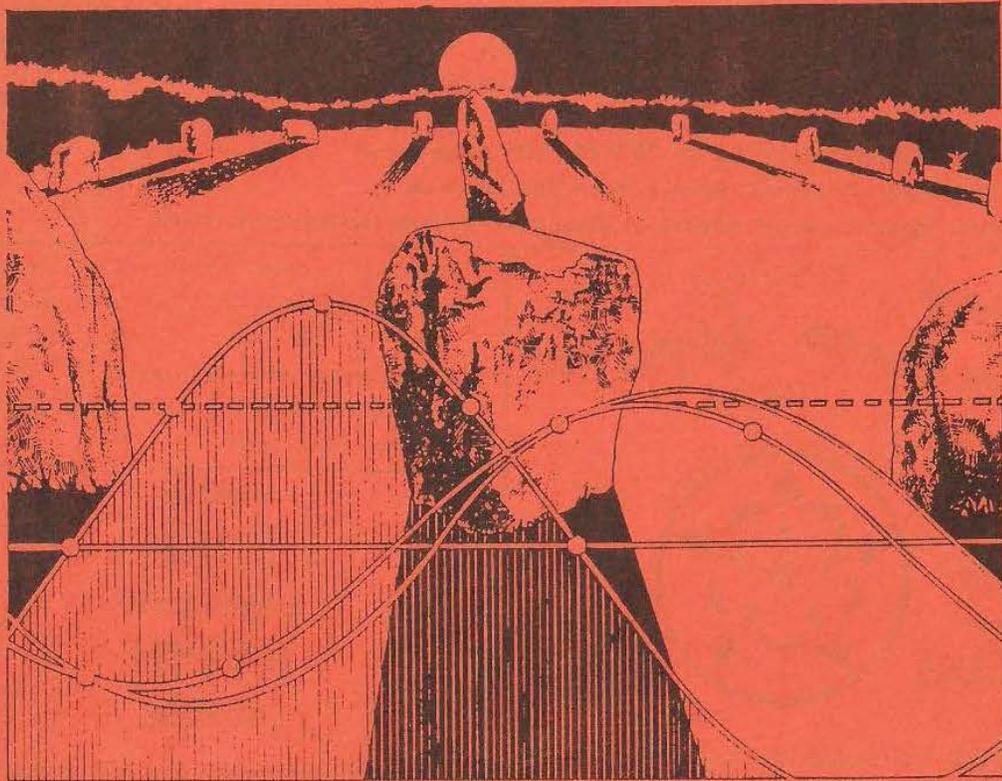


No.41 WINTER/SPRING 2000 £2.00



meyn mamvro

ancient stones and sacred sites in cornuall



**TURNING BACK THE MILLENIUM CLOCK ●
MEN-AN-TOL & LANYON QUOIT NAPALMED!
ECLIPSED AT BOSCAWEN-UN ● NEWS ●**

CONTENTS

Editorial p. 1
 Cornish Earth Mysteries Group..... p. 2
 Men-an-Tol & Lanyon Quoit napalmed!..... p. 3
 Well Restored & Well Discovered..... p. 4
 Eclipsed at Boscawen-ûn: Levannah Morgan/ Debbie & Kelvin Jones/
 Andy Norfolk & Cassandra Latham p.6
 Other Sacred Sites News p.11
 Lesser Known Sites in West Penwith - Raymond Cox..... p.12
 [Extra 4 page pull-out Total Eclipse Supplement]
 Turning Back the Millenium Clock - Cheryl Straffon..... p.14
 Dor Dama - Tides - Pamela Harvey p.21
 Tarot Review p.22
 Cornish Heritage..... p.23
 The Pipers Tune/Fair Exchange p.24

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STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

The leading story this edition is of course the horrendous napalm attack on the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit sites. Full details are on p.3, and if there are any developments a Stop Press will be inserted with this MM. This is far and away the most serious event to have happened to the sites in 15 years of MM, and especially ironic at the Mên-an-Tol with its tradition of healing. It will be a specialist task to remove the napalm residue, so the real damage to the stones will not be known until then. Both local people and the wider pagan community have been very shocked. Overall, 1999 seems to have been a difficult year for the local pagan community. The Total Eclipse in the Summer and the management of the gorse at Boscawen-ûn provoked much controversy which is still rumbling on, and a special feature in this MM explores some of those issues. Perhaps it is a measure of all movements that when they start small they are united against the outside world. As they grow, so divisions and disagreements start. Fifteen years ago when MM began there were only a few pagan folk here, at least those who were willing to be public about their beliefs. Since then more and more have moved here, or become interested in it, and the growing strength of the pagan movement has created a climate where people within it now feel free to raise issues and criticise each other. This can be a healthy practice, but equally there are real dangers that the gains so far achieved can be lost. Let's hope that out of it all can come a positive approach to dealing with the sites and a greater awareness of everyone's sensibilities.

So as we turn into the new Millenium there is much food for thought. Of course the Millenium is in itself a reminder of how over the years Christianity itself has splintered into many sub-groups, often with viscious and intolerant in-fighting. Even the Millenium itself is something of a misnomer. There never was a year 0, so 2000 is actually the last year of the old Millenium. The new one doesn't start until 2001. And anyway our calendar (which is only the calendar of the western world) wasn't fixed until the 6thC by Dionysius Exigous who codified what was an already popular belief about the birth of Christ 532 years earlier and called it 1AD (or CE as it is increasingly known). Even this calculation was incorrect, since Herod died in 4BCE and Christ was born at least 2 years before that! So it's a bit puzzling what it is exactly we are celebrating, other than an arbitrary number changing from 1999 to 2000. However, as we are clearly supposed to celebrate something, MM would like to point out that there have been in fact at least 6 millenia of occupation in Cornwall, and so our Millenium article looks back not 2000 but 6000 years for a snapshot of life in Cornwall at the turn of each 1000 years. This Millenium will perhaps be remembered for the attack on the stones. Let's hope fervently that they are still here in another 1000 years time.



news page

The Autumn started with the last site visit and walk of the year on Sept 12th, led by **Rod & Lavinia Blunsdon** to the stones of the Merry Maidens complex. Rod cast new light on the use of the stone circle, the holed stone across the road, the Pipers standing stones and Boleigh Fogou, interspersed with a welcoming cream tea at Lamorna Pottery! A full article on the sites and their meaning by Rod will be printed in the next MM.

The 10th Autumn series of talks began on Sept 30th with a visit from London Earth Mysteries Co-ordinator **Rob Stephenson** on "Ancient sites and psycho-spiritual practices". Rob shared with the audience his great knowledge of sacred sites and religious artifacts found there, as well as an insiders view of the research done by the Dragon Project. A fine selection of slides complemented the presentation, which made an excellent start to the season.

The October talk was by **Paul Newman**, author of the book *The Lost Gods of Albion*, an expert guide to the hill figures of England. Paul not only gave a lot of information about the hill figures, with some lovely slides, but also raised many different kinds of interesting points about iconography, art and culture. It was a most thought-provoking and stimulating evening.

November saw a return visit by author and illustrator **Chesca Potter** who gave a beautiful slide presentation on *Celtic Shamanism*, illustrated with some of the images and archetypal meanings from her Celtic Shaman's Meditation Cards. Chesca led her audience into the deeper resonances and significances of shamanic beliefs and connection with animals. It was a powerful and prescient presentation.

Finally December 19th brought the annual visit to Chûn Quoit to attempt to see the midwinter solstice sunset alignment to the notch in Carn Kenidjack, followed by the Celtic Storytelling social at Age Concern in St. Just.

Full details of all forthcoming CEMG events and talks may be found at the Meyn Mamvro website on www.cornwt.demon.co.uk or see Noticeboard on back page.

For the latest information and news on local sites and paganism, together with comment and controversy visit the on-line Newsgroup Cornish_Pagans@onelist.com.

WEST PENWITH ARCHAEOLOGY CLUB has been formed to re-survey all the ancient sites first surveyed by Vivien Russell in 1971 and to publish the results. They have also done a survey of Caer Bran hillfort and other activities and field trips are planned. Details: Greg- 01736-332731, Toni- 01736-361027 or Ian 01736- 796722.



NAPALM ATTACK ON THE MÊN-AN-TOL & LANYON QUOIT

ANONYMOUS LETTER WARNS THAT SITES WILL BE DESTROYED OR REMOVED

On the night of November 5th 1999, under cover of darkness and of bonfires blazing elsewhere in West Penwith, the Mên-an-Tol stones and nearby Lanyon Quoit were attacked and set on fire. Two days later the local paper *The Cornishman* received dramatic photographs of the event, together with an anonymous letter signed by so-called "Friends of the Stone" claiming that they had set the stones on fire with napalm, the deadly weapon used in the Vietnam and Cambodia wars. It appears likely that this claim is true, as both the 3 stones at the Mên-an-Tol and the capstone and uprights at Lanyon Quoit were blackened with fire damage and covered with streaks of a hardened resin that was probably napalm. The letter claimed that the violent attack was performed "in an attempt to make the monuments better, or at least more aesthetically pleasing". The letter further stated that the reason for doing this was part of an act of "finely planned worship", because "for centuries the meaning of these great monuments has been misconstrued and wrongly passed down through generations of uneducated people". It continued "You do not deserve the heritage these monuments hold". This was followed by a threat to remove the Mên-an-Tol within the week to the writer's back garden where it would be "correctly aligned", and to completely destroy Lanyon Quoit: "Better rubble on the ground than a fake prophet, misunderstood and misconstrued by thousands of non-believers". It concluded "Any attempt to stop us will be met with further burnings, each acting as a worship to strengthen us."

The police took this threat and the action very seriously, appealing for help from the public. The response they got from a shocked pagan and West Penwith community was later described by them as "greater than from a murder enquiry". On a practical level, local people began to take number plates of cars seen in the vicinity, and to visit the sites on a regular basis, and on a magical level local pagans went to the sites to perform healing and protection rituals. Local witch Cassandra Latham performed a cursing ceremony which she said would be activated "by anyone who approaches the stones with malicious intent" Meanwhile as we go to press the police are following up several leads, including security camera footage taken at the photographers where the film was developed, and DNA samples from the anonymous letter and envelope.

WELL RESTORED

A hitherto un-recorded well has recently been restored at Coxford, a little hamlet located a couple of miles inland from Crackington Haven in north Cornwall. The well, which is just down the lane from St. Tremayne Chapel (SX161 965) is not listed by any of the holy wells authorities, but was presumably dedicated to Saint Tremayne, about whom nothing appears to have been recorded. The well was in such a sorry state that it was hardly recognisable as such when thanks to a Cornwall Landscape Project grant, the hard work of Malcolm Ure of Capability Landscaping, and local artist Jacky Allan, it was restored. The tree that had caused the well to collapse was cut down and the roots dug out, silt and debris from the site was removed, and the well was then rebuilt using local stone and slate. Native wildflowers were planted on the bank and Jacky carved the lettering *Rest And Be Thankful* on the back of the seat beside the well.



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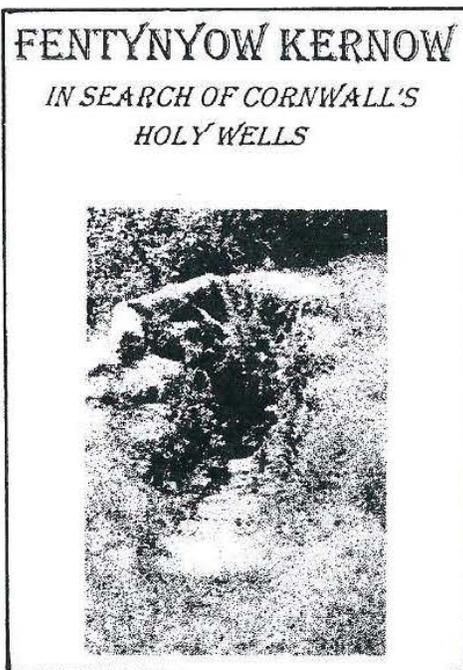
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WELL DISCOVERED

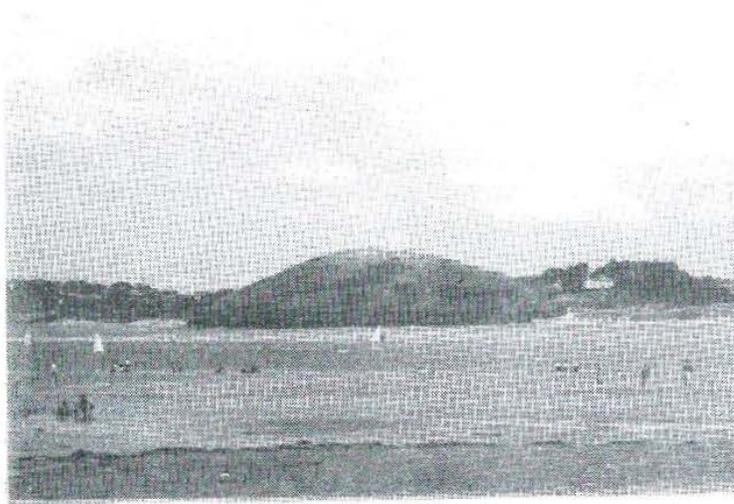
THE HOLY WELL AND THE HILL OF THE GODDESS

There were very many holy wells in the Padstow area, particularly before the Reformation, but most of them have now been lost. Padstow was the landing place of St. Petroc who arrived at Little Petherick from Ireland via Wales in about 518 CE. Where he landed he stuck his staff into the ground and water gushed forth; the connection of the early saints with water legends such as this shows that they were supplanting the association of such sites with the more pagan Earth Mother. Its pagan antecedents are remembered every May 1st in the famous Obby Oss festival, where, interestingly, the Oss formerly was taken down to a local pool at Treator to drink, a memory perhaps of the association of the Oss with water cults.

From the town a path leads northwards beside the estuary to St. George's Cove a popular sandy beach crossed by a stream that flows from inland. Above the beach the stream opens out to form a pretty pool with steps leading down and surrounded by trees: this presumably is St. George's holy well (SW918 765).



What makes the site so unusual is that from the beach by the well a most distinctive breast-shaped hill is visible across the estuary near Rock. This is Brea Hill, which may contain in its name a memory of its original significance, as a possible meaning of Brea in Cornish is 'breast', found also at Carn Brea near Redruth and Chapel Carn Brea near Land's End.



Brea Hill is surmounted with a nipple-shaped prehistoric cairn, reinforcing the significance of the site. Could this site have been recognised as a sacred place of the Earth Goddess in prehistoric times, with the hill visible from beside the sacred well, and later Christianised with the name of saint George? It remains to this day a beautiful and powerful place, a numinous site of Goddess energy.

ECLIPSED AT BOSCAWEN-UN

The Total Eclipse of the Sun in Cornwall on August 11th 1999 brought out some conflict as Sheila Bright had forecast it would in her article in MM39. Specifically, within the pagan community there was some controversy over the use of the sites, in particular Boscawen-ûn stone circle, for the Eclipse. This debate became quite bitter and even spilled over publicly into the Letters page of "The Cornishman" newspaper. The argument still continues to reverberate, and MM has received some correspondence about it. To place it in context we start with an (abridged) account of the day by the local Pagan Federation organiser for Cornwall & Devon, followed by a letter from two members of the local pagan community raising some important issues, and concluding with a 'right of reply' by two of the principal facilitators of the ceremonies at the site.

CELEBRATION AT THE CIRCLE

"I celebrated the eclipse at Boscawen-ûn stone circle with my dear friends Cassandra Latham and Andy Norfolk, Oberon Zell of the Church of All Worlds, a hundred and fifty lovely Pagans including the fully-armed Brigantes from Portsmouth and six television crews. It was a truly awesome, life-changing event for all of us who were there and I was privileged to be part of it.

Boscawen-ûn was one of a number of Pagan eclipse events which PF members and other Pagans in Cornwall and Devon had been planning for over a year. Rituals were held at a number of sacred sites with the dual purpose of protecting fragile ancient sites and providing an inclusive focus for Pagans. Readers will be very familiar with the long term process of Pagan co-operation with the authorities, eclipse planners and archaeologists to ensure the safety of sacred sites during the eclipse; through the good efforts of local Pagans we've created a very constructive attitude towards Paganism in Cornwall.

We knew from the beginning that there would be tremendous media interest in eclipse celebrations and it was therefore decided by local Pagans and the PF District Council that there should be at least one major ritual at which the media would be welcome. This would give us the opportunity to work with the media to present a positive view of Paganism to a potentially huge audience, and would also have the useful effect of concentrating the media in one place so that those who wished to celebrate away from the camera would be able to do so in peace. The media were welcome at Boscawen-ûn. For me the rite there was the culmination of a magickal working that began at Samhain 1998, when, inspired by Cassandra, we began the process of awakening the Spriggans to protect the site and guard the land. I have to say that the media, especially Channel 4 News and Westcountry TV, were throughout pleasant and respectful of what we did. They worked with us in harmony, even persuading a troublesome Polish TV crew who had got the wrong idea about Paganism to leave the site. For me it was an object lesson in how partnership and magick can achieve real results.

Cassandra, Andy, Oberon Zell, myself and other friends walked the one and a half miles from St.Buryan to Boscawen-ûn early on eclipse morning by the ancient trackways. We began our rite just before First Contact (the point where the Moon first starts to obscure the Sun). We invited all present to join with us inside the Circle, and made it clear that although individuals would lead various stages of the rite anyone present was welcome to join in and contribute at any stage. As everyone knows the weather was cold and wet. Whilst this may have been a problem for Michael Buerk and the Radio 1 Roadshow down at Marazion it didn't matter to us at all.

We all linked hands and I led the casting of the Circle. Everyone walked the Circle chanting "We hallow this Circle in love, peace and trust". Once the rite had begun I think none of us were aware of the cameras. Then Andy called the Quarters in Cornish, with loud shouts of "Hail and welcome" ringing around the stones. Oberon Zell then invoked the Moon Goddess using an invocation which he had created for an eclipse in America in 1979. This was followed by me invoking the Sun God using Cornish and other Celtic names linked with Egyptian concepts of the progress of the Sun through the sky. Cassandra then led the raising of power, an intense freeform period of drumming, chanting, music and dancing which lasted about 45 minutes. This really packed a punch; the power was extraordinary and there was a great sense of unity. We became very aware of the acoustic power of the stones; the drumming and thump of the Brigantes' spears on the ground reverberated through the stones and the ground and echoed through our bodies.

Five minutes before totality we stopped and everything became still and silent. Flocks of birds flew off to roost as the light dimmed; cows lowed and cocks crowed. Then we saw the Moon's shadow come racing towards us from the west, visible at first as a line of darkness along the bottom edge of the clouds, then racing along the ground towards us. We saw it reach our feet and suddenly we were in total darkness. There was a faint glow around the whole horizon as if we were standing in a 360 degree sunset. In the beautiful bright dark silence people hugged each other, shivered, communed with the Gods, the world and each other.

All too soon the light returned. Everyone was quiet, smiling and euphoric. The Deities, Quarters and Spirits were thanked, and the Circle closed. "Merry meet, merry part and merry meet again" rang around the stones. At this point the Sun broke through the clouds and we saw most of the final phase of the eclipse. There was general celebration and winding down before the inevitable media interviews. The TV crews had enjoyed it all just as much as we had; their enjoyment and pleasure in sharing the eclipse was very gratifying. They shared in our celebrations and showed considerable generosity of spirit. We had brought bin bags with us to clear the site but they were not needed as not a scrap of litter had been left by anyone. The stones had not just been protected; they had been loved and honoured. The atmosphere everywhere in West Cornwall for the rest of the day was wonderful: peaceful, buzzing and blissful. This seemed to be how everyone felt, not just those of us who had been at the Circle."

Levannah Morgan

[cont. over

A REPLY TO THE GENIUS LOCI

"In the summer of 1999 the visitors to Cornwall came and went, hoping to see a total eclipse of the sun. In the event what they saw was not this, but was perhaps even more mysterious: it was as if a giant hand had slowly turned the light out across the land. In the early summer a letter appeared in many pagan magazines across the country [including *Meyn Mamvro* 39], purporting to represent the "genius loci" of West Penwith. The letter carried a warning from Cassandra Latham and Andy Norfolk, both members of the Pagan Federation. The warning stated that the Spriggans, land spirits, had been summoned to protect the ancient sites in Cornwall from possible interference from visitors. 'Be afraid - be very afraid', the letter went on to warn, 'if you have any ideas of being disrespectful to any of our ancient sites'.

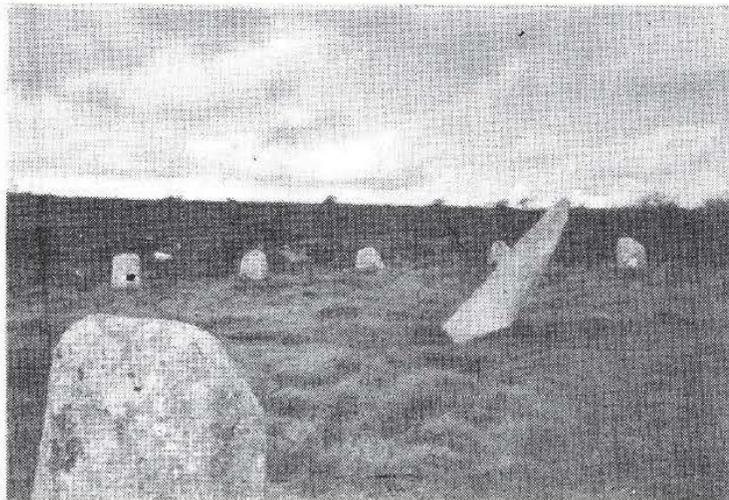
On the day of the eclipse something else happened: a number of TV crews gathered at the stone circle of Boscawen-ûn to film a 'pagan' ritual. This site had been chosen by the letter's authors as a place of significance. Prior to this, a number of ancient and most beautiful gorse bushes, over eight feet in height, were cut down and then taken to a dry stone wall and burned there (the blackened stones bear testimony). Also, from the farm which provides the longest approach path, a broad tracked vehicle was used to slash and cut more gorse bushes so that a wide approach road could be cut to the circle. The apparent explanation given for this vandalism by the letter's authors was that the bushes represented a 'fire risk'. Yet, as we now know, there was no such risk and it rained on the day of the eclipse.

On the day of the ritual three representatives of the PF turned out at the site. They were joined by a small group of visiting Americans, led by 'Oberon Zell'. The consequent ritual was then filmed and televised. Despite asking for 'rain, rain (to) go away', the attendees were rained upon, there was much circling of the stones and a bottle of bubbly was then opened. The event raises certain issues. Firstly, many local pagans stayed away from this event entirely as they did not wish to be part of a media event. Many pagans cannot afford to appear on TV, but this was not the whole reason. To connect with the energies of the land many found it necessary to go to any place which they considered to be sacred, whether listed as an ancient site or not. Others had heard of the damage to the site and were so incensed or distraught that they could not bear to be there. After hearing of what had happened one said to us, 'I do not wish to bear the name of pagan again'.

Secondly, there is the question of pagan rituals being filmed. It is normally the case that such rituals look and seem absurd (even to pagans). This one was no different. There was much looking at the camera and the ritual looked ludicrous. What, one wonders, is the public perception of pagans when such rituals are televised? Thirdly, there is the letter which preceded the event. If a document could be devised to alienate people, then surely this was it. The authors claimed that the 'open rituals' they planned to hold would protect the 'special places' from 'over enthusiastic, under educated and ignorant visitor(s)'. We cannot think of a more patronising way of describing the average visitor to Cornwall who might visit such a site at the eclipse out of curiosity.

Elsewhere the letter says the authors can't be held responsible for the consequences 'to anyone who crassly blunders into sacred places with the intent of taking over to become part of a media circus'. This seems a strange warning, since it is precisely what the authors of the letter did. Lastly, the document claims that 'Spriggans like their homes just the way they are and don't take kindly to anyone doing a spot of redecorating without permission!'. We should like to ask whether the spriggans, or indeed the 'genius loci' at Boscawen-ûn gave 'permission' to have their home redecorated and whether they did actually welcome the intrusion of so many media people into such a sacred place. Did the authors of that letter consider properly their intent and purpose towards that site before they transformed it into a platform for a media event? And did local pagans really want this shenanigans forced upon them? Have they, even if unwittingly, unhoused those same spriggans we are asked to fear? Be sure of what you ask for and be sure of your intent."

Kelvin & Debbie Jones



Boscawen-ûn circle after the gorse cut-back

RESPONSE-ABLE PAGANS?

"In December 1997, a decision was made by the Cornwall Sacred Sites Protection Network concerning the cutting of gorse at Boscawen-ûn Stone Circle. At this time we had no idea how many people would be present at this site for the eclipse - it could have been hundreds. The only precedent we had was that the last total eclipse in Britain was attended by 2.5 million. When an event of this magnitude is expected, contingency plans are necessary even if the fears are unrealised at a later date.

[cont. over

Given that the eclipse was occurring at the height of summer, fire was a risk factor to the circle and to visitors. There are regular heath fires in Cornwall due to the highly combustible nature of gorse, and these seem to be part of its life cycle. Therefore it was decided that cutting back the gorse by 2 metres from the edge of the circle would be prudent. This would not only provide a fire break but would also alleviate erosion within the circle. We offered the services of Pagan volunteers on several occasions to cut the gorse sensitively. These offers were declined by Bolitho Estates (local landowners) and Penwith District Council and a private contractor was employed by them for this work. The way in which the contractor cut and burnt the gorse horrified us as well as many other people, including Kelvin and Debbie. These events have been discussed at the Sacred Sites Protection network and hopefully, in the future, we will have a more co-operative approach regarding vegetation management at sacred sites. We have all got used to the presence of gorse at Boscawen-ûn, but tall gorse bushes are a relatively recent feature. The gorse has been regularly cut back over the years. We are pleased to report that, true to its nature, it is already growing back vigorously.

The idea of holding events at a few key sacred sites at the eclipse, as a way of helping to protect them, was debated and agreed at all the regular local Pagan meetings. The inevitable media interest in what was planned was also discussed. There is no way that the media would have been kept from the sites on this occasion. It was agreed that we would co-operate with them, rather than battling, so that we all ended up with what we wanted. We chose to concentrate on one site so that all other places would be free of media for people to celebrate privately if so desired. Ideally this focus would have been the Merry Maidens, but the landowners refused permission for this at an early stage. So Boscawen-ûn it was. There were about 150 people there for the eclipse and many came from far away. For example, there were Pagans from Holland, and Oberon Zell, who has been very influential in the development of Paganism in America, was there with one friend. Anyone who was there found that the experience was deeply moving, spiritually and emotionally. We have received many communications from participants and spectators to this effect. That some perceived the celebration absurd and ludicrous is a matter of personal opinion, to which we are all entitled after all.

'A Press Release on Behalf of the Genius Loci of West Penwith' was written in an ironic and humorous vein that was appreciated by most people. It made clear that it was not referring to the average, curious visitor, but to those who may cause damage to scheduled ancient monuments, and that if the cap fits - watch out!

Our intentions were, and still are, honourable. We did the best we could given the circumstances, and there was no reported damage to any sacred site in Cornwall and Devon over the eclipse period. Hopefully this has clarified things for concerned people, and if anyone needs any further details please contact us at Andy's address:-
The Cottage, Crowan, Praze, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 9NB.
 e-mail andy.norfolk@connectfree.co.uk"

Cassandra Latham & Andy Norfolk

OTHER SACRED SITES NEWS

SANCREED WELL

The situation concerning the original footpath from Sancreed Church to the holy well (see MM40 p.6) continues to be unresolved. Mr & Mrs Hoskins are intending to apply to have the footpath closed and replaced with a diverted path across their land from opposite the church hall, but the Ramblers Association have applied to have the original path, "the historic church path from the Church to the well", placed on the Definitive Map. Meanwhile, the new permissive path from opposite Sancreed Beacon over the fields to the back of the well still awaits signposting.

ROCKY VALLEY MAZES & ST.NECTAN'S GLEN

These sites at Bossiney near Tintagel have become the subject of some concern. Offerings at St.Nectan's Kieve are getting out of proportion, and names and graffiti are being scratched onto pieces of slate at the site. Graham King from the Witchcraft Museum has been talking to the owners of the site about this. Further down the valley at the famous inscribed maze site, it appears that the Mill has been bought by Rossart Developments, who have big ideas about developing the site, and it is rumoured that the area by the mazes has been bought by a blacksmith who has plans to charge people to see them and set up some sort of shop there selling Arthurian related stuff.

SLAUGHTER BRIDGE STONE

Also in North Cornwall at Slaughter Bridge, a new Arthurian Visitor's Centre has been opened. Apparently it is no longer possible to visit the inscribed stone to Latinus (formerly known as King Arthur's Tomb) by walking freely along the river bank as the path is now blocked, and payment has to be made at the Centre, run by the Camelot Project, a partnership between the Arthurian Heritage Trust and the British Library



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LESSER-KNOWN SITES IN WEST PENWITH

NORTH AREA (1)

by **RAYMOND COX**

The eminence of Carn Gulva (also spelt Galva or Gulva) is one of the finest hills in the peninsula, because of the extent of its ridge. It's not quite the highest (that's the nearby Watch Croft at 252m), but it seems to be. To the northeast and east are the ancient fields and hedges of the coastal



plain, the tortuous scenic coast road to St.Ives and St.Just, the great mine remnants and engine houses, the sea and the cliffs, the scattered farms and hamlets; to the east and southeast the Ding Dong complex and the windy moorland, and hidden amongst the grey expanse the sites of such as the Nine Maidens (SW434 351), the Mén-an-Tol (SW426 349) and numerous others. The name means 'rock-pile of the lookout place', but there are many rock piles to be seen around here. In legend the cairn was the home of the giant Holiburn, "a very amiable and somewhat sociable gentle man" according to Robert Hunt in *Popular Romances of the West of England* (1881). He fought to defend his friends, and, as with all the giants, it seemed he liked throwing stones about. He guarded the local humans from the more aggressive Trencrom giants in return for gifts of sheep and cattle. So what about ancient sites right here? Well, as recently as 1984 a 5000 year old stone enclosure was identified by the Cornwall Arcaheological Unit. The fortification was a complex one, and it probably enclosed a group of wooden huts. There were also several barrows, long destroyed. On this fine place there were people even then. How did they view this land? How many of their fellow men and women could they see around them and what were their thoughts? Could they view them at the other settlements and other places now in ruin, or even long ago lost and destroyed? Were there many here or few? We just know that these same piles of rocks were here enveloping all.

We now look to a time much later than those remains on Carn Galvar and much longer than our own times, and see three Iron-Age Courtyard House settlements, not unknown, little visited compared with such as Chysauster and Carn Euny, except by enthusiasts, but yet are rewarding to visit, for themselves and in their environments.

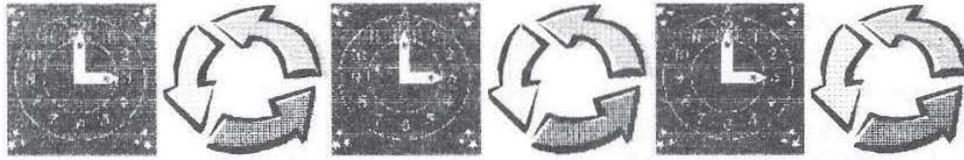
Porthmeor settlement (SW434 371) is perhaps the best known of the three, as it was the first courtyard house village to be excavated, in 1933-9 by the new West Cornwall Field Club, under Col. F.C.Hirst, a pioneer of the study of this type of ancient feature. It is a complex of village features, showing a thick stone wall up to 8ft (2.4m) high, entrances, paved courts, oval chambers, courtyard houses, and hut circles. The most interesting part of the village is on the southwestern side, where there is a fine above-ground fogou, consisting of a curving passage 43ft (13m) long. The inner 24ft (7.3m) of this has a corbelled roof. The passage is 5ft (1.5m) wide with a wall slightly higher. Ian Cooke found here, as with most of the enigmatic fogous, that the passage was aligned to receive the rising midsummer sun. Summer is not the best time to visit Porthmeor as the site is an overgrown one and the various features of the village difficult to sort out. The fogou should not be missed; look for a holly tree near the entrance and it will be found. The growth of plants and bushes keeps this site almost hidden, but this adds to the thrill of finding and recognising it, something which one might miss at Carn Euny, fine though that is. Ask permission to visit the village at Portmeor Farm. The site is just a couple of fields from the rear of the farm.

Bosporthenis Settlement (SW438 360) was a site very much in contrast, in my view a more rewarding place, a clear expansive site. The remains are scattered, in an oddly remote and lonely region beneath Cannibal's Carn. I saw the maze of small fields, bordered by stone walls shining almost white in the afternoon sun, a few sheep in one, a few cows in another, with the grass faintly swaying in a gentle breeze. The best of the courtyard houses are in fact outside the fields near the base of the hill slope. They face northeast. The entrance to the courtyard and the round room both have a jamb-stone still standing. There is a walled compound and other fragments nearby. Within the fields are a Round and other ruins including another courtyard house with walls of 5½ (1.6m) high, as with its round room. An unusual find here is within the courtyard where there are remains of a two-room mediaeval building with drystone walls 4ft (1.2m) high, a good example of the use of a prehistoric building adapted for use in a later time. Here two ages can be viewed together. This whole site at Bosporthenis is so widespread that it must have been a large village indeed.

North Area (2) in the next issue will include the Bosporthenis Beehive Hut, and Bosigran Courtyard House settlement.



TURNING BACK THE MILLENIUM CLOCK 6000 YEARS OF LIVING IN CORNWALL



by **CHERYL STRAFFON**

As we turn the Millenium clock towards the 3rd Millenium AD/CE, it is interesting to remember that we are not just celebrating 2000 years of Christian 'civilisation', but many Millenia more of human occupation and belief in Britain & Cornwall. This article takes us back to give a snapshot of life in Cornwall at the turn of each Millenium.

1000 AD/CE

1000 CE Cornwall had been known as Cornubia, part of the Civitas Dumnoniorum, the canton of Dumnonia, with its administrative centre in Exeter. It had been divided into petty kingdoms, ruled over by local chieftans, but by 1000 AD/CE those who called themselves kings of Cornwall were probably vassals of England. These included Dumgarth, who drowned in 875, and who may have been the same as King Doniert, commemorated on a stone near Minions; Howel, who attended court in Exeter in 928; and the mysterious King Ricatus, who was commemorated on the inscribed cross in Penzance's Morrab Gardens. The population of Cornwall was small and scattered, most people living in rural farms of less than 100, with the only large settlement at the borough of Bodmin. One centre of royal power may have been Tintagel, though the castle, whose ruins now stand there, was probably not begun until the 12th century. By 1000 Cornwall was Christianised and several centres of learning had grown up. Lannaed (St.Germans) was chosen in the 10thC as the seat of the Cornish See. St.Petroc's Monastery in Bodmin was also well known. Chapels had been built at or near many of the holy wells, such as Sancreed, Madron, Dupath, & St. Clether. Celtic crosses were put up on paths going to them. Many of the chapels, such as St. Helen's(Cape Cornwall) had been established in remote places, perhaps by saints and pilgrims from Ireland and Wales.



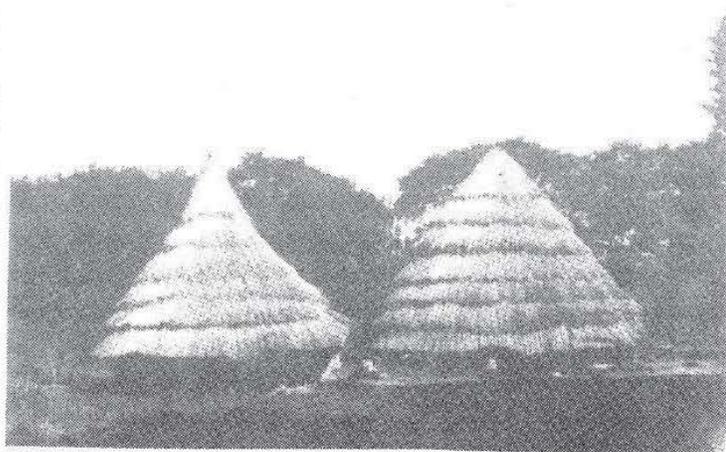
St.Helen's Chapel

1000
CE There was still an awareness that Cornwall was different from England, and was populated by people who came from Celtic stock, not English. The *Prophecy of Britain* written in c930 speaks of a time when the Welsh, together with their Celtic cousins from Cornwall, Brittany, Ireland and the Old North (Cumbria & Scotland), would expel the English from Britain and re-claim the whole kingdom. However by this time this was rather wishful thinking. A combined force of Cornish and Danes had been defeated in 838 by the English at the great battle of Hingston Down, and the River Tamar had been set as the border between Cornwall and England by King Athelston in 936. Hereafter it became a subjugated satellite of the emerging English state. It was however not yet part of that state and continued to remain distinctly different from England for many centuries to come. At the time of the Norman Conquest (1066) Cornwall was treated as being distinct from England and under separate administration. When the Magna Carta was signed in 1215, it was headed with the separate arms of England and Cornwall. Its language was different: the people spoke Old Cornish, and its inhabitants were the descendants of the Celtic peoples who had lived there 1000 years earlier.

1 AD/CE - 1 BCE

1CE/
1BCE Cornwall was at the height of the Iron Age Celtic period. From about 800 BCE waves of people had entered these islands from the Continent. These were the people generally referred to as La Tene & Halsatt cultures and they brought with them all the culture and artwork that is known as Celtic. They lived in round houses and, from about 200 BCE in west Cornwall these developed into oval houses grouped together in small village or family units called Courtyard Houses. Among the most well-known sites are Chysauster and Carn Euny, but there were others, such as Bosulow Trehyllys, Mulfra, Bodrifty, Porthmeor & Goldherring. Around the outside of these settlements were the field systems, and some of these original landscape features can be viewed today in the area around Zennor. Many of these settlements also had the distinctly Iron Age structure of the fogou built into them.

These underground chambers were once thought to have been used for storage or refuge, but now it is generally accepted that they probably served a ritual function. So, if we go back 2000 years we may imagine our forebears living in relatively comfortable places, peacefully working the land, and celebrating the Earth Mother in their underground ritual chambers.



Reconstructed Iron Age village at Greenbottoms

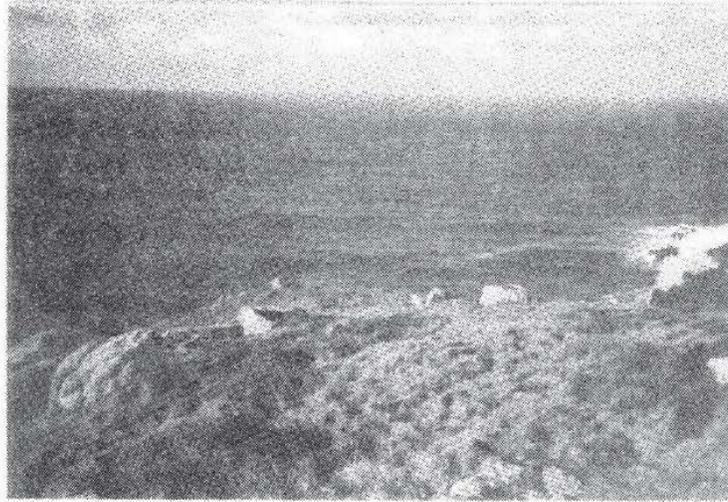
1CE/
1BCE There were other structures built at this time however, which may show that not everything was always peaceful. Cliff castles date from this period, consisting of a relatively small area defended on one side by the sea and the other by a narrow promontory of land. Some examples are Gurnards Head, Kenidjack Cattle near St. Just, Treen near Portcurno, Dodman Point near Gorran Haven and Trevelgue near Newquay. They are quite common throughout Cornwall and may represent a defensive feature to which people could retreat in times of trouble. Hill 'forts', such as Chûn Castle, Caer Bran and Trencrom Hill were also thought to perform this function, but nowadays it is believed that they may have had a much wider purpose, being possible meeting places for different tribes, ceremonial sites or trading places.

Burial practices from this period consist of inhumations in stone-lined cists, and quite large cemeteries have been found at Harlyn Bay near Padstow, Trelan Bahow on the Lizard and Trethellan Farm near Newquay. The latter site is most interesting, as it appears the Iron Age cemetery was built on the site of an earlier Bronze Age settlement from 1000 or so years before. Evidently, the cult of the ancestors was important to these people at this time. Thus 2000 or so years ago the people of what is now Cornwall lived relatively stable and prosperous lives. The tin trade was flourishing and there were probably trading contacts between Cornwall and the Mediterranean. This way of life was to continue for many centuries to come, for the Roman invasion of Britain scarcely touched Cornwall, and the people remained wedded to the rhythms of the land and the seasons.

1000 BCE

1000
BCE The Bronze Age was coming to an end in this period of transition as the old ways and beliefs were being lost. From about 1400 BCE the ceremonial sites, such as the stone circles, were abandoned. The reasons for this are hard to determine, but it may have had something to do with a general deterioration in the climate, which became wetter and colder at this time, and that may have rendered the old rituals and ceremonies redundant. The way was then open for the new ideas and culture brought by the Celtic peoples who started to arrive about 800 BCE.

People had been living in Round House settlements on upper areas such as Bodmin Moor, but now these were turned over to seasonal grazing, and more fertile low-lying areas were now occupied. They still practised a farming economy as they were the daughters and sons of their ancestors who first settled in this land and learned how to rear animals and plant crops. Cornwall had also always been a source of important and precious metals, and probably continued to trade widely with other important areas of Britain and the continent. The gold torcs and armrings found at Towednack and Morvah in West Penwith, dating from this period, are evidence of what was certainly a prosperous section of society, even if it was a ruling elite. The earliest hillforts and cliff castles start to emerge at this time, such as Maen Sennen, Bosigran, Lescudjack and Trencrom Hill, indicating a territorial aspect to the organisation of society.

1000
BCE*Maen Castle, Sennen*

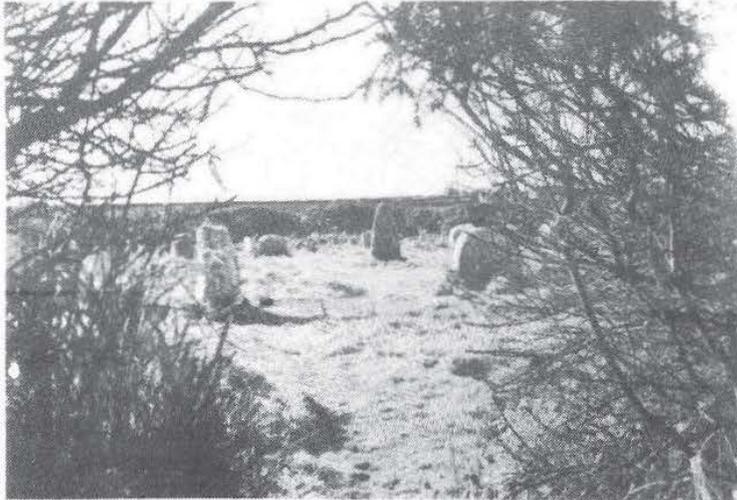
The curious thing about this period is that there seems to be a marked absence of burial and settlement remains. It is as if a whole period of prehistory is missing from the archaeological record. Some evidence has come from the settlement at Trevelgue near Newquay that the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age people located their settlements on or near sacred sites (burial chambers) of *their* ancestors, the Neolithic and early Bronze Age peoples, but the range of evidence is scanty and the number of sites found curiously small. Where did the people live? How did they bury their dead? What religious and ceremonial monuments did they build? What were their beliefs? There are many questions relating to this period for which we do not have satisfactory answers. Clearly there was a massive abandonment of the old megalithic monuments and presumably the beliefs that went with them, but the huge flourishing of Celtic society and culture had not yet arisen. This is perhaps the most mysterious period of pre-history: a hiatus in the historical record 3000 years ago that seems to have lie in a period that lies outside of the time line.

2000 BCE

The Bronze Age in Cornwall was flowering. Hunting as a means of sustenance had been largely abandoned, and the so-called Beaker People, who may have arrived here from about 2500 BCE, either in person or through their culture, were now primarily farmers, cultivating the land and cutting back the woodlands. Bronze technology, using Cornish tin, was well established, but used mainly for ceremonial and prestige objects. Most everyday objects continued to be made from stone. The presence of tin in Cornwall, needed for the making of Bronze, made it an important trading centre, and the finding of 4 gold lunulae at Harlyn Bay, of Irish design but made from Cornish tin, shows the close links between Cornwall and other maritime places at this time.

2000 BCE What makes Cornwall distinctive at this period however, and what would immediately strike a visitor of s/he could time-travel back 4000 years, would be the proliferation of megalithic building, and, if we assume that what we have remaining now is only a proportion of what must have been built then, then the whole landscape would be covered with a plethora of stone circles, standing stones, stone alignments, holed stones, stone barrows and cairns.

The collection of stone circles in West Penwith - the Merry Maidens, Boscawen-ûn, Tregeseal, NineMaidens Boskednan, the Mên-an-Tol circle, plus others now lost and destroyed, would each have proudly marked a 'family group' of monuments.



Boscawen-ûn stone circle, built in a clearing in forested land

Standing stones were everywhere, criss-crossing the landscape in alignments, perhaps marking territorial boundaries, perhaps denoting places where people were interred, or perhaps marking significant sunrises/sets at ritual times of the year. Stone rows ran across upland areas such as Bodmin Moor, probably denoting sacred space or ceremonial journeying across the land. Holed stones were put up, sometimes in lines, aligned to moonrises/sets on the moon's 18.6 year cycle, calculated and observed by the people and their priest/esses, or acting as entrances to barrows to allow the spirits to leave or enter the tombs. Distinctive stones were carved, perhaps with cup marks, such as Tregeseal entrance grave, where people would come and give libations and offerings to the dead. Grave goods were buried with the dead, such as daggers, jewellery and beads of amber and faience glass. It was a rich vibrant culture and one that expended considerable time and energy on its ceremonial monuments to honour the dead and celebrate the Earth Mother.

3000 BCE

3000 BCE If we travel back another 1000 years, at the beginning of the 3rd Millenium BCE the landscape would have looked very different. Very little of what we associate with the megalithic culture would have yet been built. All that we would see, standing dramatically on the hillsides, would be the dolmens or cromlechs (later known as Quoits), the earliest of all our megalithic monuments, the building of which started probably around 500 or so years earlier. Although to our eyes some 5000 years later, these dolmens, such as Chûn, Mulfra, Zennor & Trethevey Quoits, present a stark sculptured appearance, in all likelihood they would originally have been covered with an earthen barrow, at least to the underside of the capstone.

3000 BCE Into these chambers would have been placed the disarticulated bones of the dead, and to these places the living would have come to do acts of reverence and connection with the spirits of the dead ancestors, probably at significant times around the solar wheel of the year (solstices and equinoxes).



Chûn Quoit, dolmen of the dead

We may picture these houses of the dead looking down on a landscape of the living as they tilled their newly-created fields and raised their newly-domesticated animals. The dead and the living were part of the same continuum, and the shamans and shamankas of the tribe would have gone on spirit journeys to connect with the spirits of these ancestors, probably using the means of fasting, trance, ritual drumming, and the injection of narcotic herbs and plants.

This culture and these people were intimately connected to the Land. A thousand years before, their ancestors had been the hunters and gatherers, moving seasonally across the land and leaving little trace of their presence, but by now in this early Neolithic (new Stone Age) period the people had settled and become the first farmers. The climate was very favourable for their survival, almost sub-tropical with mild winter rains and long hot summers, not dissimilar to the south of France today. They not only farmed and raised animals, but they also had substantial time and energy to put into other activities. They produced distinctive earthenware pottery, and traded in goods, urns and food vessels. They produced axes for utility purposes and also perhaps for ceremonial use. Axes from Cornish 'axe factories' have been found in other communities many miles away, such as Wales and the Wessex region. Greenstone axes from the Mount's Bay area were most prized, and many were traded with the people who were later to build Stonehenge. Cornwall was relatively prosperous with an expanding economy, but a few hundred years later was to hit a crisis when farming began to decline and good agricultural land reverted to scrubland. The reasons for this are not entirely clear, and the building of the megalithic ceremonial monuments from about 3500 BCE may have been a reaction to this decline. If so, it evidently worked: the Goddess was kind and the prosperity of the land re-established itself.

4000 BCE

4000 We have now gone back 6000 years to the earliest inhabitants of Cornwall.

BCE The last Ice Age had ended about 10000 BCE and sometime after 6000 BCE Britain became separated from the Continent. By then bands of hunter-fisher-gatherers had begun to move across the land, living seasonally by the bands of migrating red deer. They shared the land with other creatures, such as wolves, bears and wild ox, whom these Mesolithic peoples would have hunted, pitching their camps where food was prevalent, and then moving on throughout the seasonal round. We know from some of the cave paintings on the Continent that these people were intimately connected with animals and with hunting in every way, and that this was expressed through an identification with the spirit of the animal itself. They depended on the animals for their survival, their food, their clothes, their hides and their tents.

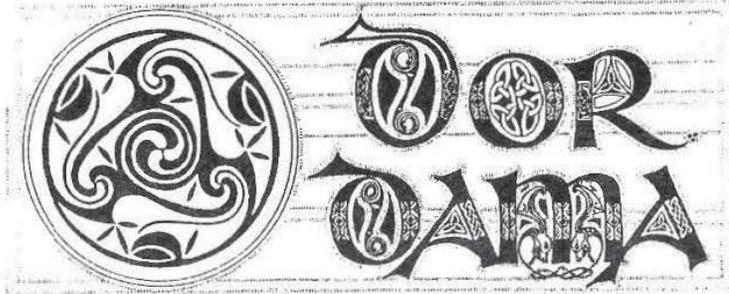
These people left behind no great megalithic monuments to thrill and impress us 6000 years later, but they did not go unnoticed. Microliths - small pieces of flint - sherds of axe-heads and beach pebbles have all been found in different places in Cornwall, indicative of their presence. On Bodmin Moor at Dozmary Pool were found a great number of mesolithic flint flakes, and it is interesting that this area has also retained a legend from Arthurian times 5000 years later. On the Lizard at Poldowrian was found a large Mesolithic site located on a cliff-top overlooking the coast, that has been interpreted as a 'base camp'. On Kelsey Head and Trevoze Head near Newquay some 6000 pieces were found, including 95 microliths. At Godrevey Headland near Gwithian some 16 Mesolithic sites have been identified at a place that would have provided a habitat rich in food resources together with nearby hunting lands. And in West Penwith Mesolithic microliths have turned up from time to time, the most recent being at Land's End a couple of years ago.

Thus by 4000 BCE we may envisage Cornwall as having been quite widely roamed by bands of these hunter-fisher-gatherers for something like 1000 years. Now they began to clear some of the forests and even set up hill top encampments. Carn Brea near Redruth is probably the earliest settlement site in Cornwall, dating from about 4500 BCE, though its use may have been seasonal. But it was the beginning of a major change. The change may have taken hundreds of years to come about, but from here on in the wild and inhospitable land that was Cornwall was about to be tamed. 6000 years of development were about to begin, 6 millenia that were to see the people settle, the houses and farms built, and the megalithic monuments constructed. The world we live in today at the beginning of the 3rd millenium CE was begun those 6000 years ago.

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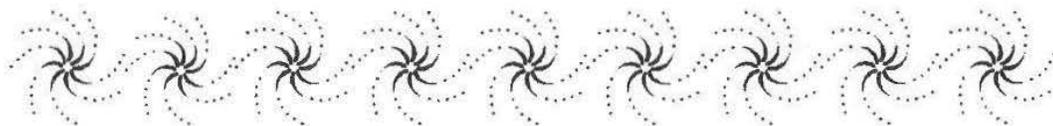
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This occasional 'Earth Mother' column features for this Millenium edition a piece called Tides by Pamela Harvey, an impressionistic response to the tides of time and nature flowing through the land of Cornwall.

The restless ocean, pulled by the Moon, herself reflecting the Sun, has shifting, changing tides. When calm, it does not reveal the power beneath. The Sun itself gives a magnetic tide, the Solar Wind, very many times stronger than gravity, in which all life in its System lives - and dies. Much of the solar spectrum is unseen. Duality pervades everything, as our ancestors knew. For them, Tir Nan Og, the world of the dead and the region of the Sidhe, paralleled Earth, and were as real, as solid. Some human beings can see, especially in the hours of Dawn and Twilight, Faery forms which appear and vanish in the wink of an eye. Women of the Sidhe, legend states, sometimes dwelt in the lands of men: Leanne Sidhe. Fiery chariots of Divine Beings, spoken of as Sky Dragons, once descended to our world. Have things so much changed? Scientists speak tentatively of 'parallel Universes'; people see UFOs which can sometimes appear and disappear suddenly and mysteriously. I saw a group of starlike objects, joined, travel calmly across the sky below a nearby hill known as 'Green Dragon Hill', not far from 'World's End Lane' or Barrowell Green. These place names and others are in a suburb of London, a long way from Cornwall, but just as significant nevertheless.

The West Country, especially Cornwall, was the object of pilgrimage among our Celtic ancestors. Arthurian tradition has the King born at Tintagel, and Cornwall is a land of standing stones, megaliths, stone circles, holy wells and fogous. There seems to be a focus, or some sort of tide coalescing this part of Britain more firmly with the lands of Faery, or perhaps ley-lines uniting the sacred places of old. We are now in the Age of Aquarius, the Water Carrier. We seem to be getting back into the flow of the ancient Tides of Knowledge. The scoffing of the sceptics and atheists can be a challenge. If you accepted them without question, you would never look at television, because it would not exist. Without the invisible tide of radio waves from Space, our modern lives would be quite different. In this Age, Cornwall may yet be a place where even the sceptical may 'see' two worlds meet, may glimpse the 'little people' (UFO or Faery, or both the same) through perhaps finely tuned electronic gadgets, or one day even on the Internet! They probably invented the first World Wide Web. Spiralling beyond Penwith to Lyonesse and the Land of promise.



TAROT REVIEW

A beautiful new tarot set *Tarot 2000 - The Pagan Tarot* has been produced in Cornwall for the New Millenium (£12.95. Alexander Associates, 4 South Street, Fowey PL23 1AR). Compiled by ROBIN PAYNE and illustrated by ROSEMARIE LEWSEY, who also wrote and illustrated the recent book *The Romance of the Stones* [reviewed in MM40], the deck comes with a small booklet, and also a separate book from the same publishers (£8.95). They say that "This tarot is the culmination of a lengthy study and an inspirational attempt to reach back across the centuries to resurrect the lost Pagan series", and the book and booklet both give an interesting background to the vision behind the cards, based for the Major Arcana on its Italian origins, in particular the lost 'Gods and Goddesses' C15th pack of Michelino da Besozzo, and for the Minor Arcana on pagan themes of earth, air, fire and water. The illustrations on the cards perfectly complement this vision with their pagan and fantasy themes. The pack works on many levels, drawing on many esoteric themes and evoking layers of allegorical meaning.

Another tarot pack with Cornwall associations is *The Greenwood Tarot* by CHESCA POTTER, who did all the exquisite illustrations, & MARK RYAN (£25. Harper Collins). Many of the cards were drawn at CAER near Lamorna, and Chesca has drawn on both the ancient sites and the wildwood and its totem animals for her inspiration. She has also produced a Handbook, giving a much deeper meaning and interpretation to the cards. She is also the illustrator of *The Celtic Shaman's Pack*, a Celtic meditation deck of 40 mythological cards, with a book written by JOHN MATTHEWS (£19.99. Element). Chesca has given illustrated talks about both packs to the CEMG, and they are all available from her at PO Box 250, Oxford OX1 1AP.

ADVENTURINE

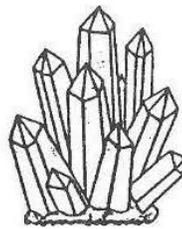
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CORNISH HERITAGE

In 'The Pipers Tune' in MM40 it was reported that the Cornish Stannary Parliament had run out of patience with English Heritage, whom they accused of imposing English signs on Cornish ancient monuments, an offense to "indigeneous Cornish nationals". This has prompted a response from one of our readers, and at the same time the debate has widened in the local press and media.

"Does Rodney Nute [Keeper of the Seal of the Stannary Parliament] not realise that many ancient sites all over 'England' that are now run by 'English Heritage' (i.e Stonehenge being the most famous) are also of pre-English, pre-Roman and pre-Celtic origin, as are similar ancient sites in Cornwall. The wording 'English' Heritage should therefore not apply to all pre Anglo-Saxon sites now under the jurisdiction of 'English' Heritage, anywhere in England, including Cornwall. The Stannary Parliament are hypocritical to be even using the English language both literally and in the spoken context, regardless of them claiming to be a contemporary equivalent of their namesake. Descendants of pre-Angles (English) and even pre-Historic people who live in England do not have the same 'hang-ups' as so called 'Cornish Nationals'. We are all part of the land and Earth no matter what the political landscape of the day may be. The sudden upsurge of Nationalism and its subsequent consequences can still quite clearly be seen throughout the world today, such as in places like Kosovo. The wantant threat of vandalism by the Stannary Parliament only reinforces the extremist mentality in the beliefs of such organisations."

Simon Hayward

Simon's letter throws into sharp relief the on-going debate here in Cornwall between those of a 'nationalist' persuasion who see Cornwall as still being 'different' from England in its customs, its legends, its culture and its heritage, and those who believe that such differences are an invention of the late 20th Century. This feeds into a wider debate about whether there was originally ever a "Celtic" peoples, and whether places like Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Brittany and Cornwall are the last remnants of such a culture. This debate has been raging vociferously in the local press for some while now. It has been given a new twist by reference to Lord Fraser's judgement in relation to the case of *Mandala v Dowell Lee* (1988) which set out the criteria which must be met before a group can be defined as an ethnic group. In summary there are 6 main criteria which apply (a) a long shared history (b) a cultural tradition of its own (c) either a common geographical origin, or descent from a small number of common ancestors (d) a common language, not necessarily common to the group (e) being a minority, or being an oppressed or dominant group, within a larger community. It is claimed that Cornwall is eligible under all 6 criteria through its history (e.g-the Cornish revolts and rebellions), its culture (e.g-the Cornish Ordinalia & Miracle Plays), its religion (e.g the Celtic saints indigenous to Cornwall & other Celtic lands), its language (once died out but now revived) and its geography (being a peninsula). Many Cornish see themselves not as "nationalist" but as "different from England". Indeed, when I was growing up in Cornwall, older people in my village used to speak of "going to England" for the day when they crossed the Tamar! [ed].

THE PIPERS TUNE

The inscribed stone found at Tintagel Castle in 1998 was carved with the name of "Artognov", suggested by English Heritage to mean "Arthur", but repudiated by Professor Charles Thomas [see MM38 p.8-9]. The 6thC inscription "Paterni...Coli Avi Ficit....Artognov" has given rise to various interpretations, including "Arthnou, father of a descendant of Coll made (or had made) [this]", or "Paternus, descendant of Coll made this [for] Artognov". The implied "this" could be referring to perhaps a building to which the inscribed slate might have been attached. The remains of a Site C 10 x 3 metre building have in fact been found there, though the slate was later re-used as a drain cover.

Meanwhile, above the 6th century inscription was the remains of part of an earlier carving by a different hand, of which only the letters AXE remain. Now Roger Irving of Boscastle Pottery has suggested (in "Current Archaeology 163") a possible meaning of this carving. He suggests that it could be part of the name Maxentius, and points out that there was a Roman Emperor of that name reigning between 306-312 CE.



The date of the AXE lettering has been tentatively given by Professor Charles Thomas as around 400 CE, so this would not be impossible. What makes this idea even more interesting is that Maxentius had a co-Emperor (one covering the eastern Empire and the other the west) called Licinius (308-325 CE) who is also commemorated on an inscribed stone in Tintagel Parish Church, only 450 yds from where the slate was discovered. This is indeed a curious 'coincidence' though it has been pointed out that such inscribed stones or milestones do not date any later than the year 341, so the dating of the Tintagel slate at approximately 400 (based on the style of the lettering) places it rather out of sequence. Another correspondent suggests that if the name is indeed Maxentius it may be Maxentius, brother of Budic of Brittany whose interests spanned the west from Brittany to Demetia. So the so-called 'Arthur' slate may indeed contain a name or names, but of Artognov and Maxentius rather than the famous King himself.

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Most back numbers are now sold out, but photocopies can be done as a special service to subscribers and regular readers upon request at £2.00 each. Index available (send SAE).

NOTICEBOARD

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CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES

Thurs Jan 27th Talk: "The Western Mystery Tradition" - Jan Machin

Thurs Feb 24th Talk: "Prehistoric Bodmin Moor" - Peter Herring [CAU]

Thurs Mar 30th Talk: "The Wheel of The Year" - Geraldine Andrew

Thurs Apr 27th The Folklore of West Cornwall" - Martin Matthews [Helston Folklore Museum]

All meetings at the Acorn in Penzance 7.30pm. Membership details from CEMG, 3 Nanturras Row, Goldsithney, Penzance TR20 9HE. Or ring Andy Norfolk on 01209-831519. Or check website at www.cornwt.demon.co.uk.

Also **GEM** [Cornwall General Earth Mysteries] Meets regularly in the Callington area. Contact Joan Wysick on 01579-37056.

PAGAN FEDERATION Regional Conference at Wharnecliffe Arms Hotel, Tintagel *Sat Mar 11th* Speakers & performers include: Marian Green, Philip Shallcross, Cheryl Straffon & Robin Williamson. Details: PO Box 314, Exeter, Devon EX4 6YR.

PAGAN MOOTS

Penzance - meets 2nd Sun each month at Acorn. Tel: 01209-831519.

Pendeen - meets 2nd Tues each month. Tel: Cath on 01736-786106

Truro/Falmouth area - meets 2nd Sat each month. Tel: Dianne 0831-450605

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IMBOLC CELEBRATIONS *Sat*

Feb 5th at Harmony Pottery, Scorrier, Redruth 7.30pm Details:01209-890581

SPRING EQUINOX FULL MOON

Mon Mar 20th with Geraldine Andrew at Tehidy Woods Resources Centre 7.30pm. Details: 01209-890581

BELTANE CELEBRATIONS

Sat Apr 29th - Beltane at Harmony Pottery, Scorrier, Redruth, 7.30pm. Details: 01209-890581

Sun Apr 30th - 12th annual Maypole Dance & feast at Carn Bosavern, St.Just.6.30pm.Details:01736-787612.

Mon May 1st - Obby Oss Day at Padstow. Details: 01841-533449.

Sat May 6th [NB. NOT 8th this year] - Helston Flora Day. Details: 01326-565431.

Sun May 7th - 12th annual Three Wells Walk. Details: 01736-787612.

THE PHOENIX GROUP A mid-Cornwall group studying & offering teachings on the western mystery tradition. Details: Jan Machin 01726-816017.

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CIRCLE Details: Stephen (Golden Eagle) Stangroom, 5 Levant Close, Trewellard, Pendeen, Penzance.

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TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN SUPPLEMENT

The Total Eclipse of the Sun on August 11th 1999 in Cornwall had a profound effect on many people who experienced it not so much as a visual (or non-visual!) effect but as an emotional, spiritual, mystical or psychological happening. This special Meyn Mamvro 4-page supplement includes a selection of reminiscences of that unique event.

TOTALITY

“Thronging the eminence the community gathers
scanning the horizon, searching for chinks
in the total cloud cover, perceptibly thickening,
expectantly waiting for something to appear.
Clock watching to measure the lunar progression,
disappointed at this shrouded solar eclipse.

Then swift as an arrow the Mother of Darkness
races out of the West extinguishing light.
In an eerie twilight, subdued and silent,
awed and unsettled no one knows what to do
as the moon shadow mantles, sensing and feeling,
absorbing the darkness, experiencing day’s night.

No heavenly display to distract my senses,
no comforting ritual to harness that might,
disturbingly ground between opposing forces
on the cosmic millstone my soul is laid bare.
Mind naked and empty I stand in communion,
alone in the crowd I dissolve as tears fall,

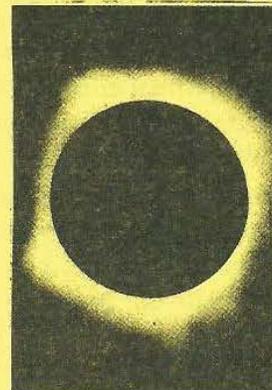
to ponder later this unique encounter
between cosmos and home, creation and self
with ancestral memories of the megalith circles,
moving images of eclipsing light,
alive in me now, invoked by totality
from the collective unconscious, from numinous night.”

Rose Lewis

DRAGON ENERGY ECLIPSED

“On the day, my partner, friends and I sat huddled in blankets on a cold cliff top at Kynance Cove overlooking the Lizard Point. As we watched the clouds slowly part at the critical time of the totality, I saw the Lizard Point as the shape of a dragon. Waking, it rose up and swallowed the sun. A struggle ensued with the archangel Michael holding the balance with an upright sword and scales. I imagined throwing an obsidian ball, which we had taken with us, in the air where it became the eclipse. As it fell to the ground it created splashes in the sand as if in water. Picking it up I wiped it clean of soot and it became crystal clear. As the sun reappeared, balance was restored.” *Karen Deeley*

[i]



SPIRITUAL ECLIPSE

It took months to decide just how and where to experience this once-in-a-lifetime event. In the months, and then weeks, and especially on the preceding Dark Moons, the precise work we needed to do gradually came into sharp focus. Eventually we chose an intensely focussed small group, to take maximum advantage of the unique opportunity to let go of major personal "stuff" on a Dark Moon so powerful that the sun itself would be obscured. (It was odd to realise in talking with other pagans that for some, the sacred marriage of the moon and sun was the primary symbolism of the eclipse - a theme less centrally relevant if you aren't heterosexual). So we made our magical contribution to the protection of our sacred sites over the months beforehand and took the day of the eclipse itself for our magical group of three. Since each of us experienced the Eclipse in slightly different and individual ways, two of us have alternatively interspersed our own personal accounts of the day.

S: "When it arrived, it was hard to believe that Wednesday morning was really the much-anticipated, talked-over and written-about day! The three of us had included a sacred pilgrimage in our ritual, to intensify the sense of something special, apart. So we cast a mobile protective circle around us at home, then walked within it, together but separate, to our local holy well to purify and bless, up the local holy hilltop for fresh wind through our aura and to the standing stone for hugs and grounding."

C: "Although the day turned out to be cloudy and drizzly so the sun was obscured, in one sense that did not matter, as the visual effect of the Total Eclipse was not the only dynamic. The spiritual effect of this unique event was our particular focus, and we therefore prepared to do the whole event as a ritual connection with the Dark Goddess. As we moved through the landscape, we went from social gatherings of people on Carn Eanes to a very separate and private walk across the moors to Carn Kenidjack, chosen by us because of its legendary associations with the spirits of the dead and the otherworld. There once again there was a crowd of people gathered but we found our own separate rocky outcrop, with our backs to the others, so that it felt a very private place."

S: "Our meditative silence deepened as we walked across the moor to Carn Kenidjack. The two of us "felt" first contact, as both independently looked at our watches for the first time at exactly 10.56: a sense of energy, something happening or changing? I was a bit dismayed by all the people on the Carn, and even more by the incessant and intrusive canned music from one of the camps, but we found a private rock far enough from the crowds to hold our own energy. There we did the most powerful invocation I have ever done of the Dark Goddess of death, endings, separation, cutting and letting go. Yes, these were probably the most potent moments we would have in our lives to do such work, and it felt like it! So clear, so focussed, so final, almost vibrating with power. then we each named out loud our offerings to Her, those things we wished to irrevocably let go of - and waited for second contact and the awesome shimmering darkness to complete our magical act."

C: "As we began the main part of the ritual, each spoke of what she wanted to give back to the darkness and to let go out of her life. For me, I was letting go of inappropriate dreams and hopes, and all the emotional and spiritual props that had been sustaining me in my life for many years. This had begun for me before Lammas on Silbury Hill and continued with our women's group Lammas ceremony with the ritual cutting of the corn. The Eclipse for me was thus the culmination of that process, and the final and ultimate giving back of myself, and my emotional, creative and spiritual 'props' to the Goddess of Complete Nothingness. At the moment of Total Eclipse, when a great wave of blackness swept across the Land, I connected in a deeper and more profound way with the spirit of the universe that I call the Goddess than I had ever before, and just gave it all back to Her."

S: "By the time the second contact came, I was stripped to the bone, like Inanna descending the seven gates to the Underworld - no masks, no coverings, no roles left to hide behind. I shook heavily through totality, less from cold as from the utter concentrated power and intensity of those minutes which seemed to be over in only about four breaths. I succeeded in being completely present for them, but they passed so quickly! We sealed our work and toasted with water which had been exposed to the total eclipse and had thus absorbed its energies - now we had them internally as well."

C: "The Eclipse brought up in me feelings of intense emotion and tears, but it also had a very cathartic effect in which I felt free of many burdens that I had created for myself in my life. Afterwards I felt very weak and wiped out, and could scarcely connect with the ritual of re-visioning that we did once the light had returned. We returned from whence we had come across the moors as the final contact of the moon and sun unfolded, and I felt very vulnerable and shaky, as though I had become a baby again. The whole experience was for me very profound and moving, and the spiritual and emotional work I did stayed with me afterwards, and changed me and my life in very many ways."

S: "Sadly for me, the others were too cold/wet/stunned/dissolved to have much energy for the affirmation of new beginnings which we had planned to do next. I seem to do so much letting go in my life, month after month, and I was keen to also avail myself of the cosmic energy of the New Moon second-half of the eclipse. I wanted to give a major boost to the new life, new ways of being, new beginnings I wanted to create. But maybe it was a little too soon to affirm definite hopes and intentions - after all, we had only just died and been born! In the end I did the new visioning work most satisfactorily a few days later with a small group on the Women's Land, where we also did some "no slip back" work to make sure we wouldn't slide back into what we had left behind at the Eclipse. Perhaps partly because of this reinforcement, the Eclipse produced the most effective endings work I have ever done, both in the hugeness of what I let go of and how effectively and totally it worked. Who knows, perhaps our magical focus would have been weakened if we had been distracted by stunning visual effects like diamond rings and coronas? As it was, my attention was entirely with the inner dimensions of the Eclipse, which was a thoroughly satisfying and absorbing experience."

Sheila Bright & Cheryl Straffon

SHATTERING ECLIPSE

“We huddle together on the mound at Sennen’s Old Manor Hotel, waiting for the total eclipse. This is Moon conjunct Sun. It’s also conjunct my natal Pluto. Cloud covers the skies. And I’m wondering about the meaning of what is happening: the meaning of the clouds. At midnight past, the skies are clear, millions of stars sparkling above in the velvet blue; meteors darting here and there, leaving trails of glittering dust as the Peseid shower fast approaches. Now it’s heavily overcast. What on earth’s The Force up to, covering up an event like this, I ask. Clouds roll in FOR the event after days of blue? I feel powerless. With the overcast, our focus is on the earth, not the sky. Darkness rushes in. Birds roost on the church tower. Lighthouses blink across the ocean. Obscured cameras fire in the hills like thousands of lightning bugs flashing in the night, It’s mystical, magical, awesome. Too fast, daylight surges in once more. Dawn for the second time today. “And now we wake up in a new dimension” I say to the group. Within minutes a solid stream of cars flows from Land’s End.

Now what? We’re at a loose end. At the airport an hour later, half the planes already gone. St.Just is mobbed, people jostling and drinking in pubs. I feel depressed, unreal, dejected. I walk away from crowds. In the afternoon all six of us crash, exhausted. I wake up disoriented, fuzzy. On the news, images of the totality I didn’t see, that others saw. The best view in Turkey. I feel cheated. Anger rises in my heart like a hot, red flame. “Anger is stupid”, my head says. “You can’t control the weather”. I’m angry all the same. Surprised, too, how strong. Early evening, I look at the sky. It’s clearing. the cosmos knows what we don’t, I think. Tomorrow, if it’s clear, I’ll be sure. Carn Kenidjack, dusk. Primal drumming from the eclipse camp adjacent. Rainbow streamers shimmering in the sea - the remains of the setting sun. A lone figure, robes blowing in the wind, raises hands and voice to the Spirits of the Four Directions. Peace flows into me once more.

Tuesday early - eclipse plus six. It’s wind and rain, darkness and clouds. Does the land feel for us as we pack to leave? The morning news - Turkey shattered. Eclipse, then earthquake. the earthquake and the eclipse. What’s the connection? Where West meets East, the best view of the cosmic show. I stand astounded. Is this what it means, I ask myself, our overcast eclipse? West Penwith, this sensitive land. Did the cloud protect it from the force of the skies, this tearing apart, this shattering power, the same disruption I felt in my soul?”

Bernadette Cahill

MOONSHADOW FESTIVAL

“We had a sacred space at Grumbla - an 80ft dome - dedicated to consciousness expansion of the human potential in relation to the eclipse. We had a lot of meditation workshops, visualisations, life force energy transformations and honouring each other and the universe in which we live. Many people were moved by the experience of being here and felt they were fulfilling some kind of destiny. During the actual totality there was a great build up of excitement which was made even more emotional by not being able to see the sun. We were more aware of everything around us - people and energy. A lot of people felt a massive sense of relief afterwards”

Deasy Bamford.