

**STONE CIRCLES & BODMIN MOOR ●
ST.AGNES ● SPIRIT OF THE LAND
ROMANS IN CORNWALL? ● NEWS
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STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

**EARTH ENERGIES * ANCIENT STONES * SACRED SITES * PAGANISM * LEYPATHS
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The protection and preservation of the ancient sites continues to be highlighted in Cornwall. As can be seen from the news pages 3-4 of this issue, as soon as one problem at one site becomes sorted another seems to crop up. The catalogue of abuse and neglect of some of the sites seems to get more frequent, and at times it feels as if we and the sites are at seige from the forces of ignorance, aggression and irresponsibility. Most people who visit the sites do care about them and respect the place, but it only takes one or two thoughtless or selfish people to cause damage or trouble for both the sites and those of us who are trying to protect and guard them. The fire attack this previous Samhain on Boscawen-ûn quartz stone is by far the worst example, and although the perpetrator was seen and identified, and someone had the good sense to telephone Andy Norfolk and Cheryl Traffon immediately, nevertheless by the time any of us got up there it was of course too late and the stone was badly fire damaged. There has been much talk of having voluntary site wardens or guardians who could be at these places at such key times, but so far the idea has floundered on the problems of legal responsibilities for the sites. It is an idea still worth pursuing, though even a site warden cannot be there at all times (for example the Mên-an-Tol attack on Nov 5th 1999). At the end of the day, perhaps the best approach is publicity about how to respect the sites. The ASLaN Sacred Site Charter is an excellent document in that respect, and if any readers would like a copy please contact Andy Norfolk at the address given on p.19 of this issue.

Another aspect of the Ancient Sites syndrome at the moment is the question of who owns them. This has been brought into sharp relief by the campaign of the Cornish Stannary Parliament to remove all the English Heritage signs from sites in Cornwall (see p.5), on the grounds that "English" is an insulting name to apply to sites in Cornwall. There is a Cornwall Heritage Trust, whose patron is the Duke of Cornwall, Prince Charles, and they manage a number of sites on behalf of English Heritage, but it is the "English Heritage" signs that they have erected at the sites that seem to cause all the trouble. Within 6 weeks of them going up, all were removed or attacked at a cost of nearly £5000. Tony Blackman of CHT recognises that a change of thinking on English Heritage's part might help. EH themselves have made some movement: their new guide to their sites Historic Cornwall is subtitled Kernow Istorek, and all the names of the sites listed are given Cornish language translations, so that Chysauster for example becomes *Chy Sylvester*. Yet their approach is still inconsistent, as the back of the leaflet emphasises that "English Heritage is the true guardian of the country's inheritance" (what country?), and "We safeguard England's glorious inheritance" (what about Cornwall's?). I have the feeling that this issue is far from resolved yet!



news page

The 11th annual series of talks at the Acorn began on Sept 28th with a presentation by **Philip Heselton** on "A History of Earth Mysteries". Philip can justifiably claim to have seen the history of Earth Mysteries from the beginning, and he talked about its origins and development, from the Watkins Old Straight Track Club through to the Star Fellowship and then the revival of the Ley Hunter Club in the early 1960s. He referred to some of the early notions of ley hunting, such as old straight tracks and clump alignments, before turning his attention to the new dimension that was given the subject with John Michell's 'View over Atlantis'. Since then, the whole field of EM has taken new twists and turns, and continues to develop and evolve, so this was a rare opportunity to hear about from where it all came.

The next meeting on Oct 26th brought **Sheila Jeffries** who came to talk about "The Cornish Landscape Zodiac and the stars of Orion". Sheila has researched and published books on the whole landscape zodiac that she has discovered down the Lizard peninsula, and she presented her findings with many interesting maps and pictures of the features. She also spoke about the beings, fairies and spirit guides with whom she communicates, and who have been part of the whole story of her relationship with the Land and her visionary discoveries. She believes that the landscape zodiac was set out in very ancient times, and she showed how many of the old names have come through in appropriate features in the zodiac, even when later developments have obscured and changed the original designs. It was an unusual and most thought-provoking evening.

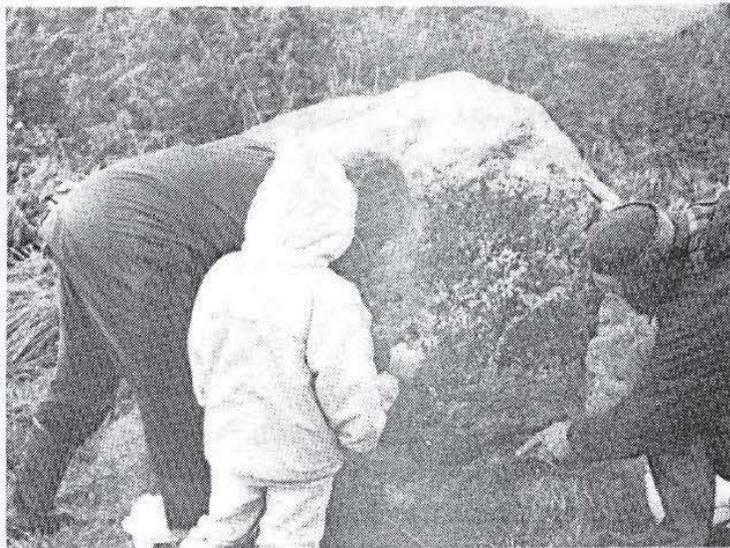
The November meeting on the 30th featured **Graham King** who came to talk about "The Museum of Witchcraft" at Boscastle. This was an absolutely fascinating presentation in which Graham, who is now the owner of the Museum, spoke about Cecil Williamson and how he came to set up the original Museum on the Isle of Man. He traced the relationship between Cecil Williamson and Gerald Gardner, the father of modern witchcraft, and revealed how they came together and eventually fell out. From that he told the story of how the Museum came to Boscastle, his involvement with it, and Cecil Williamson's final years of his life. The talk was accompanied by rare archive material of original letters and photographs, and much of the talk was new material that has not been publicly aired before. A very lively question and answer session followed.

Finally, to round off the year, on December 17th there was the annual **Chûn Quoit** walk to see the midwinter sunset, followed by the seasonal gathering at Age Concern in St. Just for food and drink and **Celtic Storytelling** for Yule. *For details of the next series of events see Noticeboard on the back page, or visit the web site at www.cornwt.demon.co.uk/Cornish Earth Mysteries Group.*

SACRED SITES NEWS....SACRED SITES NEWS....

FIRE ATTACK AT BOSCAWEN-UN QUARTZ STONE

Almost exactly a year since the Mên-an-Tol was so badly fire attacked, the beautiful quartz stone at Boscawen-ûn circle was fire damaged. On Oct 31st (Samhain Eve) a fire was set with paraffin right up against the inward face of the stone, which caused much blackening of the surface and destruction of the lichen.



Clean-up at the Quartz stone

A group of people at the site witnessed a traveller living in Trevaylor Woods named Arthur setting the fire, and although they tried to dissuade him he was determined to go ahead. The matter was reported to members of the Sacred Sites Committee and subsequently to the police, who took statements but decided to take no further action. Although the blackening looked bad, fortunately the surface of the stone itself was not damaged, and members of the Sacred Sites Group subsequently met up there with Ann Preston-Jones from CAU/English Heritage, and were able to remove the blackening without too much difficulty. They also took the opportunity to re-turf the circle in three places, where fire pits had been made and fires lit. They discussed with Ann ways in which people could be dissuaded from lighting fires at ancient sites, including more publicity and the possible provision of notices at the road entrances to Boscawen-ûn.

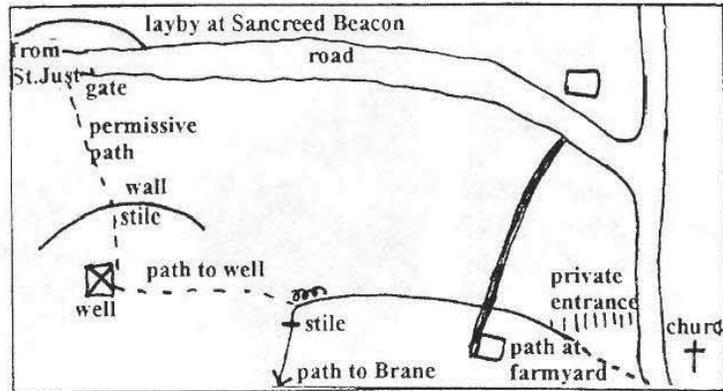
WATER FLOWS AGAIN AT MADRON BAPTISTRY

Meanwhile, some better news at Madron Baptistry Well. The water, which flows into the well, dried up completely last Summer, leaving only a thick layer of mud, but is now flowing again. Partly as a result of the uncovering of the original Madron Well in the Spring of 1999, the water channels became altered and eventually the supply of water to the Baptistry Well dried up, creating only a sad, silent and neglected feel to the site. A letter to *The Cornishman* by MM editor Cheryl Traffon & Sheila Bright about the state of the site prompted some activity, and local pagans returned there and managed to get the water flowing again. It is now hoped that a Management Plan can be drawn up and presented to the Bolitho Estate who are ultimately responsible for the site.

SACRED SITES NEWS....SACRED SITES NEWS....

STAKES ARE RAISED ON SANCREED PATH ROW

The disputed footpath leading up to Sancreed Well [see MM40 p.6-7] was recently blocked by a barbed wire fence (by the stile leading to the path to Brane & Carn Euny), presumably placed there by Mr & Mrs Hoskins, owners of Glebe Farm. The fence was quickly torn down, but the action



was a very provocative one, especially as the well is sometimes visited in the dark when the fence would not be seen. Meanwhile, some good news is that the County have agreed to the whole path being instated on to the Definitive Map. If this Modification Order goes through, the onus will then be on the Hoskins to apply to have it diverted, which would lead to a public enquiry. The Hoskins also applied for and obtained planning permission for a driveway leading from the road opposite the Church Hall to their Holiday Cottage, which crosses the footpath. In a very controversial vote, permission was granted by the casting vote of the Committee Chairman who is also a local farmer, and the drive has now been constructed.

CARN EUNY BEEHIVE HUT RUNED

More vandalism has occurred at one of West Penwith's sacred sites, this time the circular chamber or Beehive Hut that leads off from the fogou at Carn Euny. Here in the moss that lies above the shrine opposite the entrance were carved some runic inscriptions. Local Sacred Sites Committee co-ordinator Andy Norfolk commented: "The damage is temporary - the moss will grow back eventually - but the attitude that resulted in this being done worries me. There was a complete lack of respect for the site".

ARTHURIAN CENTRE SOLD DOWN THE LINE

More than £1 million will have to be raised if an international centre celebrating centuries of literature on King Arthur is to be kept in Cornwall. The Arthurian Heritage Trust, in conjunction with the British Library, was hoping to establish an international centre at Worthyvale Manor, near Slaughterbridge in North Cornwall for historical Arthurian material, including manuscripts, music and images. The site includes a stretch of land by the river, where the inscribed stone to Latinus (formerly known as King Arthur's Tomb) can be found [see MM41 p.11 & MM43 p.4 for details about the controversy over access to this stone]. But the Trust does not have the money to purchase the Manor, which has been put on the market for £1M and which is central to the whole project, and there are fears that the whole thing may now have to be scrapped.

NEWS....NEWS....NEWS....NEWS....NEWS....NEWS....

A SIGN OF THE STANNARY TIMES

A campaign by Cornish nationalists to end alleged cultural aggression and racism in Cornwall has continued with the systematic removal of English Heritage signs from ancient monuments. Signs at many sites, including Chysauster, The Hurlers, Trethevy Quoit and Tintagel Castle were removed, and a letter from Rodney Nute, the Keeper of the Seal of the Stannary Parliament, was sent to English Heritage, saying that the signs had been confiscated. The Stannary, which is claiming racial discrimination under the European Convention of Human Rights, says that the presence of "English" Heritage in Celtic Cornwall is an insult and offensive to Cornish people. It also objects to the flying of the St. George flag at some sites, instead of the St. Piran Cornish flag.

DO CORNISHMEN HAVE VIKING GENES?

At the same time as the Stannary are claiming Celtic identity for Cornwall, a new study has been set up to determine if there is any trace of Norse ancestry in the genetic makeup of people, including West Cornwall. Professor David Goldstein of University College, London is taking DNA samples from 2500 volunteers in 25 towns and cities across the British Isles, including 100 men from Penzance, to determine the extent of Nordic influence in Britain. It might be thought that there would be much more likelihood of Nordic genetic strains remaining in the North and East of England and the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland than in Cornwall, but in fact there is recorded history of Viking incursions into Cornwall. A combined force of Danes and Cornish were defeated by the English at the great battle of Hingston Downs in 838, but in the 10th century the Danes started attacking the Cornish coast. In 981 a Danish fleet sacked 'Petroces stow' (Padstow), and a few years later in 997 another fleet plundered the whole length of the north coast before rounding Land's End and then heading eastwards, finally going right up the Tamar as far as Lydford & Tavistock. The study will discover whether these events had a lasting effect on the local population.

WITCH HANGED AT LAUNCESTON IN YEAR 2000

An extraordinary "re-enactment" of the hanging of a witch took place in Launceston last Summer. As part of the town's Millenium celebrations, there was a medieval banquet and mock trial followed by the mock hanging of a witch. There was some controversy about this amongst Council members, but only because of the effect they thought it might have on children who could be watching, not because of any sensibility towards modern-day witches or pagans. Despite the doubts of some Councillors the event went ahead as planned.



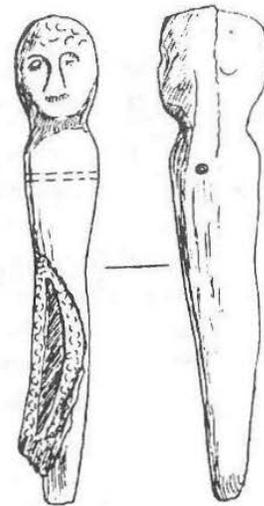
'Witch hanging' from "Witchcraft in England" - Christina Hole

WERE THE ROMANS EVER IN CORNWALL?

The recent discovery of the hoard of Roman coins [reported in MM42] raises the question as to what extent the Romans ever reached Cornwall. Although there have been several finds of Roman coins in Cornwall over the years, this does not mean that the Romans were here. It is the absence of Roman finds, rather their presence, that is the most pertinent indicator. In Cornwall there were no Roman towns, no bath houses, no temples, and no trappings of the Roman 'civis'. Instead during the so-called Romano-British period, more properly in Cornwall called the Romano-Celtic period, the people continued to live in round houses and courtyard house settlements, and built cliff castles and hill forts. They probably continued to trade and barter with neighbouring Celtic tribes, though the discovery of the Roman coins certainly indicates that there may have been direct trading links with the Romans, or at least Romanised tribes, in England.

This trade was probably connected to the Cornish tin mining, and that may explain the Roman interest. Large hoards have been discovered in the past, such as the pewter jug containing 2500 Roman coins, discovered in the mid-19th century at Porthluney Valley near Gorran Haven, and the hoard of over 1000 silver and bronze coins found at Gare near Probus in 1967, as well as the recent discovery. Anna Tyacke, curator of human history at the Royal Cornwall Museum, has suggested that, as the recent hoard of coins were found on a riverbank, they may have been a kind of offering to the gods or there may have been a temple there. There is one other curious find that might validate this. In 1972 two objects, both dating to the Roman period were presented to the Royal Cornwall Museum, having been handed down in a family since they were first found, probably around the middle of the 19th century. Both objects probably came from tin-streaming in the Red River Valley near Gwithian, Hayle.

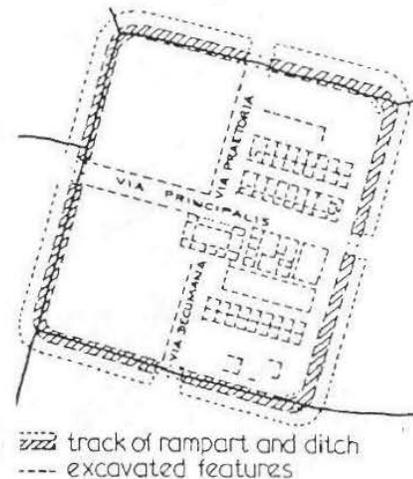
One of these objects is a pottery lamp and the other a figurine, carved from an ancient animal bone, with the head carefully shaped to give a neck, and the face coated with a grey-white pipeclay, creating an emphasis of eyes, nose and cheekbones. Professor Charles Thomas suggests [*Cornish Archaeology no.11*] that the lamp may have been used in an alluvial tin-working shaft during the Roman period, and the figurine associated with it as a votive or apotropaic offering to the gods or goddess. If the recently-discovered coin hoard was also placed deliberately into the water of the riverbank where it was found, it too may have been a similar offering. However, this practice is perhaps more likely to be performed by native peoples, who were probably the tin streamers, than the Romans themselves. The carved head certainly has a more Celtic than Roman feel about it, and the hoard of coins may have belonged to the tin streamers who traded their tin for the coins and perhaps then felt they needed to offer them back to Mother Earth.



Half scale
[c] Cornwall Archaeological Society.

Certainly it is difficult to find evidence of remains in Cornwall that are specifically and exclusively Roman rather than Romanised Celt or native British. A Roman-style villa was found at Magor, north of Camborne in 1931, and was excavated then, but is no longer visible. It was built in the mid second century BCE, extended during its occupation and abandoned about a century later. It was probably built by a native Celt who had been in Roman service, maybe in Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum) and decided to build a Roman-style retirement home on his return. This theory is supported by the fact that there was not a right angle in the place, and the usual symmetry of Roman design was missing. The villa was also notably lacking in amenities.

A Roman fort was discovered at Nanstallon near Bodmin (SX034 670) and excavated between 1965 and 1969. It was found to be a rectangular structure containing barrack blocks, a principia or headquarters in the centre, angle towers at the four rounded corners, and two roads dividing it into four. The fort was probably occupied by an auxiliary detachment of mixed infantry and cavalry, perhaps 500 men. It does at least show that Roman troops were in Cornwall, but they appeared not to have stayed very long, as it was only occupied between 55/65 to 80 CE. It was then abandoned peacefully, the troops being deployed elsewhere in Britain.



Other Roman-style camps were found at Carvossa and Golden near Probus, but may have been native-built enclosures rather than Roman establishments. The lack of any extensive or sustained Roman presence in Cornwall may have been because there was no opposition to Roman rule, or perhaps because Cornwall was too far away from Exeter for the Romans to have much interest in maintaining a presence there. On the other hand, perhaps the Romans needed the tin that was only found in Cornwall, and preferred to trade rather than conquer. Whatever the reason, the recent find of Roman coins does not make the presence of the Romans themselves in Cornwall any more likely than before.

Plan of Nanstallon Fort [c] Craig Weatherhill

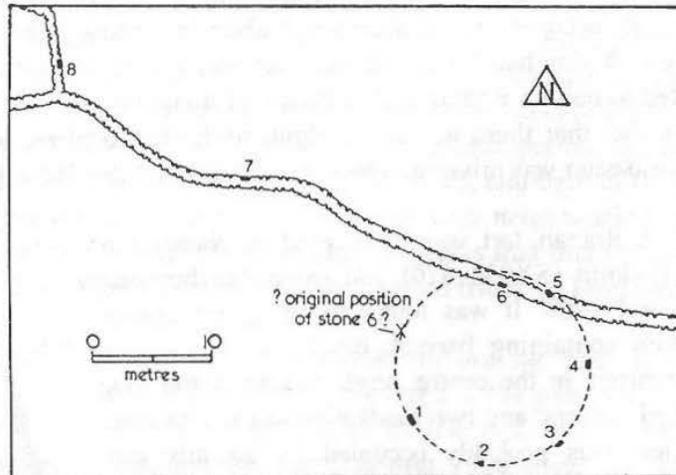
NOTABLE FINDS OF ROMAN COINS IN CORNWALL

- * During World War II American soldiers found a hoard of Roman coins, while digging gun-emplacements at Turnaware Point (St. Just-in-Roseland) on the River Fal. These coins were subsequently dispersed and most are now not in Cornwall.
- * In 1967 the farmer at Gare Farm near Sett Bridge (Probus) discovered a large hoard of over 1000 coins while ploughing his field.
- * Single finds have included a coin of Caracalla (198-217 CE) dug up in a garden at Lowenva Rock, St. Minver - the coin was minted in Antioch and was a very unusual find; a coin from 139-161 CE found in Gerrans Bay, depicting Honos holding a sceptre and cornucopia; and an uncommon coin dating to 97 CE, depicting a modius on 3 legs containing poppy and corn ears, found on a beach off Black Cliffs, Hayle.

SEEING DOUBLE

The Lost Multiple Rings of Cornwall. Part 2 by CHERYL STRAFFON

We saw in Part 1 of this article that stone circles throughout West Penwith were either doubled up, or at least had other circle sites not very far away. What of elsewhere in Cornwall? North of Helston at Wendron we come to the isolated circle of the **Nine Maidens** (SW6831 3653).

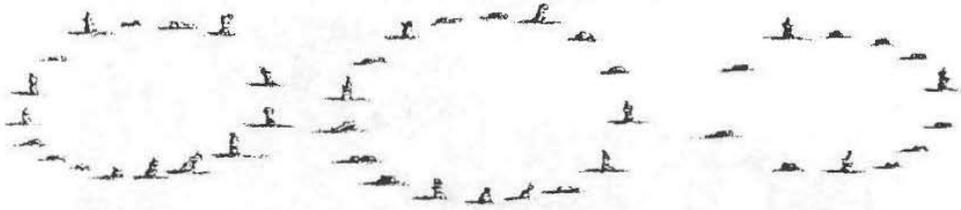


The existing circle has 6 stones remaining, 2 of which are in a wall. Once again there were originally 2 circles here, a second one a few yards away to the NW at SW6829 3656, of which 2 stones only remain in the wall. These 2 closely-linked circles were similar to the Merry Maidens and Tregeseal in West Penwith, and either or both rings may have been deliberately aligned to a cairn on the summit of nearby Carnmenellis hill at the equinox sunrise, and/or Crowan Beacon 1½ miles SW at the midwinter sunset. It has been suggested¹ that these double rings may have been constructed as meeting places for 2 neighbouring tribes, and these circles could have performed that function for peoples from the south and north of the area. Equally, the 2 circles could have been connected with the massive round barrow about ½ mile to the WNW, Hangman's Barrow (SW6737 3669), reinforcing the connection of circles with places of the dead.

The other main area of Cornwall for stone circles is Bodmin Moor. What do we find there? Interestingly again, out of 13 circle sites, 3 are doubles or triples, and a further 2 are located close to each other. All seem to be connected astronomically. The most famous multiple site is **The Hurlers** which consists of the remains of 3 stone circles in close proximity (south-SX2580 7132; central-SX2582 7139; north-SX2584 7146), the line of which points towards Rillaton Barrow (SX2603 7191), which Barnett² suggests was a processional routeway on to the Cheesewring, a prominent hilltop feature (though the sites are not in a direct line). Interestingly, it has recently been suggested (by archaeologist Peter Herring) that there may have been a smaller fourth circle at this site at SX2587 7160, directly NE of the existing 3 circles. There may even have been a fifth circle between the 3 main ones and this fourth one. A multiple site indeed

¹ by Aubrey Burl in 'Ever Increasing Circles' (*3rd Stone* no.30 p.33-37)

² Prehistoric Cornwall - John Barnatt (Turnstone, 1982)



The Hurlers (Borlase, 1796)

To the NW, just over a mile away, lies the site of **Craddock Moor Circle** (SX2486 7183), denoting the Beltane/Lughnasad sunset from the South Hurlers circle. Looking in the other direction, the 3 circles are aligned to 13 barrows on Caradon Hill to the east, so as to observe the rising sun on sequential days, leading up to Samhain and on to the Winter Solstice, when it would have risen over the last cairn for a week before returning again.³ O'Brien suggests that the reason for the setting up of three Hurler circles rather than one was to avoid the necessity of building 3 times the cairns on Caradon Hill, and of having to build them so close together that they would overlap and cause confusion. The central circle originally had a floor of quartz crystals, which could have been a ritual foundation, so the central circle could have been constructed first with the other two built later.

Other double circles on Bodmin Moor are the **Leskernick Circles** (SX1859 7970/ 1881 7961), and the **King Arthur's Downs Circles** (SX1345 7751/ 1348 7750). Neighbouring sites include the **Trippet Stones** (SX13123 7501) and the **Stripple Stones** (SX1437 7521), intervisible from each other; and the **Stannon** (SX1257 8010), **Fernacre** (SX1448 7998) and **Louden Hill** (SX1320 7949) complex near Rough Tor. From Louden Hill both Stannon and Fernacre are visible, and Stannon, Fernacre and Leskernick North all align with Brown Willy, the highest hill on Bodmin Moor, at the equinox sunrise/sunset. What we have here on Bodmin Moor are the remains of a ritual landscape, involving stone circles, holy hilltops and celestial alignments. Clearly, the double, neighbouring and triple circles played an important rôle in this pattern of landscape geomancy, even if we have now lost the precise keys to unlock their memory.



Trippet Stones (Blight, 1858)

³see *Megalithic Odyssey* - Christian O'Brien (Turnstone, 1983) p.84-94



Duloe Circle

Finally, there remains one site to confound us. A few miles south of the Moor on low-lying pasture land lies **Duloe stone circle** (SX2359 5850), a completely unique site. It consists of just 8 stones all made of shining white quartz. It appears to align to no other obvious site or landscape feature, and there is no evidence for a second or neighbouring stone circle anywhere in the area. Perhaps it was built long after the meaning of multiple circles had been forgotten by a small group of people who had moved on from the main areas of circle building. At any rate, it is an enigma wrapped up as a mystery and also shows that one cannot generalise about the nature of double stone circle sites in Cornwall!

Aubrey Burl has speculated about possible reasons for double circles, amongst which are possible sites for “male and female ceremonies”, “adolescents and puberty”, “natives and strangers”, “trade and ritual” or “midsummer and midwinter ceremonies”. If the latter, it may be that one site was used from Beltane to Samhain, celebrating the Goddess of spring and summer, who may have come down to us as Bridgit/Bride, while the other site was used from Samhain to Beltane, to connect with the crone or hag of winter, who is remembered as the Cailleach. It would be interesting to see if readers have any ideas and/or experience of being in double stone circles. It has been observed that on some double stone circle sites, such as the Grey Wethers on Dartmoor, some women are naturally attracted to one of the two circles rather than the other, and at the Hurlers on Bodmin Moor dowser Hamish Miller⁴ found that the “Michael” line that he was following and which he identified as male went through the southernmost circle, while the “Mary” line which he identified as female went through the central circle. Do any readers have experiences they would like to share about the double circles? At the moment the double and neighbouring stone circles of Cornwall leave us with more questions than answers.

⁴ The Sun and the Serpent - Hamish Miller & Paul Broadhurst (Pendragon, 1989)p.141

BODMIN MOOR CIRCLES & THEIR MEANING

by Aubrey Burl

In the south-west peninsula associated groups (of circles) lie between rivers at suitable positions for converging people and traders. It is possible that the **Hurlers** (as at Stanton Drew in Somerset) the large central circle was the first of the three, its partners being added at a later time to accommodate a larger population or to allow more complicated rituals, to permit the beliefs of separate cults or for ceremonies at varying times of the year. Speculation is synonymous with fancy. Hints of ritual complexity come from the paved area between circles, from the missing stone in the central ring as though participants were to pass from one enclosure to another. Conjectures may miss answers.

At the north-west edge of the moor there is a quadrangle of land at three of whose corners rise the startling hills of Garrow Tor, the wierd and abrupt elegance of Rough Tor and, to their east, midway between them, Brown Willy silhouetted like the snout and lumpy body of a submerging crocodile, skull thickly pimped with rocks. Streams separate the secular from the sacred, running deeply between the settlements and three vast megalithic rings, **Stannon** to the west, **Fernacre** to its east and **Louden Hill** to its south. They are enormous. Even assuming that half their interiors were set aside for the ceremonies of shamans/priests/witch-doctors/proto-Druids, and allowing comfortable body space for onlookers, each of the rings could have accommodated over 300 people, when an overall population in that restricted region was of a thousand men and women.

It is arguable that if the rings were contemporary rather than successive then the trio may have been intended as centres for rituals at different times of the year. The tors are the key. Reverence for conspicuous landmarks might explain the presence of three capricious rings within a mile or so of each other. To these can be added the existence of solar sightlines that emphasise the empathy between the sun, the landscape and the prehistoric mind. The recently discovered havoc of the Loudon Hill ring on a ridge between Stannon and Fernacre had a crude alignment to the midwinter sunrise over Garrow Tor. So had Stannon which additionally was due west of Brown Willy over which the sun rose at the equinoxes. To the north-east it appeared in a prominent notch on Rough Tor in May and November, the festivals of Beltane and Lughnasa. Fernacre's situation was even more arcane. It stood at the exact crux where north-south and east-west intersected, Garrow Tor peaking to the south, Rough Tor to the north. Across that meridional line the equinoctial sun rose over Brown Willy. Opposite it the southern slopes of Loudon Hill marked sunsets at the equinoxes. It is possible to imagine but not to prove that there were seasonal gatherings, people in their hundreds assembling at Fernacre in the Spring and Autumn, at Stannon in May and November, at Loudon Hill at the midwinter solstice, waiting at dawn for the sun to appear above the gloom of the lightened edges of the rocks, and for their leaders to conduct irrecoverable rites of fecundity and supplication.

Extracted from "The Stone Circles of Britain Ireland and Brittany [Yale UP, 2000]

LESSER-KNOWN SITES IN WEST PENWITH

NORTH AREA (4)
by RAYMOND COX

On the way from Zennor & Sperris Quoits to see the Trendrine Hill Barrows (SW479 387) right on top of the hill (another hill which affords spectacular views over the maze of fields on the coastal plain towards St.Ives), the footpath passes the Sperris Croft settlement. This is a group of seven hut circles more or less in a line. They are between 20ft (6.1m) and 46ft (14m) in diameter. They lie on the open moor. On Trendrine Hill itself I sat among the foxgloves, tormentil, bluebells, bilberries, heather and gorse to admire the view; to speculate on the alignment from the top of the hill through Zennor Quoit, tumuli on The Beacon at Treen Common, tumuli near the Nine Maidens circle and the Boswens standing stone; and to move back in time to the Bronze Age of these barrows. There are two barrows here, easy to recognise: one is a pile of stones 62ft (19m) across and 8½ ft (2.5m) high, holding the OS triangulation pillar.

The other to the south is 46ft (14m) in diameter and 6½ (2m) high. This one has a kerb of large stones which do include outcrops of natural stones as well. Also to be seen are parts of an inner retaining wall and the remains of a central cist.



It was a calm day when I was here and the sun was shining, but often it can be windy and wild in this exposed hilltop close to the sea. The climate was drier and warmer for those people who were here over 3000 years ago. Following the alignment with the mind's eye to the southwest, with the exception of Zennor Quoit of the earlier (Neolithic) period, the line crosses through sites of the same age as these barrows. (many alignments do link sites of different ages). One wonders, did the energies of human consciousness travel this line? Linking with natural energies where the structures were built? Yes, there were burials, but were there also ceremonies? Altered states of consciousness linking earth and sky?

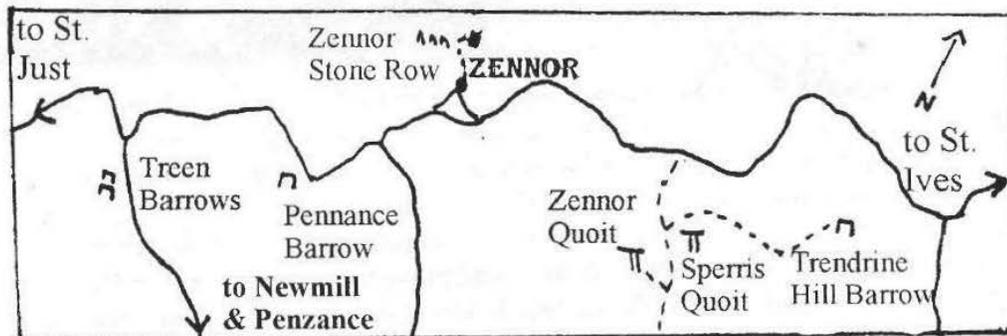


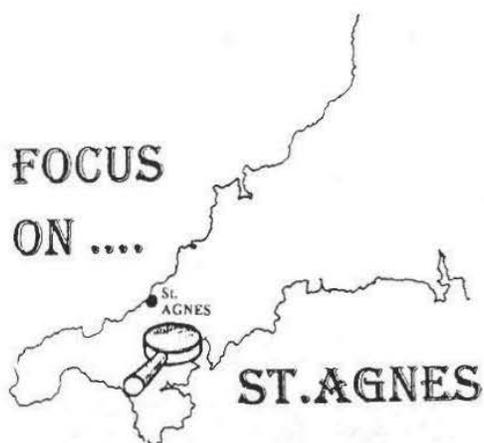
Something else attracts the eye to Trendrine Hill, and before it, Zennor Hill. Something very unusual was found near Zennor, and only quite recently - a possible stone row, pointing to these hills. The only other stone row in West Penwith recognised today - and that still only probable - is the row of holed stones at Tregeseal. To my mind the Zennor Stone Row (SW454 388) also seemed questionable.

At the east end a large 8½ft stone, which is a gatepost, does seem to link mysteriously to the nearest hill because of the shape of its top being similar to the curve of the hilltop. This, of course, depends on the angle of view. There are three smaller stones to the west, two recumbent in the field and the other in the next hedge. So there are, at least four stones to make up the row. However, I could not get the stones lined up into a straight line, and so, personally, I had to admit some doubt. But does a row have to be completely straight to qualify? The problem in the Land's End peninsula is that there are so many stones and boulders in profusion scattered everywhere. Inevitably some are going to be seen as straight lines of stones.



Nearby is the famous Giant's Rock or Witch's Rock, (SW454 385) where, in legend, anyone walking nine times around it at midnight would become a witch. But was this an ancient folk memory of some ritual? Was there a connection - and indeed a connection with the hills as sacred ancestral places? Could the question of the stone row or not be decided? I could think of only one solution: make use of the dowsing pendulum in my pocket. I am not a regular dowser and often simply forget to try it out. But the question was asked here at the stone row. Was this indeed a sacred place? The answer was clockwise, which for me said yes. But go there and try to decide for yourself.





This is the first of a new series that focuses on areas of Cornwall that are not generally known about or featured widely as ancient places. Each article will draw together information about the prehistoric sites, together with the legends and any other earth mysteries material about the area featured. This first one looks at the St. Agnes area on the north-western coast of Cornwall, where there are some strange discoveries to be made.

St. Agnes is a town of some 4,500 people that owes its growth to the expansion of tin and arsenic mining in the 19th century. The parish was one of Cornwall's most active mining areas, and the remains of many of the mines and chimneys can still be seen dotted around the countryside. It owes its name to an early Celtic saint, Agnes, about whom little is known historically, and for whom there appears to be no hagiography. On an inlet to the south of St. Agnes Head at a place called Chapel Porth lies the site of her chapel, which was formerly on the land that is now the National Trust kiosk in the car park. The site of her well (SW697 497) is on the cliffs about 50 yds to the north above Chapel Porth, but nothing remains now except a dip in the cliffs where a stream runs down to the sea.



Although there is little historically to explain why this chapel and well were dedicated to St. Agnes, there are some very interesting mythological legends surrounding her, that contain tantalising hints of something far older and more primitive than her Christian status would seem to indicate. The local legend tells of how the giant Bolster fell in love with her, a feeling that was not reciprocated. Tiring of his attentions, she pretended to agree to return his love if he would prove his valiant intent by filling a hole in the rocks at Chapel Porth with his blood. This Bolster duly did, but unbeknown to him, the hole opened into the sea at the bottom so he eventually bled to death.

This legend may contain echoes of the pagan motif of the sacrifice of the consort lover to the Goddess, a motif that is played out in the eternal round of the Wheel of the Year. If this is the case, then the Christian legend only took over a much earlier pagan one, in which St. Agnes would have been an aspect of the Goddess rather than a Christian saint. This interpretation is perhaps given some credence by the fact that the chasm where the deed occurred is known locally as 'Wrath's Hole', the name of which may be derived from "(g)wrah" meaning a witch, hag or crone, often a Christianised name for Goddess.

This theme of St. Agnes as the 'witch, hag or crone', finds an echo at **St. Agnes Beacon** (SW710 504) which lies inland to the east overlooking the coast. This is a dramatic hill outcrop, 189 metres in height, with paths that wind through its heather and gorse-laden slopes to the summit with some breathtaking views.



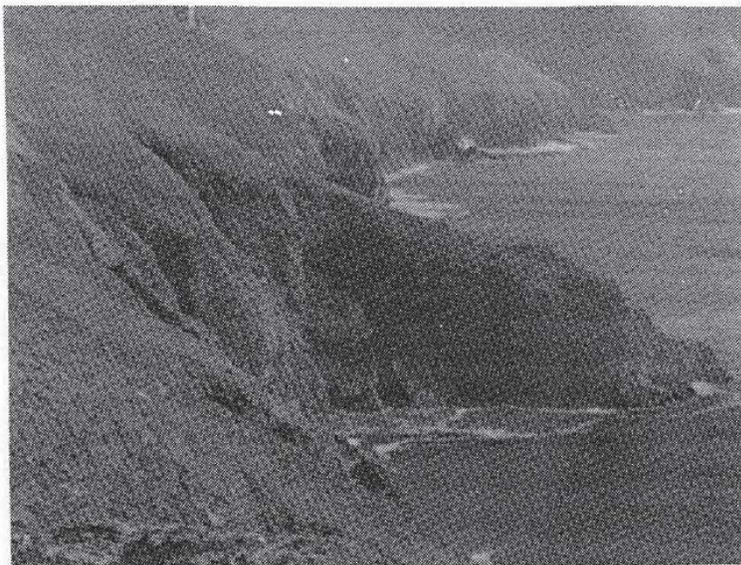
On the southern part of the summit lies the flattened remains of a large prehistoric barrow or cairn (SW7001 5021), which was flattened for use as a beacon in the Napoleonic wars. The remains of a further 2 smaller cairns lie to the north at SW7099 5033 & 7091 5057, so this was clearly an important site in the Bronze Age.

The legend associated with this hilltop features the giant Bolster, whom we have already met in connection with St. Agnes. Here, in this world of strange myths and stories, Bolster was supposed to stand with one foot on St. Agnes Beacon and the other on Carn Brea, some 6 miles away to the east at Redruth. This may be a memory of an ancient linking together of the two holy hilltops, perhaps with ritual bonfires on each. However, it is the giant's wife who is perhaps more interesting. She was made to clear the neighbouring fields of stones which she carried in her apron, and the 3 barrows on the Beacon are supposedly the heaps of stones she piled up.



This motif of the giantess' apron and the stones is one that is often found in other places, particularly with regard to ancient sites, and I have argued (in *The Earth Goddess*) that this may be a folkloric memory of a very ancient creation myth, featuring a Goddess who strides the land and creates the hills and prehistoric burial mounds.

Certainly, not only was the Beacon significant in the Bronze Age, but also **Tubbys Head**, an rocky promontory that sticks out on the cliffs south of St. Agnes Head and north of Chapel Porth. Here there was an Iron Age Cliff Castle (SW6980 5050) consisting of about 20 metres of bank and ditch with a causewayed entrance near the northern end.



There is something a bit strange about the site however: it is really much too steep and narrow to form much of a defensive place, and it has been suggested that it might have been a landing place, as there is a flat area of rock near the waterline that could have been used for that purpose. However, I have another suggestion. From the ground above Tubby's Head, St. Agnes Beacon appears as a very distinctive shape on the horizon, like the body of a sleeping woman or Goddess in the landscape. Her head is the Southern Cairn on the Beacon, her body the long north-south slope of the Beacon, and her thighs and legs the lower northern slopes of the Beacon. If this were seen by ancient peoples in this way (and there are other precedents, for example, the Sleeping Woman mountain on Harris in the Outer Hebrides when viewed from the Callanish stone circle on Lewis), then the ground above Tubby's Head could have been an ideal viewing platform, and the enclosure itself a ritual area from which the observer would climb up to view the Goddess in the landscape.

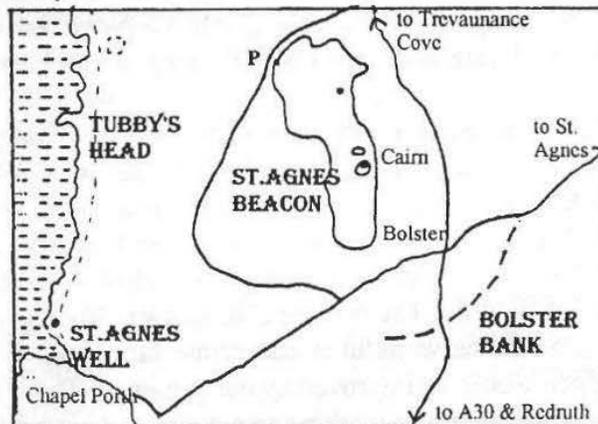
To the north of Tubby's Head, once again near the cliff edge is the site of an alleged **Stone Circle** (at either SW7010 5072 or 6996 5077), which would indicate a ritual use of the site in the Neolithic or early Bronze Age. Amongst a scatter of large granite boulders are a dozen, each about a half-metre high and 8 metres in diameter. If this is a ritual site, then once again St. Agnes Beacon would have been visible from it, but Ann Preston-Jones of the CAU suggests that it is much more likely to be random scatter from adjacent mine workings.

To the south of St. Agnes Beacon lies **The Bolster Bank** (SW705 494 to 716 500), an earthwork which originally ran for some 2 miles from (approx) SW703 493 at Chapel Coome to SW721 508 above Trevaunance Combe. This bank, which probably dates from the 5th or 6th centuries CE, enclosed the whole area of the Beacon and St. Agnes Head, for reasons now about which we can only guess. Its name however does explain the origins of the giant Bolster. It probably derives from the Cornish word *both-lester*, meaning a boat-shaped hump, and the word then became corrupted to Bolster, whose giantian powers were attributed to its construction.

Finally, there is a strange tale to recount that takes us back again to St. Agnes herself. To the north of the towns lies the small Trevaunance Cove, and it was here 3 years ago at a very low tide that a walker, Everett Johnson, found a piece of driftwood about the size of a door. It bore a carving of a female, that was interpreted as either the Virgin Mary, or St. Agnes herself! What made it even more strange was that it was found on the holy day of St. Agnes, January 21st! It was also suggested that it has the letters 'Gaudete' carved vertically on it, which means 'rejoice'. This icon of the Madonna or St. Agnes is now housed in a local Craft Shop, and provides a most enigmatic aspect of the St. Agnes story.



The area of St. Agnes then, which on first sight looks to be less interesting for ancient sites and remains, actually provides us with a wealth of possibilities and fascinating places and legends, many of which may be a memory of a time when this area was a very sacred place indeed. [CS]



THE SPIRIT OF LAND PROJECT

Sarah Vivian & Andy Norfolk

Readers of MM will know of the damage caused to ancient Cornish sites in recent years. Mistreatment is nothing new but now the sites are under pressure from increasing numbers of visitors and increasing use for spiritual purposes. The Penwith Pagan Moot is dismayed by the treatment of ancient sites as a commodity. No one group is entitled to think they have any “rights” to the sites, but we do hope we can help improve the way the sites are cared for and regarded. Many of us have been directly involved in conservation tasks at sites, and we already meet with those who own them (or have legal responsibility for their upkeep) to agree better ways forward. But we want to do more.

We want to create new sacred space, in a project which we hope will involve many other organisations and fulfil a variety of interconnected objectives; spiritual, conservation, educational, cultural and environmental. We would like the new sacred site(s) to be a combination of Pagan ideals with the aspirations of all others who care for the Land, and for Cornish Heritage and Culture. We feel there is a need for a place to act as a general focus for spiritual activities, where seasonal celebrations, gatherings, meetings and events could be held, in a purpose-built space designed to take such use. One consequence of the over-usage of the sites is increasing reluctance to meet as large groups at any of the sites for, say, a celebration or a rite-of-passage, because of the potential for inadvertent damage. A new Sacred Land centre, open to all, would provide an alternative and safer venue for such events, as well as a new “destination” for all other visitors, both locals and tourists. This would take some of the pressure off the ancient sites, thereby assisting with their conservation, and we hope to attract the support of various Heritage organisations who approve of such diversionary tactics.

Part of the Project might be to reconstruct an ancient type of monument, such as a Fogou, or an item no longer existing, such as a courtyard house or round house. This would be of interest to archaeological groups, and would also be of both conservational and educational value. A new site would also serve to educate visitors to ways of working with the Land and with sites with respect, and without causing damage, which would then extend to people’s dealings with the ancient sites. As well as various educational aspects to the Project, we are hoping that the very fact that this initiative seems necessary will help educate in itself, by highlighting the problems.

The site would be intended to reflect Cornish culture, past and present, and could be the venue for many activities, such as storytelling, Mummer’s plays, drama, music and dancing, both traditional and modern, and would also be a wonderful place for Sacred Art/Land Art of all kinds. The whole of the environment would be considered sacred, and “safe space” for all wildlife as well as people. Habitat creation appropriate to the Land would encourage wildlife. The site needs to be away from any places of archaeological interest, and it would be wasteful to use prime farmland, so ideally we would hope to find an area which would be improved by our presence. Then we would have the added benefit of knowing we were also working to reclaim and heal damaged land.

The main consensus is to have a central large stone circle, preferably surrounded by a raised bank, and planted around as a sacred grove which would give protection (in all senses!) to both people and wildlife. This would be the centrepiece of the site, and we would also like to have some shelter, perhaps in the form of a Roundhouse, and some form of water presence, i.e stream, pond, waterfall. These are considered the most essential elements, but what is achieved will depend entirely on circumstances - not only the parameters of the site but the amount of support, voluntary help, funds and sponsorship received. The scope of the Project is such that many organisations could potentially become involved - environmental, historical and archaeological, cultural and arts organisations, as well as Pagan/Green, earth-friendly and spiritual groups.

At the moment this Project is in the Realm of Air - ideas which are being progressed and discussed to see what support there is to bring it to actuality in the Realm of Earth. We see this as networking between organisations, to see what can be achieved working together. If you have any ideas, offers of support, or any contacts with organisations, please write to either Sarah or Andy, or feel free to come to the Moot, which is open to all and is held at Chy Gwella, 53 Morrab Road, Penzance on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm.

Sarah Vivian, 24 Queen Street, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7JW.

Andy Norfolk, The Cottage, Crowan, Praze, Camborne TR14 9NB.

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COMPETITION RIDDLE

Robin Payne is the author of the beautiful book on Cornwall's megalithic menhirs *The Romance of the Stones* [reviewed in MM40]. During the research for this, he became aware of one of the profoundest mysteries of prehistory, namely, the falling into disuse of Britain's ceremonial monuments at the end of the Bronze Age around 1000 BCE. Caught up in the idea of that apparent 'loss of faith', he was inspired to write the following piece "The Last Rite", and send it to MM for publication. He says of it: "I don't think many people will have difficulty in identifying the prehistoric location, but I would be interested to receive any guesses or interpretations they may care to offer as to the meaning of the visions seen by Arfyn before she died". A free copy of the paperback edition of *The Romance of the Stones* is offered to the person who comes nearest to cracking the riddles in the story. Answers and suggestions please direct to MM.

THE LAST RITE

The light was fading slowly as Arfyn slowly climbed the hill. She felt suddenly so lonely, her spirit was weary, but for the moment she no longer felt ill. Most of her people had now packed up and gone. The few who lingered on had not noticed her slip away. They had already told her she must leave, and, disobeying them, she knew, placed her in great danger. Those with the 'sight' were no longer trusted, except by the ordinary people. It was so unfair, when so many dark forces moved across the face of the land, it was not her kind who were to blame.

As she drew near to the henge of the Silver Hawk, she stopped for a moment. The ring of stones was still concealed behind the circular bank, but Arfyn could already feel their power. The darkness gathered around her, while the full moon flitted between the clouds making only brief appearances; even the Silver Hawk seemed unsure whether her presence was any longer needed here.

She remembered her mother now, as that sharp pain grew again inside her. She recalled learning the secrets of plants and herbs, of the sacred mushrooms and the shaman's brew. She had her mother's gift of second sight and this told her now that her time to die drew near. She chewed the mushrooms and sipped the pungent brew in her leather-hide cup. She must make haste, soon the visions would come to her; also, the time to perform the sacred ritual drew near.

To save time, she climbed the bank into the circle, slipping in the ditch as she did so. As she got to her feet, the twenty-eight stones of the circle were suddenly illuminated in a flood of moonlight. Arfyn felt as if her arrival was being acknowledged by unseen forces. She remembered how, in this ninth year, the Silver Hawk would hang momentarily framed in the entrance to the ring before it set. How strange, that she should stand here now alone, a solitary officiating shaman in that holy place. No one was with her because the ritual was proscribed, another cursed nine years had already been predicted (and many of her kind put to death for it). But her mind was made up: she would hold the last sacrament and submit herself as the final offering.

She leaned against the centre stone and began the ceremony. There were no musicians, but she heard the music and the beating of drums. There was none other but her, but the chant of voices reverberated around her. It was as if all the ancestors who had ever worshipped at the henge now came to join her. The time passed and the Silver Hawk, past her zenith, sunk lower in the sky. As the visions came to her Arfyn sunk to the floor, overwhelmed by a cacophony of sound and pain. She saw a battlefield where swarthy dark haired men with swords of silver swept all before them. Then bright stars and crashing symbols. She stood in sunlight looking out from the entrance to the ring, and realised that it was now ruined, the central stone fallen. In the distance, a great grey snake lay stretched across the rain-soaked landscape and upon it small, scurrying beetles travelled back and forth. Then she heard a roaring sound coming from the heavens above her head. Looking up she saw a large silver hawk, like some great airborne dragon, come gliding across the sky. In her heart she knew, as she closed her eyes to die, that the Silver Hawk had finally come to take her home.

The night was slowly fading and the bright orb of the moon was slowly dipping towards the horizon. A cool breeze was stirring now within the deserted circle where Arfyn's lifeless body lay where she had fallen beside the centre stone. The last rite had been performed.

BOOK REVIEWS

An original and important book on Charmers and Charming in the Bodmin Moor area of Cornwall has been published by Oakmagic Publishers. **White Witches: A Study of Charmers** by ROSE MULLINS (£3.95) traces the tradition of the charmer or "white witch" in Cornwall through the ages. Rose Mullins, who lives high on the moor at Bolventor, has researched deeply into the past of this healing tradition and shows how it has changed over time. "Every town, village or hamlet" she says, "had its wise woman who practised the 'Wicce Craft' (wise craft) and her powers were handed down from mother to daughter". These powers, she points out, were not only a secret knowledge of herbal remedies and charms, but also the paranormal powers with which they were born. She shows that getting rid of warts was only one of the Charmer's skills: others included the cessation of bleeding, convulsions, burns and the healing of wounds. Rose gives a number of traditional charms that were spoken by the Charmers, some showing a fascinating mixture of Christianity and paganism. One of the most interesting chapters is the one on Charmers past and present, and, as well as featuring 19thC characters like Tamsin Blight, Anne Jeffries and Grannie Boswell, the book is also invaluable in featuring some contemporary Charmers like Joan Bettinson, who has inherited the gift from both the maternal and paternal side of her family, and Ivan Miners who lives in Lostwithiel and has been charming successfully for 40 years. There are many other examples and anecdotes of Charmers who cured gangrene, ringworm, adder bites and other ailments within living memory, but only known about to the people living in some of the most remote villages and hamlets in the Bodmin Moor area. The book is well illustrated with some fascinating photographs of some of the Charmers mentioned, and priced at £3.95 is amazingly good value.

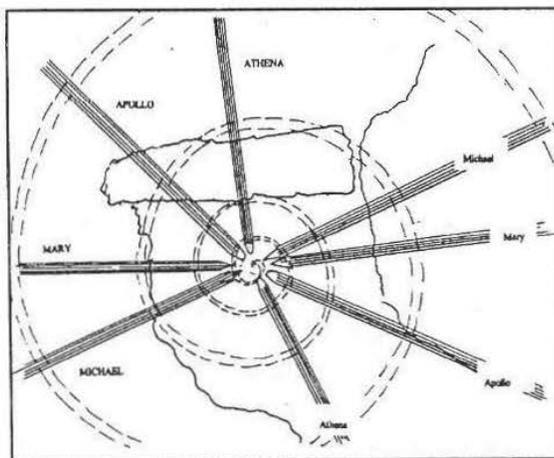
BOOK REVIEWS

The Dance of the Dragon is the long-awaited new book by PAUL BROADHURST & HAMISH MILLER (Pendragon Press, £28 hardback, £16.95 paperback), a kind of international follow-up to *The Sun and the Serpent*. This time Paul and Hamish follow two new 'earth currents' which they name the Apollo and Athena lines from Skellig Michael off the west coast of Ireland, through the Land's End Peninsula, the Lizard, Mont St. Michel in France, Italy, Greece, finishing at the biblical place of Armageddon in Israel! Once again, the book is an picaresque journey visiting ancient and sacred sites along the route. The section most of relevance to MM are the 2 chapters on Cornwall. Paul and Hamish pick up the Athena current entering the peninsula at Pendour Cove, home of the legend of the Mermaid of Zennor. The authors comment: "There is a deeper significance to this universal symbol of a beautiful woman with a curling fish-tail. She may also represent the deep collective unconscious of humanity, and reminds us that in ancient times a Great Goddess was thought to rule Creation.... Are mermaids the presiding deities of the 'Songlines' that whisper quietly to some, but loudly to others who show a certain rapport with them? Are the songs that they sing a reference to the various frequencies that we found make up the currents of earth energy?" They follow this current through the Giant's Rock, Zennor Quoit, Trencrom Hill and Ludgvan Church to St. Michael's Mount.

Meanwhile, the Apollo line is traced from Gurnard's Head through Carn Gulver, the Men Scryfa (from where the horns of Carn Gulver perfectly frame the current), the Mên-an-Tol, Lanyon Quoit, Madron well-chapel, Madron Church (with its inscribed stone) and Gulval Church, finally meeting the Athena current on St. Michael's Mount.

The section on the Mount includes details of healing cures effected in the 13thC from a MS not widely known about. From here they trace both currents through Prussia Cove, Gunwalloe Church Cove and across the Lizard until they leave the land for the Continent. Three of the sites, Towednack Church in West Penwith, and Gunwalloe & Landewednack Churches on the Lizard are all dedicated to St. Winwaloe, and Paul and Hamish explore the significance of this saint in healing and pilgrimage traditions.

As the lines leave southern Cornwall, we follow the authors on their pilgrimage across Europe, to discover and reveal other sacred sites on their journey. For those who loved *The Sun and the Serpent* this book will be more of the same kind of interest, and there is much to learn and enjoy from Paul's evocative writing and ideas.



The nexus point on St Michael's Mount, where the Michael/Mary and Apollo/Athena currents conjoin.

RITUAL INVOCATIONS IN CORNISH

The Cornish invocation featured this time is a Calling of the Quarters, and is by Andy Norfolk in Kernewek Kemmyn.

“With the blessings of the hawk of dawn soaring in the clear pure air, we call upon the powers of the East, spirits of Air - Hail and Welcome!”

Gans bennath a'n hok bora ow nija y'n ayr kler pur, y helwyn ni orth nerthow a'n howldrevel, spyrysyon ayr - Hayl ha Wolkomm!

“With the blessing of the great stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the sun, we call upon the powers of the South, Spirits of Fire - Hail and Welcome!”

Gans bennath a'n karow bras y'n toemnder a'n heigh ha tan a-ji dhe'n howl, y helwyn ni orth nerthow a'n dheghow, spyrysyon dan - Hayl ha Wolkomm!

“With the blessings of the salmon of wisdom who dwells within the sacred waters of the pool, we call upon the powers of the West, Spirits of Water - Hail and Welcome!”

Gans bennath a'n eghek furneth neb a drig y'n dowrow sans a'n pol, y helwyn ni orth nerthow a'n howlsedhes, spyrysyon dhowr - Hayl ha Wolkomm!

“With the blessing of the great bear of the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we call upon the powers of the North, spirits of Earth - Hail and Welcome!”

Gans bennath ors bras a'n nevow sterennek ha'n dor down ha feyth, y helwyn ni orth nerthow gledh, spyrysyon dhor - Hayl ha Wolkomm!

“To those Above and Those Below, and the Spirits of our Ancestors-Hail and Welcome!”

Orth a'n re na a-ugh ha'n re na a-woeles, ha spyrysyon agan hendasow - Hayl ha Wolkomm!

“In the name of the hawk of dawn and the element of air, we thank the spirits of the East. Hail and Farewell!”

Yn hanow a'n hok bora ha'n elvenn ayr, y aswonnyn gras dhe'n spyrysyon howldrevel. Hayl ha Farwel!

“In the name of the great stag and of the element of fire, we thank the spirits of the South. Hail and Farewell!”

Yn hanow a'n karow bras ha'n elvenn tan, y aswonnyn gras dhe'n spyrysyon dheghow. Hayl ha Farwel!

“In the name of the salmon of wisdom and the element of water, we thank the spirits of the West. Hail and Farewell!”

Yn hanow a'n eghek furneth, ha'n elvenn dowr, y aswonnyn gras dhe'n spyrysyon howlsedhes. Hayl ha Farwel!

“In the name of the great bear of the starry heavens and of the element of earth, we thank the spirits of the North. Hail and Farewell!”

Yn hanow ors bras a'n nevow sterennek ha'n elvenn dor, y aswonnyn gras dhe'n spyrysyon gledh. Hayl ha Farwel!

“Those above, those below, and the spirits of our Ancestors we thank you also. Hail and Farewell!”

An re na a-ugh, an re na a-woeles, ha spyrysyon agan hendasow, y aswonnyn gras dhewgh ynwedh. Hayl ha Farwel!

The Pipers Tune

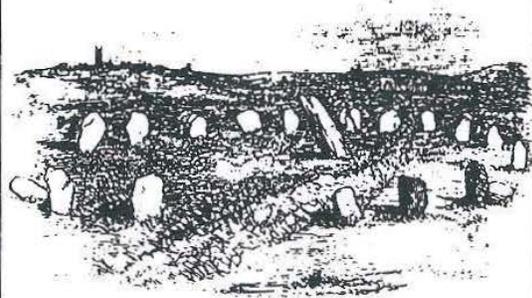
A controversy about the extent to which ancient sites were used in prehistoric times for rituals has been running for a while now in the pages of *The Cauldron* magazine [see exchange listings opp.] between 2 of Cornwall's most well-known figures, Andy Norfolk and Kelvin Jones. The whole affair really started with the publication of the *Press Release on behalf of the Genius Loci of West Penwith* before the 1999 Total Eclipse of the Sun, by Andy & Cassandra Latham (reproduced in MM39 p.2-3). This was followed by an article *Who Are the Genius Loci?* in TC96 by Kelvin, in which he questioned the assumption of some contemporary pagans that the sites were necessarily places of pagan use, and suggested that there is very little evidence of this from archaeology or folklore. He said that there is very little mention by folklorists like Robert Hunt of sites being used for ritual purposes - in fact local people would avoid the places. He believed that the modern pagan tendency to use the sites as a backdrop for their rituals was an appropriation by them.

In an article entitled *Pagan Stone Circles* in TC97, Andy replied to this, saying that if he contacted the 'genii loci' at the sites he would always treat them with respect. He also produced some evidence showing the historical use of ancient sites by pagans or for ritual purposes, and gave as an example the recent interpretations of Leskernick Moor [see MM 38 p5-7]. He disagreed that people always kept away from ancient sites, and pointed out that there are many instances of sites being associated with various types of folk magic in the books of Hunt & Bottrell.

Kelvin responded to this in TC98 in an article called *More Pagan Stone Circles*, in which he re-iterated that the link between paganism and ancient sites derives largely from the Romantic imagination. "Yes, it is true that some of the Cornish sites, like Mên-an-Tol, were used for healing and divination rituals, but this is a far cry from the grand scenarios involving druidical sacrifices at Stonehenge and robed figures presiding at huge rituals at Avebury, which the intellectuals of the last century were so proud of." He concluded that we simply don't know how the sites were originally used, but we do know that local people were fearful of them and the spriggans they might encounter there in the 18th & 19th centuries, and we should be wary today about how we use them and assumptions we might make about them.

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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. MM45 due May 2001 will include Stone Circles, Nor-Nour & The Cornish Otherworld. 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

CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES

Thurs Jan 26th Talk: "Giantesses and Virgins: Goddess sites of Malta & Ireland"-Cheryl Straffon/Sheila Bright

Thurs Mar 1st Talk: "Mother of the Isles: myths, legends & stories of the Western Isles" - Jill Smith

Thurs Mar 29th Talk: "The Romance of the Stones" - Robin Payne

Thurs Apr 26th Talk: "The Celtic Lunar Calendar"Serena Roney-Dougal

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

PAGAN FEDERATION Devon & Cornwall Conference *Sat Mar 11th* King Arthur's Castle Hotel, Tintagel Speakers include Emma Restall-Orr & Philip Shallcross and Levannah Morgan + "Golowan" film + music from Nigel Shaw & Carolyn Hillyer. Details: PO Box 314, Exeter, Devon EX4 6YR.

PENWITH COLLEGE Alternative Life courses & workshops. Inc. Celtic Wheel of the Year - Julie Eddy *Sat Apr 28th* (1 day); Dowsing for Beginners - Ann Moore *Tues Jan 16th* (10 weeks); Exploring Spirituality - Ann Moore *Sat Jan 27th* (1 day); Ley Lines in and around your Home - Ann Moore *Sat Mar 3rd* (1 Day); Feng Shui - course & workshop - Heather Campbell *Weds Jan 17th* (10 weeks) & *Sat Mar 17th* (1 day). Details: 01736-335100.

PAGAN MOOTS

Penzance - meets 2nd Tues each month at 53 Morrab Rd. Tel: Andy 01209-831519

Pendeen - meets 2nd Tues each month. Tel: Cath 01736-786666

Truro/Falmouth area - meets 2nd Sat each month. Tel:Dianne 0783-3567911

Helston - meets 3rd Sat each month. Tel:Tina01326-569627/07776-492965

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

Liskeard area - to commence shortly
Volunteers needed to run Moots in the Camborne & Redruth and N.Cornwall areas - contact Adrian Bryn-Evans on 01209-212251

FRIENDS OF THE WITCHCRAFT MUSEUM at Boscastle. Occasional events, gatherings & talks. Details from House of the Old Ways, 234 Agar Rd, Pool, Redruth TR15 3NJ.

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

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

BELTANE CELEBRATIONS

Sat Apr 28th - Beltane at Harmony Pottery, Scorrier, Redruth 7.30pm
Details: 01209-890581

Mon Apr 30th - 13th Annual Maypole Dance & feast at Carn Bosavern, St. Just 6.30pm Details: 01736-787612

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

Tue May 8th - Helston Flora Day. Details: 01326-565431