

BODMIN MOOR - KING ARTHUR'S HALL ●
DISCOVERING PROPPED STONES ● WELLS
ST.NECTAN'S KIEVE ● RITUALS ● NEWS ●

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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**

While being interviewed by a Phd student recently for his dissertation on sacred geography, I was asked if I thought that the ancient sites in Cornwall needed more management. This set me thinking: we are always complaining about the threat to the sites from too much over-use and excess attention, from all manner of people, including visitors, New Agers and tour groups, most of whom want 'something' from the site, whether spiritual or physical, and some of whom insist on leaving something at the site (crystals, bits of cloth, stones, etc). So, would it be better if we tried to control these activities more, perhaps with more signposts, more directed ways to the places, and more monitoring of activities there? Well, yes and no. At the Sacred Sites Network, we have over the last few years discussed placing some discreet signposting at the entrances to the sites asking visitors to treat them with respect, not dig fire pits or light candles on the stones, etc. We have also discussed voluntary site guardians, whose job it would be to keep a general eye on the places, remove litter and detritus, etc. And of course if the ASMO post (Ancient Sites Management Officer) gets Objective 1 funding, then a great more could be done to educate and inform visitors, and perhaps encourage them to go to other lesser-known sites to take some of the pressure off the main ones.

But given our limited resources at present, are we doing the right things? A good example would be the recent clear-up at Madron Baptistry and Well. Several organisations and voluntary groups came together one afternoon in July to try and improve the state of the site. The Bolitho Estate, who manage the land where the site stands, came and cut back the overgrown path leading down to the Baptistry. The Historic Environment Section (CAU) arranged for the large tree that was overhanging the Baptistry to have some of its branches lopped off to discourage people climbing on the walls to hang clouties and then dislodging the stonework. The local Pagan Moot organised a cloutie-clearing gang to come and remove some of the dirty old rags and plastic that were festooning all the trees nearby, and try and direct the cloutie-hanging to just one tree near the well. And the newly-formed Madron Forum liasied with the Group to inform all local interested parties what was going on. It was a shining example of what can be done by networking and communication with all groups, both official and alternative. Probably anyone coming to the Baptistry and Well for the first time will have no idea that such 'management' has taken place: they will love it as a peaceful sacred 'unspoilt' place. And so it should be. The best 'management' is discreet management, when it is not obvious that anything has been 'managed', but which hugely improves the appearance and experience of the site for all visitors to it.



news page

The Winter/Spring 2002 programme of presentations began at The Acorn on Jan 31st with the intriguingly titled “The Carn, the Knocker and the Reliquary: Rock-ancestor dreaming in the prehistoric South-West” by **Dr. Caradoc Peters**. Dr. Peters drew together several strands about how people in the past viewed the spiritual and supernatural dimensions in their lives, and how they related to the natural places in the landscape. He showed how in earlier times, the spirit of the ancestors became part of the living rocks and how the living then would hear the spirits in the underground places, linking it to the beliefs of the Cornish tin miners who propitiated the ‘knockers’. In the second half there was an interesting discussion and sharing about ritual space.

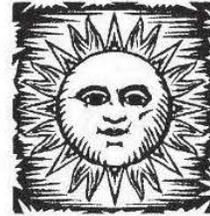
Feb 28th brought local ghost-hunter **Ian Addicoat** talking about “Haunted Penwith”. Ian is a well-known researcher into the world of the supernatural, and attracted a full house at the Acorn. He focussed on his interest in the world of spirits and explored whether ghosts are real or not, and some of the possible explanations for them. He also talked about Penwith’s most haunted place - Pengersick Castle. This was an enthusiastic and energetic talk, and elicited a lively discussion with different ideas put forward by the audience.

The March 28th presentation was by **Cheryl Traffon & Sheila Bright** on “The Goddess in the Temple: Life Death and Rebirth at Maltese Temple Sites”. Newly returned from a visit to Malta & Gozo, Cheryl & Sheila had much information, ideas, slides and pictures to share with the CEMG audience. The talk was a mixture of detail together with personal experience at the sites, and evoked the megalithic peoples who accessed the world of spirit through ritual, ceremony, offerings, oracles, dreams and prophecy. In the second half there was an excellent discussion and sharing of ideas, particularly about the possible meaning and significance of the Goddess figurines with detached heads.

Finally, the April 25th talk by past-curator of the Helston Folk Museum **Martin Matthews** was intriguingly titled “Peculiarities: folklore, legends and artefacts of the Helston area”. The talk encompassed a wide range of interesting topics, including the efficacy of cures involving snails and adders, charmers and pellars, such as Tamsin Blight, ill-wishing and witchcraft, the powers of white witches such as Granny Boswell, and the sightings of spriggans and piskies. Martin finished by showing a ‘Celtic head’, one of two that have been dug up in the vicinity of Helston Church, which he said was built on a “pagan site”. A worthy end to a season that was much about the spirit world.



Round The Season's



Summer 2002 started with the 14th annual **Maypole Dance** on May Day Eve at Carn Bosavern, St.Just. It was a windy but dry evening, and about 50-60 people turned up to dance in the summer to the music of a local folk group, and to share food and drink together. There was the usual mix of adults and children, and this has now become a regular event for the local pagan and alternative community. There was much jumping over the bonfire afterwards, before a heavy shower brought the proceedings to a sudden close, though a few people stayed on afterwards to drum together.

There was no gathering at Harmony Pottery this year, but instead the West Penwith Pagan Moot organised a **Beltane ritual** at Sancreed House, where about 30 pagans turned up for the ceremony in the lovely setting of the grounds. In a circle there was a focus on hopes and joys for the Summer, and everyone tied multicoloured ribbons on to a tree arch. A traditional Irish poem of Beltane blessings was read out in parts by all, followed by some individual contributions. Then pairs of people formed a circle arch and each pair danced through to a Beltane chant. Finally, there was an individual journey taken through the grounds that went through the tree arch, by two fires for cleansing and purifying, then to meet the Goddess or God - a reflection of the self in a mirror. The evening finished with shared food and drumming around the Beltane fires.

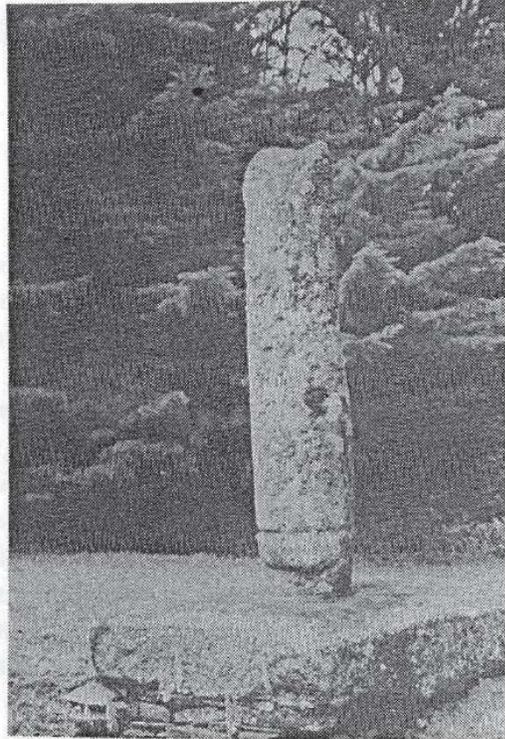
The next day was the 14th annual **Three Wells Walk**, which takes place on the first Sunday in May to recreate the old tradition of visiting the wells on that day for healing and divination, and to visit the land awakening in all of the earth's finery. As usual, it was a lovely day - sunny with a light wind perfect for walking. The hedgerows were ablaze with bluebells, pink campion and white three-cornered leeks, and a beautiful arch of white blackthorn marked the path down to Madron Well. There the water collected from the three wells, Chapel Euny, Sancreed and Madron was co-mingled and a blessing given for everyone and thanks to Mother Earth. There was a particularly good turnout this year: over two dozen people on both legs of the walk. An enjoyable and companionable day, though some were a bit foot sore after the 12 miles!

Midsummer celebrations included the Penwith Pagan Moot **Summer Solstice** ceremony, re-routed at the last minute from Kerris Quarry to the more public Merry Maidens. The staged fight between the Oak & Holly Kings attracted quite a lot of attention, all of it positive, and participants found it an enriching experience. The **Mazey Day Serpent Dance** was as exciting and lively as ever. Penglaze was in excellent form, Cassandra Latham teased well, and a number of local pagans (including MM editor!) ended up leading the dance through the streets as it weaved back and forth.

SACRED SITES NEWS * SACRED SITES NEWS

OLD KEA CHURCHYARD STONE MYSTERY

The remote and beautiful Kea Church, just off the A39 not far from Truro, has a mysterious stone in its churchyard, a curious quasi-circular pillar with a collar carved around its base. Apparently it was found among the foundations of the old church when it was demolished in 1802, itself on the site of a Celtic monastery. It was subsequently set up on a plinth outside the porch, and Professor Charles Thomas told MM that there is nothing else like it in Cornwall. He does not think it is either a cross-shaft or a chancel pillar from the original church. It may even be a pre-Christian menhir that was incorporated into the site and then shaped and dressed, but he says that it is "a real mystery". The Church Guide says there are markings on it, though they are not clear to see now.



BOSKENNA CROSS TAKES ANOTHER TUMBLE

The much knocked-down Boskenna Cross on the Lamorna-St.Buryan road junction was again felled earlier this year. In February the top of the cross was found lying by the roadside. It is not known whether this was the result of deliberate vandalism or a road traffic accident, but local village witch Cassandra Latham acted quickly in alerting Cornwall Archaeological Unit, who took it away for repair and restoration. This is at least the third time that this cross has been knocked down. In 1941 when it stood in the middle of the road it was hit by an army lorry; subsequently it was removed to the verge but was dislodged again in 1992 when a vehicle hit it in foggy conditions.

SANCREED WELL PATH NOW ON DEFINITIVE MAP

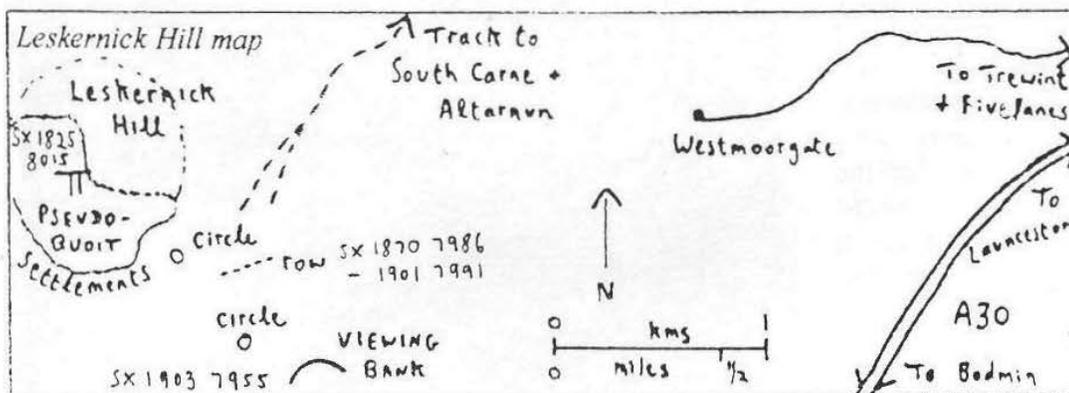
The disputed churchway path from Sancreed Church to the Well [see MM44 p.4] has now been placed on the Definitive Map, and thus access along its full length is now legally enforceable. However, this is unlikely to be the end of the story, as it is expected that the Hoskings will apply to have the footpath diverted and replaced with one running along their new driveway. If this happens a full tribunal hearing will follow, for which local people have offered to give evidence supporting its retention. Meanwhile, the permissive path to the well from opposite Sancreed Beacon placed by the Hoskins is taking some pressure off the traditional path to the well from the Church.

Focus On .. Bodmin Moor

LESKERNICK - MORE SURVEY RESULTS

The area of Leskernick Hill on Bodmin Moor has received much attention from archaeologists in recent years. An article in MM38 p.7 *Leskernick - a ritual settlement* gave details of the Survey done on the hill by an archaeological team, which showed that "every movement in and around and about (the settlement) was imbued with a sense of ritual", and the orientation of the houses, the sacred hilltops and the ritual monuments were all linked together in an integrated way. Now, the current edition of *Cornish Archaeology* (No.37) gives further information about the ritual monuments that lie in the lee of the hill. The remains of two stone circles have been identified - Leskernick North at SX1872 7985 and South at SX1881 7961, between which at right angles runs a stone row at SX1872 7985 to 1899 7991. The stone circle of Leskernick North, which has only 3 surviving small uprights, was originally relatively small (approx. 22.5-23m diameter), broadly similar to the 2 King Arthur's Downs stone circles and Leaze Circle. It originally consisted of between 27-29 stones, making it similar to 8 other Bodmin Moor circles. Just north of the centre of the circle is a large whale-back stone, which may have been either a particularly attractive moorstone around which the circle was built, or more probably a fallen standing stone.

Running across the plain to the south, the stone row comprises a straight line of mainly fallen small stones, 317m long. Only 2 stones are still standing and these are less than 0.3m high. The row runs down a hill slope, crosses a stream and rises up the other side. For anyone walking the row, when they cross the stream and begin to rise up the other side, a sight of Rough Tor, a distinctive Bodmin Moor holy hilltop, comes into view. The stream may thus have marked a liminal boundary, and the crossing of it was to enter a sacred area that then afforded a view of Rough Tor. The article also gives full details of the discovery of the 'pseudo-quoit', and the calculating of its midsummer sunset alignment, mentioned in the previous article (p.14 of this MM) and also in MM30 p.5. It also points out that the above-mentioned stone row stops deliberately at a point that allows for a clear view of the 'pseudo-quoit' from the 'viewing mound' placed to view the midsummer solstice sunset.



Focus On .. Bodmin Town

HOLY WELLS OF BODMIN RESTORED

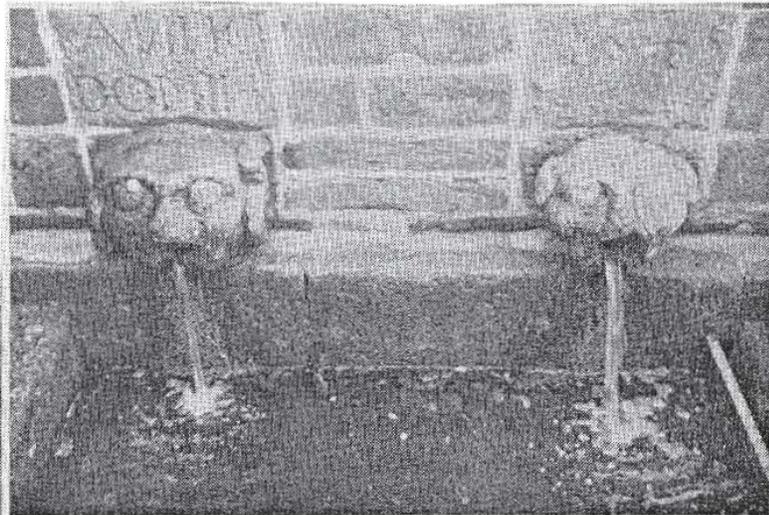
Bodmin has a number of holy wells, which until recently were all ruined or derelict. However, a £100,000 scheme has now been completed to refurbish and restore them. They are all linked together with a town trail, so it is possible to once again visit and enjoy the sites of their healing waters.

St.Petroc's Well is situated in Priory Park that lies behind the large town car park. Here there are the sluices of a flood alleviation scheme, but the well is in a pretty basin under an old tree. In a 1635 document it was known as St. Guron's Well, but the dedication was later changed

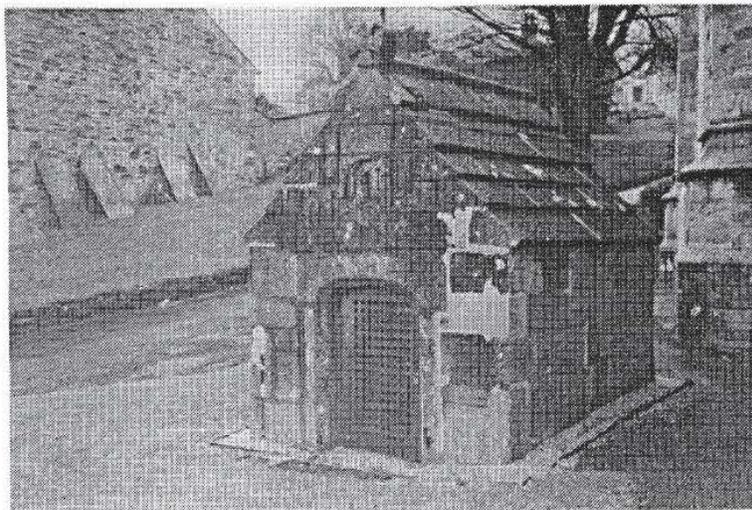


In the early 1900s a wooden statue of St.Mary with baby Jesus was found preserved inside the well, believed to have been hidden from Cromwell's troops during the Civil War. It has been restored and repainted and is now kept at Buckfast Abbey.

St.Petroc and St.Guron are closely linked in Bodmin, for the next well is also known as **St.Guron's Well**, but it lies at St.Petroc's Church in the centre of Bodmin. Indeed, from a document dated 1519 it seems that the Church was built over the original site of the well. The water that originally supplied the well now issues through the mouths of two gargoyles, one horned and the other with pendant ears, at the foot of the churchyard. Over these is carved AD 1545. The water flows into a trough, and until relatively recent times was the town's main water supply.



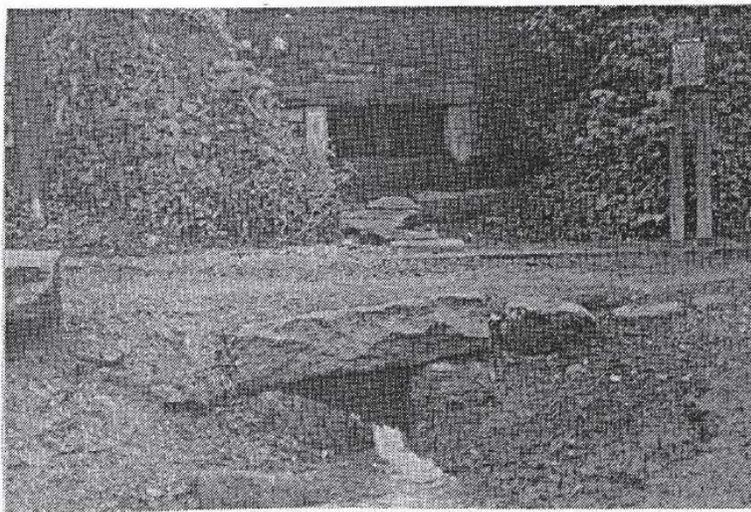
Inside St. Petroc's Churchyard is a beautifully reconstructed well house which originally dates from around 1545. It now has a new roof and gate, external walls have been repointed and worn stones replaced. There is an early 1891 photograph of it in Quiller Couch's holy wells book.



Other town wells include: **The Eye Well** off Dennison Road, which once had a reputation for healing weak and troubled eyes (earlier known as Bree Shute Well, from the Cornish word *bree* which means a hill); and **Cock's Well** at the corner of Chapel Lane and Dennison Road, which supplied water for local people and a blacksmith.

But Bodmin's most famous well was **Scarletts Well** which lies down a lane off Scarletts Well Road near the beginning of the Camel Trail. Quiller Couch said of it: "It is in a valley threaded by a brooklet.... issuing from the grounds of the priory", thus linking together St. Petroc's Well in Priory Park and Scarletts Well here.

In 1600 Richard Carew wrote that its waters were so famed that "folk ran flocking thither in huge numbers". He also commented on the consistency of the water and said that "you shall see it represent many colours like in the rainbow, which argueth a running through some mineral vein".



Today the well has been restored, vegetation cut back and a series of stepping stones provided. It provides a peaceful and delightful spot to sit and contemplate the sacred waters of the newly-restored wells of Bodmin town.

A leaflet of Bodmin's Well Trail is available from the TIC (Tel: 01208-76616).

Focus
On ..
Bodmin
MOOR

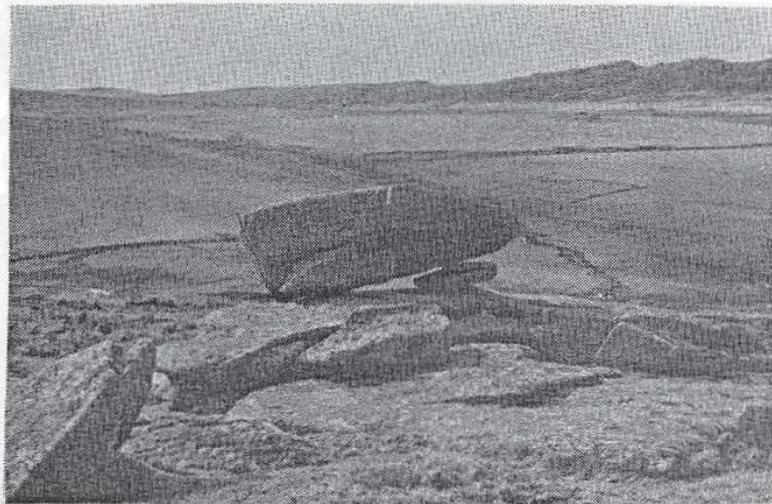
DECORATING THE LANDSCAPE - 'PROPPED STONES' ON BODMIN MOOR

by TONY BLACKMAN

Tony Blackman is an active member of the Cornwall Archaeological Society, for whom he often leads walks to ancient sites and runs the Young Archaeologists Club. Together with Peter Herring from the Heritage Environmental Service [CAU], he discovered and identified the original 'pseudo-quoit' on Leskernick Hill [see MM30 p.5]. This article, especially written for MM, reveals for the first time further new discoveries.

In the early 1990s Peter Herring and I were leading an archaeological walk around Leskernick Hill on northern Bodmin Moor and diverted to a part of the hill we had rarely visited to investigate a stone setting. What we had originally thought might be 2ndWW Home Guard volunteers 'playing' with the stones eventually led us to: a geology lesson on erosion shadows, a raised sausage shaped mound 900m distant, an accurate surveying of the setting and mound, communication with the Greenwich Observatory, and many midsummer evening visits to the hill.

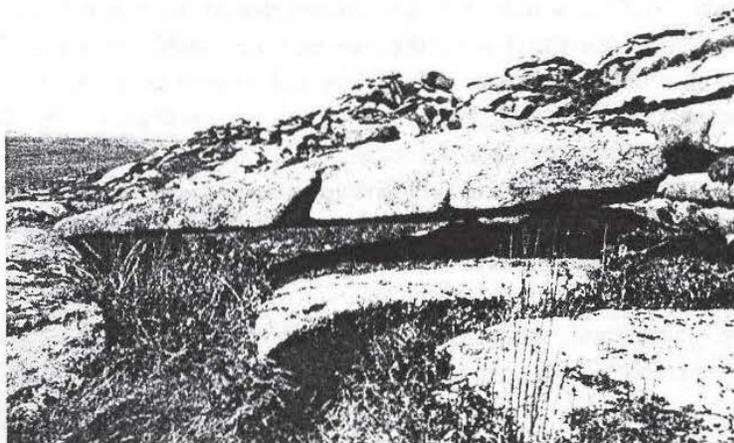
There is little doubt now that this profile feature on Leskernick Hill was erected in early Neolithic times, and that some 5700 years ago the midsummer sun would have set immediately behind what we now call Leskernick 'Quoit' when viewed from the distant mound.



Leskernick 'pseudo-quoit'

Following this recognition, other settings began to reveal themselves on Bodmin Moor and it became necessary to consult outside sources for some help in evaluating these both as human constructions and in an archaeological context. Professor Tjeerd van Andel from Cambridge University Geo-Archaeological Department visited four settings and gave a considered opinion, and then Dr. Judith Bunbury from the same department visited six and carried out a detailed geological examination on each. Following her visit we agreed that classification should be in three bands - Definite, Probable and Possible. Members of the Heritage Environmental Service [formerly the Cornwall Archaeological Unit] have been kept informed of all recognitions and have been extremely helpful in this study.

Since those initial evaluations more settings have been recognised on Bodmin Moor and evaluated, and just before Foot and Mouth struck last year, two settings were recognised on Carn Galver in West Penwith with a possible associated smaller setting close to one of them.



Tony's Stone on Kilmar Tor [Bodmin Moor] which directs the eye over Langstone Downs directly to Stowe's Hill

At the same time I received two slides from a Dartmoor researcher of a similar setting which he had recognised on Pew Tor - no doubt more will 'appear' as eyes are opened to this new monument type. [N.B. A possible one was identified on Gugh (Scilly) during a recent CEMG visit - cf.MM47p.17-18.Ed.]



Tansy's Stone on Roughtor [Bodmin Moor]. This has a rough bearing of 296° (reference the midsummer setting sun?)

A telephone call three years ago to Professor Richard Bradley at Reading University put me in contact with Dr. Vicki Cummings from Cardiff University who visited Cornwall to view the settings and has been supportive of my work ever since. Peter Herring from HES (CAU) has re-visited the 'Cannon Stone' on Carburrow Tor since these other recognitions and viewed it with 'new eyes' - it is magnificent and well worth a visit. This study is still young enough to allow opinions to be formulated for discussion from many different disciplines without clouding thinking with dogmatic statements. Some examples are given in the photographs on these pages (many other examples could be given), but do visit them and make reasoned decisions of your own.

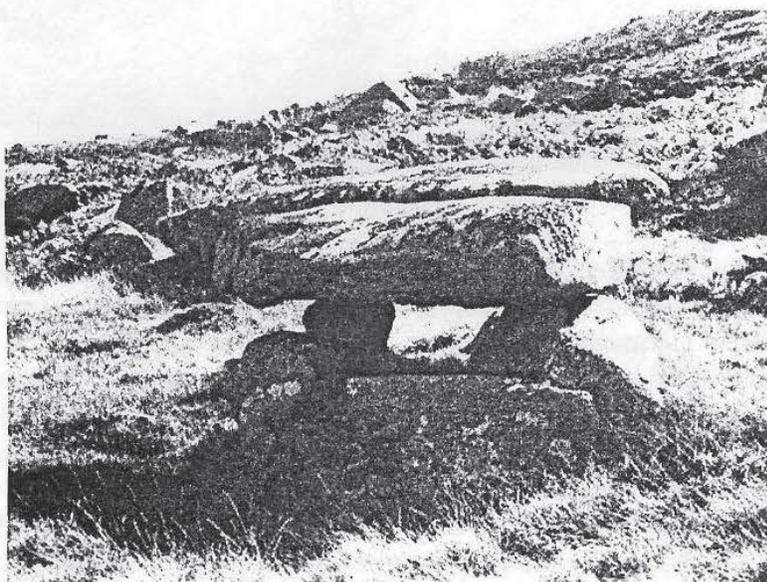
As yet we are not able to put these monuments securely into any archaeological time period, using only the probable dating of the Leskernick 'Quoit' as a guide. Modern science has not yet developed the techniques for assessing the age of the erosion shadows that lie at the base of some of the stones, and tests that might help, such as radio chlorine are university controlled and very expensive. Perhaps a gift to future archaeologists might be extremely accurate surveys of the monuments giving the greatest accuracy possible to the base stones with erosion shadows, so that as the shadows increase in size they will give an indication of erosion rates.

YAC Stone - recognised on Twelve Mens Moor [Bodmin Moor] during a Young Archaeologists Club holiday on Trewortha Farm. This setting clearly shows the erosion shadow - the raised portion of the base stone under the top stone.



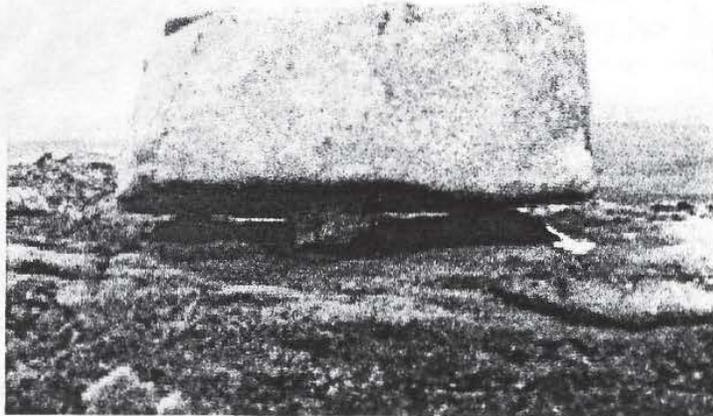
The monuments too do not fit a secure pattern of construction, nor do they immediately suggest a single reason for their erections. If we are to apply true archaeological consideration to them perhaps we should not look for a single reason or pattern for their existence.

James' Stone on Twelve Mens Moor, recognised by James when he was 12 years old! This is magnificent and appears to point to an area of lowland now occupied by Langstone Farm.



However, as we look beyond the physical archaeology we do begin to find position, reference and construction to perhaps have greater meanings. Was it an accident that Stannon Circle was built so that Alex Tor, Brown Willy and Showery Tor were all just in view, or that that there appears to be a stone setting which frames Rough Tor and provides what might be called a 'processional gateway' to the circle? Were the two eastern cairns on Brown Gelly constructed not only to mirror the images of Rough Tor and Brown Willy (this incidentally is the same on Carburrow), but also to lie on a parallel bearing as well as provide a frame through which to view the two hills. Just a couple of examples to reinforce my title!

Dot's Stone on Carn Gulver in West Penwith. Note the horizontal quartz vein in the propping stone.



SPOT A STONE & HAVE IT NAMED AFTER YOU!

Many of the 'propped stones' listed by Tony Blackman have been named after the people who recognised them or who were working alongside him when they were recognised. In this way, he says "it gives status to the searchers and finders and allows a personalisation of the landscape that enriches the stories of their finding." Now, MM invites its readers to go 'stone-spotting' and see if any more stones can be identified and named after the finders. Points to look out for inc:-

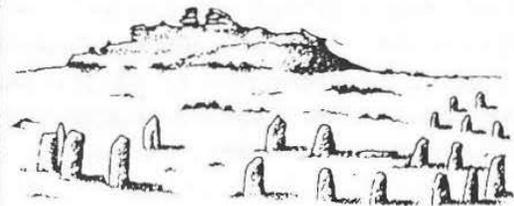
Location. Possible sites will be close to prehistoric settlement areas.

Stones. Stones will appear distinctive in the landscape, perhaps with alignments.

Erosion Shadows. Some stones may have 'shadow areas' under the topstone(s) where erosion is less than natural process.

If you spot one send MM photo & details.

THE EARTH MYSTERIES GUIDE TO BODMIN MOOR AND NORTH CORNWALL.



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More on Bodmin Moor over the page.....

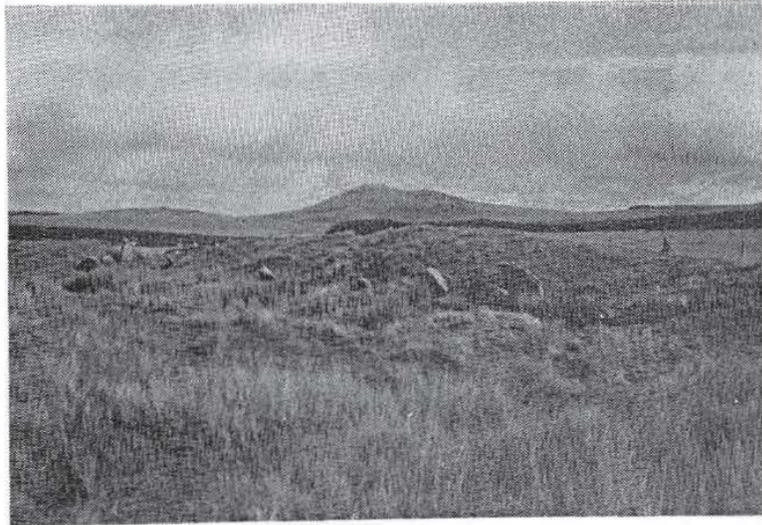
Focus on Bodmin Moor

KING ARTHUR'S HALL

MEGALITHIC MONUMENT OR MEDIAEVAL POUND?

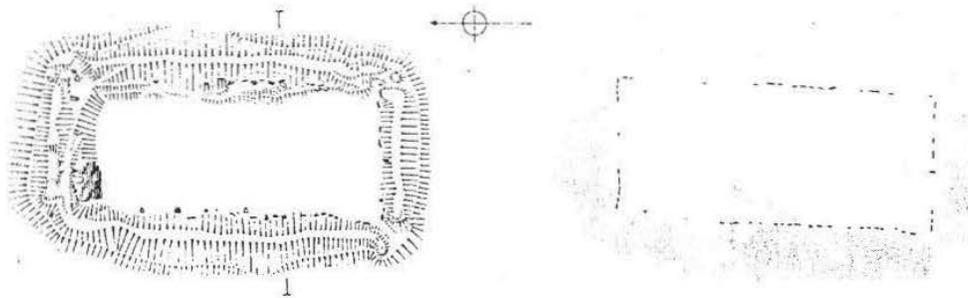
by DIANA COLES

King Arthur's Hall, a rectangular banked enclosure 47x20m, is situated on Bodmin Moor at SX1298 7765. It lies on a slight ridge, just below the crest of a plateau, making it visible only from close up to the south, but for about a mile from the north. Nearby stand a pair of ruined stone circles to the SE at SX134 775.



Location of the Hall on the Moor

The banks, constructed of gravelly earth and rough stones, were revetted (faced) within by upright stones of which 14 remain upright, 25 leaning, 13 fallen completely and 5 possible others visible. Peter Herring from the CAU believes there may have been a total of 138 stones, with many possibly located beneath the collapsed bank. There is an inturned stone in the south bank, set at right angles to the rest of the stones. The banks themselves are approximately 1m high and 6m wide. The rectangle is aligned north-south with a gap creating an entrance in the southwest corner. Herring considers that this was to allow drainage and notes the presence of a ditch outside the hall. There appears to be a berm running inside the standing stones. The interior has been scooped out and contains several centimetres of standing water. The 1986 RCHME survey discovered traces of cobbling in the northwest corner.



Plan of monument & Suggested reconstruction with stones set upright

King Arthur's Hall lay near the boundary between the manors of Hamatethy and Blisland, both of which were flourishing in 1086. The first printed reference to King Arthur's Hall is by John Norden in 1584:

"Arthures Hall. A place so called and by tradition helde to be a place whereunto that famous K.Arthur resorted: it is a square plott about 60 foote longe and about 35 foote broad, situate on a playne Mountayne, wrowghte some 3 foote into the grounde; and by reason of the depression of the place, ther standeth a stange or Poole of water, the place sett rounde aboute with flatt stones in this manner."

It appears on a 1610 map in the Lesnouth hundred as Arthurs-hall. On the 1813 OS map it is shown to be on an east/west path that runs past its south end.



The 1610 Map



the 1813 Map

Evidently the monument must predate by some time Norden's reference. Various uses and periods, both probable and fantastic, have been suggested for the site. Several early writers suggested a prehistoric origin. In his survey in 1982 John Barnatt concluded that King Arthur's Hall was one of the prehistoric ceremonial sites and possibly contemporary with the stone circles. Aubrey Burl has gone further. He considers that the monument is 'a megalithic rectangle', and draws attention to the D-shaped enclosure on East Moor, some 10 kilometres to the east at SX2221 7784, noting parallels between Bodmin, Stonehenge and Brittany. The Stonehenge horseshoe and the quadrilateral of the Station Stones are echoed on Bodmin by the enclosure on East Moor and King Arthur's Hall itself. In Brittany there are quadrilaterals at Crucuno and Manio, horseshoes at Er Lannic, Treguier and elsewhere, while both are found at Kerlescan. Regard for the cardinal points in the alignment of monuments is a not uncommon practice among the megalith builders. It should be noted that Crucuno has an east-west alignment & Kerlescan a north-south alignment as has King Arthur's Hall.

Burl suggests of the Bodmin Moor sites that "the proximity of two such un-British shapes with only 160 miles of English channel between them and Brittany hints that both may have been the ritual centres of travellers from overseas." It may also be noted that Fowey gives Bodmin direct access to the Channel, as does the Avon for the Stonehenge area. The treasures of the Rillaton Barrow near Minions on the southside of Bodmin Moor indicate the possibility that during the Bronze Age there may have been on Bodmin, as in Wessex, a rich society with continental links.

Other writers (such as Tregelles in 1906 & Lewis in 1910) have suggested that the structure might have been intended for a pound of some kind. Peter Herring considers King Arthur's Hall to be a drift pound where animals found illicitly grazing on the moorland summer pastures would be held subject to the payment of a fine. He proposes an early mediaeval date and suggests the pound was the responsibility of the Trigg hundred. He gives several arguments in support of this theory:

- There is no other candidate for the Trigg hundred pound.
- The architecture of the pound would enable animals to be easily driven over the ramp, while, once inside, the stone revetment would make their escape difficult.
- The Hall's relationship to later pasture boundaries seem to emphasise its earlier presence.

I would argue that these two proposed functions are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It is possible that part or all of the Hall's structure may date from the Bronze or Neolithic period but it may have been utilised for another purpose later with or without structural modifications. Butler [*Dartmoor Atlas of Antiquities, 1998*] in discussing the pounds of Dartmoor, an area close to Bodmin both physically and geologically, observes that "pounds...have often been brought back into use at many periods. Practically all have seen some period of re-use, usually with minimal structural alteration." This re-use of earlier structures is also apparent on Bodmin. Peter Herring has noted how four small Bronze Age huts on Brown Willy have been adapted as shelters by transhumance shepherds of the early mediaeval period.

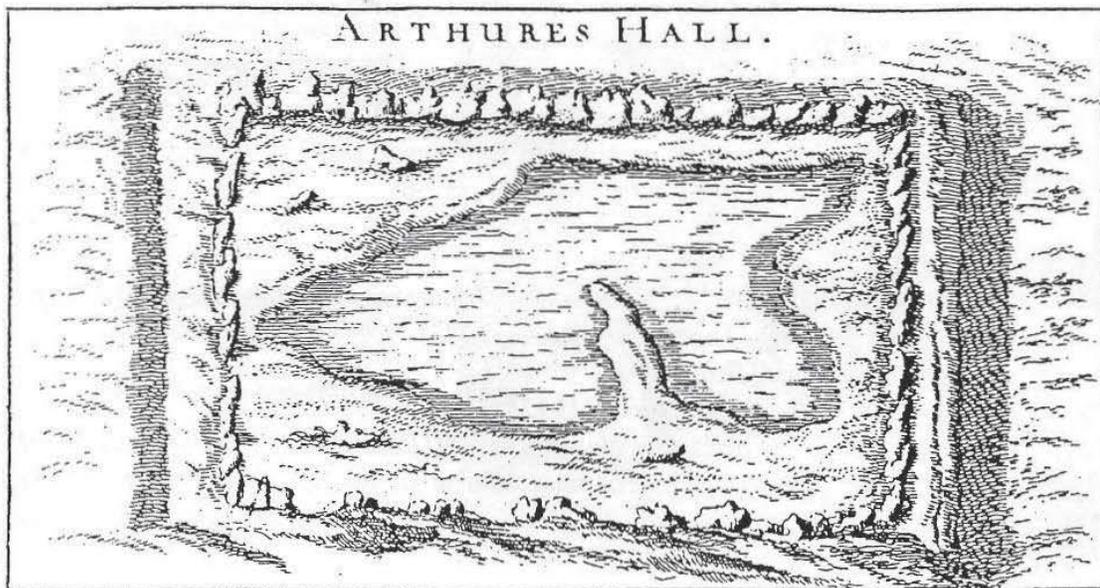
There are various possibilities for the construction sequence. It may have been built all of a piece with the interior scooped out to provide material for the stone-revetted banks. It is also possible that there was originally a free standing quadrilateral and that the bank was created at a later stage. The awkward siting of the entrance in the corner [*photo below*] and the lack of stones as gateposts or portal arrangement argues against King Arthur's Hall having been originally built as a pound. A purpose-built structure would surely have been built with the means to accommodate the stout gating needed to confine hungry animals.



From an examination of the manorial boundaries, Peter Herring considers that the Hall was a present feature regarded in the establishment of later Medieval boundaries and therefore in place already in the earlier pre-Norman landscape. This argument does not exclude an earlier date. W.G. Hoskins *{English Landscapes, 1973}* observed that “boundaries are one of the most permanent and ancient features of the English landscape”. Prehistoric monuments were frequently used to establish boundaries in the early medieval period, and a series of boundary stones on East Moor indicate that the boundary runs up to Altarnun Stone Circle and then changes direction at this point. Furthermore, an examination of the field systems and boundaries at one point on Louden Hill shows how later periods successively refer to points of the earlier system.

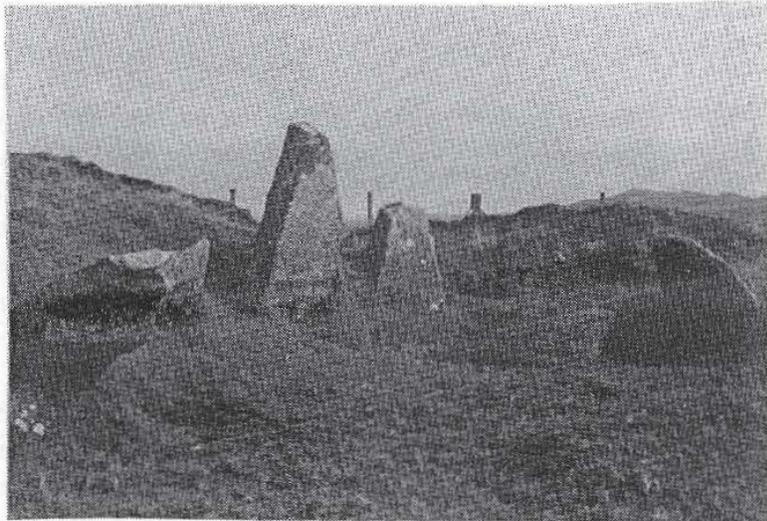
As Norden noted *[Description of Cornwall, 1584]*, the effect of scooping out the bank material from inside the monument has been the formation of the permanent pool of water covering much of the interior. In 1932 Hencken *{Cornwall & Scilly}* considered this “problematic site” and discussed how climate had deteriorated towards the end of the Bronze Age. He concluded that “unless the place was meant originally to have water in it, it must be at least as old as the Bronze Age”. Sheep in particular would not benefit from being confined in such wet conditions, although it is perhaps possible that the standing water would provide drink for the animals.

Norden’s plan of the site *[below]* does not show the gap in the southwest corner. This raises the question as to whether it was opened later. If this was the case, then it may be that the Hall was never used as a pound at all as there would have been no exit for the animals. If the gap was opened later, it may be that there was an earlier entrance, still to be identified, a possibility for which could be that the in-turned stone represents a surviving portal.



A feature of Neolithic and early Bronze-Age ritual monuments is the use of contiguous or near-contiguous orthostats (standing stones), whether as freestanding structures or as revetments (stone facing). Animal enclosures from the prehistoric period onwards were commonly constructed using drystone walling techniques. There is no clutter (loose stone) on King Arthur's Downs in the immediate vicinity of the Hall so the stones used in its construction would have needed to be transported at least half a mile or so. If the site was initially constructed as a livestock pound, it seems strange that such large and unwieldy stones were chosen.

Aubrey Burl
[*Great Stone Circles,*
1999] has drawn attention to the particular arrangement of the stone slabs. In those parts of King Arthur's Hall where neighbouring stones remain in position there is a strong indication that they have been arranged alternately high and low [right].



I know of no practical reason for this arrangement in a pound. However, there are examples elsewhere from ritual monuments, for example in the West Kennet Avenue at Avebury of paired and contrasting 'male and female' stones. This arrangement may be an indication that the Hall first existed as a free-standing monument.

My own view is that it seems likely that King Arthur's Hall was constructed during the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. It may well have been originally a free-standing monument, with the bank post-dating the stones, and have subsequently been adapted as a drift pound during the early medieval period.

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A version of this article first appeared in 3rd Stone Issue 39. Thanks to Neil Mortimer for his help in facilitating its publication in MM.

TREWORTH BRONZE AGE FARM

Trewortha farm lies in Twelve Men's Moor on Bodmin Moor and is in the middle of a complete Bronze Age funerary landscape. Close by lies a hut circle and five hundred yards away is a Bronze Age settlement with hut circles and walls. The valley is littered with cairns and round barrows, and recently Tony Blackman has discovered propped stones here [see p.10]. There are also some interesting stone alignments, and all this is set against the dramatic backdrop of the granite skyline. The Trewortha valley is even more interesting when looked at in the context of the entire Bodmin Moor landscape, saddled as it is between the two tors, Trewortha and Kilmar, whose rugged outlines can be seen from a great distance. There seems to be a strong connection between high ground, tors and barrows, with the propped stone aligned on to the hilltop of Brown Willy, twelve miles away on the northern horizon. Three miles to the south lies the complete Bronze Age landscape of Craddock Moor.

It was at this Farm that the owners Liz and Graham Lawrence started a project in 1996 to construct three round houses, with the largest still under construction. The farm is mainly used for educational purposes, from schools to archaeological societies, and recently has offered practical workshops, including the making of bronze tools and ceremonial objects under the expert tutelage of craftsman Neil Burrige. For more details of the workshops offered at Trewortha and elsewhere see advertisement below.

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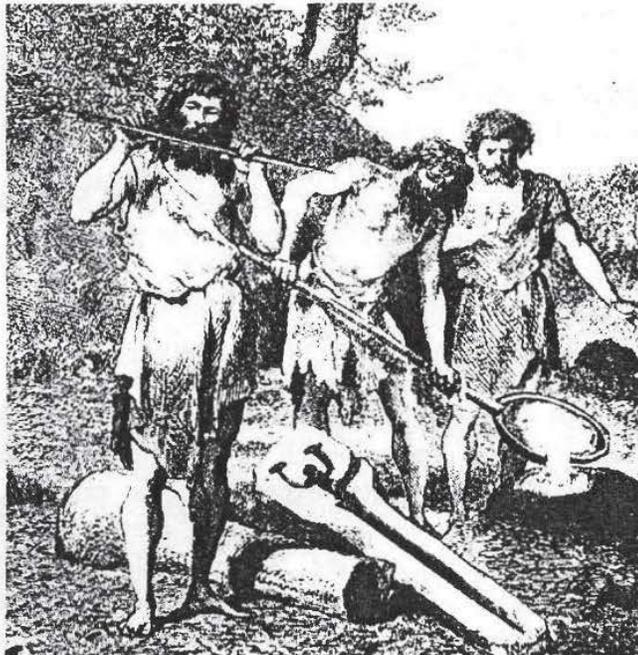
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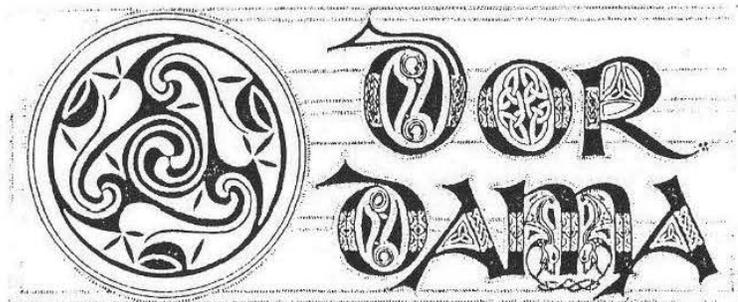
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This "Earth Mother" column this time tells of a visionary experience on the Isles Of Scilly by MM reader **Julie Walker**, who formerly lived on the islands but who now resides on the Isle of Man.

The sketch in MM46 of the Goddess Sillina reminded me of a strange experience when I lived the first of two winter retreats on the Islands. I visited several sacred sites while staying on St.Marys at Old Town, and when asking for permission (from the spirits of the site) to walk on the grassy mound over Innisidgen was told in no uncertain manner "No - come again another time". It was to be three weeks later that I was welcomed and settled to meditate. Facing NE with the sun behind me shining over the Eastern Isles and Nornour, the sea gently disappeared and the earth between Innisidgen and the holy lands was covered with knee-high grasses blowing in the wind. The grass was not a planted crop but natural hay with some grains, probably barley, growing in among the ripening stems. When I looked NE towards the higher ground, now the Eastern Isles, I was looking towards the "temple" of the lady I knew was called Sillina. She had a daemon, a power animal, that accompanied her, a lion-like young male animal, with a stiff pom-pom of hairy fur at the end of its tail and as yet no mane.

Little 'boats' seemed to go across this land, probably groups of people scything patches of the grass. I, a young adolescent boy, knew my turn to help with the mowing would come within the next days. The mowing was carried out in boat-shaped formation and we sang and blessed and thanked Sillina, Mother Earth, as we moved forward together. Each boat-shaped group moved in curves, not straight lines, as we 'flowed' across the meadow that is now sea, like waves with the incoming tide and wind behind us. The images, like very strong dreams, stayed with me for days.

The second winter let was on St.Martins at High Barn. Every morning I woke to look at the Eastern Isles, the holy lands, and did my own 1990s version of singing, blessing and thanking the land of Mother Scillina, as I wrote her name. The sketch of Sillina [right] made me wonder if she was holding her arms, legs and body in a particular position for a specific reason? Belinda Gore's book *Ecstatic Body Postures* notes research on specific body postures held to 'invoke' a particular experience, for example, healing, divination, metamorphosis, initiation, death and rebirth, spirit journeys, living myths etc. When I hold the position now, images come of carrying grass, and singing using the thigh-high leather 'water-bottle' as a drum to give rhythm to the other mowers in my boat-formation group.



ST.NECTAN'S KIEVE ABUSED

by Shane R. Gary

"I have in past years made visits with my mother to St.Nectan's Kieve in Trethevy near Tintagel. We have always found it to be a very special, unique place with its beautiful waterfall, enchanting atmosphere and 'secret' feel. Truly a place of the Mother Goddess. Living in West Cornwall, I had not visited the Kieve for some time and was looking forward to doing so when some friends from Norfolk were staying in Boscastle and asked me to join them. On Feb 15th one friend and I went to see the Kieve and were shocked at what we found.

Firstly the atmosphere had changed; we could only describe it as feeling 'choked'. When we reached the base of the waterfall it looked as though a refuse tip had been scooped up and dropped on the site. Every available branch had been covered in vast quantities of hideous rubbish, we assume trying to pass for clouties. True clouties, of course, were pieces of natural cloth torn from clothing next to a bodily ailment and hung up in the tree so that the cloth rots, the ailment goes. The rubbish we found garrotting the branches of the Kieve were made up of such things as plastic ribbons, necklaces of plastic beads, plastic and metal key-rings, plastic bags, cigarette lighters on pieces of string, plastic and glass bottles, broken sunglasses, and the list went on. Some bright spark had made an offering of a few copper coins: quite a traditional offering you might say, until I tell you that they had offered them up in a large plastic bag! There was even a computer printed cartoon figure of a penguin in a plastic A4 sleeve with an empty plastic tissue bag clipped to it with a plastic bulldog clip! One wonders at the mentality behind such 'offerings'.

Also everywhere you looked there were literally hundreds of pieces of slate with people's names scratched into them. But the saddest thing of all was that many people had taken pieces of stone and had scrawled their names in huge ugly letters into all the rock faces of the Kieve. It will take Mother Nature a long time to erode away this graffiti, but then of course people will do it again. The spirit of the place was obviously unhappy and we were so disgusted that we spent quite a few hours taking down every last bit of rubbish out of the trees. We also pulled out the rubbish that poked into the rock, and picked up all the bits that had fallen and littered the place, along with countless metal night light pots. My friend asked the owners if we could have some rubbish bags to take it all away, but their attitude was far from helpful. The only reason we were able to carry it all away was because some people had tied plastic carrier bags into the trees, and even a bath towel that we made into a sack. We took all this rubbish and filth back to the car, drove it to Boscastle and spent some time emptying it all into the car park bins.

The leaflet produced about the Kieve by its 'guardians' at the hermitage says such things as "please remember that this site is held sacred by many and visit it with respect and reverence", and "it has been described as amongst the ten most important spiritual sites in the country". If this is so, surely there must be some legal protection of this site from such vandalism? The 'guardians' of the Kieve have a responsibility to ensure that this site is not abused in the way it has been. They are obviously not doing their job."

Turn to p.20 for a guided healing meditation to St.Nectan's Glen and the waterfall.

JOURNEY TO THE WATERFALL

A visualisation for letting go of anything hurtful and accepting love
by **Sarah Head**



Sit comfortably on your chair, relaxed with your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting on your lap. Take several deep breaths, and each time you breath in, I want you to breath in peace and every time you breath out I want you to breath out any sorrow, bitterness or hurt. I want to take you on a journey. Carry on breathing in peace and love and breathing out anything you want to let go.

Imagine yourself at the roadside. Cross the road and walk up the footpath towards a small building with a well head in front of you. There are three steps leading up to the well. On the third step, kneel down and reach in with your hand to touch the water. The water is clear and runs down the moss and ferns growing on the back of the well head. Feel the coolness of the water. Reach in with both your hands and scoop up some water. Firstly let it run away from your hands, cleansing them of any impurities, then cup your hands again and collect the water as it runs down from the spring into the well. Bring the water to your mouth and taste it. It is cold and slightly sweet. Drink a few drops, then pour the rest on the ground as a libation. Finally, cup some water with one hand and dip the index finger of your other hand into it. Make a sacred mark with the water on centre of your forehead. feel your forehead tingle as your third eye wakes. Rest for a moment and be aware of the sounds around you - the soft murmur of the spring into the well, the breeze blowing gently against your cheek and the small birds twittering in the trees. When you are rested, rise and we will continue the journey.

To the right of the well head is another path. Walk along it until you come to a stone standing waist high. There are ancient letters carved into the stone. Run your fingers along the letters and see if you can tell their meaning. This is a milestone, placed here by the Romans and it will show you how far you have to go to reach your goal. Walk further along the path.. It is very warm now, for the path is open to the sun. You feel the heat on your head and your back and you remember the coolness of the well water. The path dips down now, it is quite steep and you almost have to run to follow it. It leads you into a wooded valley. The sun has gone now, because great trees cast their shadow over you, their leaves line the path as you tread it and in your ears you can hear the sound of a bubbling stream.

You walk along the path until you come to the stream. It is filled with boulders and the water rushes over them. There is a bridge by which you must cross over the stream. You pick up some leaves that have fallen. You write on them the things that are causing you hurt. You walk onto the bridge and lean over, watching the water rushing away beneath you. You drop the leaves into the water and watch them float down the stream. They go round in circles sometimes, but gradually they go around the bend and you cannot see them any more.

You walk across to the other side of the bridge and carry on walking along the path, which now begins to go upwards. You can hear the sound of a waterfall. You climb up steep stone steps. They are wet and slippery and you can smell the scent of the trees all around you. Eventually you reach the top, but still you cannot see the waterfall although the noise of it fills your ears. A man comes towards you and you ask him the way to the waterfall. He shows you a tiny wicker gate. He tells you to follow the path down to the bottom and then to go around the bend and you will see the falls. Carefully, because the steps are very slippery you open the gate and climb down the path. As you turn the corner you see the waterfall in front of you. You take off your clothes and wade into the pool at the bottom of the falls. You walk forwards until the water covers you. You feel it coursing all over your body, washing you clean.

You climb out again, but you so are tired from the long walk that you lie down on the bank and fall asleep. As you sleep, you become aware that your head is lying in someone's lap and that she is singing to you gently. The song tells you how much you are loved and how proud the singer is to have you as her child, and how you have been showered with gifts to use within your life upon the earth. You feel the music of the song covering your body and entering your soul. It clothes you with light and brings a sense of deep peace.

Listen now to the song, and, when you are ready, slowly wake and come back to this world. Feel your roots going down into the earth and slowly draw them back into yourself. Wriggle your toes and your fingers and open your eyes. You might like a drink of water to help you ground yourself in this world before you try to do anything else.

Artwork of the Goddess at St.Nectan's Glen by Shane Gary.



BOOK NEWS & REVIEWS

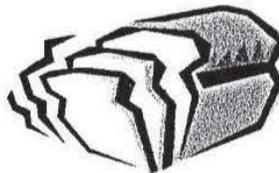
Prehistoric Cooking by Jacqui Wood (Tempus, 2001, £15.99)

Jacqui Wood will be known to MM readers through her involvement with the setting up and running of the 'Celtic Village' at Greenbottom near Truro. She is also Archaeological Consultant to the Eden Project, and has a wealth of knowledge in the field of experimental archaeology. In particular, she has long been interested in the food and cooking methods of prehistoric peoples, and she now puts the fruits of her research into this book. She starts it engagingly by admitting: "Writing a cookery book about a period that has no written records might be considered an impossible task", but she then goes on to reconstruct the lifestyle and food production methods of our ancestors from the scraps of archaeological evidence that we possess. These include bone remains, charred grains from middens, pollen analysis and food remains from wetland sites and bog bodies.

The first part of the book consists of an overview of the life style of prehistoric peoples from the Mesolithic (Hunter-gatherers) to the Neolithic (The First Farmers) to the Bronze Age (the first metals) to the Iron Age (the Celts). Then Jacqui gets down to the meat and drink of the matter, so to speak. She takes each kind of food in turn - bread; dairy; meat, fish and vegetable stews; clay-baked foods; salt and the seashore menu; peas, beans and lentils; herbs and spices; vegetables; yeast, wines, beer and teas; and sweets and puddings. Not only does she give the prehistorical and archaeological evidence for all these different kinds of foods, but she also recreates delicious-sounding meals that she has made herself from ingredients which would have been available to these peoples. There are a surprising variety and amount of these recipes, which include mouth-watering items like sweet fruit bread baked in honey; nettle-leaf covered cheese (still made in Cornwall today), mutton and vegetable stews cooked with juniper berries, or with hazelnuts, sorrel, chives and wild marjoram; cod and oysters in beer; myrtle pudding; sea lettuce and curd cheese fritters; dried peas with mint and cream; beer samphire pickle; oat and wheat nut dumplings, etc. She adds comments like "the rich aroma of this dish is wonderful", which get the taste buds going just reading about it!

This book is a real original work, that is based not on theory but on practical experimentation. As Jacqui says: "You will have just as much chance of rediscovering a real prehistoric recipe as anyone else. The past does not just belong to the professional archaeologist or university academic, it belongs to all of us." An excellent exhortation, so, take my advice, get this book and start cooking (and don't forget to invite me to your banquets!).

[CS]



Dowsing in Devon and Cornwall by Alan Neal (Bossiney Books, 2001, £4.99)

Alan Neal is an experienced local dowser who also lectures on the subject, and he has now written an interesting anecdotal book on finding and identifying underground features by means of dowsing. He is one of the old school of Watkins-type ley line enthusiasts, and so manages to avoid the worst excesses of the New Age School of Energy Lines. A substantial part of the short book is given up to his findings at St. Clether's Well, where he identifies both the date of the foundation of the altar in the chapel (380 CE) and the outline of the earliest oratory there. Other parts of the book are also interesting, including the topic of dowsing for water, and dowsing to discover the route taken by Charlotte Dymond who was murdered near Roughtor in 1844. This is not a scientific treatise on dowsing, but nevertheless it makes for an entertaining read.

Crosses and Churchyard Paths in the Land's End Peninsula. Vol 5: Madron & Morvah by Ian McNeil Cook (Mên-an-Tol Studio, 2002, £12.95, £14.95 inc. postage)

Ian Cook continues with his series on all the crosses, extant and recorded, and the trackways linking them together in all the parishes of West Penwith. There are some surprises in this Madron & Morvah volume: not only does it include all the well-known crosses, but also items like The Four Parishes Stone near Boskednan, the Mên Scryfa and the crosses in Penzance. It also records the recent restoration and re-erection of Parc-an-Growes in Dec 2000. Altogether, a must for enthusiasts of crosses and old paths.

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The Pipers Tune

An unknown play from the Middle Cornish period written more than four centuries ago has been sensationally discovered in a collection of Celtic work held by the National Library of Wales. The play is about the life of the Celtic saint St.Kea, but has a large section featuring King Arthur. It was written down in Cornish by a scribe in what was probably the mid-16th century. Nothing is further known about the provenance of the manuscript, other than it was among the papers of Emeritus Professor Caerwyn Willims, donated to the library by his widow. It is not known from where Professor Williams obtained the manuscript, but it consisted of an unbound gathering of 20 folios. The find proves substantial new evidence about the cult of St.Kea and the importance of King Arthur in Cornwall, and is the only example of a secular play surviving in Middle Cornish. It may also be the only example of a medieval play featuring King Arthur to have survived in the whole of Western Europe, and will eventually be published by the National Library of Wales.

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FAIR EXCHANGE

Several of our Exchange Magazines (see listings opposite) have recently run articles on topics relating to Cornwall. The latest edition of **The Cornish Antiquary** (No.5 May 2002) includes an interesting article on "The Mystery of the St. Just Bronze Bull" by Lorraine Evans, and an update on "The Museum of Witchcraft: 50 years of controversy" by Graham King.

There is also another article on the Witchcraft Museum by Hannah Fox in **The Cauldron** (No.104 May 2002). That issue includes an article on "Cornish Curses" by Kelvin I. Jones, editor of *The Cornish Antiquary*, extracted from his book *Occult Cornwall* (Reviewed in MM48).

Pendragon, the Journal of Arthurian Studies (Vol XXIX no.4 Winter 2001-2), has an article on "Avalon: the Cornish Connection" by Beryl Mercer, that goes on a search for places associated with the Tristan & Iseult legend.

3rd Stone, the Journal of archaeology, folklore and myth, includes in its Issue 42 (Spring 2002) an article by Andy Norfolk on "Smoke and Mirrors: Scillonian Stone Rows", a version of which first appeared in MM47.

Finally, **Dalriada**, the Journal of Celtic/Gaelic Culture, Heritage and Traditions usually includes news from Cornwall in its regular "News from Celtic Lands" feature, and in Vol 17. Issue 1 (An Fheille Bride 2002) the Celtic Reflections column by Brendan McMahon has some pertinent things to say about the political history and present situation of Kernow.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

Prices are for annual subscriptions [sample copies in brackets]. *Web site details are given in italics.*

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3rd STONE (archaeology, folklore & myth) PO Box 961, Devizes, Wilts SN10
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www.northernearth.co.uk.....£6.50 [£1.70]

T.E.M.S NEWS (Travel & EM Society in Home Counties) 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, TW12 2QY£8

TOUCHSTONE (Surrey) - 25 Albert Road, Addlestone, Weybridge, Surrey...£2
www.strodes.ac.uk/semg/semg.htm

FOGS (Friends of Grampian Stones) - The Old Manse of Bourtie, Inverurie, Aberdeenshire AB51 0JS.....£10
www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~stones

CAERDROIA (mazes & labyrinths) 53 Thundersley Grove, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3EB£6

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THE CORNISH ANTIQUARY (folklore & antiquities) For back issues nos. 1-5 [£3.40/issue] contact Oakmagic Publications, P.O Box 330, Weston Super Mare BS23 2WD. Web site: *www.oakmagicpublications.com*.

MEYN MAMVRO is available on annual subscription - 3 issues £6.50 (inc p&p) from:-51 CARN BOSAVERN, ST.JUST, PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR19 7QX. MM50 due Jan 2003 will be a special issue with colour feature on prehistoric Gold finds

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).

PAGAN/CELTIC/ARTHURIAN

DALRIADA Taigh Arainn, Glenartney Hotel, Brodick, Isle of Arran KA27 8BX
www.dalriada.co.uk.....£15 [£2.50]

CELTIC CONNECTIONS - 97 Rosehill Drive, Bransgore, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 8NX *www.celtic-connections-magazine.co.uk*.....£9 [£1.75]

PENDRAGON (Arthurian) 7 Verlon Close, Montgomery, Powys, Wales SY15 6SH£7.50 [£2.50]

THE CAULDRON - Mike Howard, Caemorgan Cottage, Caemorgan Road, Cardigan, Ceredigion, Wales..£10 [£2.50]
www.the-cauldron.fsnet.co.uk

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THE SILVER WHEEL (Paganism, Craft, Druidry, Folklore) PO Box 12, Earl Shilton, Leics LE9 7ZZ£8.00 [£2]

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St. Austell area - meets 3rd Thurs each month with: Teresa & Rory

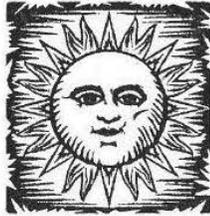
Bude - meets last Thurs each month. Tel: Lorraine 01288-359463

Wadebridge - meets Weds evening. Tel: Val 01208-850851

Pagan Moots co-ordinated by Dianne & Graham 01326-211002.

CORNWALL'S 12TH NEW AGE

FESTIVAL Nov 22nd-25th Ponsmere Hotel, Perranporth. Stalls, talks & workshops. Programme (enclose SAE) from 65 Porth Bean Rd, Newquay or tel: 01637-873024.



Round The Season's



Summer 2002 started with the 14th annual **Maypole Dance** on May Day Eve at Carn Bosavern, St.Just. It was a windy but dry evening, and about 50-60 people turned up to dance in the summer to the music of a local folk group, and to share food and drink together. There was the usual mix of adults and children, and this has now become a regular event for the local pagan and alternative community. There was much jumping over the bonfire afterwards, before a heavy shower brought the proceedings to a sudden close, though a few people stayed on afterwards to drum together.

There was no gathering at Harmony Pottery this year, but instead the West Penwith Pagan Moot organised a **Beltane ritual** at Sancreed House, where about 30 pagans turned up for the ceremony in the lovely setting of the grounds. In a circle there was a focus on hopes and joys for the Summer, and everyone tied multicoloured ribbons on to a tree arch. A traditional Irish poem of Beltane blessings was read out in parts by all, followed by some individual contributions. Then pairs of people formed a circle arch and each pair danced through to a Beltane chant. Finally, there was an individual journey taken through the grounds that went through the tree arch, by two fires for cleansing and purifying, then to meet the Goddess or God - a reflection of the self in a mirror. The evening finished with shared food and drumming around the Beltane fires.

The next day was the 14th annual **Three Wells Walk**, which takes place on the first Sunday in May to recreate the old tradition of visiting the wells on that day for healing and divination, and to visit the land awakening in all of the earth's finery. As usual, it was a lovely day - sunny with a light wind perfect for walking. The hedgerows were ablaze with bluebells, pink campion and white three-cornered leeks, and a beautiful arch of white blackthorn marked the path down to Madron Well. There the water collected from the three wells, Chapel Euny, Sancreed and Madron was co-mingled and a blessing given for everyone and thanks to Mother Earth. There was a particularly good turnout this year: over two dozen people on both legs of the walk. An enjoyable and companionable day, though some were a bit foot sore after the 12 miles!

Midsummer celebrations included the Penwith Pagan Moot **Summer Solstice** ceremony, re-routed at the last minute from Kerris Quarry to the more public Merry Maidens. The staged fight between the Oak & Holly Kings attracted quite a lot of attention, all of it positive, and participants found it an enriching experience. The **Mazey Day Serpent Dance** was as exciting and lively as ever. Penglaze was in excellent form, Cassandra Latham teased well, and a number of local pagans (including MM editor!) ended up leading the dance through the streets as it weaved back and forth.

