

SHAMANS, SAINTS & GODDESSES
GRUMBLA CROMLECH REDISCOVERED
WELLS ● SCILLY ● BOOKS ● NEWS

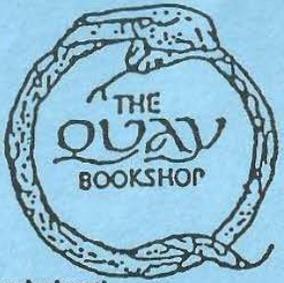
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CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP - SUMMER ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY AUGUST 6th 11.00am Meet at the layby on A39 by the Nine Maidens stone row (SW934 676) to dowse for a possible lost stone row or circle there and visit local sites. Ring 01736-787614 to arrange a lift if required.
SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 3rd 11.00am Meet at Halligye fogou (SW877 254) for a visit to the site and a 'creative visualisation' session there. All welcome.

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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**

The main happening this summer in West Cornwall has been the wanton destruction of trees leading to the Baptistry and Well at Madron, effected by the local Methodists. The action provoked a storm of protests from many people (see p 2-3 for full details) but the Methodists remain unrepentant. Once again we see the ancient sites under threat, but ironically this time from the very people who should be protecting the site. And once again it throws into relief how delicately balanced the sites stand between wanton desecration and well-meaning but ignorant "improvement". Meyn Mamvro has warned in the past about the dangers of turning West Penwith into some archaeological theme-park, or to use the latest buzz-words "Heritage Centre", and, interestingly, the local paper "The Cornishman" which has been reporting the Madron Well débâcle, had something apposite to say about this in its satirical 'Penwithinan' column:

"Now that the rumpus about the way in which the undergrowth has been cut back at Madron Baptistry and Wishing Well seems to have died down, perhaps its time to move to ensure their future. How about a strip of tarmac being laid to allow a few cars down there, and, at the same time, keep walkers' feet dry and mud-free during the bad weather? A parking area by the Wishing Well could earn money to pay for up-keep of both well and Baptistry, and an admission charge could be levied, a pay-booth being manned, perhaps by Old Cornwall Society members, who could also sell teas ice-creams and souvenirs. This could be a bit of privatisation of which the government would be truly proud. An area could be set aside, with a few swings, a roundabout and a slide to keep the children amused while parents are at the Wishing Well and Baptistry, and the muddy area around the well could be paved with concrete slabs, perhaps in an attractive pink and cream check pattern. It might also be an idea to floodlight the area to prevent vandalism at night, or, alternatively, to construct a security fence around it. And this could be paid for by a weekly barbecue during the summer months. Yes....?!" We could not have put it any better ourselves!

If the above is an example of how not to do it, then the example of Alma & Bruce Hathaway on Caer Bran Farm in West Penwith provides an excellent example of a totally different approach. On their land, they have found the remains of the lost Grumbla Cromlech, a most exciting discovery that is reported in full on p.4. But their interest goes beyond just this. Their farm lies in the middle of an extraordinarily archaeologically rich area, with three holy hilltops visible from the cromlech, Bartinney, Caer Bran, and Sancreed Beacon, each with ancient remains on the slopes and top. The Hathaways would like to open up special archaeological trails across their land, so that people can walk from place to place in the landscape, seeing the relationship of one site to another as ancient peoples did. This is the kind of enterprise that is sympathetic to the land, the sites, and the visitors, and we wish them every success with their hopes for the area.

Cornishman

Vandalism at the Baptistry?

20/4/95

FROM: Cheryl Straffon, Meyn Mamvro, 51 Carn Bosavern, St. Just.

Sir - Does anyone know who is responsible for the recent cutting back of the trees leading to Madron Baptistry? The discarded branches and timber now lie on the ground, opening up a large swathe of space leading to the well, instead of the former avenue of overhanging trees. The broken branches were even left with the jowds or clouties (pieces of cloth left as offerings) still attached to them, giving the impression of an old dump as one approached the Baptistry. Members of the local Dragon Environmental Group have tidied up as much as possible, removing the old rags from the broken branches, but it has altered the whole nature of the place and will take years to re-grow. Penwith Council say it is not them, and the chairman of Madron Parish Council assures me that they only maintain the footpath by carefully pruning in the autumn.

The motive for this vandalism is hard to fathom. If it was thought there were too many clouties on the trees (they had indeed spread widely of late) it would have been a simple enough matter to have removed them without harming the trees. Indeed the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group did just that last spring. If the intention was to "improve" access for visitors, then it is entirely counter-productive. For example, two recent visitors to the area were very upset and wrote to me: "The uniqueness of Madron Well lay in its location - deep in the grove, deep in the bowels of the earth - a dark brooding solemn atmosphere created by the trees and shrubs. We are horrified to find that the trees have been so desecrated - Is this deliberate vandalism?" Can anyone shed some light on who has done this and why?

Dumbstruck over devastation at well

27/4/95

FROM: Kelvin and Debbie Jones, 17 Pleasant Terrace, St. Just.

Sir - The recent letter from Cheryl Straffon regarding vandalism at Madron Well so perturbed us that we decided to pay the site a visit.

When we got there we could not believe the scene of devastation. Once fine trees had been hacked along the footpath and branches thrown recklessly into the opening of the well. The baptistry had been shorn of its wild flowers and every blade of grass torn from its roots.

As we stood dumbstruck at the entrance to the now forlorn baptistry, several visitors joined us, many of whom were visibly distressed at the vandalism.

A friend of ours who visited the well recently met two men armed with saws. When challenged they replied they were getting the place ready for the May pilgrimage. We then recalled that Madron is the scene of an annual pilgrimage by Christian congregations from the local community.

Clearly this matter must be resolved. Like all our ancient sites in Penwith, Madron was until recently a place of great beauty. Now it is a wasteland.

Who has committed this unwarranted and insensitive act? And did they seek the landowners' permission before they acted? If anyone can shed light on this outrage, then let us hear from them.

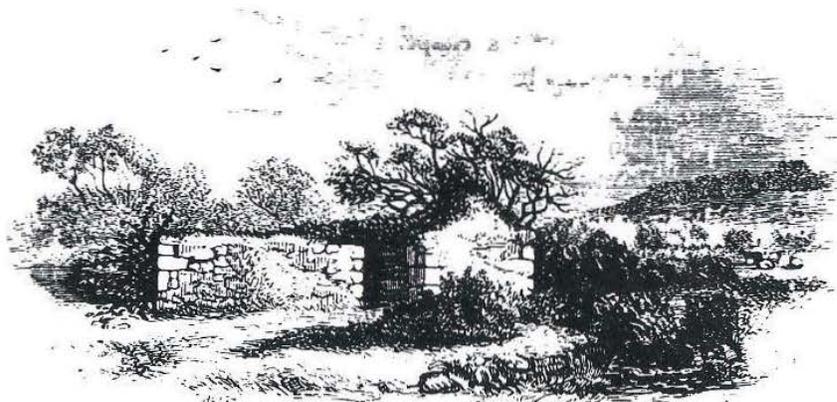
FROM: Steve Gardiner and Barrie Wright, Hillside, 9, St. James Park, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

Sir - While on holiday in West Penwith recently we visited the ancient well and baptistry at Madron.

To our horror, many of the trees on the path to the baptistry have been cut back in a crude, seemingly random fashion, with no attempt made at clearing the resulting debris, which includes hacked off branches with clouties still attached.

We first visited Madron well and baptistry last September, and were deeply struck by the atmosphere created by the tunnel of overhanging trees and shrubs leading to the site.

Now someone has taken it upon themselves to make the site more open. Why?



18/5/95

CRITICISMS about the scale of "trimming back" of the path leading to Madron Well and Baptistry have been answered this week by a leading local Methodist.

Steward at Madron Methodist Chapel, Bill Cock, says the path was cleared by volunteers from the village, not necessarily from the chapel and they had "done a marvellous job".

It is a tradition of the chapel to hold two services there in May and another is held by the Parish Church later.

Before the May services are held the pathway is cleared by volunteers workers and complaints have been made that this year they had gone too far.

Cornish Bard Hugh Miners said they had "desecrated the Well and Baptistry".

He commented: "We rightly deplore smashed shop windows but a more a more insensitive piece of vandalism as has been perpetrated at Madron is beyond my experience."

"Madron Well and Baptistry are deeply spiritual places and did the vandals not know that the latter is a consecrated building in which Christian services are still held?"

And Cheryl Straffon, of St. Just, says: "It seems hard to credit, but it was the Methodists at Madron who were responsible for this terrible 'vandalism'. Apparently, they have permission from the Bolitho Estate, who own the woodland to 'trim back' the path leading to the well and Baptistry each year at this

time ready for the annual pilgrimage.

"There has never been a problem, but clearly this year they have gone way beyond anything that is reasonable or necessary."

But Mr. Cock disagreed: "The pathway was trimmed by volunteer workers and they have done a first class job". And, he added, the Bolitho estate was well satisfied with the work.

He also pointed out that hanging bits of rag from the trees was not an old tradition, and in any case they were hanging them in the wrong place in the boggy area not the well. He said they were unsightly and the idea of putting them there probably arose after a publication about the area by the writer Daphne du Maurier some years ago.

25/5/95

Dismay over attempt to re-write 'our Cornish history'

FROM: Kelvin I. Jones, 17 Pleasant Terrace, St. Just.

Sir - I read with dismay and disbelief the Madron Methodists' defence of their recent vandalism of Madron Well. "A first class job" is certainly not how many local people would describe the mess that confronts visitors who pilgrimage there each year.

And how absurd that Mr. Cock, their spokesman, should regard the hanging of clooties from trees as a modern innovation! Clearly Mr. Cock has not read Quiller Couch's classic account of Madron Well, published as long ago as 1894. The author recounts how in a visit to the well in 1845 he "observed the custom of hanging rags and bandages on the thorns which grew around (the well)". Robert Hunt, the great Cornish folklorist, also refers to the custom persisting at Madron. The hanging of clooties at Madron was

certainly not invented by Daphne du Maurier and it is ridiculous that anyone should suggest such a thing. The custom of votive offerings placed at ancient sites is a Celtic tradition. Examples of it can be found all over Europe and India.

Interestingly Quiller Couch also recalls how people who attended the "Wesleyan services" at the well in the 1840s stayed to throw pins or pebbles in the baptistry waters in order "to consult the spirit, or try for sweet-hearts" - a fascinating example of the fusion of Christianity with paganism!

Mr. Cock's attempts to re-write our Cornish history from a Christian standpoint just will not do. For those of us who visit Madron regularly and appreciate its natural beauty, we are angry that the genius loci of the place has been attacked. We have no doubt that it will re-establish itself in due course.

More on Madron Baptistry well on p.21.

GRUMBLA CROMLECH REDISCOVERED

A major archaeological discovery has been made in West Penwith on Caer Bran farm near Sancreed. The farm has been "off-limits" for many years, as the previous owners did not encourage visitors. However, the farm was bought recently by Bruce and Alma Hathaway,



who are keen conservationists and wish to preserve the rich archaeological heritage that lies on and around their farm, consisting of hut circles, settlements and cairns.

In one of their fields lay not only a beautifully-positioned hut circle, but also some megalithic remains (SW4049 2955), which upon closer investigation proved to be the ruins of the Grumbla Cromlech. This cromlech (dolmen) was known about in the 1840s, when it was mentioned in the "Gentlemen's Magazine" as having been destroyed a few years previously. Its name, Grumbla, is actually a corruption of the word "cromlech", and gives its name to the surrounding area. Thought to be destroyed or lost for 150 years, it proves to be surprisingly still quite well preserved. It consists of a huge upright stone at one end, some 10ft wide at the base and 6ft high, which could have been the original capstone which fell off and was subsequently stood upright. 17ft away there is another upright stone remaining, 4ft wide at the base and 4½ft high, which could have been one of the uprights. Many other broken stones lay around the edge and in the centre, but some of these at least are modern, and it may well be that the site was re-used in historical times as a dwelling or pound of some sort. The most unusual feature is the siting: it lies far down the slope, nearly on the valley floor, which makes it different from most other cromlechs, such as Chûn, Mulfra, Zennor and Sperris which lie near the summit of hills, supposedly as territorial or ancestral markers. The only similar positioned ones to Grumbla are West Lanyon and Bosporthenis. A full plan of the site will be published by the C.A.U shortly, and it is also hoped that a geophysical survey may also be done. It brings the number of extant cromlechs in West Penwith to 8, with a further 4 in the rest of Cornwall. An exciting find!

ATTEMPT TO STEAL A MERRY MAIDEN!

Midsummer madness hit West Penwith when an attempt was made to steal one of the stones of the Merry Maidens stone circle. On the weekend of the 24th-25th June a green Volkswagon was seen in the vicinity of the site, and a group of people were disturbed by a member of the public as they tried to dig up the stone, which was left out of the ground and tilted at an angle. Mike Rosendale, Penwith's Countryside Officer commented that "After Stonehenge and Avebury, the Merry Maidens are one of the most popular stone circles in the country, and there is always this danger".

READERS WRITE



NURSERY RHYMES AND GODDESS CHIMES

"Andy Norfolk's research on Margery Daw (MM27) strikes me as wasted ingenuity. He assumes, a priori, that children draw on the names of obsolete deities when making up nonsensical rhymes, a notion which is about as unlikely as anything could be. My kids do not run around the garden chanting Sterne & Hopkins metrical psalms at each other. Andy's evidence that Margery Daw derives from Medgeri Dew would only be meaningful if there was a transmission from religious ritual to child's play, and this is a possibility which he has to prove, as a general model of social transmission, before evincing evidence for it in a particular culture. Why not collect the nursery rhymes of Syrian Muslims to see if they mention Christian saints, or look for survivals of Hindu deities in Pakistani playgrounds? He wouldn't find them, but that simply goes to prove a negative - children have better things to do with their time than quote dead religions. Adults, however, are allowed to do all sorts of things including composing fantasies on the basis of arbitrary jingles."

Jeremy Harte, Ewell, Surrey.

"I am somewhat flattered that Jeremy Harte seems to think I have invented a new way of looking at traditional children's rhymes. Alas nothing could be further from the truth. For example, Sabine Baring Gould in the 19thC theorized that the Jack and Jill rhyme could be traced to the Scandinavian legend about Hyuki and Bil. These two children were sent by their father Vidfinner to get song-mead from a spring linked to Mimir's well at the foot of Yggdrasil. They were caught by Mani, the youth who drives the chariot of the moon and carried off. Nigel Jackson, writing in "The Ley Hunter"(No.117) says that the rhyme "Old Mother Goose, when she wanted to wander, would fly through the air, on a very fine gander" recalls the tradition that Epona flew on a goose back. It is widely recognised that the traditional game and rhyme "London Bridge is falling down", which has parallels in other countries may contain references to human sacrifice. The part where the children bring their arms, until this point forming an arch, down to capture one of the players is suggested as being a reference to the tradition of placing a sacrifice in the foundations of a new bridge as protection against destructive forces. Then again the children's chasing game called 'touch iron' is supposed to be derived from a folk memory of the invasion of Britain by Celts with iron weapons. There are many other similar examples.

I think there is plenty of evidence that children's play does contain elements of early ritual and folk memories, although sometimes no longer easily recognisable. Of course it is adults who teach nursery rhymes to children. I hope it was clear that my article was speculation. It could hardly be anything else! But, there are references to Madge Figgy, Figgy Dowdy, The Dowdy and Margery Daw scattered throughout Cornish myth and legend. And just to give Mr Harte something else to think about, the female giant of St. Michael's Mount was called Cormelian. This means the clover, or trefoil giant. Traditionally, trefoil is said to mark the footsteps of the spring goddess. So Cormelian is actually the goddess in her young and sprightly form. Here she is again!"

Andy Norfolk, Camborne.

ST BRIDGET AND HER CHAPELS

by CHERYL STRAFFON & CAEIA MARCH

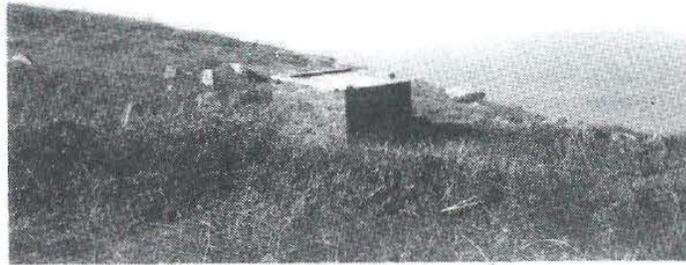
In a previous article (in MM21) we wrote about our discovery of a well dedicated to St. Bridget at Landue near Launceston. We argued that St. Bridget was a Christianisation of the pagan Irish Goddess Bride, the Goddess of healing, smithcraft and poetry; and folklore and legend associated with her is found widely throughout Ireland, Scotland and Man. Our surmise was that the Irish migrants of the 5th-7th who came to Cornwall would have brought the knowledge of such a major Goddess/Saint with them, so there would have to be some evidence of this, even if it were only fragmentary. So our discovery of the well dedicated to her was an important link in the chain of Irish-Cornish contact [see also MM24 on the links between Cornwall and Ireland].

It appears that there were two waves of migrations into Cornwall from Ireland during this period. One, via Wales, entered the Camel Estuary and spread out across North Cornwall and Devon: St. Bridget's Well would have been part of this 'Bride's Way'. The other wave of migration was into West Cornwall, probably via the Hayle Estuary. The evidence for this second wave is less conclusive, but nevertheless significant, and includes the predominance of Irish saints names found in the area, an inscribed stone with Irish links, and some Cornish-Irish linguistic similarities.¹ All this we knew, but we were not aware of any evidence of links with Bride/Bridget in this area of West Cornwall until recently.

During a reading of "A Week at Land's End" by J.T. Blight (published 1870) by C.M., whilst doing research for her forthcoming novel set in Cornwall and Man², a reference not hitherto noticed was found to "an ancient chapel dedicated to St. Bridget at Lanyon", which lies mid-way between the settlements of Morvah on the north coast and Madron in the south near Penzance. No further information was given, but we knew that Morvah Church, which is about 3 miles away, is dedicated to St. Bridget of Sweden, so this seemed too much of a coincidence not to be further researched.

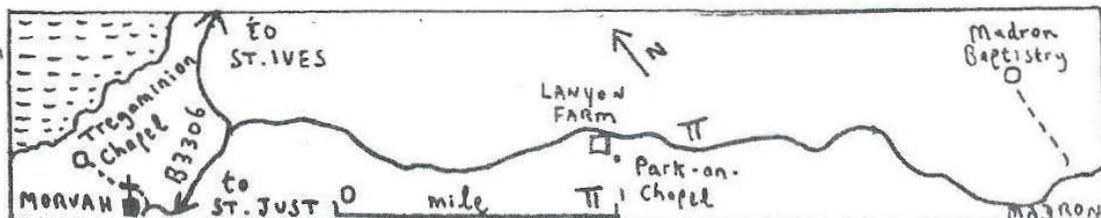
St. Bridget of Sweden was founder of the Bridgettine Order of nuns. She founded the monastery of St. Vadstene in 1344, died in Rome in 1373 and was canonised in 1391. These dates are very significant, as we shall see in a moment. There was an English order at Isleworth in London which flourished in the 15th, and in fact laid claim to the shrine at St. Michael's Mount in 1427. She was adopted as the patron saint of the church at Morvah which dates originally from the early 15th (though only the small tower remains from this period). However, we have discovered that as far back as 7th May 1390, Sir Roger Melleder, vicar of St. Madern (Madron), had leave to celebrate Divine Service in the chapels of the Blessed Mary of Laneyn (Lanyon) [of which more in a moment], and of Saints Brigid and Morvetha³. Now, this cannot be St. Bridget of Sweden, for as we have already seen, she was not canonised until a year later in 1391, and clearly these chapels were already in existence by then.

This chapel to St. Bridget and Morvetha was presumably at Morvah. Certainly, on 22nd September 1400, a mere 10 years later, Bishop Stafford officially licensed a chapel of St. Bridget in the parish of Madron (where Morvah stood), presumably the same one as mentioned in 1390.



This may have been the Chapel of Tregaminion (SW402 358) which lay about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile N of where Morvah Church now stands, towards the coast. This chapel was certainly already in existence at this time, and was a renowned chapel with a holy well. Some stones from the chapel, and the holy well (now capped with a pump house) still remain [illustrated above]. However, by 1409 the church itself had been built, for it was on 7th April in that year that the church was dedicated to St. Morvetha.⁴ As we have already seen, the chapel was dedicated to Saints Bridget and Morvetha, so it would have been a natural extension to similarly dedicate the church. Our assumption also is that the church's other dedication to St. Bridget of Sweden came about because of the already-existing dedication of the chapel to the Celtic St. Bridget. It therefore seems that the oft-repeated assertion that Morvah Church is dedicated to the Swedish St. Bridget is somewhat suspect: it may be that it was only building on an earlier Bridget/Bride association of the Chapel site.

Both saints dedications are extremely interesting. Bridget/Bride was a pre-Christian goddess associated particularly with wells and sacred shrines. so the dedication of the well and chapel to her at Tregaminion would make perfect sense. It has been suggested that 'Morvetha' was probably a 'fictional' saint, named after the already-existing place Morvah⁵. But Saint Morvede is recorded as early as 1349, and Saint Morvetha in 1379⁶, both references pre-dating the 1390 dedication of the chapel. "Morvah" may mean "sea-goddess" (related to the Breton word Morverch = women of the sea⁷), a very apt attribution to give to a sacred well and chapel site that stands in such a dramatic place overlooking the sea. Perhaps the Christian saint was not named after the place but the place named after a pre-Christian Goddess.



However, this still leaves the matter of the Chapel of the Blessed Mary of Laneyn. There is evidence of a chapel site at Lanyon Farm in a survey of 1670 and maps of 1778, which note that the three fields adjoining Lanyon Barton on the south-east are called "Park an Chapel". Vivien Russell suggests⁸ that the chapel was at approx. SW4258 3398. We visited the fields at this location which are beautifully situated on sloping ground with the dramatic shapes of Carn Galva to the north and Carn Kenidjack to the west. There are many large stones lying about in the corner of fields where they have been moved, but no obvious remains of the chapel, except perhaps a tell-tale field corner shape which does not align with the rest of the fields but seems to stick out on its own. Our suggestion about this site is that it was a pre-Christian sacred site that may also have carried a vernacular or colloquial understanding that it was a Bridget/Bride place. Hence, when Blight visited the area in the 1890s he was told that the chapel that formerly stood there was St.Bridget's Chapel. Although it had been dedicated to the Blessed Mary (another female saint) in 1390, the former awareness of its St.Bridget association remained in the folk memory. Interestingly, this tallies with what we found at Landue when the present owner informed us that many wells in the area were known as Bridget's wells.

There are other similarities between the Bridget and Mary dedications. The worship of Mary (formerly the sea-goddess Mari) is not incompatible with the worship of Bridget (formerly Bride) in the same place. They are both Mother Goddesses: Mari was originally a Goddess of the ocean, and Bride a Goddess of healing water, water being a primal source of energy in both cases. We may therefore have a parallel between both Chapels, both being dedicated to two water and sea goddesses: Tregaminion at Morvah to Bridget and Morvetha, and Lanyon to Bridget and Mary. When the churches of Morvah and Madron became established, the use of the Lanyon Chapel fell into disrepair, but the association with Bridget remained in the colloquial memory. Similarly, the Chapel at Tregaminion continued to be visited, particularly as it contained the holy well, but eventually all memory of its titular guardians, the goddesses Morvetha and Bridget/Bride became transferred to the Church and the Swedish St.Bridget.

Whatever the precise truth of it, the evidence remains that before St.Bridget of Sweden became canonised, there was already reverence in the Morvah area for Bridget, who may have been the Irish saint and former pagan Goddess, brought there by the Irish migrants in the 5th-7th. If this is so, then we may have found the West Cornwall branch of "Bride's Trail".

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A CORNISH SHAMAN

by BRENDAN McMAHON

The saga of 'Tom', a series of interconnected tales recorded by Robert Hunt in his "Popular Romances of the West of England", contains the following remarkable description of a 'tinkeard' or tinker, encountered by Tom in the course of his adventures.

"Tom's bows had no effect on the tinkeard, because he wore such a coat as was never seen in the West Country before. It was made out of a shaggy black bull's hide, dressed whole with the hair on. The skin of the forelegs made the sleeves, the hind quarters only were cut, pieces being let in to make the spread of the skirts, while the neck and skin of the head formed a sort of hood. The whole appeared as hard as iron; and when Tom hit the tinkeard, it sounded as if the coat roared, like thunder. They fought until Tom got very hungry, and he found he had the worst of it. 'I believe thee art the devil, and no man' says Tom."

Tom and the tinkeard eventually resolve their differences and become friends, after which the tinkeard teaches Tom a wide range of skills which were new to the world at that time, including wrestling, tillage, and tin mining. After a long series of adventures, some of a prosaic and others of a magical nature, the tinker, whose name is Jack, marries Tom's daughter, and their wedding is celebrated with great rejoicing, and contests of wrestling, quoits and hurley. "The wild hills", Hunt tells us, "rung and echoed then, as they have often rung and echoed since, with the brave cry 'Guare wheag yu guare teag!'"

Jack is a fascinating and unique character in Cornish folklore. In some respects, he partakes of the 'culture bringer' stereotype, the promethean figure who brings knowledge and skills from the other world to the benefit of mankind. A clear parallel in Irish myth is the famous Lugh Lamhada. In any case, his other-worldliness is clear from Hunt's account, as evidenced by his invulnerability, his coat, which was "never seen in the West Country before", and in Tom's mistaking him for the devil (though Jack demonstrates that "he has no cloven foot"). In a later episode the Lord of Pengerswick asks, "art thou the devil?". Though full of lively observation of Cornish rural life, the stories are strongly magical in character, and take place in a world beyond the constraints of everyday life, the world of myth and legend. Hunt places them among his "Romances and Superstitions of the Mythic Ages".



I have written elsewhere of the 'culture bearer' aspect of Jack's complex and composite character. But there is more to him than that. His identification with the bull is of particular interest, given the significance of the bull in wider Celtic, and particularly Gaelic culture.

One recalls the significance of cattle at the Samhain celebrations in Scotland, and the great Irish epic the Tain Bo Cuailnge in which a quarrel between two wizard herdsmen over a bull engulfed the whole of Ireland in war.

The Irish tale appears to contain vestiges of an earlier sky myth, in which light and darkness, personified as divine bulls, wage continuing warfare, and the bull with which Jack is associated may also echo such a myth: we recall that, when Tom hit the tinker, his coat "roared like thunder".

Jack's magic coat recalls Neolithic cave paintings of priestly figures dressed in animal skins and, perhaps more tellingly, modern descriptions of northern European shamans who wear the skins of animals in order to communicate with the divine beast with which the community identifies. As a mark of his favour, the animal god confers magical powers on the shaman, as well as secret wisdom, as the divine bull does upon Jack the tinker. The Cornish story even has echoes of the social organisation of priesthood, the way in which spiritual authority is passed from one generation to another, and the ritual with which the transfer is effected.



Ancient bronze bull found at St Just-in-Penwith in 1832.



"When a calf was to be skinned (Jack) instructed Tom how to take the skin off whole from the forelegs, by unjointing the shoulders, and to remove it entirely clear of grain, and without the smallest scratch. In addition to all this, Tomy Veau (Tom's son) who was now a boy four years old, but bigger than many at ten, must have a coat possessing all the virtues which belonged to the tinkeards. So a bull calf's skin was put on the boy and Jane had special instructions how she was to allow the coat to dry on his back, and tan and dress it in a particular way. The skin thus treated would shrink and thicken up until it came to his shape. Nobody can tell how proud the young Tom was of his coat when all was done, though the poor boy suffered much in the doing."

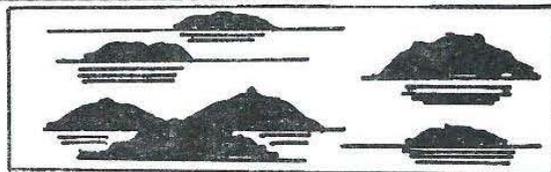
Jack's 'priesthood' in the story clearly has a communal function, in terms of the skills he brings, particularly brewing and tilling the land, without which the people could not physically survive. But he is also associated with a particularly Cornish culture – his introduction of wrestling for instance, and inauguration of the Morvah Feast. One of the primary functions of all priesthoods has been to bring the people together to celebrate union with the godhead, and Jack's wedding is such an archetypal celebration. His roll in the story is to create and sustain the community by, for instance, using his magical powers to negate the evil forces, in the form of giants or wizards, which threaten to destroy it. It might be said that the story depicts Jack as the creator of the Cornish nation, or, more accurately perhaps, that the story represents an attempt by the Cornish people to define themselves, in cultural, mythic terms, as separate and distinct from their large Saxon neighbour.

No comprehensive interpretation of this rich and multifaceted tale is possible; it contains many meanings. It would be possible, for instance, to see Jack as a Jungian 'trickster' figure, an embodiment of the anarchic, yet creative aspects of the human psyche. It would also be possible to interpret the story in terms of the social and economic situation in early nineteenth century Cornwall at the time it was shaped, in the form we have it. None of these approaches, and certainly not the one I have offered here, should be regarded as definitive. I hope however that I have said enough to suggest the possibility that the priesthood of the sacred bull is, albeit on an unconscious level, one of Jack's many meanings.

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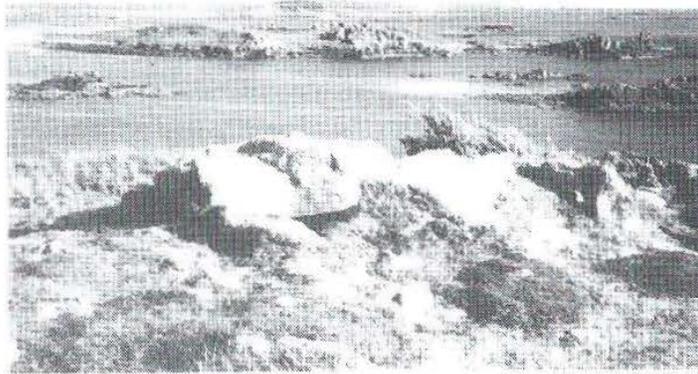
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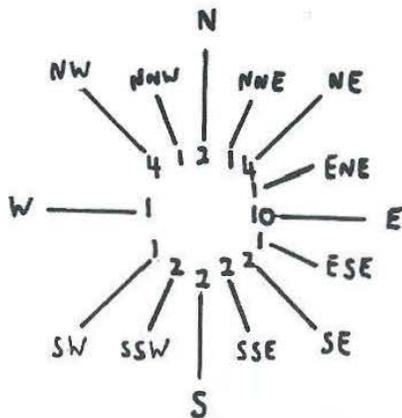
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The Ritual Landscape of Scilly



When Scilly was one island in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, the fertile low-lying plains were farmed and the hilltops and slopes became the places of the ritual landscape. Here were built the cairns and graves, tumuli and chambered tombs, that denoted the sacredness of the land. Over 500 of these have been identified on the remaining islands. They vary from simple cists to elaborate constructions, many representations of womb shapes in which the dead rested to await their re-birth. They were also the places where the living peoples came for worship and ritual to connect with the spirits of the dead. On isle after isle we see the hilltops crowned with these sacred places of tomb and womb, places where the spirits of the dead returned to the spirit of the Earth Mother herself. She, the Goddess of the Land, was in the land, the outline of her body was formed by the land, and we can still see her today as the land, if we look with our Ancestor's eyes.

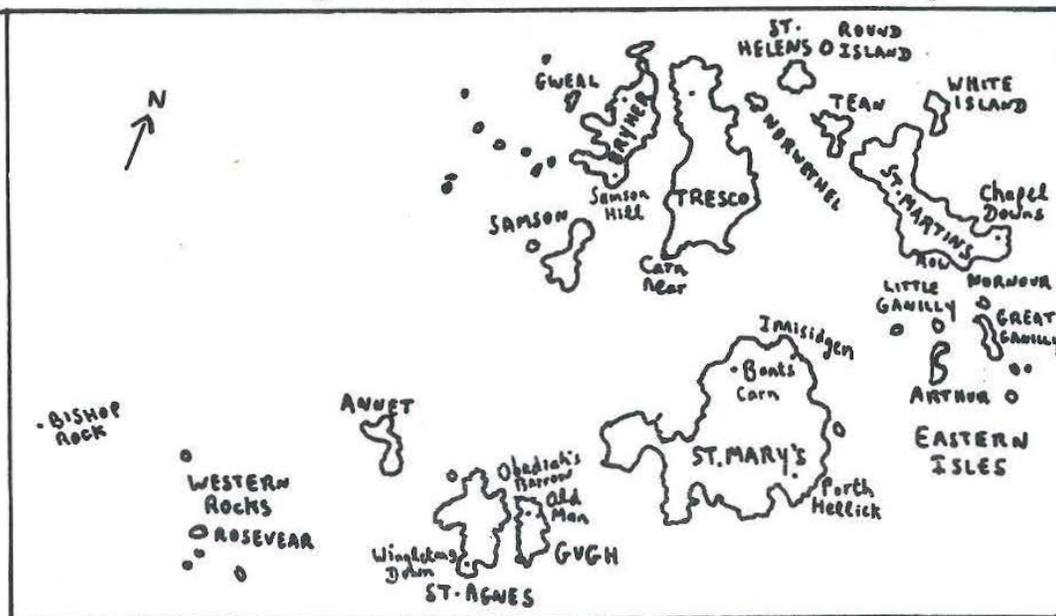
We can see this ritual landscape from various places and perspectives on the islands. From St.Mary's the summer solstice sun sets spectacularly over the twin peaks of Samson, breast hills of the Mother Goddess. On St.Martin's the stone row on Higher Town Beach points directly to the site of the beacon on Chapel Downs (and what may later have been the bonfire shrine to the Goddess *Sillina) in a north-easterly alignment, the direction of the midsummer solstice sunrise. The three islands of Great Arthur, Little Arthur and Little Ganilly form a triple-hill outcrop, with the entrance graves on Middle Arthur aligned to the rising and setting midwinter sun. The entrance graves at Bants Carn on St.Mary's and Samson Hill on Bryher are aligned to the midsummer solstice sunrise, that of Innisidgen on St.Mary's the winter solstice sunset, Porth Hellick Down on St.Mary's and Obadiah's Barrow on Gugh the midsummer solstice sunset, while others (Knackyboy Cairn on St.Martin's and Tregarthen Hill on Tresco) face the setting equinoxial sun. At each of these places there are often other neighbouring tombs pointing in different directions, the whole making up a huge living landscape calendar, aligned to the different compass points at significant times of the Wheel of the Year. The diagram on the next page illustrates the numbers of the tombs with known orientations.



Orientation of Scillonian Entrance Graves, with numbers of sites whose entrances face cardinal points.

At the heart of this ritual complex lies Treseo. From Carn Near at the southernmost point of the island (where Bronze Age flint and pottery fragments have been found) nearly all the other islands circle around like precious stones on a necklace [see map below]. When most of the islands formed the one large island, *Ennor, in prehistoric times, this must have been roughly the centre of that land mass. To the east, forming a distant line on the horizon, the islets of Arthur, the Ganillys and Nornour can be seen, the former being topped with cairns, the latter being the Goddess shrine in Romano-Celtic times. The equinoxial sun would have risen over these holy

hilltops. To the north-east is St Martin's and the 17thC Daymark on Chapel Downs visible. In prehistoric times this was a sacred area of cairns, later Christianised with a Celtic chapel. The midsummer sun could have risen here. To the north-east lies Bryher with its network of cairns on Shipman Head Down and Samson Hill. To the south-west lies Samson - the twin hills of the Mother Goddess, each hill tipped by cairns and chambered tombs. From the north end of Appletree Bay below Carn Near the winter solstice sun may have set in a prominent notch that lies between the two holy hilltop breasts. To the south and west lies the distant outcrop of St. Agnes and Gugh with its cairns on Wingletang Down & Kittern Hill with the standing stone The Old Man of Gugh directly south from here. Finally, the entrance grave of Bants Carn on St. Mary's is but a few miles SE across the now-drowned landscape. All of this a still-living manifestation of the ancient ritual landscape.



the pre~christian origin of cornish saints

in search of the goddess

by JILL HARRIS

Jill Harris, local lecturer, authoress and reflexologist, has been undertaking important research into this whole subject matter. She has received only a small grant so far to help her in her studies, the result of which she hopes will be a book on the subject. As a preview of that, MM presents this article, which is divided into two parts in this and the next issue.

She is elusive, this Lady of ours. Elusive but enduring as well. In disguise yet woven firmly into our folk lore and legends. I understood this clearly one wet and blustery day two years ago when I stood inside Zennor Church and made the connection between the legend, the bench end of the Mermaid, and the probable link between Senara and Azenor. The discovery once made opened many hitherto closed doors. It was so blindingly obvious. The wild and fanciful legends of the Saints of Cornwall had not been assembled carelessly. Far from being cobbled together, each word and each fragment was of unique importance. A story within a story. And to the initiated, the meaning had always been perfectly clear.

The initiated are now no longer with us. And with their disappearance the legends have sunk into the status of fairy stories. They were, however, crafted for survival. And whilst one person survives to recount them, or one fragment remains to be read, the coded message also remains, even if it is no longer understood. As my research proceeds, a very definite pattern is emerging. There is much in the legends of the early Saints of Cornwall, both male and female, which can be linked to earlier continental mythologies. The temptation is to believe that the monks who recorded the legends for us were drawing from this source in order to flesh out their fantastical stories. This must be resisted, no matter how uncomfortable the realisation which follows.

If Azenor is entombed in a cask and thrown into the ocean, it is because the custom was widespread at one time. The fact that Danae endured a similar fate does not mean that the scribe is merely copying the story of Danae. What he is doing is recording a commonplace ritual involving the sacrifice of a mother and baby. In effect he is enabling the old Goddess ritual to hitch a ride on the pedigree of an illustrious Christian Saint in order to destroy that ritual. Hundreds of years separate the storyteller from the personage of Budock. The Saint cannot rise up in wrath and smite the audacious one for slandering his mother. Budock is long gone and only his reputation remains. In the mind of the writer (or whoever commands that mind) there is little danger of besmirching the reputation of the son, since the mother is of insignificant importance once she has performed her biological role.

If Columba runs her race and loses her head; if Newlina embarks upon her stately progress and also loses her head – it isn't their heads which these beautiful maidens lose but their 'maidenheads'. Amongst the qualifications necessary for the indelicate frolic which lay at the heart of their performance, was that of uncompromising virginity at least up to the 'climax' of the ritual. In order to Christianise these very pagan ladies, the storyteller was faced with a formidable task. The solution was neat. Change the head and keep the virgin! As Sir Walter Scott said: "Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive". As a result of this particular deception we have been haunted by virgins for centuries!



The orgiastic nature of much which enlivened the worship of the Goddess, especially in the first or Maiden aspect, left a deep and lasting mark on the soul of man. Once he gained the upper hand, the woman was forced into eternal virginity, untouched (if you will pardon the levity) by human hand. Only that way was he safe from the depredations of the Goddess. Unfortunately he couldn't close his mind to the Lady's subtle magic, and in the dark recesses her special virginity continued to trouble him. So the Mother of God became a Virgin. And in the process the fact that the old Goddess could restore her virginity after coupling was overlooked. It was at best an unsatisfactory relationship and led in the end to the witch hunts.

Winwalloe set the standard. He dealt most severely with the sorceresses who dared to approach him. It was his proud boast that not one female ever passed the door of the famous Abbey he founded at Landevenac. Fear, bread repression and repression spiralled into aggression. Deprived of her magic the woman lost her strength and ever after became the victim.

It is now evident to me that there was an intermediate stage between the full-blown worship of the Goddess and the arrival of Christianity. I am indebted here to Paul Broadhurst's magnificent book – "The Arthurian Mythos". Basing my work on his researches I can identify fragments which deal more particularly with a solar deity. These by definition belong to a later phase than the worship of the Goddess, even though the two run concurrently up to the Christian period and many centuries beyond. What I am looking at is a gradual process of change akin to the evolving forms of 'Jesus' worship. Everything evolves, including our Gods. If not, then that which remains incapable of expansion becomes fossilised and eventually disappears. This was the fate of the Goddess. Unwilling or unable to change she slid out of the equation and the stronger more patriarchal deities took her place. They in turn gave way to the completed form, an entirely monotheistic patriarchal God system. By the time Celtic Christianity arrived in Cornwall, its inhabitants were already worshipping across a wide pantheon and were thus well prepared to accept a totally male dominated spiritual dimension.

When undertaking any research which is sparsely attended by concrete evidence, it is always best to begin close to home. So I began in my own back yard. The Saint of my Parish Church accurately defined my problems. Her name is Stediana or Stethyana or Stithians. She is one of those Saints identified in dictionaries (if she appears at all) as "(6th? Century) not a lot is known about this Saint." At one time that recurring statement depressed me. Now I regard it as a very hopeful sign. If an entry is dignified as 6th Century then I know I am up against the monkish benchmark of St. Augustine. Since their brand of Christianity could not have begun in these Islands before the emergence of this particular Saint, it follows that the 6thC designation makes of my Saint someone who has existed before or at that date. At one time my Parish Church was re-dedicated to St. Thomas a Beckett. If such a dedication exists, it is more than likely a pilgrimage route of sorts also existed in the vicinity. The fact that the newer dedication did not stick reinforced the tenacity of the original Saint's reputation.

My next step was to search for Stediana's holy well. I found ancient stones which had been Christianised. I found the 'Old Lady' up in the field on Seauragh Farm. And then when Hamish Miller & Paul Broadhurst published their book "The Sun and the Serpent" I discovered the existence of a strong energy field coursing through the Church and wandering on through the Parish. I took hold of my divining rod, and found her holy well, called Lady Holy Well [details and photo in MM27]. I was then told by a neighbour a surviving story connected with Stediana's name. "I have always understood that our Patron Saint Stediana was a little Irish lady, in a long brown dress, who came over from Ireland in a small round boat". A precious fragment. A stone called the Old Lady, a well called Lady Holy Well. I have yet to decide whether my Saint is second or third aspect.

To date I have assembled sufficient information to define a substantial first aspect (Maiden) cult running along the north-western seaboard of Cornwall from St. Agnes to Trevelgue Head. I call this segment 'the Land of the Running Virgins' and there are some surprising candidates for this category. The second aspect cult of the 'Lady' (Mother) is a little harder to access, although as I have indicated I have made a tentative beginning. There is much work to do here and as yet I have not attempted any in-depth exploration. 'She' yields her secrets slowly, and I must be patient. However, the cult of the 'Old One' (Crone) is very strong indeed in Cornwall. Much of my present work is centered around this aspect. Already I am being rewarded and it is yielding startling results. I begin to feel that perhaps this part of the Island of Britain was a major centre for third aspect worship.

If that fact can be proved, much that was previously hard to explain will fall into place. The rumour that in the period immediately preceding the settlement of this island by the Romans, some noble Gaulish families sent their children to school here will cease to be unbelievable. And the story of the seat of St. Keyne on St. Michael's Mount will also be capable of explanation (as the Cailleach or Crone sitting on the holy hilltop in order to turn the world).

In the next part Jill Harris looks at the cult of the holy well and the significance of the legends of some other female saints.

BOOK NEWS

Readers of Jill Harris' article on the saints may be interested in 2 recently-published source books on the subject. **"The Age of the Saints"** (Early Christianity in Cornwall with the legends of the Cornish Saints) by WILLIAM COPELAND BORLASE was originally published in 1893, and is now reprinted in facsimile by Llanerch Publishers (£8.50). For a succinct and useful modern reference **"The Cornish Saints"** by PETER BERRESFORD-ELLIS is published in pamphlet form by Tor Park Press (£2.50).

PETER BERRESFORD-ELLIS is also the author of **"Celtic Women"** (Constable, £16.95), a new book that examines the role of women in Celtic society and literature. It focuses on questions of the rights and status of women, the influence of the women of Celtic mythology, and whether Christianity destroyed the matri-central Celtic society. A timely piece of research.

Still on the Celtic theme, an original approach to the subject is the research on the possible links between the Celts and African peoples. Punite Books of PO Box 478, Cardiff have a series of Afro-Celtic Studies. **"The Black Celts"** (£8.99) explores the evidence for an ancient African civilisation in Ireland and Britain; **"England Affric"** (£5.99) deals with the links between the early population of England (6thC) and Africa; & **"Pre-Celtic Languages"** (£6.50) explores the links between Celtic languages and the languages of Africa. Some important material here.

"The Celtic Tradition" is a new edition of a book by CAITLIN MATTHEWS with some beautiful illustrations. It is one of a new series by Element Books called the "Element Library Series", each book with colour illustrations retailing at £9.99. Other titles in the series include **"The Arthurian Tradition"** by JOHN MATTHEWS, offering insights into the inner spiritual meanings of the intricately-woven Arthurian myth; and **"Native American Traditions"** by ARTHUR VERSLUIS, which offers a real as opposed to New-Age insight into shamanic and spiritual beliefs of indigenous peoples. Element Books are also publishing (Sept 95) **"The Celtic Shaman's Pack"** (£19.99), exploring the inner worlds with JOHN MATTHEWS, consisting of an introductory book and set of 40 original cards, beautifully illustrated by CHESCA POTTER, as well as (Oct 95) **"Goddesses for Every Season"** by NANCY BLAIR (£7.99), showing the many forms of the goddess - heroines, witches, queens, healers, priestesses and crones - grouped according to the seasons of the year. Some inexpensive books offering real value for money.

Capall Bann Publishers also specialise in pagan and celtic paperback books, and have an excellent stock list available from Freshfields, Chieveley, Berks. Among their most-recent titles of interest are **"Celtic Lore and Druidic Ritual"** by RHIANNON RYALL (author of "West Country Wicca") (£9.95), a pot-pourri of magical working, and **"The Sacred Ring"** by MICHAEL HOWARD (£9.95), a useful reference book exploring month-by-month the pagan origin of British folk festivals and customs, including the Padstow Obby-Oss.

Finally, **"Witchcraft in Cornwall"** by KELVIN JONES (Sir Hugo Books, £2.50) is a most important and ground-breaking study of the extent of witchcraft and persecution in Cornwall. There will be an extract from it in the next edition of MM, but meanwhile the booklet is available direct from 17 Pleasant Terrace, St. Just, Penzance, Cornwall. Add 50p to cover p & p.

in search of cornwall's holy wells-3

In the third part of this series Cheryl Straffon and MM reader Gill Rourke, who lives in North Cornwall, travelled around Bodmin Moor to find some of the Moor's hidden wells.

We started our deasil (sunwise or clockwise) circumnavigation of the Moor on the A395 road which runs across the north edge of the Moor. This is now a busy main road and the first well lay just off the road in a boggy field, 250 yds NE of the church of DAVIDSTOW (SX153 874). The well was restored in the 19th century (with stones taken from the holy well of St. Austen nearby at Lesneweth!) and is a solid structure with a large stone surround, and a great oak door, above which grows an old thorn tree. It was hard to get right up to the well because of a large water extraction system nearby, and its rather gaunt appearance and open position combined to make it rather less atmospheric.



However by way of contrast, the next well, reached from a turning to the south of the A395 in the tiny hamlet of ST.CLEATHER, was of breathtaking beauty and peace. We both knew this well from previous visits, as it is in one of the most spectacular locations in Cornwall. From behind the church, a path leads above the River Inney through the valley under overhanging rocks where cows grazed contentedly in the fields below. As we approached the well (SX203 847), the bushes were bright with yellow gorse and white may blossom, and it felt an enchanting and enchanted place. We opened the gate into the enclosure, where stands the well-chapel, the largest of its kind in Cornwall, restored in 1895 on Celtic foundations. The well itself lies around the back of the chapel and the water actually runs from here through the chapel and issues out of the side. Birds flew in and out of a window in the top of the masonry, and we felt that it was surely one of the most delightful spots anywhere in Britain.



Driving through the narrow lanes from St.Clether we came to the hamlet of **LANEAST**. Parking at the church, we crossed the road and halfway down a field opposite we found **JORDAN'S WELL** (SX229 839), a 16th century granite and roofed well surround. Opening the gate, we found the water to be clear and fresh, and indeed it was formerly used for baptisms and divination. The church and well are dedicated to St.Sidwell, and her latter-day maidens came here last century to make butter and throw pins into the waters. Now it remains quiet and isolated and we breathed in its peace.

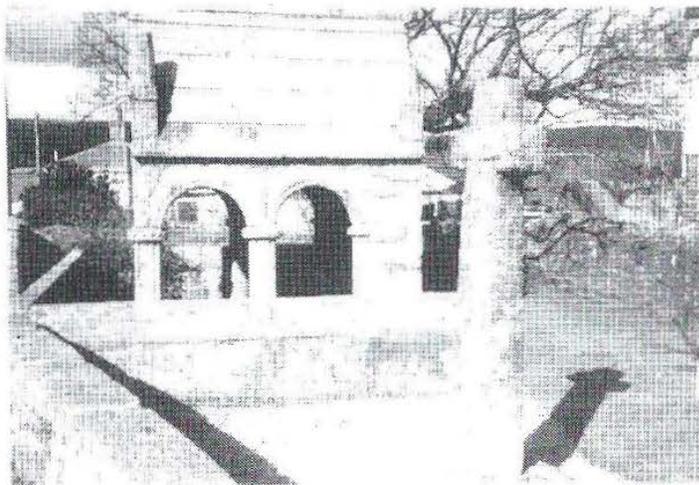


From Laneast we took a lane going south to the village of **ALTARNUN** with its pretty bridge and river, a perfect place for a picnic. The Church is known as the Cathedral of the Moors and has an ancient Celtic cross in its churchyard. A short distance up the hill is a gate on the right which leads into a field at the bottom of which lies a rather stagnant pool and the small covered well of **ST.NONNA** (SX226 816). This is the same saint who gave her name to the beautiful St.Nun's Well in Pembrokeshire in Wales, and in Christian hagography is the supposed mother of St.David (who gave his name to the first well we visited). However, despite her well-known association with Wales, it is in Cornwall that she was buried, at Altarnun itself. Her well was formerly used as a "browsening pool" into which mad people were immersed frequently to try and cure their madness, perhaps some garbled memory of the link between the mind, the moon ('lunatics') and the holy wells. It was a long-forgotten well until it was rediscovered earlier this century by the owner of the land, who used a local dowser to help him. An interesting and intriguing well.



We now crossed the A30 and began to circumnavigate the south side of the Moor. At Lewannick village there is a farm on which stands **BLAUNDERS WELL** (SX274 807), a square open structure, the water running from a round hole cut in one of the surrounding slates. Another stream in the woods of the Trelaske estate nearby was formerly the source of **JOAN'S PITCHER** well (SX285 810) that Lane-Davis ["Holy Wells of Cornwall", 1970] suggested was a survival of pagan nature worship. Another similar well, **ST. TORNEY'S WELL** (SX271 763) lay in the woods near North Hill, in a tranquil spot above the river Lynher. We followed a path from the village through the woods to the spot, but little was left of the ancient stone building, though the water still ran clear. At Cardon hamlet on the far eastern flanks of the Moor was **ST. JOHN'S WELL** (SX291 714) situated in a triangle on the village green in boggy ground, the well in a shallow basin with running water inside a small well-building.

We then drove south to the village of **ST. CLEER** (SX249 683), in the centre of which is a large 15th century chapel (restored in 1864) enclosing the well, beside which stands a Celtic cross. Like Altarnun, the well was formerly used as a browsing pool, but we felt it now has a rather sombre & soulless atmosphere

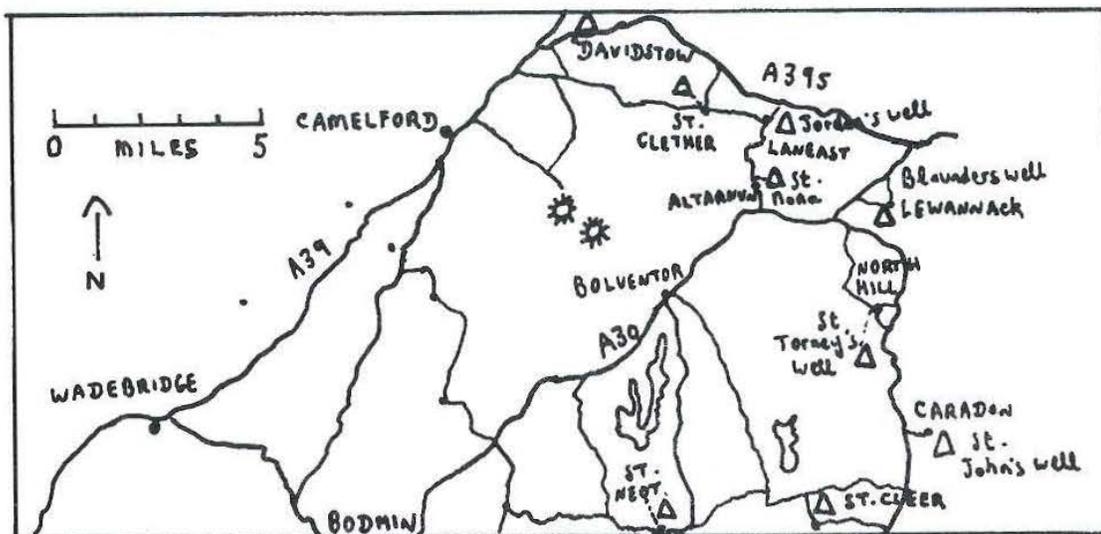


The same could not be said for the next well though, as we now turned westwards and drove through the lanes to **ST. NEOT** (SX183 681). This picturesque village with its historic church and inn on the south side of the Moor is home to a beautifully situated well. We took a lane below the church which ran beside a stream to a wide open meadow, covered in buttercups and daisies. At the foot of a rocky outcrop covered in trees is the well, its waters famed for the cure of sickly children, particularly in early May, linking back to the old Celtic festival of Beltane. The well, although in a good condition, was unfortunately restored in a rather heavy-handed fashion in 1852 - large lettering over the entrance makes sure one does not forget! But when we opened the door, the well felt very gentle inside, and we saw Arachne herself spinning a web above its waters. We lingered awhile in the meadow outside in the late afternoon sunshine, and relaxed at the end of our first leg. we had now come a full 180° from Davidstow in the north to St. Neot in the south, and were half way around our pilgrimage to the ancient wells of the Bodmin Moor area.

The second part of this article will appear in the next MM.



St. Neot's
well.



MADRON WELL VISION

Moving back from Bodmin Moor to West Penwith, reader Bruce Davies has contacted us about an interesting experience at Madron Baptistry well. He writes: "My friend and I decided to sleep inside the well-chapel as we had been travelling around Cornwall for a week, looking at all the ancient sacred sites. We had found it hard to find good places to sleep, and as the chapel and well was so beautiful we decided to camp the night. All was alright until we blew the candles out and tried to get some sleep. I started to hear a tune being played on a pipe of some kind. After a while I decided to wake my friend up to see if he could also hear it. He could, and was going to ask me the same thing, but was too sacred to – just in case I could! By now we were both pretty frightened, but then I started hearing a woman's voice whispering in my ear. It was loud enough to hear but I could not be sure what she was saying. It was a beautiful voice, which sounded all the better with the continuous tone of pipes in the background. Eventually it faded and we fell asleep – to both dream the same dream, of a procession of torch carriers at the door, a woman standing at the altar and a man standing by the well. Overall, it was a very strange experience, and what was also funny was that when we first arrived at the well we met someone who said that the water is prophetic and gives visions, and he wished us 'happy visions' when he discovered that we were planning to sleep the night there. Needless to say we drank the water!"

ACROSS THE BORDERLINE

In a review of "Mother and Son: The Cornish Fogou" by Ian Cooke in the current volume of Cornish Archaeology (no.33, 1994) archaeologist Peter Herring raises the topic of the "great divide" between 'professional' and 'alternative' archaeology (his words). He says: "Each camp has encouraged its alienation from the other, with some academics dismissing as inconsequential ramblings the work of the so-called 'lunatic fringe', and alternative archaeologists caricaturing professionals as unimaginative people concerned only with 'facts'." This is often how the matter is said to be perceived, though notice how loaded the apparently 'balanced' language is. The Alternatives may be "dismissed" by the Professionals (shades of intellectual elitism), but when the Alternatives criticise the Professionals it is described as "caricature". He goes on to say: "The separation has particular significance in West Penwith as there are probably more readers of the local Earth Mysteries journal 'Meyn Mamvro' than of 'Cornish Archaeology'!" If there is a value judgement implied here, it is the suggestion that alternative archaeology is more "popular" than academic archaeology. Now all this is a very interesting perspective on the matter, but is it necessarily true?

Firstly, it is true that where in the past professional archaeology has acknowledged the work of the "alternatives", it has been to contemptuously dismiss and ridicule it. The late Professor Glyn Daniel was a notorious example of this. However, it has been much less true in recent years. The work of Penzance-based Paul Devereux and others has earned grudging respect in archaeological circles, even to the point of publications and broadcasts of research featuring both approaches (for example the book "Who owns Stonehenge?" and the Radio 4 broadcasts). Locally, professional and internationally-respected archaeologist Charles Thomas has even spoken to the Cornish EM Group on strange phenomena, and has discussed some of Paul Broadhurst's work in his recent book on Tintagel. So clearly there is a recognition among some archaeologists that the EM people are not going to go away, and, even more, that they are doing research in the same field which needs to be addressed.

Conversely, is it really the view of Alternatives that the Professionals are "unimaginative people concerned only with facts"? Well, it is true that that has been part of the perception. A cartoon from a few years ago showed an ancient site with a neolithic shaman travelling a spirit path towards a midsummer sunset alignment, passing right over the heads of a couple of totally oblivious archaeologists who were peering into an excavation hole and saying "I think there's a very interesting pot sherd in here"! However, there are more serious charges that also have been laid at the archaeologists' door, one of which is their seeming inability to even properly preserve and protect the sites they have in their care. It is still a fact that many ancient sites have still not been properly scheduled or listed, as the farce over the uprooting of the Eathorne menhir in 1992 showed. Earth Mysteries researchers have sometimes looked with envy on the amounts of money and grants doled out to the archaeologists to amass more and more obscure facts while so much potentially interesting research goes unfunded and the sites remain unprotected. Small wonder that there is sometimes a sense of alienation between the two 'camps'.

But how real is this supposed alienation in the minds of the public? I suspect not very. If there are more readers of 'Meyn Mamvro' than 'Cornish Archaeology' it may be a close-run thing. I know that many readers (including professional archaeologists and new-agers) quite happily subscribe to both. MM's policy has always been to publish (speculative) research into Cornish sites providing it is well argued and can be backed up with evidence. Sometimes there is very little difference in the speculative research published in Cornish Archaeology (save in the wider resources available to the archaeologists) - the articles on the possible functions of standing stones (no.29) and fogous (no.31) would be two good examples. In addition MM has always featured interesting and useful research from the CAU, particularly in those areas where the professional archaeologists are prepared to consider the use and function of the ancient sites, especially from a ceremonial or ritual perspective (see "The Pipers Tune" on p.24 of this MM for example). Many of us who are EM researchers feel nowadays that some of the ideas and perspectives of some of the professional archaeologists are not light years away from what we were saying 10 or even 5 years ago! For example, a recent talk by a professional archaeologist at the Royal Cornwall Museum organised by the Cornish Archaeological Society on the alignments of ancient sites on Mull could easily have come straight out of the pages of an EM journal (though noticeably there were no observers from the CAU present in the audience).

Both 'sides' have changed during the last decade. Some of the wider speculation of the EM enthusiasts has given way to a more thorough, less whimsical, approach, and the focus of professional archaeologists on 'just the sites' has changed to an awareness of the significance of the sites in the land and the context of the people who built them. There are still silly unthinking comments sometimes. Recently a film crew who interviewed both the Professionals and the Alternatives in Cornwall reported to me that the Professionals had dismissed all talk of alignments as nonsense because "stones have been moved over the ages". Now if true this really betrays how out of touch they are, even with some of their own colleagues in the professional field. All good researchers - professional and alternative - check out the provenance of sites carefully before coming up with theories. Generalisations are no substitute for proper research on either 'side'.

Sometimes it seems as if the Professionals are guilty of the very things that they level against the Alternatives. They make great pronouncements about 'this is so' on the basis of flimsy evidence that an EM researcher would be ashamed to present, only to completely alter their minds a few years later when new research shows it to be untenable. But this is considered to be all right, because they are feel they are dealing with 'real and substantial' theories as against the wilder shores of speculation. But one wo/man's real theory is another's inconsequential ramblings. So, yes there is still suspicion and mistrust on both 'sides'. But there is also a great deal of convergence in the way both the Professionals and the Alternatives look at the sites and the possible practices of the people who built them. We can both learn from each other. And the sooner both 'sides' recognise that, the more likelihood will be that both Professionals and Alternatives can cross 'the great divide' together.

Cheryl Traffon

The Pipers Tune

There are a couple of pieces of interesting news and research from the CAU. In the current volume of "Cornish Archaeology" (no.33) Peter Herring writes about the cliff castles and hillforts of West Penwith. He suggests that the earliest sites dating from the late Bronze/early Iron Age period were at Maen Sennen, Bosigran, Lescudjack Penzance and Trencrom Hill, with other sites coming later, like Gurnard's Head, Kenidjack Castle, Carn Les Boel, Treryn Dinas, Chŷn Castle, Caer Bran, Faugan Round, Lesigney Round, and Castle-an-Dinas. He also suggests that these hillforts and cliff castles were not primarily defensive, nor built for permanent or even temporary occupation. They may not have been "castles" or "forts" or at all, but places of peaceful activity by stable co-operative groups. The "castles" may have been built on their beautiful headland settings as "objects of display", and the "forts" centres for administration, law-giving, or places for performing rituals and ceremonies.

What we have then is a model of defended central places offering security to traders, priests/Druids, stewards and law-enforcers. Most of these functions could have been performed at particular times of the year, when people would have gathered from throughout the territory "to meet, render dues, exchange goods, settle disputes, and either take part in or witness rituals, the calendar of which may well have determined the dates, through the seasons, for these meetings". In other words, places of ceremony and social gathering rather than warfare and conflict.

Two other items of interesting research include the discovery of a 4000 year old burial mound at Trelowthas Farm on the site of the new A390 by-pass at Probus. The Unit excavated the site before it was buried by the new road, and discovered Bronze Age pots on a low ploughed mound that had a ditch around it. A stone-lined cist was full to the top with burnt bones, and it also contained 3 whole pots, together with about 40 others which had been smashed and buried around the outside. The broken pots seem to have been deliberately thrown and smashed against the ditch, and CAU director Nick Johnson says: "It could be the equivalent of breaking the mould to free the spirit. It is the first evidence we have of pottery smashed as part of the burial ceremony. The bones were cremated before being put in the pots. It gives us an insight into burial practices almost 4000 years old."

Finally, a chance find at Land's End Greeb Animal Farm and Crafts Centre has revealed the existence of Mesolithic (middle Stone Age) people on the site. Doug Francis, a potter at the site, was helping to round up chickens for the night when he discovered a near-perfect flint arrowhead in the grass. As well as arrowheads, there were knives, scrapers and other flint tools left behind by a band of semi-nomads who lived by hunting and fishing from about 8000-3000 BCE, pre-dating the Neolithic era when the first ceremonial monuments of West Penwith were built.

CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Events include Archaeology Alive events on July 16th & Sept 24th, & talk by Charles Thomas on "Archaeology & Cornishness" Nov 16th at Truro Museum. Details from:- H.L.Douch, 2 Enys Road, Truro.

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For details of Summer activities see i.f.c. Autumn series of talks start in September on last Thursday of every month at the Acorn in Penzance @ 7.30pm. Further details from: Andy Norfolk, The Cottage, Crowan, Camborne (01209) 831519.

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GROUP Meet on last Tuesday of every month at the Acorn in Penzance @ 7.30pm. Further details from: Loic Degeneve, 1 South Place Folly, Penzance (01736) 332015.

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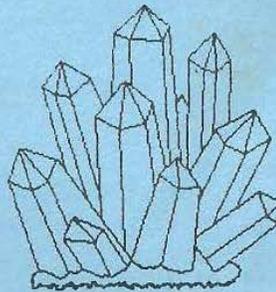
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