinct ruin, possibly a courtyard house, in heavily overgrown but terraced croft.

TREEN COTH, Zennor (433376) Possible courtyard house site suggested by Hirst on the strength of courtyard house type stone artifacts found in hedges west of Gurnard's Head Hotel. However these may have been brought from Upper Treen site.

TRENDRENNEN, St Levan (388321) Possible courtyard house site suggested by a number of courtyard house type stone artifacts around the farm.

TRVEAN, Morvah (413357) 3 courtyard houses, one adapted in post-Medieval times. Large contemporary terraced fields. Above-ground fogou destroyed in 1913.

TREWELLARD, Pendeen (?379339) Courtyard house mentioned by Buller (1842) in a croft called "The Reins" (no such name recorded on 1840 Tithe Maps).

TREWERN, Newbridge (428322) 1 courtyard house and remains of fields and enclosures immediately behind Higher Trewern Farmhouse. The site might have contained a fogou. Trewern Round lies 600 yds to SE.

TREWEY-FOAGE, Zennor (466369) A ruined courtyard house immediately S of the well-known Late Bronze Age settlement site, close to Mill Downs.

TRINK, Nanchedra (505368) 2 courtyard houses and 3 round houses, partly dug in 1955, soon after its discovery, and 1959. Totally destroyed in late 1970s.

TRY, Newmill (461355) 2, perhaps 3, courtyard houses above Try(e) Farm, just S of Try Round. One is widely surrounded by embanked enclosure with inturned entrance

UPPER PORTHMEOR, Zennor (439369) 1 courtyard house adjoining modern field wall.

UPPER TREEN, Zennor (437372) 4 courtyard houses, 2 connected to form a semi-detached unit, within well preserved paddocks and terraces, still retaining gateways All houses have entrances untypically facing W. Near late Neolithic entrance graves

WICCA, Zennor (470398) Possible remains of a courtyard house in a small enclosure within ancient fields.

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 HOLED STONES & STONE ROWS \* FOGOUS  
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# BRAN

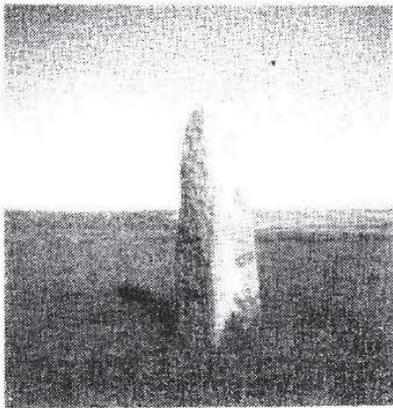
## the blessed

The previous MM contained an article on most of the Celtic Goddesses and Gods: however, one in particular, Bran, is complex enough to deserve a separate feature. Here, John E. Palmer writes of the Cornish and Celtic context for Bran the Blessed.



One of the foremost pagan Gods of ancient Britain, of Kernow, Cymru and of Gaul, is Bran the Blessed. In the Celtic languages of Cornish, Welsh, Gaelic and Breton, "Bran" means "RAVEN" and/or "crow".

"Bran the Blessed, son of Llyr, was the crowned king of this island, having been raised to the throne of London. One afternoon he was at a court of his at Harddlech in Ardudwy; he was sitting on the rock of Harddlech overlooking the sea, accompanied by his brother Manawydan son of Llyr, and his two brothers on his mother's side, Nissyen and Evnissyen, and such noblemen as ought to surround a king." (Opening lines of "Branwen, Daughter of Llyr" from "The Mabinogian").

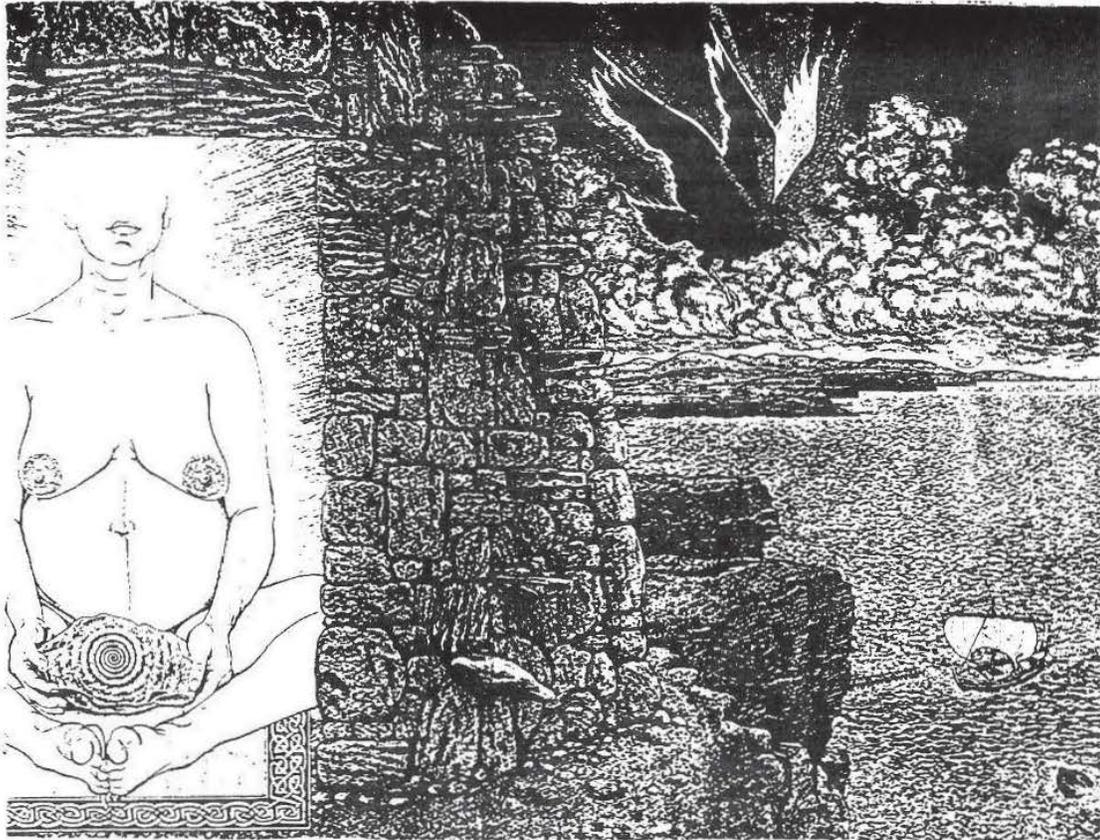


Like the God Wodan, Bran is a magician-king, and indeed, Celtic leaders allied themselves to his name, as shown by the Mên Scryfa standing stone in West Cornwall (pictured left), which tribal stone is engraved with the lettering: "Rialobrani Cunovali Fili", meaning "Royal Raven son of (the Glorious Leader) Cunouallos". The Caer Brân Hillfort, and the Brane chambered mound, both in West Cornwall, also mark Bran as Lord of the Mounds. The passages of chambered mounds are often found to be orientated towards midwinter sunrise, when the solar rays illuminate the interior of the chamber, impregnating the Earth-womb. He has also given his name to St. Breward on Bodmin Moor (from St. Branwalder = raven lord).



In Cymru the name of Bran is still perpetuated in such placenames as Aber-Bran - mouth of the river Bran (= dark water), and Cwmbran - valley of Bran (= dark). Bran is connected here also with high places, for across the river Dee, above Llangollen, rise the ruins of Castell Dinas Bran, built in about 1200, on an ancient site predating the Norman invasion, by Madog ap Gruffydd as a base for Welsh resistance. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his geomythical 12thC work, the "Historia Regum Britanniae" (History of the Kings of Britain) lists Belinus and Brennus as kings of the British Isles, which in the Welsh version are named as Beli and Bran. On the Continent, there were at least two Gallic leaders by name of Brennus, who invaded Rome and Delphi. The Gallic God Belenos means "the shining one", also known as Belenos the Brilliant and Beli the Great, whilst the name Brennus (Welsh "brenin" = king) signified King of the Tribe. It is from the Old Celtic "brannos" from which came the word Bran.

The Nervian chief Boduognatos (= Son of Victory, or Son of the Crow) who nearly beat Caesar at the river Sambre near Bavai, also shows in his name the link between the magician-king and the protection of the invoked divinity. During the period when Pytheas of Marseilles sailed to Britain (about 330 BC) the Land's End was known as Belerium, where tin was mined, the tin isles of the Ancients (which the Greeks called the Cassiterides), from where the ore was ferried in large ships by the Veneti tribe to Gaul. On the fringe of Dartmoor is Belstone, where there are two stone circles and an isolated standing stone. In the ancient Celtic calendar, Bel is closely connected with the Fires of Beltaine, occurring on the 1st of May. In the Flemish language, "bron" means a spring, and in Eire, Bran is Bron, son of Lir (of the waves) and brother to Manannan, son of Lir, and leader of the Tuatha de Danann. (Welsh: Manawyddan, son of Llyr). Manannan is God of Navigation, and his bag, made from the skin of a crane, also a bird sacred to the Celts, contains the treasures of the world.



*"Bran at the Hall of Keridwen"*

The female form of Bran is Branwen (= white raven) who is Bran's sister. In that captivating story of the Welsh Mabinogian "Branwen, Daughter of Llyr", Bran the Blessed, as divine hero and God-king, comes into the possession of the magical Cauldron of Rebirth. However, here this magical cauldron of inspiration and plenty happens to work to his own destruction and he is wounded in the foot by a poisoned spear. Dying, he orders his seven companions to sever his head and bury it at Gwynn Bryn in Lludein (London), with his face turned towards France, which would protect the country from invasion. Among the seven are Manawydan, Bran's brother, Pryderi, and Taliesin, who are in turn related with journeys into Annwyn, the Other World. On their way, the seven halt at two sacred places; Harlech, where they feast for seven years, and on the isle of Grassholm, where they feast for eighty years, without noticing the passage of time, until they open a door on the side facing Cornwall, whereupon all their grief comes back to them, and they set off for the final resting place in London. Seven is a mystical number, and the burial site is of prime importance, for the Welsh "gwyn" means "white, holy", the White Mound at the Tower of London. London itself was probably derived from Ludd, Nudd, the God Nodens. The hoary tradition seems to have been conferred onto the Tower itself; today there are still black ravens at the Tower, the birds receiving an allowance from the government, for it is said that, if the ravens disappear, the Tower, royal castle and a symbol of the kingdom, will fall. Significantly the tower in medieval times was painted WHITE. The human head was, of course, regarded by the Celts as seat of the soul.

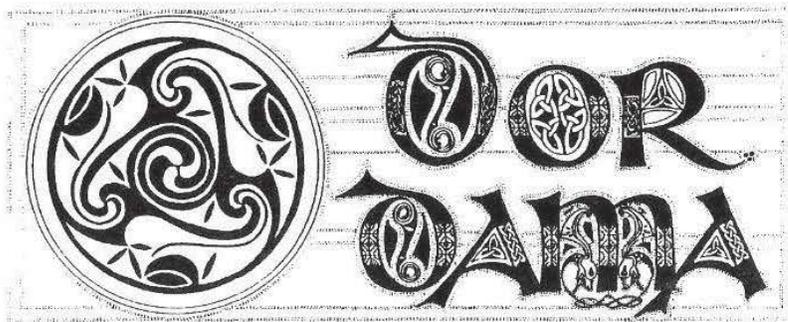
Following the Mabinogian, Owein, one of the three Blessed Kings of Britain, possessed ravens, and who, after having been pestered by Arthur's men whilst Owein was playing chess with Arthur, fell upon Arthur's army, and wherever Owein went with his ravens, they were victorious. Among the avatars of the Gods, connected with the Other World, ravens or crows also appear on battlefields. The triple Macha, the Great Horse, the Morrigan, the Great Queen, and Bodb, Goddess of Battle (battle-raven), swoop down as birds on the fields of dissent. In the "Tain Bo Cualnge", also from Eire, ravens fly around two fighting heroes, and it is esoterically worded that a good warrior is "one who knows the way of the black ravens". In the French romance, "Didot-Perceval", during a fight between Perceval and Urbain (Welsh: Uryen) appears a flock of birds dramatically perceived as "blacker than anything he had ever seen", to defend Urbain. When Perceval kills one of the birds, this becomes transformed into the body of a girl: the birds happen to be sisters to the wife of Urbain, a Welsh goddess by the name of Modron. She is concomitant with the Gallic Matrona, as also with the Irish Morrigan, and too, Morgan le Fay of Arthurian romance, and it was Morgan, sister to Arthur, who ferried him to Avalon, the Isle of the Dead. In Eire, the Morrigan couples with the Dagda, in Gaul, Secullos and Nantsuelta "she of the winding stream", and they are accompanied by the RAVEN as totemic animal.

In the Irish tales, bound up with wonder-voyages, in which the hero journeys to the twilight of the Other World, Tir-nan-Oc, the Land of Eternal Youth, or Land of the Living, there is found the story of Bran, son of Febal. He meets, in mid-ocean, his brother Manannán mac Lir, God of the Sea, receiving visions of the Other World. Bran reaches an island inhabited by fairies, who entertain him fantastically, but when one of his men suffers from home-sickness, the expedition returns to Eire. On their arrival at the shore, the people ask them who Bran and his companions are, and when Bran tells them they reply: "We do not know of such a one, though the voyage of Bran is in our ancient stories". When the first of the sailors then jumps ashore, he instantly becomes reduced to a mere heap of ashes, as if he had been in the earth for hundreds of years. Cornish and Welsh folklore tells similar stories of quests into the land of the Fairies, relics of an earlier awareness of moving into realities with a non-linear experience of time, and the tale later served as a model for the voyage of St. Brendan in search of Paradise.

In "Branwen", Bran's sister gives birth to Gwern, the "aldertree". This links Bran to the Celtic-Bardic calendar, the Beth-luis-nion, where the names of the months, each of 28 days, are cognate with those of 13 trees, and with the 13 consonants of the Celtic alphabet. The calendar, which starts at the Midwinter Solstice, gives for the month of March the letter F. "fearn" = alder tree. Thus, Bran, avatar of the celestial worlds, whilst going through a rejuvenation at mid-winter, is connected with the renewing forces of Nature, heralded by the Spring Equinox. The alder tree, which grows best on marshy ground, affirms the sacred link of Bran with the Earth Goddess. According to Celtic visionary reality, the BLACK RAVEN, Bran the Blessed, can magically change into WHITE, as indicated by Branwen. The imagination, or spirit, is formed by projections of energy, and the late medieval alchemists sought to achieve such process of transformation by what they termed the "white head of the raven", in their Quest for the Philosopher's Stone.

*Article and original artwork [c] John E. Palmer.*





*Geraldine Andrew runs Harmony Pottery where she organises events and activities of spiritual awareness. Here, in the "Earth Mother" column, she writes of a special experience she had at Boleigh fogou sacred site in West Cornwall.*

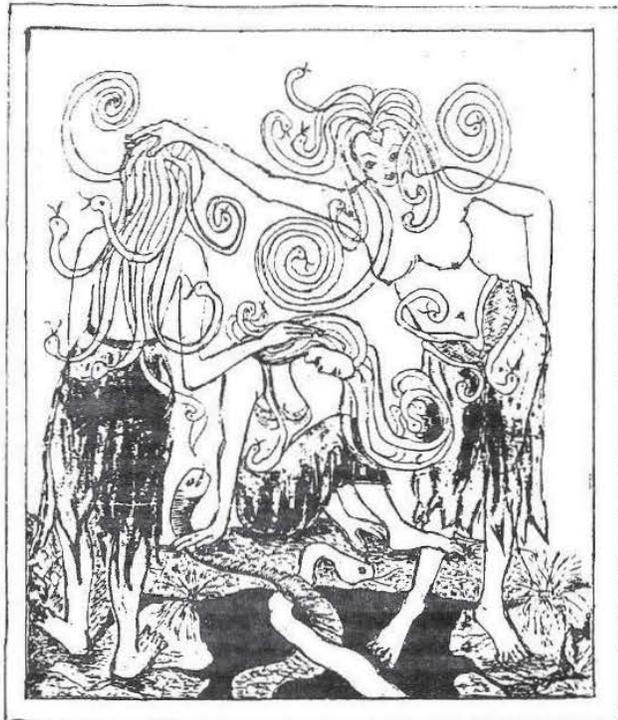
I was very interested to read Mike Woolf's article on spiral energy (MM16). I too have found much spiritual food and nourishment from our sacred sites, and when I visit these special places it is of a "returning home": the radiance, the colour, the great peace, the power which gently pervades the atmosphere, the ancient wisdom which can lead our minds into new ideas, and reach out into new dimensions; the courage and strength to think in new fields of energy and thought to try out new schemes, to whittle away the poverty of the material mind and fill it with great potential of the spiritual future. It allows a different degree of sensitivity, a new awareness to receive impressions of the consciousness over and above the fixed pattern of everyday existence. We have to journey into another dimension to find the chemistry of change, to enter the vortex, the spiral energy.

So I must now relate my own experience of this energy which I first encountered in September 1988 whilst visiting Rosemerryn House at Lamorna for an astrological weekend. What a magical setting! Lush autumnal vegetation swamped my senses, the aroma of decaying wood, of sodden grass, greens, golds and browns of September's garb. I walked through the grounds, my feet squeaking in sticky mud, assailed by harvest fruits, my hands reaching out to savour the bitterness of sloes, quickly followed by the sweetness of bulging purple blackberries - the fullness, the ripeness of Mother Earth, the overwhelming abundant fruitfulness of her gifts.

And so in this atmosphere I came to exchange new ideas and insights. My sleep on Saturday night was dreamless, cradled in the bower of Mother Nature's fullness and plentitude. Sunday morning I awoke early and roamed the grounds; damp cloying mist enveloped my clothes, hair and eyelids, spiders webs glistened with droplets of dew, no birdsong, an eerie silence. I returned to the kitchen for a hearty breakfast. I relate the substantial breakfast so you may realise that I was not "light headed". Our teacher then suggested that we visit the fogou in the grounds and have some time for meditation. I was puzzled to know what a fogou was: I had heard the name but knew nothing of its reputation or attendant myths or explanations for its construction and purpose.

As we reached the fogou there was still a chill in the morning air. Warm air from my breath condensed and added to the gloom, the shroud of mist invoked a silent landscape. As I moved forward my hand slipped on the moss-covered granite, silver lacelike lichen on branches bowed in mourning to summer's end. On entering the fogou we faintly discerned on our left the figure of the "Healing God" carved onto the rock. The dankness quickly enveloped each one of us, six women disappearing into the gloom. The passage gradually sloped downwards and after a few feet we found ourselves standing flat against the wall to avoid the large puddle. We stood quietly whilst four small candles pricked the darkness and gave solace. We allowed the energy from our bodies to flow down into mother earth.

I was feeling content and peaceful, breathing deeply as I felt the deep connection with the earth. Then, the only way to describe the next sensation was as "a bolt from the blue". The force was immense: it was a spiralling force in the centre of my forehead, the spin was so strong, and quickly became faster and faster. I felt sick, my whole body reeling I felt my head would explode. I could no longer stand, my knees were collapsing and I fell to the ground. As I fell, the energy left me, as suddenly as it had appeared. I was very shaken and was helped back to the kitchen. I was also quite frightened as no one gave me an adequate explanation of what had happened. Someone mentioned that rituals were performed in the fogou and also that it had very female energy. For about an hour I lay on the floor whilst the workshop continued, but my concentration had gone. I felt exhausted and just wanted to curl up in a ball and go to sleep.



My experience was most interesting academically as I had no previous knowledge of fogous or spiral energy. From that time my life changed, an acceleration of energy and consciousness. I believe these sites focus the potential of the human, spiritual mind, and by contacting and understanding the nature of this force we can raise ourselves to the status of the God/Goddess within ourselves. This upward spiralling force of which we have such a small perception! We look up and see the sun and moon and stars; outside of these are other dimensions, moons and stars, and outer suns, and inner suns in so vast an array that it almost goes beyond the imagination to conceive what a dimension is. So many things exist dimensional-wise in the one space that we occupy, that other areas of consciousness can live within our atmospheric environment, unseen perhaps by ourselves, but felt by our spirit.

Mike speaks of a "dimensional shift" and this is exactly my response to these sites, not only the fogous but stone circles and menhirs. They facilitate and energise our journey into the unknown, our discovery of our internal spiral, our creative centre, our infinite potential and our right relationship to all creation and our environment. Embracing the sacred stones of our magical and beautiful planet we blend into the harmonious universe and share the unfolding secrets of the spiral.

I have since visited Boleigh fogou several times but there has been no reoccurrence of the phenomena. Perhaps others can share their experiences of the Spiral, which after all is contained within all life forms.

*Article and drawing [c] Geraldine Andrew.*

## BOOK REVIEW

Books on the Celts continue to come out apace. A beautifully-produced one is **DICTIONARY OF CELTIC MYTH AND LEGEND** by **Miranda Green** (Thames & Hudson, £16.95). This is a really excellent reference book with some 400 entries arranged alphabetically, covering all the information about Celtic divinities, festivals, holy places, legendary heroes, mythological beings, religion and ritual, in fact all aspects of Celtic life and lore, drawn from British and European Celtic sources. There are in addition nearly 250 well-chosen illustrations, making this a delight to dip into as well as an invaluable reference source. Miranda Green has no particular axe to grind, and the information is given fairly, with due acknowledgement of the pagan goddess and "the deep mysteries of life, death and rebirth". Recommended.

Complimentary to this is **A GUIDE TO EARLY CELTIC REMAINS IN BRITAIN** by **Peter Berresford Ellis** (Constable, £11.95), tracing the archaeological and other remains of the Celtic peoples from the Iron Age to 43 CE (AD). This also covers a wide variety of subjects, including hill forts, cliff castles, hillside carvings, burial grounds and bog bodies, in sections covering geographical regions. Cornwall is given a separate section, as may be expected from a Cornish author, but unfortunately some of his comments are rather contentious, as for example his conviction that fogous were for practical rather than ritual purposes. However, with this reservation in mind, the Guide can be used as a means to seek out our visible Celtic past, although it does not really bring that past to life in the way Miranda Green's book does.

**THE CELTIC SHAMAN** by **John Matthews** (Element Earthquest, £8.99 pbk) certainly attempts to bring that Celtic past well to life. This is a handbook for spiritual journeying to contact the shaman within all of us. John Matthews (and his wife Caitlin) have done much to revive and reconstruct traditional Celtic lore and legend, and his book "Taliesen: Shamanism and the Bardic Mysteries in Britain and Ireland" (Aquarian Press, 1991) is a fascinating elucidation of the Taliesen material from the Mabinogian and elsewhere. In "The Celtic Shaman" he develops a plan of self-tuition based on Celtic source material. "Shamanism" tends to be a rather overused and devalued word nowadays, but nevertheless there is much sound wisdom in this book. Other new related titles from this prolific couple are **LADIES OF THE LAKE** by **John and Caitlin Matthews** (Aquarian, £8.99), a study of ninefold priestessly roles of some Arthurian women, and **THE CELTIC BOOK OF THE DEAD** by **Caitlin Matthews** (Harper Collins, published Autumn £25 approx.). This is a unique problem-solving card-set and book based on Celtic immram text, in which we are invited to journey to certain mythological islands to meet aspects of ourselves. (CS)

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**IMAGES OF PREHISTORY** - Text by Peter Fowler. Photographs by Mick Sharp.  
(Cambridge University Press, 1990, £19.50)

This is the kind of glossy archaeological picture guide that has been widely produced in recent years, but this one is a little different from the rest. For one thing, there is a whole section on West Penwith, which usually gets overlooked or mentioned in passing. And for another there is a real appreciation of the sites as sacred places in relationship to the land. Peter Fowler, who recently gave a CAS lecture in Truro, is an establishment archaeologist, but his comments show that, unlike some of his colleagues, he does not believe that archaeologists have the exclusive rights to the ancient sites. For example, on West Penwith he says:

"The fact that no-one else may be there (at the sites) should not blind a visitor to the intense local interest in the monuments and the considerable lore about them... We are very conscious of following an honoured tradition of painters, poets, writers, visionaries, scholars and photographers, all with their own images to create and convey... Archaeological sites are perceived by those wanting to use them in this way not as defunct structures only of interest to scholars and tourists, but as live sights functioning in contemporary late 20th century society."

Now this is a significant acknowledgement by a mainstream archaeologist, and as an example a photograph of Bosporthenis Beehive Hut is captioned: "A store cupboard in the centre contains, presumably symbolically for some latter-day pagan, a lump of quartz with a circle of plaited grass". This suggestion is in fact not a million megalithic miles from the truth! (although the recess could as easily have been a shrine as a store cupboard, and "symbolically" does not convey the real meaning of the offering). And Boleigh fogou is illustrated with candles "for present-day religious purposes" with the text that says: "It is also a place of powerful symbolism, secret, tomb-like, sexual and fecund". West Penwith certainly seems to have opened up Peter Fowler's receptiveness, and although ultimately he does not fully comprehend the meaning of the sites "to those who now use them as a shrine" there is nevertheless an awareness of that use and a seeming respect for it. That in itself is a measure of how far archaeologists have moved.

**CORNISH ARCHAEOLOGY No. 30 (1991)** (Cornwall Archaeological Society, £10)

Meanwhile, more ritual use of ancient sites can be found in the pages of the CAS's annual volume, only this time it is the conclusion from the recent excavation at Trethellan Farm, Newquay, that the site was probably used primarily as a ritual one by Iron Age peoples. The report of the excavation, which takes up 240 pages, the bulk of the volume, is of a technical nature and probably mainly of interest to professional and amateur archaeologists, but the conclusions are interesting ones. The author of the report, Jackie Nowakowski, points out that the site was used as a Bronze Age settlement before being abandoned for some 900 years, and then was re-used in the Iron Age as a burial ground. She suggests that its re-use may have been influenced by "a deep-rooted sense of tradition associated with the site - a tradition and sense of place... a strong awareness that the place had previously been a settlement which had strong spiritual and 'ritual' associations". Again, there is an acknowledgement that "a sense of the past and of the spirit of places of former occupation sites is a familiar idea today", and she concludes "In a time when the tradition of place was probably even more important than today, the spirits of the past must have been an ever present influence that could not be ignored".

Finally, **THE PAGAN RELIGIONS OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH ISLES** by Ronald Hutton (Basil Blackwell, 1991, £19.95) is a detailed look at the evidence for continuity of pagan tradition. Michell's Cornish leys are superficially mentioned (and dismissed), ditto for Ian Cooke's fogou theories. Overall, although it promises to be interesting, it is in fact a rather uninspiring and dull book. (CS)

## The Pipers Tune

A column in the Peninsula Voice magazine by Branwen, in which she talked about water cures at Cornish holy wells provoked a heated response concerning radiation in the water. Branwen mentioned that radiation levels in the water at Madron Well were twice as high compared with the background reading, and suggested that "low doses of radiation can be beneficial to health". Judith Cook of Liskeard responded by describing this as a "dangerously irresponsible statement" and added that "low levels of radiation absorbed over a long period are often more damaging than one moderate dose". So what is the truth of the matter? In "Places of Power" Paul Devereux commented that although radiation is inherently harmful to living tissue and that long exposure to high levels of natural radioactivity can cause illness, perhaps homeopathic doses of radiation could have curative effects. He evidences the case of Boulder Montana USA where old gold and uranium mines are now being used for giving sufferers of certain ailments strictly timed periods of exposure to the radon concentrations in the abandoned workings, and also points out that spas, such as Bath, which were regularly visited for health reasons, also have a high radioactive content. This could perhaps explain why healing traditions became associated with wells and certain stones (for example the Men-an-Tol) which have a higher radiation count. So who is right? Are all levels of radiation dangerous, or is a little of what we fear in fact good for us? No doubt the debate will continue.



The 'Open File' on ley-lines placed in Penzance Library by Julie Cain (see The Pipers Tune in MM17) has reached a resolution. Paul Devereux, from the Centre of Earth Mysteries Studies in Penzance, complained to the County Librarian as follows: "My concern is that displays of this nature, without some guidance as to the factual worth of the material they foist on a casual public, simply reinforce stereotypic responses to the topic-area of sacred geography, This means that otherwise uninformed people either get sucked into a fantasy-release situation, or have their prejudices that the subject area is a 'lunatic fringe' confirmed. Both resonances are most unfortunate, and a truth slips away between them. Even if public interest has seemingly been minimal in the presentation, we cannot know how its very presence may have affected existing prejudices in visitors to the library". Although the Library could initially see no objection to the file, they now feel the experiment is at an end and have had it removed.

KEVIN AND INGRID CARLYON welcome all with a genuine interest in the Occult Arts to their HALLOWEEN RITUAL at the Nine Maidens, above Men - an - Tol. Watch local press and tv for details

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES**EARTH MYSTERIES & SACRED SITES**

THE LEY HUNTER - National EM magazine (Annual: 4 issues £7) PO Box 92, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2XL.

REGIONAL EM MAGAZINES - addresses on p4. NORTHERN EM (Annual: 4 issues £3.95 single £1.15). GLOUCESTER EM (Annual: 3 issues £5 single £1.50). MERCIAN MYSTERIES - Midlands EM (Annual: 4 issues £6 single £1.75). TOUCHSTONE - Surrey EM (Annual: 4 issues £2). MARKSTONE - N.Lincs EM (Sample £1.35)

EARTH - EM, Fortean, Pagan (Sample £1) Paul Bennett, 20 Stonegate Rd, Thorpe Edge, Bradford BD10 8BT.

THE CEREOLOGIST - Crop circles mag (Annual: 3 issues £7.50, sample £2.50) J Michell, 11 Powis Gardens London W11

RILKO (Research into Lost Knowledge Organisation) (Annual 2 issues £6.50) 10 Kedleston Drive, Orpington, Kent.

PENDRAGON - Arthurian journal (Annual: 4 issues £6) Chinook, Paxhill Lane, Nut Orchard, Twynning, Glos GL20 6DU.

HIDDEN HISTORY (Annual: 4 issues £5.50) APRA, 443 Meadow Lane, Nottingham NG2

CAERDROIA - mazes and labyrinths (Annual journal £3) 53 Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex.

ASH - Albion's Sacred Heritage (Annual: 4 issues £4.50 single £1.25) 2 Kent View Rd, Vange, Basildon, Essex SS16

BELTANE FIRE - Earth Magic (Annual: 4 issues £3, sample 80p) 16 Cross St. St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 6DP

MEYN MAMVRO is available on annual subscription - 3 issues £5.00 (inc p & p) from 51 CARN BOSAVERN, ST JUST, PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR19 7QX. MM19 due Autumn 92 will include articles on folklore of the fogou, seasonal rituals, and other features.

All back numbers are now sold out, but photocopies can be done as a special service to subscribers and regular readers upon request at £1.70 each, inc p & p.

**PAGANISM**

THE CAULDRON - the Old Religion (Annual: 4 issues £4 sample £1) pay Mike Howard, Caemorgan Cottage, Cardigan, Dyfed, Wales

PANDORA'S JAR [formerly Pipes of Pan] Greening the Earth anew (Annual: 3 issues £3.50) Blaenberem, Mynyddcerrig, Llanelli, Dyfed, Wales SA15 5BT.

WOOD AND WATER - Goddess centered & feminist influenced (Annual: 4 issues £4.00) 77 Parliament Hill, London NW3 2TH.

DALRIADA - Celtic clan journal (Annual: 4 issues £5.00 single £1.50) Dun-na-Beatha, 2 Brathwic Place, Brodick, Isle of Arran.

THE UNICORN - Paganism today (Annual: 4 issues £4, single £1.50) PO Box 18, Hessele, East Yorkshire HU13 0HW.

DEOSIL DANCE - New Age of Paganism (Annual: 5 issues £6, sample £1.25) Keith Morgan, Noddfa, Llithfaen, Pwllheli, 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 - Self & Earth (3 issues £3.90) 498 Bristol Rd, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29

THE SILVER WHEEL - Native British Celtic tradition (Annual: 4 issues £6 single £1.75) cheques to Anna Franklin, B6 Deveron Way, Hinckley, Leics LE10 0XD.

PAGAN VOICE - New monthly newspaper (Annual: 12 issues £10 single £1) 13 Barnstaple Walk, Knowle, Bristol BS4 1JQ.

HARVEST - US neo-paganism. Details- PO Box 378, Southboro, MA 01772, USA. CIRCLE NETWORK NEWS - US pagan scene. Details- Box 219 Mt Horeb WI 53572, USA

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(wear something colourful & dancing shoes)

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(bring some flowers, preferably some you've grown yourself)

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(bring food & drink made from harvesting grains to share)

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(bring swimming things and meet at Porthtown Beach car park at 1.30pm)

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(bring a scented candle to burn)

All evening celebrations begin at 8.00pm, so try to arrive at 7.45pm.

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