

**MÊN-AN-TOL - ARRESTS, RITUALS & ALIGNMENTS**  
**MAZEY DAY - PENWITH'S PAGAN FESTIVAL ●**  
**MERRIE MAIDENS - A NEOLITHIC ART FORM ●**

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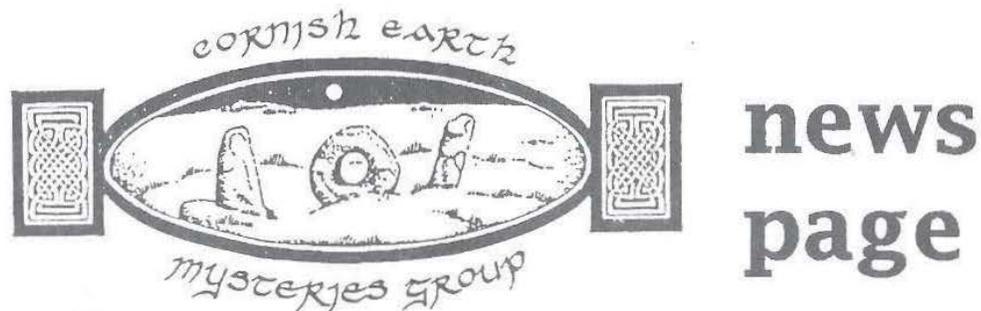
# Meyn Mamvro

## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

After all the dramas and disasters of 1999, it is pleasing to be able to start 2000 with some good news. Those responsible for attacking the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit with home-made 'napalm' (now known to be a mixture of polystyrene and petrol) have been caught. Full details follow inside, including a special feature on the effect all of this had on the West Penwith community, and a look at some of the claims of the perpetrators in their 'Friends of the Stone' letter. While there is relief that the attackers cannot now carry out their threat of further destruction, there still remains the sense of shock and outrage that it happened at all, as well as the cost and inconvenience of having to clean up the stones, estimated to be about £10,000. Fortunately, with the conviction of those responsible, it will now be possible for English Heritage/CAU to claim the money back from a special compensation fund, and we all hope that the stones may once again be restored to their original state. Meanwhile, the consequences for the pagan community, as reported on p.4-5, have been quite difficult, with differences of approach and conduct highlighted. Let us now hope that matters can now settle down and that everyone, including the sites, can be left in peace for a while.

To that end, it feels good that "summer is a coming-in", with the annual round of Maypole Dance, Padstow Obby Oss Day, the annual Three Wells Walk, Helston Furry Dance, and Penzance's Golowan Festival about to unfold. There are also an attractive number of walks and events this Summer, organised by the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group and others, and full details are included with this MM. Indeed, events and groups are now getting so numerous in Cornwall, it gets increasingly difficult to include them all on the Noticeboard page. Just how large and expansive the community has become was evident from the 2nd regional Pagan Federation Conference in Tintagel in March. I was pleased to be invited to give a presentation on 'Goddesses in the West Country' and was astonished to find 300 or so people there for the Conference. Everyone I met said how much they had enjoyed it, with good talks by Ronald Hutton, Marian Green, Stephen Hall and the Golowan Band, and a performance in the evening by Robin Williamson, and congratulations are due to Lavannah Morgan and others for excellent organisation. Together with the huge New Age Festival in November, this year in its 10th year, it is obvious that Cornwall has become something of a mecca for those interested in alternative and pagan matters, as well as those who love the sites themselves. It is therefore with some sadness that we record the closing of the Quay Bookshop in Penzance. Over the last 15 years they have been good friends to MM, and their passing leaves a real hole. Let's hope that others will arise to take their place.



The Winter series of presentations started at The Acorn in January 2000 with a talk by **Jan Machin** on "The Western Mystery Tradition". Jan runs a Group in St.Austell, and has a great deal of knowledge about this subject. Her talk was fascinating, and ranged over the Kabbalah, magick and the Matter of Britain. She kept the well-attended audience interested and stimulated, and the discussion session was witness to the interest she provoked.

The February talk was by CAU archaeologist **Peter Herring** who gave a beautiful slide presentation on "Prehistoric Bodmin Moor". Peter's love for the Moor and its ancient sites and tors, especially Rough Tor, was inspiring and he really brought the quality of the Moor and its earliest inhabitants alive. The talk included examples of linear and astronomical alignments between ancient sites and landscape features, as well as what he described as the 'landscape design' capabilities of prehistoric peoples. It was quite an insight into how archaeology and earth mysteries have now converged.

March brought friend and CEMG supporter **Geraldine Andrew** with a slide talk on "The Wheel of the Year". She began by giving an historical overview of Goddess spirituality from all over the world, and then paused for a candlelit and silent meditation on the Burning Times, that was an unusual and affecting idea. Finally, in the second half she talked about the revival of paganism and the celebrations of the Festivals today under her organisation at Harmony Pottery. It was a lovely well-appreciated talk.

Finally, this year's season of talks finished with **Kelvin Jones** (who replaced Martin Matthews who was unwell). Kelvin gave an informed and intriguing talk on "Folklore and Witchcraft", a subject about which he is something of an expert, having researched the ancient lore of Cornwall and the reports of witchcraft in the area, as well as being the publisher of over 80 books on the subject. It was a befitting end to a very varied season of talks and presentations, and a pleasure to see how the CEMG continues to entertain and produce such a range of topics and subjects.

*Full details of all forthcoming CEMG events and talks may be found at the Meyn Mamvro website on [www.cornwt.demon.co.uk](http://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](mailto:Cornish_Pagans@onelist.com)*

**WEST PENWITH FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY** is open to all interested in the ancient sites and to helping to work to protect them. They have an on-going project to clear the vegetation at Bodrifty Courtyard House settlement. Contact: Greg Clouter 01736-332731

## SACRED SITES NEWS

### MÊN-AN-TOL/LANYON QUOIT ATTACK-2ARRESTED

The perpetrators of the fire attack on the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit last November 5th have been caught by police and sentenced. The two attackers were Ian Thomas Woolridge, aged 18, from Boscarn Farm near St.Buryan, and Benjamin James Warner, aged 19, from Trewellard near Pendeen. Both pleaded guilty to a charge of criminal damage and were sentenced at the Magistrates Court to 200 hours Community Service and a £250 fine each. *[see p.4-9 for fuller coverage of the event]*

### POSSIBLE 4TH CIRCLE FOUND AT THE HURLERS

A possible new stone circle has been discovered at the 3-circle Hurlers complex on Bodmin Moor by CAU archaeologist Peter Herring. It lies directly NE of the 3 existing circles on the same axis at approx. SX2587 7160, but is much smaller than the other 3, being probably less than 20 metres in diameter. There are the remains of about half a dozen stones on the ground that, given their position and shape, could have originally formed a stone circle, or perhaps a cairn circle. The distance from the northernmost circle of the other 3 is about a stone circle's width, giving rise to the speculation that there may even have been a 5th circle between the three and this one.

All circles are in a line pointing towards Rillaton Barrow, where a magnificent gold cup was found, and may originally have formed a processional way across the moor. Peter Herring told MM that he believes that there is about a 70% chance that this 4th circle is a genuine megalithic site.



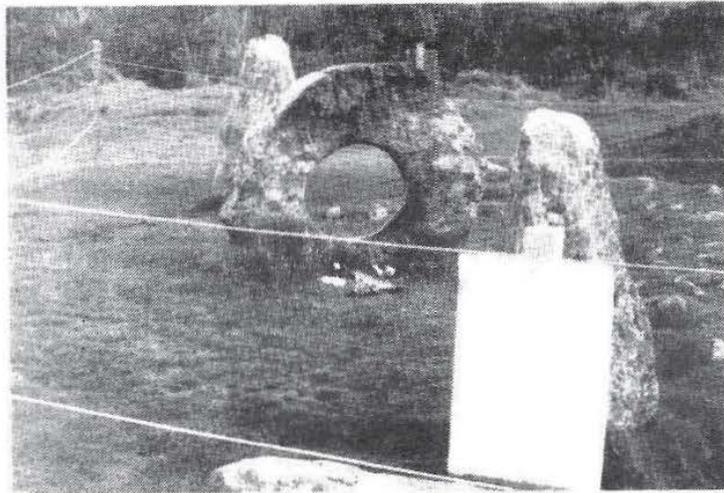
### GORSE CUT BACK AT TREGESAL CIRCLE

A request by some local residents, including Penwith Native American Circle co-ordinator Stephen Stangroom, for the gorse to be cut back at and around Tregesal Stone Circle to make access easier, received a positive response from Ann Preston-Jones at the Archaeological Unit, who arranged for some BTCV volunteers to carefully work at the site in March. Mindful of the outcry that followed the gorse cut-back at Boscawen-ûn last Summer, the Sacred Sites Group were keen to allay fears and reassure people that the cut-back would be handled sensitively, so publicised the action in the local press beforehand. This resulted in general support for the action, and the BTCV volunteers were joined on the day by some local pagans, who together managed successfully to cut back most of the gorse which was choking the inside of the circle.

### ...AND LARGE GORSE FIRE BURNS AT OTHER SITES

A few weeks later, a large area of the West Penwith Moors were set alight in a huge gorse fire that burned throughout the night and the day, and destroyed the gorse and vegetation over a large area of some 8-10 square miles. Ancient sites, such as the Mên-an-Tol, the Nine Maidens stone circle, Lanyon Quoit and the area around Watch Craft and Carn Gulva were all affected, with the flames leaping as high as 15ft, fanned by a strong east wind and dry conditions. It will take at least a year or so for the land to recover, and meanwhile everything around the sites looks very blackened and burnt.

## THE MÊN-AN-TOL - ATTACKS AND CURSES



The “napalm” attack (actually polystyrene and petrol) on the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit in November 1999 was not only a violent assault on the sites, it also created quite a stir in the West Penwith pagan community. St.Buryan witch Cassandra Latham reacted almost immediately by placing a curse around the stones, which she said would protect the holed stone site by becoming activated by anyone who approached them with malicious intent. She added: “The curse will be very personal to the person or persons doing the damage. What they sow will come back to them, of that I am sure.” Other pagans in the area did their own healing and protection rituals for the stones, but it was the nature of the “heavy duty cursing” ritual, that involved setting up a “psychic gunpowder trail”, that caused some controversy. A “Cornish Witch” from North Cliffs wrote to *The Cornishman* newspaper, suggesting that it was the invocation of the malevolent energy of the spriggans at the Eclipse by Cassandra and others that might have contributed to the attack. “Better by far” she added, “to protect such sites with a curse of the awe-ful power of love, healing and peace that creates wonderment at their untouchable beauty, than with the ugly energy and anger of a curse of retribution”. She concluded: “Cassandra is not the only witch in Cornwall. Most of us go quietly about our business of being in service to the universe, our healing of the land, its spirits, and its inhabitants; and many of us neither use or approve of her methodology”.

The controversy also continued on the pages of the Cornish Pagans e-mail list, where local pagans, such as Debbie & Kelvin Jones, Andy Norfolk and Cheryl Straffon debated aspects of how the pagan response, both to the events of the Summer and the Eclipse, and the Mên-an-Tol attack, had been handled. There was some feeling that perhaps the response to the attack may have been better, had the pagan community come to a joint decision in advance about what ritual(s) might have been most appropriate, and to have met up at the site together to do it, rather than having it reported back afterwards. But events at the time when *The Cornishman* got the anonymous letter and photographs moved very fast, and it was always easy to be wise in retrospect.

Clearly, the pagan community, now a large(ish) and quite diverse community, is making quite an impact on West Cornwall. Another letter to *The Cornishman* showed how closely that community was being watched from outside. The letter, from a Mr.R. Saines of Penzance, tried to understand the motives of those involved in the attack. He suggested that "Pagans are no longer a relatively small, homogeneous group, but now constitute a large tribe of diverse individuals. This has given rise to different interpretations of ritual worship, which in turn has led to factionalism, with no one faction having hegemony over the whole movement. At present Paganism, at least at a local level, speaks with no single, unified voice of authority". He went on to suggest that "The Friends of the Stone" (the anonymous two responsible for the attack) "bear the classic hallmarks of a body of people intent upon creating a privileged class within the Pagan fraternity: a self appointed Priesthood, its actions determined by the possession of arcane knowledge derived from sacred texts unavailable to ordinary people." He went on to suggest that what we were seeing was the rise of a religious or quasi-religious sect, such as happened in the early days of Judaism and Christianity, making a bid for power and authority over the Pagan movement locally.

This idea was replied to by Debbie Jones, who felt that the attack on the stones should give us all pause for thought about all the publicity accorded to the sites at and around the Eclipse. This may have contributed to the attack as "the seemingly endless use of the sites as ritual backdrops may have produced this violent action as a form of protest". She also felt that curses, challenges and counter-challenges would only serve to heighten the tension and further the publicity afforded to the perpetrator/s, and made a plea: "Can we all, as mature and responsible individuals, continue to watch over and guard the sites in a quiet, unsensational and dignified manner?"

Cassandra defended her use of the 'curse' at the sites. "It was fuelled by golden energies...and also works on the premise of 'return to sender'. All we are doing is returning any malicious energies aimed at the stones back on itself with quite a bit of 'oomph'. There is no revenge coming from us, simply fate; 'what goes round, comes round'. All the sites are vulnerable and need a lot of TLC, especially at the moment". That much, at least, everyone seemed to be in agreement about. Later, *The Cornishman* newspaper suggested that the curse had in fact worked, together with the vigilance of local people, as the perpetrators had not returned to attack or remove the stones, as they had originally threatened to do.

Then, much to everyone's relief and a little surprise, the "Friends of the Stone" were arrested, charged and sentenced. It turned out that they were local lads, one of whom had already been cautioned for other offences, and therefore had fingerprints and DNA samples that could be matched. They claimed that it was a prank that had backfired and had not meant to cause such trouble, but the matter of the anonymous letter, which showed something of an 'insiders' knowledge of occult and other matters, was never explained. The damage to the stones was estimated at £10,000, and English Heritage have now given approval for a clean-up operation, which should take place shortly. The stones, and the pagan community, have now returned to a calmer state of mind.

*Readers Write*  
 about ... **THE**  
**STONES ATTACK**  
**DESECRATION**



"We read the article about the attacks on Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit with interest as we saw the results ourselves during a flying visit to Cornwall at the end of November. How anyone can desecrate such sites, be they pagan or otherwise, which are an intrinsic part of the spiritual and cultural heritage of Cornwall is beyond us. We are a couple of 'outsiders' who have come to love and respect all aspects of the culture and heritage of Kernow, and cannot comprehend the nature of the people desecrating the sites, and threatening to desecrate more of them. There really are some very odd people around."

*Keith & Maureen Osborne, Cambridge*

**MALAISE IN SOCIETY**

"The news about the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit was shocking and disturbing. I think the reasons you give - if one can really understand such mindlessness - in your editorial (in MM41) are apt. I feel it is also a reflection of a wider malaise in society. It can be seen, for example, in the recent phenomenon of road rage, etc. I think it can be partly linked also to the indictment of the ubiquitous electromagnetic pollution affecting the brain. Anyway, my initial reaction is that the community of West Penwith, pagans and all, must surely now be united in the face of such a happening, at least in the preservation of the local heritage."

*Raymond Cox, Halesowen*

**DARK FORCES**

"It seems clear to me that those responsible are followers of the dark side of things. Note too the timing, just when the power of the Dark Goddess was at her height (Nov 7th/8th). However, that does not exclude the possibility that some fundamentalist Christian group was responsible, whilst pretending to be a pagan group, to avoid retribution and put the police investigation on to the wrong trail. However, I do not think that likely. Christian fundamentalists are not known for their cleverness or knowledge of other beliefs, and the 'communique' from the Friends of the Stone seems quite knowledgeable of the darker forces. Also, it contains the same arrogance and selfishness I've come to associate with the followers of the dark side! The sophisticated use of 'napalm' [*polystyrene and petrol*]; the careful planning for November 5th as cover; the taking of the photos; the communique to back up the action - it's like a black magic Angry Brigade! The only time I've come across anything similar is in Andy Collins' *The Black Alchemist*, where he mentions a group of black magic practitioners called 'The Friends of Hekate' who practised dark rites in the depths of Clapham Woods, including starting fires by psi-electrical, paranormal means. Later they burn down a tree that is in the centre of an energy matrix in Danbury Churchyard in order to open up a 'wormhole' into the site through which 'dark entities' can pass. A watch needs to be kept on all ancient sites in Cornwall for the foreseeable future"

*Robin Ellis, Hathersage*

## WHO WERE THE 'FRIENDS OF THE STONE'?

Although we can all breathe a sigh of relief that those responsible for attacking the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit were caught, and that there are not still some maniacs wandering around with home-made napalm ready to attack more sites, there remains the unexplained curiosity of the anonymous letter sent to *The Cornishman* from the 'Friends of the Stone' after the attacks. MM has obtained a copy of the original letter, and, at the request of several readers, we can now publish it in full for the first time:-

*"Within this communication there is enclosed a number of photographs, taken by myself and my colleagues, that we thought might be of interest to you. As you well know, November 5th, Guy Fawkes Night, has just passed. Myself and my group, Friends of the Stone, think that this is a very important time of the year and must be celebrated accordingly. This, however, was merely a catalyst to a more significant end. There are greater forces at work that evoke our interest.*

*On the sacred night of November 5th myself and my associates travelled to two of the great ancient monuments in the local area in an attempt to make them better, or at least more aesthetically pleasing. Using stolen Napalm we systematically set fire to them and immortalised the moment in the photos you see before you. We have our reasons for doing this.*

*You will recognise the structures as Men-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit, both engulfed in flame. To us, this was a finely planned worship to something you could not possibly comprehend. The reason for doing this was because these may be the last photos you see of your precious landmarks. For centuries now the meaning of these great monuments has been misconstrued and wrongly passed down through generations of now uneducated people. You do not deserve the heritage these monuments hold and therefore we intend to act further. By this time next week, Men-an-Tol will be gone. It shall be set up again, correctly aligned with pertinent sacred stones, in my back garden. The photos are an apt warning that you have no control over this occurrence. We now have over 100 followers and this will be a shrine to us and only us.*

*Lanyon Quoit will be destroyed. Better rubble on the ground than a fake prophet, misunderstood and misconstrued by thousands of non-believers. Any attempt to stop us will be met with further burnings, each acting as a worship to strengthen us.*

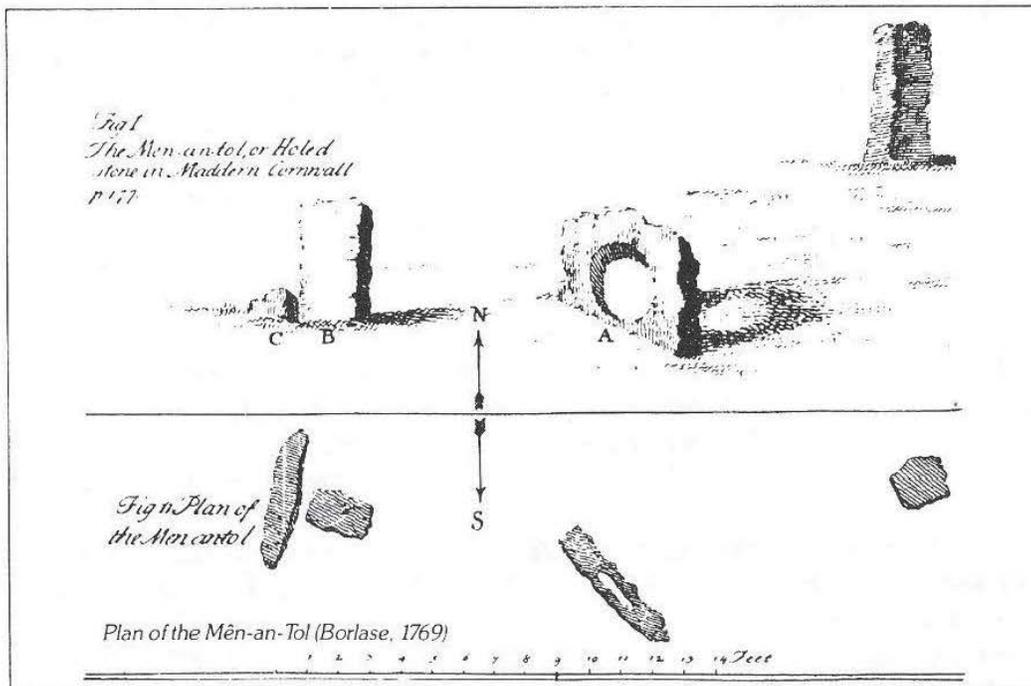
*Friends of the Stone"*

The language of this letter is quite startling, and seems to show an articulate awareness of fundamentalist thinking ("finely planned worship"), and a detailed knowledge of the sites themselves. "For centuries now the meanings of these great monuments has been misconstrued" they say. Lanyon Quoit is described as a "fake prophet" and the Mên-an-Tol as not being correctly aligned. This seems to show at least some knowledge about these sites, which it is possible they obtained from local books about the monuments. If so, they evidently had done their homework well, and have gone to some lengths to justify and explain their actions. For, as we shall see in the following article, Lanyon Quoit is in some regards a "fake", and the Mên-an-Tol could indeed be described as being "not properly aligned"

## THE MÊN-AN-TOL - NOT PROPERLY ALIGNED?

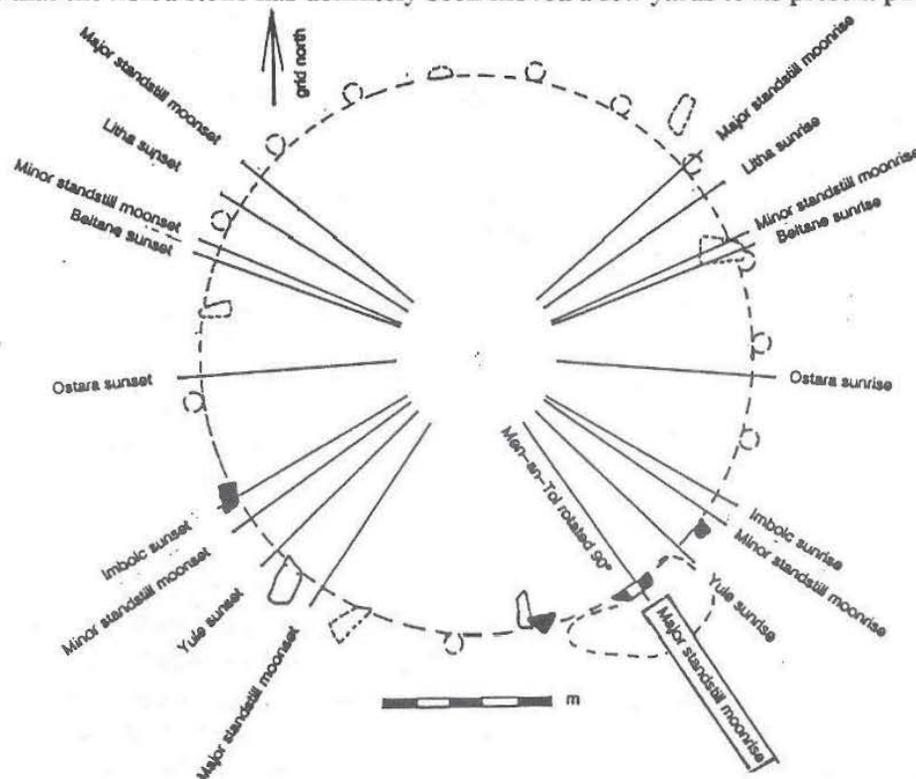
The 'Friends of the Stone' (now known to be local young men) in their letter to *The Cornishman* say that Lanyon Quoit is a "fake prophet", misunderstood and misconstrued by thousands of non-believers. There is a kernel of truth here. It is of course a false reconstruction. The original Quoit, itself the denuded remains of a chambered tomb, collapsed in 1815 in an exceptionally violent autumn storm, so that only the northern support stone remained upright. It was re-erected in 1824 but with shorter uprights (so that no longer could "a man and a horse" ride underneath) and probably in different positions, so that it now looks so untypical of other Quoits, such as Chûn, Mulfra, Zennor and Trethevey.

As far as the Mên-an-Tol goes, the letter writer says that the monument is not "correctly aligned", so it will be removed to his back garden, where it will be set up with other sacred stones. So what does this mean? Well, once again there is perhaps some truth here. The three stones that now make up the monument, one holed stone and two uprights, may not have always been in line as they are now. In a sketch made by William Borlase in 1769, the three stones are in a triangular arrangement, so that if the drawing is correct (and Borlase's plans were not always so), at least one of the stones would subsequently have had to have been moved to bring it into its present setting.



However, in 1992 the Cornwall Archaeological Unit excavated the site and concluded that the three stones in their present position form part of an arc, which in itself is part of an original stone circle, the other stones being buried in the ground, and forming a probable 19 in all. If true, this could mean that the holed stone either formed part of that circle, or was directly associated with it.

But what, if anything, was it aligned to? In its present position there are no obvious explanations. The hole and 2 uprights are orientated in a direction which makes no specific alignments, neither to neighbouring sites, landscape features, nor significant astronomical positions. But the CAU have suggested that the stone has been moved at right angles from its present original position which would have been tangential to the circle with observations made through the hole to the NNW or SSE. If this were the case, then it gets much more interesting, because when viewed from the centre of the circle, the moon would rise, framed by the holed stone, at its major southern standstill (148°) every 18.6 years, a beautiful piece of earth and sky magic. There are also the remains of a possible mound next to the holed stone, which may have been a barrow, and the holed stone may have been the entrance stone to this barrow. In its present location that would mean that the moon alignment would *not* have been visible from the centre of the circle, as the barrow would have been in the way, but it is just possible that the holed stone may have been on the southern edge of the barrow, allowing the full moon light to rise and enter the chamber at the major southern standstill. If so, this means that the holed stone has definitely been moved a few yards to its present position.



So what are we to make of all this? Did the letter writers and attackers know any of this speculative and rather difficult-to-obtain material? Or was it just a coincidence that they talked about the monument being incorrectly aligned? Or were they referring to some mysterious theory of their own? Although they have been charged and convicted, this aspect of the event remains a puzzle. [CS]

**REFERENCES:** *The Mên-an-Tol - a hole new puzzle* (MM22 p.4-5); *The Moon-an-Tol* - Kris Bond (MM26 p.6-9); *The Mên-an-Tol Circle Observatory* - Andy Norfolk (MM29 p.5-7).

## THE MÊN-AN-TOL: THE GYPSY SWITCH

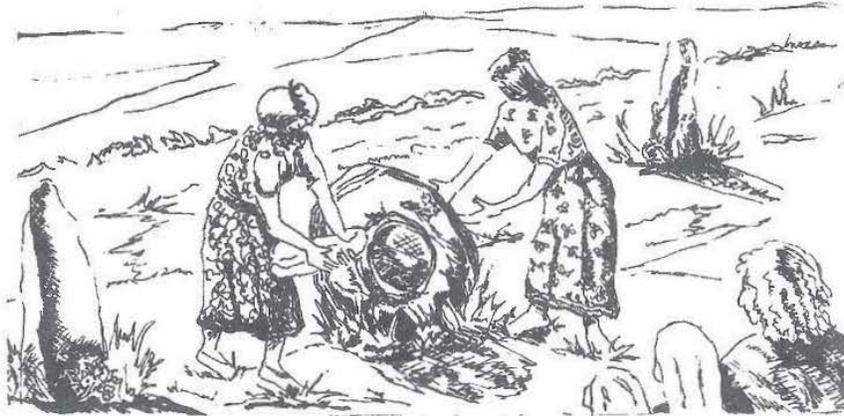
by Modesto & Janet Gutierrez

Several years ago Janet read a work by Charles DeLint entitled *The Little Country* that tells the story of a woman living in Mousehole who becomes enchanted and reduced in size to that of the wee folk. Her friends, in order to return her to her normal size, take her to a stone north of the town to pass her through a stone with a circular hole in it, which must have been the Mên-an-Tol. It was a bright day as we drove past Morvah and parked on the gravel across from the Mên-an-Tol Studio. The stony path was actually hot as we walked up the lane formed by the hedges on each side. Hot and dusty, we climbed the stile on our right and walked the short path to the holed stone.

As we approached the site, we reviewed what we knew of the site. Passage through the holed stone, against the sun, is an act to secure good health, or to cure an illness, or perhaps to seek good harvests. A more modern use would be for a couple to hold hands through the stone to confirm an engagement. Proper use of the holed stone required a child to be passed through three times and an adult nine times, nine being a number that appears at other sites such as The Nine Maidens stone circle just up the path from the Mên-an-Tol.

On the edge of the clearing we passed a stone that had blue flowers laid at its base. As with most sites we visit we kept to the outside path to get an overview of the site before approaching the stones. The stones themselves were surrounded by a group of six people, a young boy and girl, three adults and a baby in arms, giving the appearance of a family. On approaching closer it was obvious that it was a gypsy family, not only in dress but in facial features, which I easily recognised since I am part Gypsy. The same type of flowers which were at the base of the stone we had passed were also at the base of the uprights and the holed stone. The flowers appeared again in a garland around the heads of the baby and women, which went well with their long flowing floral dresses. The man had on a suit jacket, vest and a white shirt and no tie.

We sat ourselves down directly across from the stones, perhaps 50 feet away, and just watched. At first the young children were playing, chasing each other around the stones and occasionally through the holed stone. Then somehow the atmosphere changed, and the children retreated to the edge of the clearing, and the adults arranged themselves around the stone. The two women stationed themselves on each side of the holed stone, the man off to the side. The older woman passed the baby through the stone to the younger women and continued to do so several times. Not realizing at the moment what we were watching, we did not count how many times. However even from our distance there was no mistaking the seriousness of those involved. If words were spoken, we could not hear them from that distance. The group then moved back from the stone and, as if by cue, the younger children joined them. They gathered up their things, left a bouquet of flowers tied up with greenery by the stones and left. We were left there, along with two other couples, wondering what we had just seen.



[c] Geraldine Andrew

Now it was our turn to visit the stones, and of course we had to crawl through. On the way out we found that the outlying stone now had an ear of corn and some bread to accompany the flowers. I am not great with flowers but these blue flowers looked much like Forget Me Nots that were growing on the hedges we passed on the way in. Still enthralled by what we had just seen, we turned right up the path to a field festooned with blue flowers to see the menhir Men Scryfa, and from there continued on to the Nine Maidens stone circle. It had been a rather unique experience. It's one thing to visit these stones and try to visualize how they might have been used, and quite another to see people still using them with reverence and appreciation for their strength and mystery.

## **A Golden Dawn Talisman**

**for health and abundance - comes to you  
complete with a mantra to change your life!**

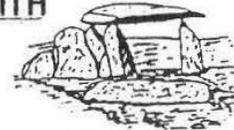
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## LESSER-KNOWN SITES IN WEST PENWITH



NORTH AREA (2)  
by RAYMOND COX



The whole site at Bosporthennis (SW438 360), a remote and lonely region beneath Hannibal's Carn, is so widespread that it must have been a large village settlement in the Iron Age period. Its best and most intriguing structure is the curious Beehive Hut, in the corner of a field and actually quite central within the whole complex

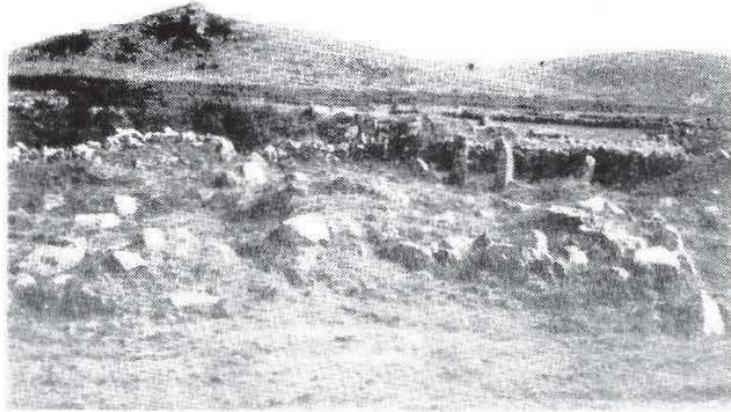
It is a round, corbelled chamber 13ft (4.0m) across, connected to a rectangular room 11ft by 7ft (3.3 by 2.1m) by a big low doorway. There is a small window in the rectangular room and an entrance in the round chamber which are more modern. The walls of the hut reach 7½ft(2.3m)high



This most fascinating building is one of only two of such in West Penwith, the other being at Carn Euny. Their purpose is of some speculation. They are named after their shape, but it is thought they could be connected with fogous rather than be simply rooms, as they are unlike other rooms of courtyard house settlements. Apparently the Beehive Hut had remnants of turf covering its roof 150 years ago, and rubble around it could have meant that it was covered by a mound to create a hollow dome with a short entrance passage. Its orientation is to the southeast. There is also a mysterious recess at floor level in the round chamber.

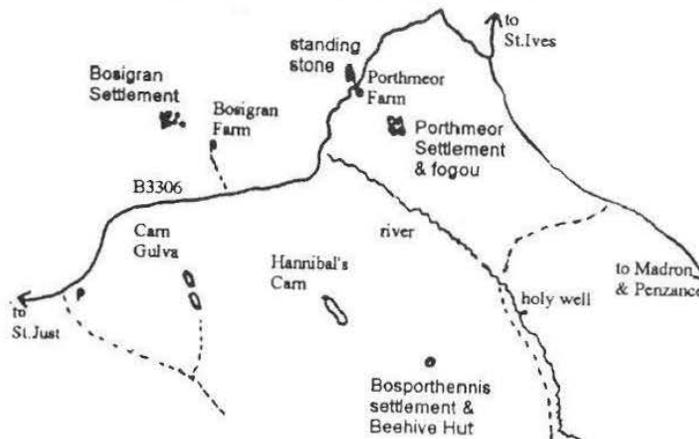
Altogether this is a 'must see' place, and the whole of Bosporthennis settlement is one to remember. But visit on a clear day as the extent of the settlement as such would make all the sites within it hard to find if mist descends, even though its atmosphere of questioning and searching would be enhanced.

Bosigran Courtyard House Settlement (SW244 371) which I visited with your editor caught us rather by surprise. A few fields west of Bosigran Farm, this is a large open site, over two or three fields, with easily recognisable features and quite photogenic. Carn Galvar is the prominent backdrop, and once again, as with many sites below such hills, one wonders if such hills were sacred ancestral visionary places. Galvar itself holds much older, Bronze Age remains. Here at Bosigran grassy fields covered with daisies awaited us.



The settlement itself was recorded by Hirst in 1937 as having two courtyard houses, two hut circles and fragments, terraces and a possible fortification. Subsequently, this widely-scattered and quite beautiful settlement was recognised as having a complex of features including four courtyard houses, a roundhouse, hut circles and an associated field system. Included is the remains of low grass-covered banks, dry stone wallings incorporated into field walls, as are other of the round and rectangular compartments. The latter may be part of a third phase of courtyard house history, perhaps a fold or garden used by the occupants of the attached house. In a central position in the settlement is a courtyard house with three prominent standing stones near the south-western edge of the large chamber, with a fourth recumbent stone. Altogether this site is a gem, all the more so for its clarity, beauty of setting and that quality of unexpected discovery.

Some way away to the north-east of Bosigran Farm is another courtyard house and other remains, including a possible second house, and mutilated by more recent huts or 'crows' as they are known. Also there is a Round with a big wall, part of which is missing. However, this site bears little comparison with its neighbour, is less distinguishable - or distinguished - and offers none of the same elation.



## MAZEY DAY -A PAGAN FESTIVAL REVIVED

BY CHERYL STRAFFON

This year (2000) marks the 10th year of Penzance's Midsummer Festival called Golowan, the Feast of St.John (from the Cornish *Gol-yowan* = the vigil or wake of St.John). The week's festivities culminate in Mazey Day, which occurs on the Saturday nearest to St.John's Day, June 24th: in fact this year it will be on St.John's Day itself. St.John's Day is the Christianisation of the old pagan midsummer solstice, which generally happens on June 21st (though occasionally on the 20th or 22nd), and the Golowan Festival, and Mazey Day in particular, though a revived festival, contains many of the original pagan elements that continued to be celebrated in Penzance and the surrounding district right up until the end of the 19th century. Caroline White, the Mayor of Penzance has commented: "Travellers from the Mediterranean lands and the Celtic world, trading for tin and bronze, must have taken back vivid stories of the bonfires blazing on the carns of Penwith, and the Serpent Dance, winding through a maze of burning tar barrels, led by the powerful emblem of the Winter and Summer solstice, Penglaz."

The Festival was first recorded in the 18th Century by William Borlase who wrote: "In Cornwall the Festival Fires, call'd Bonfires, are kindled on the eve of St.John Baptist and St.Peter's Day, and Midsummer is thence, in the Cornish tongue, called Goluan, which signifies both Light and Rejoicing." These bonfires were vividly described by William Bottrell and Robert Hunt in the 1870s. Bonfires were kindled on all the cairns and hills round Mount's Bay. Fire crackers and tar barrels were lit and flaming torches swung round. "Then the villagers, linked in circles hand-in-hand, danced round the bonfires (to some wild native song) to preserve themselves against witchcraft, and, when they burnt low, one person detached himself from the rest and leaped through the flames to insure himself from some special evil. The old people counted these fires and drew a preassage from them." These bonfires are still lit today on the holy hilltops on June 23rd by the Old Cornwall Society, and, whilst they have hitherto been rather staid affairs with pasty-eating and hymn-singing, in recent years the one on Chapel Carn Brea has become more enlivened when local pagans have gone to drum and dance, and one year, even persuaded the local Vicar join in the dance as well!

At the same time on Midsummer Eve, long before sunset, groups of girls "neatly dressed and decked with garlands, wreaths, or chaplets of flowers, would be seen dancing in the streets." The girls' dresses were white and sewed or pinned with rows of laurel leaves, often spangled with gold leaf. Small wooden hoops, wreathed with green boughs and garlands of flowers, were also worn over one shoulder and under the opposite arm. This custom has been carried over into Mazey Day itself, when groups of children and adults from local schools and youth clubs parade through the streets, accompanied by bands, displaying huge dramatic effigies, which in the past have included the Green Man, a Sea Witch, and spirits and other-worldly beings. Last year's effigy was of a particularly dramatic and powerful black Dragon.

The Parades also feature the Mazey Day emblem of two black effigy dancers surrounded by a serpent, a logo that has in the past earned the whole festival some criticism of being too 'pagan' [see MM31 p.6]. This is often reinforced by the Mock Mayor, sometimes called the Lord of Misrule, who wears a large pentagram embroidered on his back!



In fact, the whole Mazey Day festival does have a very contemporary pagan or anarchic feel to it. It is a popular public festival that feels as if it belongs to the people, for, although financially supported by the Town and District Councils, it is organised by a local Golowan Committee, and manages to maintain a freshness and spontaneity that would undoubtedly be squashed if it were an "official" event.

This is nowhere more apparent than in the final dance of the day, the Serpent Dance, which gives Mazey Day its name and *raison d'être*. Kelvin Jones has suggested<sup>1</sup> that "Mazey" comes from the Cornish dialect word "mazed", as in bewildered or disorientated. He believes that this would originally have been linked to an exhaustive, trance like state which he says "would certainly make sense when we consider the function of many pagan festivals - that is, to put recipients into a trance or shamanic state so that either fertility or divinatory rituals might be performed." By the 19th century this had descended into a general air of drunkenness and debauchery, which eventually put a stop to the festivities. Stephen Hall, the Golowan organiser, says that Mazey comes from the maze-like meanderings of the Serpent dancers, as they weaved in and out of the streets and houses. This Mazey or Serpent Dance was recorded by Bottrell as something called "threading the needle", and by J.S.Courtney in 1845 who described it thus: "The line is formed without any regard to the number engaged, excepting to keep in mind the old proverb of 'the more, the merrier'. The two individuals at the upper end then hold high their hands, and the whole party, beginning with the opposite extremity, rush quickly through; this of course reverses their position, and it is now the turn of those who at first held up their hands, to be the leaders of the thread. Thus alternating, rush after rush takes place, with shouts and laughter, until weariness compels them to desist".

<sup>1</sup> Kelvin I. Jones *Penzance Customs and Superstitions* (Oakmagic Publications, 1997)

This Serpent Dance has been revived, and still manages to have the spontaneous and exuberant feel to it observed by Courtney. There are no formal dancers as at Helston's Furry Day, but rather all the townspeople are invited to join in. The Dance starts out from St. John's Hall at 4.30pm, and, led by the Golowan band, weaves in and out and around the streets, as groups and chains of people form, break, make an 'eye' (of the needle) or an archway, run through, and twist and spiral around. Taking part is an exciting, invigorating and powerfully hypnotic experience, as the dance takes about an hour and a half to finally wind its way to the waterfront at the bottom of Penzance. Jan Fennell has suggested<sup>2</sup> that this dance incorporated a mystic type of spiral weaving, representing both the sun's pattern through the sky, and also connected with the great natural transformation cycle of life, death and rebirth. She also points out that mazes are frequently called Troys (as in Troy Town Maze on St. Agnes, Isles of Scilly) which may come from an old Celtic word meaning to twist or turn. Scandinavian fishermen used to dance around pebble mazes before setting out to sea, and a dance called 'Troy Town' is still danced today. The word survives in the Cornish 'troyl' which means a ceilidh, so we have another clear link between the spiral paths, music and dancing.

Towards the end of the Serpent or Mazey Dance, along Chapel Street, the Obby Oss Penglaze emerges and is danced to the end of the dance, led by the teaser, local witch Cassandra Latham. This is perhaps the most pagan part of the whole festival, the Oss being a powerful shamanistic figure



with a real horse's skull. Old Penglaze was formerly a character with a Obby Oss who made his appearance at the Christmas mummer's plays, and may even have been in use as long ago as the 16th century, for when the Spaniards burnt Paul church in 1595, they recorded that the church contained an effigy of a horse "carved in wood, greatly embellished and serving as an idol worshipped by the people". Penglaze has now been transferred to these Midsummer celebrations, on the model of Padstow and its Obby Oss. It is none the less authentic for that, and its appearance a powerful climax to Mazey Day. Thus it may be a revived festival, but its roots go back long into our past. It has, in the words of the Festival organisers, "succeeded in bringing together the best of the past with the music and cultures of the Celtic world and beyond" and in doing so has created a public festival that allows the continuity of pagan tradition to thrive.

<sup>2</sup> Jan Fennell *Midsummer Dances: An Insight* (South West Junction, April-July 1982)

## **THE MERRIE MAIDENS -A RITUALISTIC ART FORM**

*by* **RODNEY BLUNSDON**

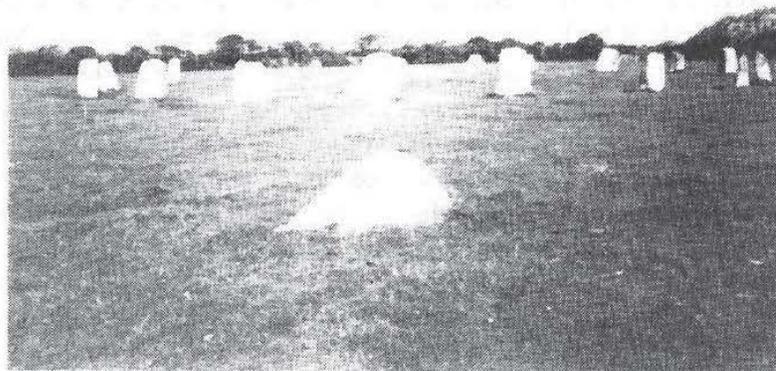
Every year thousands of people trudge to these lonely rings and stones hoping to sense some of their surviving atmosphere, for these are some of the surviving memorials to these prehistoric peoples, who with momentous effort raised these pillars for reasons that few can hope to explain. There is only emptiness, and alone in the silence of the stones, the unknowing visitor receives few answers to their questions.

Today, like the dark fingers of time, these stones jut from the ground, stark and unyielding to the enquiries of people who for centuries have asked why stone circles were built. Are they the wrecks of temples or astronomical observatories or something deeper? Archaeologists, in collecting factual detail, have often distracted attention from the possibilities of an alternative approach to understanding the past. Excavations and measurements can only test existing theories, and scientists, suspicious of the means by which modern theories are reached, can often fail to appreciate the views of poets and visionaries. For too many years these places have been regarded solely as monumental edifices within the landscape, the sites of old temples and observatories, with little thought to the ritual and secular significance, serving the tribal peoples as a fixed base for inter-tribal trading and religious purposes. But consideration must also be given to the visionary impact of these stones as standalone works of art. Imagine the impact within the landscape that they would have had, a solid reassurance of the tribe's existence, a place of gatherings for what would have been no more than a large extended family. For if late Neolithic farmers were no more than bands of dispersed skilful peasant farmers, combining at Autumntide for the construction of these wonderful stone monuments, then the circles need be no more than megalithic rings used for communal ceremonies and trading, each regional culture being doctrinally diverse and separate from the others, and perhaps the use of one circle could appear totally alien to a tribal family using a circle only a few miles distant.

Archaeological evidence for the time of building points to a time of peaceful existence and a drier climate, when knowledge of the movement of the sun and moon might be developed without interruption, a period necessary if observations had to extend over hundreds of build seasons to delineate certain alignments. During such an age the religious ceremonies, at first simple and communal, would have become increasingly complex, as did society itself, evolving from egalitarian bands into a tighter and hierarchical structure of chief priestans who would organise and conduct the rituals and so give birth to the solid structures we see before us. The dancing stones, the place of meetings, the place of ancient practices. The Lamorna area of West Penwith best illustrates the phase of build growth within the period of climatic changes that occurred from about 2500 BCE. During this time it was probable that it was far warmer and drier with an absence of strong westerly winds, allowing the area to be densely covered by low lying forest, until humans moved in to leave their signature within the landscape for future generations.

The first habitation known within this area is a small natural cave high above the valley, known as Castallac Vow, evidence pointing to this having been inhabited circa. 4000 BCE. Probably the first remaining human structure within this landscape is Tregiffian Chambered Tomb close to the modern roadside near to the Maidens stone circle. First looked at by William Borlase in 1868, it was not seriously investigated until 1967, when of course it would have been open for many years and modern methods of investigation would have been dealing with corrupted evidence. The finds include two pits in the floor, one containing an urn with remains of cremated human bone, the other containing wood charcoal. The most interesting part of the mound itself was the blocking entrance stone with its extensive cup marks. (The present one is a replica, the original being in Truro museum). There is evidence that this was in use over a long period of time, possibly as long as 1200-2000 years. It was periodically cleared out, the remains used in ritual dispersed, as new tribes and new ideas moved in. This place would have seen the worship of many different cults and was the precursor of even grander schemes.

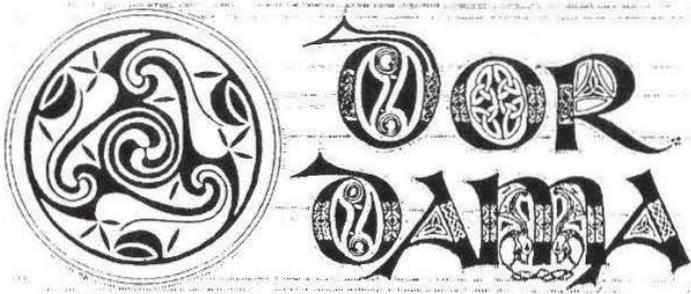
The Merrie Maidens, this mystic place, followed in this grand scheme of things. Obviously the newcomers to the area worshipped in a more open way, constructing not only a temple open to the sky, but a new art form of verticals designed to be seen against the landscape, not on the top of the hill where most of the art would have been lost, but against the hillside at its most visible from the distant horizon. The most startling visual trick to the people of the time, and the way the site is designed, is as you come from Lamorna, on a path out of the valley as old as the stones themselves. The way to the stones brings you over the brow of the hill, and suddenly the circle would appear with the entrance facing you as you approach. To these ancient people, this would be as visually unexpected as it would be to come upon a modern stainless steel sculpture in the middle of a desert to the modern eye. The first impact must have been visually stunning.



Imagine the excitement of the gatherings in these places, the meetings of these family groups often separated for months at a time by the constraints of survival and the difficulties of terrain. Try to imagine the smells of the camp fires, the hubbub surrounding the trading and the exchange of gossip. And then the rituals with the drama and rapid, often sexually exciting, dances, the drumming and loud ceaning sounds of fertility ceremonies. We can but visualise those ceremonies of anamalistic symbolism enacted in these rings, presumably by the same Shamans or Witchdoctors who designed and had built these enclosures. Try to imagine a ceremony, imagine the hot smells of food, fires and bodies. Framed against the night by the red glow of the flickering flames, the Shaman priest begins to move rhythmically, drumming, dancing, leaping and chanting. The bells on his robe tinkle, his bone ornaments clatter, and the tribe sit in the dim light riveted by his every move. His excitement communicates itself to the circle of spectators, and the larger the audience, the stronger the empathy between them and him. They all know each other, being members of the same clan and drawn together by the combination of firelight and the darkness of night. The sound rises and falls as they allow the spirit of the drum to waft them irresistibly into the spirit world. The excitement mounts, leaping from one to another until they are near ecstasy and each is at once performer and spectator, ghost-spirit & god-animal bringing power to the place of dance

Nearby, the monolithic standing stones in the area are probably the remains of many more that stood within the surrounding landscape. The best known of these are the two mighty stones known as the Pipers, standing out of sight from the circle. The age of these wonderfully statuesque stones has never been fixed, but local legend perhaps gives a clue as to which one of the two was erected first. The SW stone was known within living memory as a healing stone and had offerings and gifts made to it by the sick. The NE stone also had legend and mystery attached to it and was called the Bloodstone. It was supposed to have been erected on the site of a great battle, supposedly fought in the area, which may have given the place its name of Boleigh, meaning 'field of blood'. In a field close to the Maidens and visible from the circle there is another standing stone known as Gûn Rith, or alternatively 'The Fiddler' (named as one of the musicians along with the pipers turned to stone with the Maidens for making merry on the Sabbath). The base of this was excavated in 1870 by Borlase, his only find being a beach pebble, which may have been a ritual foundation offering.

One of the most interesting and most overlooked of the local standing stones is in use as a gate post on the opposite side of the road to one of the entry gates to the Maidens site. This fine stone with a hole bored through the top was locally known as the Bargain Stone or Troth Stone, and until recent years deals were sealed, and marriage without benefit of the church confirmed, by the claspings of hands through the aperture. Sadly the last person with memories of it being used died recently without passing on his memories of how these ceremonies were carried out. So, though we may not be able to understand or know the true nature and purpose of these wonderful edifices, we cannot fail to notice them as a form of art within the landscape, and even the modern eye must appreciate their symbolism and beauty as they stand quietly, evoking emotions and feelings that live deep in the depths of our human psyche. And long may it be so.



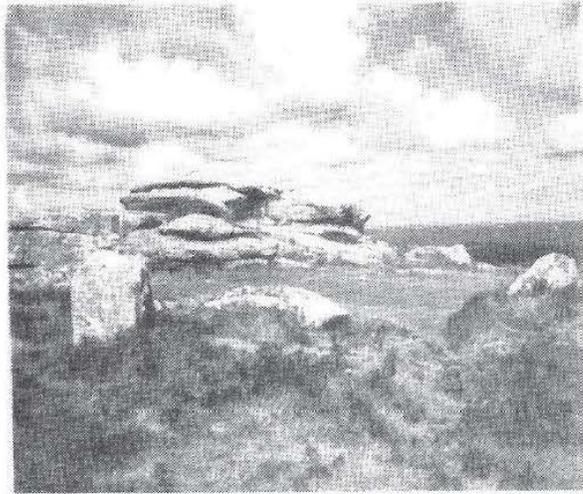
*The Earth Mother column this time is by Pam Hatton and recounts, in the first of 2 parts, a walk to the holy hilltop of Trencrom Hill, location for the CEMG Lammas Picnic last and this year.*

As a lover of Cornwall, and as someone who is never happier than when wandering around the nooks and crannies of the landscape, I thought that readers may be interested in a walk I took recently with my husband, while we were staying just outside Lelant, a place we have stayed at several times before. On that particular morning, the weathermen forecast rain coming in from the west in the afternoon, so we decided to have our walk straight after breakfast, and we pulled on our boots with the intention of walking up Trencrom. Only instead of our usual route, we decided to approach the hill from the south and return via the Bowl Rock, a place we had passed many times in the car but never actually visited on foot. We set off up the lane signposted 'Crippleasease', which forms a long, steady, almost straight ascent to the shoulder of Trencrom itself: we are always surprised at how little time it takes, considering it is uphill all the way! What's more, it was an extremely blustery morning, with the wind trying to snatch our breath away and sending the clouds scudding across the sky, revealing only occasional glimpses of blue. But we were in a jocular mood, relaxed and happy as people with nothing better to do should be, and helping ourselves to fat, luscious blackberries out of the hedgerow as we passed.

We reached the little car park and passed through the little gate where we were immediately enclosed in another world, a copse of windblown, stumpy trees that form a kind of barrier, with the path running narrowly through it. It is as though visitors are being told, forget that world - this is something else. Then just as suddenly, we were above the trees and winding our way above that curious and fascinating rock called 'Twelve O'Clock Rock'. The first time I saw it, from above, I felt sorry for it halfway down the hill, apparently on its own and away from the others, but now I realise that it probably has a purpose, perhaps as a marker - or as a sentinel? Either way, we stayed with it for a little while, catching our breath and enjoying the spectacular sight of St. Michael's Mount rising directly behind it, before continuing up the stony path.

From the top of Trencrom Hill the views are breathtaking - the whole of the Hayle estuary, Godrevy and the coastline stretching away to the distance. But we always seem to find ourselves staring out in the other direction towards Mounts Bay and Lands End in the unseen distance. The wind is nearly always in our faces on this side, bringing us a sense of time and space, even of the turn of the earth itself. This morning was no exception and I stood on my favourite rock, bracing myself against the wind, and silently staring at the landscape below and the sky above, absorbing the sheer timelessness of it all.

Eventually it was time to move and I went to say hello to the other rocks, which always seem to me to be living beings, just as much a part of this place as the sky or the earth under our feet, sentient life forms that sit around in groups, or sometimes alone, just watching listening and waiting.



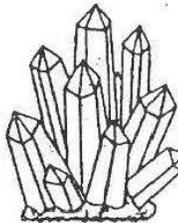
If Twelve O'Clock Rock is the sentinel, then these are the guardians. They have been there since the beginning of time and will certainly be there aeons into the future, long after us mere humans have ceased to bother them. They have knowledge which we can't even comprehend, and to be up here in the middle of a Cornish mist, with these huge rocks looming all around, is a very special experience. I have occasionally felt disorientated up here, but not that day. We emerged from the wild moorland over a low wall into a grassy field, and from that angle the rocks and crags had a completely different aspect, dark and menacing against the hurrying clouds. *To be continued.*

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## BOOK NEWS & REVIEWS

**Oakmagic Publications** continue to produce a wide variety of interesting books on the folklore, myths and legends of Cornwall. **The Faery Faith of Cornwall** (£3) is a reprint of the Cornish section of W.Y.EVANS-WENTZ 1911 book on *The Faery Faith of Celtic Countries*, which still remains an invaluable source of oral belief, now long lost. **An Joan the Crone** is a contemporary book by KELVIN I.JONES (£7.50) on the history and craft of the Cornish witch. It consists of sections from the previously published "Seven Cornish Witches" and "Cornish Witchcraft" which are now unavailable. Part 1 consists of the lives of famous Cornish witches, with some new material from more recent times, and Part 2 is an A-Z of Cornish witchcraft. A very useful reference book, covering 4 centuries of witchcraft and belief in Cornwall.

Other books are focused on specific locations and areas of Cornwall, all reprints of books from the 1920s. **St.Michael's Mount: its history and legends** by JOAN WAKE (£3) is a 1922 complete history of the Mount, including all its legends, both Christian and pre-Christian. Then there are some Arthurian books. **Tintagel Castle: its history and romance** (£3) is by HENRY JENNER with an essay on Tristram, King Rivalen (sic.) and King Mark by J. HAMBLEY ROWE. **King Arthur in Cornwall Fact File** by W.H.DICKINSON (£5.95), also first published 1900, is an account of all the legends relating to the Cornish Arthur. And **King Arthur's Country** by F.J.SNELL (£3), first published 1926, is an account of all the places in Cornwall associated with Arthurian sites myth and fact lie intertwined.

Oakmagic have also now started up a twice-yearly folkloric journal entitled *The Cornish Antiquary*, which features articles of original research by antiquarians and folklorists, biographical material on figures of the past, reprints of hitherto unobtainable material, and book reviews of important publications in the field. Antiquities, folk customs, legends and lore are all featured. The first edition is now published, and includes articles by Kelvin Jones, Craig Weatherhill & Cheryl Traffon. It is priced at £2.99, or a year's subscription (2 issues) at £5.50 from the Oakmagic address below.

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## CORNISH HERITAGE

The on-going controversy about the Cornish ancient sites being managed by English Heritage, and the threat by the Cornish Stannary Parliament to remove the signs, was reported in MM40, with a follow-up letter raising several points in MM41. The Stannary Parliament have now been as good as their word and removed the EH sign from Chysauster courtyard house settlement in protest against the "suppression and misrepresentation of Cornish culture and history". The Keeper of the Seal of the Parliament Rodney Nute commented: "The parliament has decided to continue to remove EH signs in Cornwall until English Heritage realise they are involved in an act of theft and relinquish their imposed position by moving out of Cornwall so that our heritage can be promoted by the Cornish as Cornish." Susan Bode of EH questioned the democratic basis and the Cornish make-up of the Stannary parliament, and claimed that EH cares very much that the monuments it cares for in Cornwall are Cornish.

Local Bard and ancient sites researcher Craig Weatherhill replied to this with a detailed attack on English Heritage in Cornwall:-

"When it comes to democracy, who elected 'English' Heritage to oversee sites and monuments, not only in Cornwall but far beyond the Tamar - sites that were designed, built and utilised centuries and even millennia before the English had been heard of in these islands? Who elects their board members and chairmen who have no archaeological or historical pedigree? And what of 'English' Heritage's record as regards their much-vaunted 'care' for Cornish sites? What of those supposedly protected menhirs, barrows and round houses destroyed in Penwith alone during 1984-85? What of the programme of revised and extended scheduling of Cornish monuments that, ten years ago, we were promised within five? The Cornwall Archaeological Unit did the spadework and prepared their recommendations years ago, but 'English' Heritage, once again, failed to deliver. Or their defence of Penwith Council's damage to a scheduled barrow on the Gump last year? What of the filling in of the fogou at Chysauster a few years ago, rather than carry out simple repairs?

What of the discovery of the 'Artognov' stone at Tintagel in 1998? Suppressed by EH for several months, it was not announced until the height of the summer season by way of the most appalling, non-factual hype ever heard from a supposedly professional body. As Professor Charles Thomas famously commented: the name Artognou is as closely related to that of Arthur as Gerald is to Geronimo. To listen to EH, it was virtually the discovery of Arthur himself. Their rhetoric was phrased, in my opinion, purely in pursuit of revenue and to hell with historical fact and scholarship.

More than once in the past I have called for the disbandment of 'English' Heritage and the devolution of its responsibilities to the regions (in this case, Cornwall). We have an archaeological unit in Truro which is far more capable of the job, as have the shire counties of England. What need is there for this superfluous, centralised, unprofessional and propogandist quango?"

### *Letters Extra*

"I am concerned about the tidal wave of consumerism that seems to have engulfed North Cornwall. Tucked away under 'Other Sacred Sites News' in MM41 is a catalogue of horror: the Rocky Valley labyrinths, the Mill (cult centre), and the Slaughter Bridge stone. The Barbarians are no longer at the gates of the North, but are running through the streets, putting to the torch the concept of free access for all. This leads to a vicious circle, for as people know they are being exploited, they unfairly lose respect and awe for the site itself, leading to vandalism of various kinds." *Robin Ellis, Hathersage*

"On reading MM41, we were struck at the connection between the eclipse and the various 'goings-on' re. potential commercialisation of Rocky Valley Maze site and Mill and Slaughter Bridge inscribed stone, plus the Sancreed Well path problems. Many people tried to milk the Eclipse for easy money. Their greed turned to despair as Mother Nature made sure that the 'I saw the Eclipse in Cornwall' T-shirt brigade were chastened. The eclipse was humbling and has provided a clean sheet to begin again with clearer intent. We are not saying 'sit back and do nothing because Mother Nature will sort these commercialisers out', more that the lessons learnt at the Eclipse may need to be repeated to those who are less able to listen. The article on the Millinnium's past (in MM41) showed the weight of inheritance that we must endeavour not only to preserve, but to keep integral to our lives, and that means everyone."

*Alison Englefield & Clare Calder-Marshall, St. Just*

### **CECIL WILLIAMSON 1909-1999**

Cecil Williamson, occultist and long-time past-owner of the Witchcraft Museum in Boscastle, died on 9th December 1999 after a long illness. He was born on 18th September 1909 and spent a lifetime in the world of witchcraft and magick. After a varied career in the film industry and the Secret Service, he opened a Witchcraft Museum in 1951 in the Isle of Man, where Gerald Gardner also came to join him. Eventually he sold the building to Gardner and moved the collection first to Windsor, then Bourton-on-the-Water, and finally to Boscastle in Cornwall, where the Museum remained in his ownership until he sold it to its present owner Graham King in 1996, the deal being concluded at midnight on Samhain eve! Cecil Williamson was interested in many aspects of "traditional" witchcraft, in particular the village wise women and white witches, and he amassed a huge collection of artifacts and a great amount of knowledge during his lifetime. The exhibitions, displays and documents at the Museum have been a unique source of reference over the years, not least to me when I was researching the witchcraft material for *Pagan Cornwall: Land of the Goddess*. This rich legacy was collected by Cecil and left for future generations, an epitaph to his significance and importance for the contemporary witchcraft revival and its location in Cornwall. A few years ago we were talking about the importance of women in witchcraft when he suddenly said in that disconcerting way he had of rapidly switching subject: "You know, our body is just a house, a wigwam, to house our spirit. It is the spirit that goes on." May his spirit journey on peacefully into the other realms beyond death. [CS]

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**MEYN MAMVRO** is available on annual subscription - 3 issues £6.00 (inc p&p) from:-51 CARN BOSAVERN, ST.JUST, PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR19 7QX. MM43 due Sept 2000 will include Stone Circles, Rituals and Witches.

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

ISSN:0966-5897

### **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. 01326-565431.

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

### **CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES**

Summer activities and events:-

*Sun June 4th 11am* - Awayday to Roche Rock & the Hermitage. St. Gundred's holy well & Castle-an-Dinas hill fort. Meet Roche Rock.

*Sun July 2nd 11am* - The Uther Bosence Story walk. Visit Botrea round barrows & the old holy chapel of Bosence where **Kelvin Jones** will tell the story. Meet Botrea Farm road. Finish with cream tea (optional).

*Sun Aug 6th 11am* - Lammas Picnic on Trencrom Hill. Shared lunch & drumming. Visit nearby sites such as Bowl Rock & Beersheeba menhir.

*Sun Sept 2nd 11am* - The First and Last Sites Visit. Meet in car park at First & Last Inn. visit Sennen standing stone, King Arthur's Stone & Table, the newly constructed World's End circle and Chapel Carn Brea. Bring swimming costume if wished.

All members & visitors welcome. Full details of all events from Andy Norfolk on 01209-831519.

### **PAGAN MOOTS**

**Penzance** - meets 2nd Tues each month at Heaven at 53 Morrab Road. 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

**Camborne/Redruth area** - meets last Tues month Tel: Beccie 01209-890657

**North Cornwall** - meets 1st Tues each month Bude. Tel: 01288-359463

**St. Austell area** - meets 3rd Thurs each month. Tel: Teresa or Rory 01726-823005

### **WELL WALKS** led by Rory Te Tigo

*Sun July 16th & Sun July 30th 1pm*  
Meet St. Just Library and visit 7 wells & springs - finish with cream tea.

*Sun July 23rd 12pm* "Holy Landscape, Sacred Waters" Meet Chox-Away café at Land's End Airport. Visit Chapel Carn Brea & Bartinney wells, springs.

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

### **CORNWALL UFO RESEARCH**

**GROUP** Meets 1st Tues month at Richard Lander School, Truro. Talks on *May 2nd* (Sheila Jeffries) *June 6th* (Alan Jones) *July 4th* (Marjorie Rowland). Tel: Dave: 01872-276381.

### **HARMONY POTTERY**

*Sat Aug 5th* Lughnasad- beginning of harvest, ripening and fullness. Details: Geraldine Andrew 01209-890581

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