

WINDOWS TO THE TORS ● CORNISH CELTS ●
TIME TEAM ON BODMIN MOOR ● LUGHNASA
CASPN & CEMG ● DOWSING ● NEWS ●
*** ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR ***

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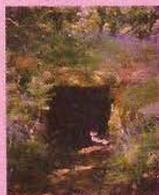
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STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

Welcome to the new all-colour issue of Meyn Mamvro! Now we're 64, far from retiring, we have moved into all-colour printing, something that would have seemed all but impossible for a small magazine like ours a few years ago. But our sister magazine Goddess Alive! has been printing in colour since it was launched in 2001/2, and now, thanks to our printer, Paul at Brigid Design, we are able to extend that facility to MM. This means that the pictures of the ancient sites and other things can now be seen at their best. We have raised the cover price of the magazine by 10p only to help meet the cost, but for the present the annual subscription remains at £7.50, so that if you subscribe you will be receiving it post free.

This has been a summer of mixed fortunes for the ancient sites in Cornwall. On the negative side, there has been some low-level vandalism and disrespect. The planting of stakes with Christian dogma [see MM63] ceased, but there was a further attack on the Merry Maidens stone circle, when small pieces of the stones were hit with something like a hammer and bits chipped off. Then someone decided to erect a roughly-hewn log and wood bench on the edge of Boscawen-ûn stone circle! This may have been done with the best of intentions, but no permission was sought, and it was felt that it was making the circle look like some kind of suburban park. The bench was removed. This was then followed by reports of visits to Lanyon Quoit by a tour company (Haggis Adventures!) in which the tour guides climbed on the top of the Quoit to deliver their lectures! On the positive side however, CASPN was active in continuing to monitor and maintain the sites, with new granite signs installed near to the major sites asking people to respect the places and giving phone numbers for them to report any misuse or vandalism. There was also a successful FOCAS weekend in May, with people coming from London and up-country for the two days of walks and talks. Old friendships were re-established and new ones made. Full details about CASPN's activities can be found on p.4, together with details about how to join FOCAS and help preserve the ancient sites.

Although no longer doing a regular programme of autumn and winter talks, CEMG also had a successful summer of walks to the ancient sites. This has now been supplemented by the activities of various Dowsing Groups in Cornwall, who are doing great work on researching the sites (see p.3), so the outlook is still looking very bright. Nowadays there are so many people who care about these special places that Cornwall is very fortunate indeed to have both the amazing sites and the people to look after them.



news page

After a break of a few months, the Summer activities 2007 started with the 19th annual **Maypole Dance** on Carn Bosavern on Sunday 30th April. Although the day had been rainy, it cleared by the evening, and about 25-30 people came to enjoy the music and the dancing around the Maypole, followed by the Beltane fire to jump across. The dance must have worked because the next day, May Day in Padstow was hot and sunny! The subsequent days also remained fine until the following weekend for the 19th annual **Three Wells Walk**, when the weather began to deteriorate. However, the Sunday for the Walk remained dry and warm, which meant good walking conditions for the 19 or so people who came to enjoy the walk to Chapel Euny, Sancreed and Madron wells, collecting water from each and having a simple blessing ceremony at Madron. The hedgerows were particularly beautiful this year, with a riot of colour from the profusion of bluebells, pink campion, yellow buttercups and white three-cornered leek (wild garlick).

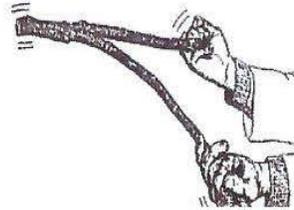
On Sunday June 3rd **Bart O'Farrell** returned to the Lizard, following on from the interesting visit there in June 2006. The Group returned to Dry Tree menhir, and this time went on to the Three Brothers of Grugith stone setting behind Zoar Garage. Many cup marks were counted on the capstone, and everyone felt that this was a burial chamber that had been built using an earthfast stone for one side. A new find was made by two of the Group, who discovered a fallen standing stone lying not far from the Brothers.



Moving on to Crousa Common, the Group found that the two menhirs had been part of a row, though there was some discussion about whether it was a row of 4, 5 or more. The last stop was the charming Tidal Rock, just east of the lane from St Keverne Beacon and Penhallick. This nearly forgotten place is a stone in which there is a small pool which is said to go up and down with the tide. A brilliant end to a most interesting day out.

For the July visit of the Mên-an-Tol Circular walk see article on p.14-17.

DOWSING NEWS



West Cornwall Dowzers. At the beginning of April we returned to the Lizard, this time going to the fine multi-faceted Tremenheere stone. This is a stone with gentle energies, set in a field in which the dowzers found many tumuli. In the hedge to its north-west are some large stones which we found to be the remains of a burial chamber. The footpath past the stones goes along one those timeless overgrown tracks to the south-west passing some large stones and in the next field is a large earth-fast boulder which it was felt was an important meeting place. Looking back past Tremenheere this green lane aligns on St.Keverne church steeple and the same line links to Drytree menhir. The next stop was Higher Boden Fogou partially excavated in October 2003. The shape of this fogou was dowsed and turned out to be rather like a mirror-image of Pendeen Vau in shape. The passageway that was excavated turns quite sharply to the right and from that arm another passageway runs at approximately right angles and aligns on Midwinter sunrise. We found that the creep entrance was off this passage. Not only did the passage of the fogou face SE, but so did the entrances of the many hut circles in the same field.

In April we met up with the **Tamar Dowzers** at the Arthurian centre at Slaughter-bridge. The medieval village of Old Melorn near the top of the hill was a challenge to dowse because of the power lines overhead. Further along the site across a lane is the ridge which used to be marked on maps as the site of the battle of Camlan and here the dowzers felt there had been a number of skirmishes. Below this area is where Arthur's Stone lies beside the river. Only it's not Arthur's and it originally stood well above its present location to the west. Just along the river is, the very pleasant remains of the 18th century Lady Falmouth's Garden, a small sheltered terrace, which had such comfortable energies that people stayed there for a while.

We returned to Carn Brea on May 22nd. The dowzers were looking for the possible locations for greenstone axe factories and Lawrence found one at a disused quarry near the Castle where he picked up a nearly perfect pyramid of greenstone. The energy line from St Agnes Beacon was found to curve through St Euny Church and then the Castle. At midwinter from between two small stone looking past the tall stone near the Castle the midsummer sun would have risen over the "hot spot" at Tregonning Hill found on a previous visit. There's Looking from the top of the hill a line of stones runs past a big triangular stone on the north side of the hill not far from the Giant's Well and points to a notch at the coast where the sun would have set at midwinter. There also seems to be an alignment between the two standing stones SW of the hill and Men Amber. This was day full of discoveries and we'll be going back again.

C.A.S.P.N NEWS ROUND-UP

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



At the beginning of the summer, CASPN installed granite signs near to the pathways leading to many of the major sites, such as the Merry Maidens, Boscawen-ûn, Sancreed Well, Carn Euny, Chûn Quoit, Tregeseal circle, Mên-an-Tol, Lanyon Quoit & Madron Baptistry. These were a permanent replacement for the wooden signs which had become faded or destroyed, and should remain in place for many years to come. They include telephone numbers for reporting misuse or vandalism at the sites. In addition, the CASPN Adopt-a-Site Monitoring Scheme continued to run successfully, so the sites are, for the first time ever, now systematically visited and looked after. All of this received good positive publicity in the local paper *The Cornishman*.



Granite sign at entrance to Tregeseal circle

CASP.N's daughter group FOCAS (Friends of Cornwall's Ancient Sites) had a successful weekend of walks and talks among the ancient sites in May. On the Saturday Cheryl Traffon kicked it off with a guided walk to Tregeseal Circle and holed stones, exploring 'the meaning of the megaliths'. Nearly 40 people came on this walk, and almost as many for the afternoon one to Tregeseal Valley with Paul Bonnington. In the evening Paul gave a splendid Powerpoint presentation on Ancient Sites of West Penwith, an up-to-date account of the interpretation of the monuments and the people who built them. On the Sunday morning Cheryl gave a slide talk on Holy Wells of Cornwall, and this was followed in the afternoon by a guided walk with Rory Te'Tigo to the wells of Chapel Carn Brea and Bartinney. Finally, the weekend finished with a social get-together in the King's Arms in St. Just, when some stories from local folklore were told by Craig Weatherhill and Jackie Dash. A great weekend that was much enjoyed by everyone.

In October, CASPN celebrates a decade of work for the protection of the sites, since it was first set-up in 1997. Although run largely by volunteers, it has achieved a tremendous amount in that time, especially over the last year with the AONB Grant. If you don't already belong to FOCAS, please help to support it by joining now.

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Web site: www.cornishancientsites.com **E-mail:** secretary@cornishancientsites.com
To join FOCAS (£8/year waged- £5 unwaged) write to: 24 Queen Street, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7JW, or visit CASPN web site for downloadable application form.
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Penwith Pagan Moot



By Gemma Gary

The Moot gathered for the celebration of **Beltane** in Sancreed Village Field. The Goddess was invoked as flower petals were cast about our circle and the God was called as our twin fires of Beltane were lit within two cauldrons. We circled about the cauldron fires to turn the wheel onward into summer and as we did so we each received the purification of sacred well waters sprinkled from a sprig of Hawthorn. When the turning of the circle was complete we each found a place within the field to meditate upon those aspects of our life for which we wish to ask for fertility and wrote these on pieces of card. These were later cast into the flames as we passed between the twin fires to send our wishes out into the ether upon the rising smoke. To aid this we raised energy with drumming and the tapping of sticks before enjoying a libation of anatomically correct chocolate coated fannies and willies (note to any confused American readers worried that our libation included chocolate coated bottoms; the word “fannies” has a different meaning here)! A Beltane Goddess blessing concluded our rite as it had begun with the casting of petals and a picnic was enjoyed with some of us trying out the new moot Gazebo!

Our **Midsummer** celebration took place within Boscawen-Un Stone Circle. We began our rite by greeting the stones and connecting with them and with the energy of the sun by weaving around the outer stones with a long length of red fabric measured out with wonderful accuracy by Sarah! We spiralled inward to the centre stone laying the fabric as a sun symbol and connected with the stone with humming and singing. We then performed a dressing and blessing of the outer stones with flowers and sacred well water before the Queen of summer crowned the central stone with a crown of flowers. The Sun wasn't much in evidence although the energy of the sun was raised within the circle with solar invocation, a magical cauldron fire, the reciting of a fire spell and the clashing of cymbals (much to the disapproval of Nike!). With the cold winds and drizzle that usually accompany Midsummer celebrations we were all grateful for the shelter offered by the Moot gazebo for our after rite picnic!

The Penwith Pagan Moot hold regular ritual celebrations, moot meetings & outings for ancient sacred site clearances. Everyone welcome! Visit the moot's website for more information: www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk or call Sarah: 01736 787522

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS **MORE FINDS FROM SITES IN CORNWALL**

A large number of prehistoric finds have been made in Cornwall in recent years by metal detectorists and others [see MM63 p.6, MM61 p.5, MM56 p.5, MM53 p.6, MM50 p.10, MM46 p.3 & MM43 p.3] and now most of these, and some new ones, have been catalogued under the Portable Antiquities Scheme by Anna Tyacke, the Finds Liaison Officer at the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. They can be accessed on the web site www.finds.org.uk, and include:-

- A late Bronze Age (800-600 BCE) hoard recently found at Mylor, consisting of 33 ceremonial axe heads found in a broken pot.
- A late Bronze hoard of gold and bronze objects found at St.Erth in 2002, including a gold armband (86% gold) decorated with a line of punched dots [*pictured below left*], fragments of a sword, a winged axe, and some Bronze ingots (which have been matched to others which came from Switzerland).
- A late Iron Age (120-50 BCE) cast copper alloy La Tène III bow brooch, found at the archaeological dig of the Iron Age settlement site at Kenwyn near Truro (Truro College extension) in May 2005 [*pictured below centre*]. Such brooches are rare in Cornwall, and this one found in context outside an Iron Age house is a special find.
- An early Romano-Celtic (50-100 CE) cast copper alloy two-piece hinged dolphin brooch, found at St.Goran by a metal detectorist in January 2006 .
- A Romano-Celtic (43-410 CE) miniature iron votive axe-head (38mm long., 20mm wide & 5mm thick) [*pictured below right*], found in December 2003 at St.Minver, similar to others found at Uley (in Gloucestershire) and Harlow (in Essex). Doubtless, a ceremonial deposit.

*Left to right -
Bronze Age gold
armlet, Iron Age
brooch, Iron Age
votive axe-head*



EARLY BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENTS FOUND

Two sites in Cornwall have recently produced evidence of Early Bronze Age occupation (2100-1900 BCE). The pipeline for South West Water's new sewerage works between Sennen and Porthcurno in West Penwith came across a possible settlement. And early Bronze Age artefacts, including fragments of pottery, were found during the construction of the new A38 by-pass at Dobwalls in SE Cornwall. John Hawkes of AC Archaeology, the company carrying out the dig, said: "These discoveries are particularly interesting because this is an area where prehistoric finds have not previously been recorded". More information on both these sites will be published in the future.

TIME TEAM COME TO BODMIN MOOR

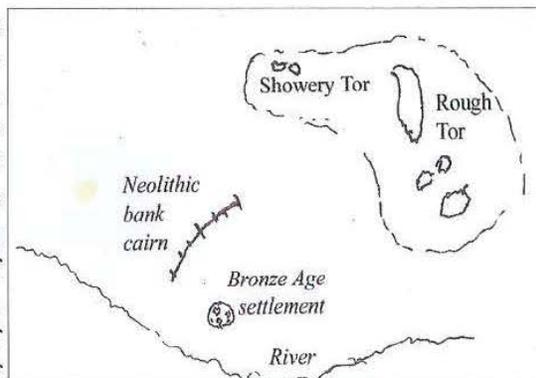
Channel 4's Time Team programme have been to Cornwall twice before: in 1996 they investigated Boleigh fogou [see MM30 p.6-7], and in 2002 they were at Caervallack & Gear Farm settlement on the Lizard [see MM47 p.8]. This year they came to the bleak uplands of Bodmin Moor, described by one of the archaeologists Frances Pryor as "one of the best preserved landscapes in Britain". Ian Morrison, from English Heritage, pointed out that the HES Bodmin Moor Survey had shown 200 settlements, with maybe 1500 houses (housing perhaps a couple of thousand people), but it was not known if they were all Bronze Age. The Team set out to investigate an area lying close to Rough Tor. Environmental soil analysis showed that the area had begun to be cleared of dense woodland in the Neolithic with more clearance for farming in the Bronze Age.



Phil Harding at the Time Team excavation

Three trenches were laid in an area of round structures that Dorothy Dudley had dug in the 1950s. Finds were scarce, though a piece of Roman glass from C2nd-3rd CE turned up, showing that the later Romano-Celtic people had visited these sites of *their* ancestors. However, then a piece of Trevisker ware pottery was found, followed by another that had originally been decorated with chevrons, which dated the structures to the Middle Bronze Age. The Team concluded that they were Bronze Age round houses that were part of a settlement. One unusual discovery was that one house had a cairn that had been placed right in front of it, that HES archaeologist Peter Herring suggested was a cairn built in honour of the house itself, rather than to a single person.

However, perhaps the most interesting discovery was that made by Phil Harding, who excavated a structure about 300 yards away, and found a piece of flint 6000 years old. This dated it to the early Neolithic, about 2000 years before the Bronze Age settlement. The structure turned out to be a 500 metre long banked cairn, aligned on to the outcrop of Rough Tor. The team felt that this had been a processional way, lined with two rows of white granite stones flanking a green turf walkway, and that it had been a cairn kept sacred to the memory of the ancestors. The people would have processed along this cairn towards Rough Tor, which was venerated as being the abode of the Gods/Goddesses, and was "a centre for ritual ceremony for them to celebrate their lives in the landscape". Phil Harding was clearly overawed, describing it as "totally unique - one of the most extraordinary structures I have ever dug" and "one of the best pieces of archaeology ever done on Time Team". Cornwall came up trumps!



REMOTE & ANCIENT PLACES IN WEST PENWITH

by Raymond Cox

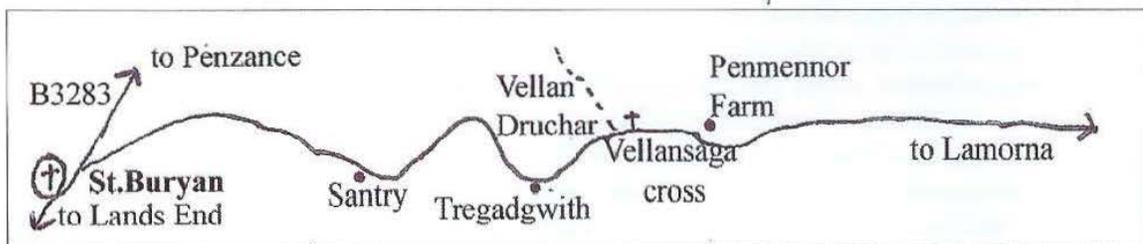
2: The blood of Vellan-Druchar

The wayside cross of Vellan-saga at SW 4255 2585 sits by a cottage in the valley of the Lamorna stream at mid-point of the quiet back road going east from St Buryan. Charles Henderson (in *Antiquities*) described the location as “one of the sweetest spots in Cornwall” with the cross



by the garden wall entwined with “periwinkles and other beautiful plants”. My own clear memory of this place years ago was of a sudden shaft of bright sunlight just illuminating the cross itself. Originally it may have been set close by at a ford across the stream where there was a mill. It is certainly on a churchway path, to St Buryan to the west and to Paul and Mousehole to the east.

At this point the Lamorna stream is also at mid-point from its rising near Carn Euny to its journey to Lamorna Cove. To the left of the cottage a gateway leads to a track upstream to what must be one of the most lonely and remote places in West Penwith - and one of the most legend-haunted. It is Vellan-druchar, which means *wheel mill* and the Cornish gave the name Melyn-Drucky or Velyn -Druckya to the mills which were used to dip, clean and dress homespun cloth. The track eventually gives out into an open area and then the stream is lost in a marshy and wooded section. There are no tracks and no dwellings visible along the streamside. There are no extant ancient stones of any kind in this area either. The place seemed somewhat ominous and quiet except for birdsong which seemed oddly distant when I was there. Perhaps the legend has its effects to this day.



For this was the stream said to have flowed with the blood of the Danes at the battle with legendary King Arthur, and it was a great victory for Arthur. It was the location of the Battle of Vellan-druchar! It is almost at mid-point again between two other locations connected with the Arthur legend, as there is Merlin's Rock off Mousehole, and at Sennen Table-Maen, the stone where Arthur dined with Cornish kings after being summoned from Tintagel to repel the Danish invasion. The Danish had landed apparently at Gwenver beach in Whitesand Bay, as safe a spot as could be found on that coast. In the peat in this semi-moorland area of Vellan-druchar remains of weapons have indeed been

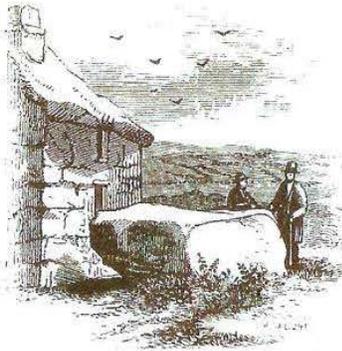


Table-Maen rock at Sennen

found, e.g. arrow, spear and axe heads. Is there anything else remaining? The little stream is calm as its upper reaches become hidden, but the valley is not enclosed. There is no sign of a further track and a way through. One seems constrained to turn round and with a firm tread return to the road for another look at the old cross and to experience in the general environment of at least some civilisation a more comforting mood.

See Meyn Mamvro No 15 "Arthur at the Lands End" by Craig Weatherhill (p.14-17) for more details of the locations, and "The Battle of Vellan-Druchar" by Ron Newsome (p.19) for an imaginative reconstruction of the legend.



Liz Allmark

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SIGHTLINES TO THE TORS AND STARS

Part 2 - Windows to the Tors

by **Roger Farnworth**

View frames are megalithic constructions that focus the mind of the viewer on the object of greatest significance in the landscape. Part 1 of this article (in MM63) explained why, on Bodmin Moor, Rough Tor, Stowe's Pound and the huge Cheesewring rock on Kilmar became sacred. When viewed from the Hurlers stone circle to their south, their peaks pointed to the Pole Star. As all stars revolved around the Pole Star, it would appear that the whole cosmos circled above these local peaks each night. Though most of the Moor does not afford a view of these tors, nearly all the Cairns are constructed within sight of these sacred places. Nearly every high place has a view frame, and most are focussed on Rough Tor.

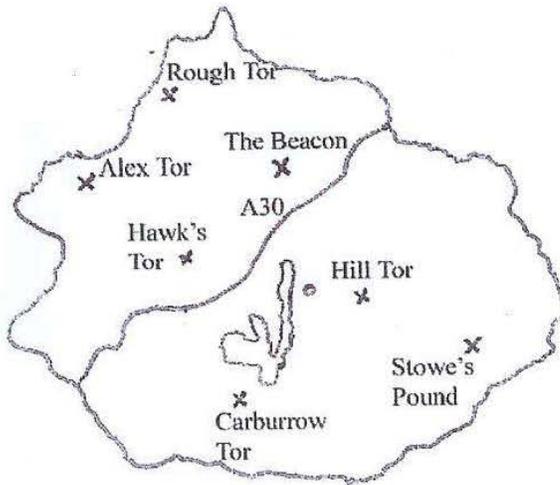
All view frames are improvised on natural features. Usually it only requires the addition of one boulder to complete the frame, as on Hawk's Tor [*photo on p.12*], but what a mighty task it must have been to shift that boulder into position. Rough Tor is due north of Hawk's Tor, and has stone circles on either side of it [*photo on p.11*]. If you stand back from each of its two frames, Rough Tor will become the only object to appear in the frame.

Five miles further south, the greatest view frame, the 'Cannon Stone' on Carburrow Tor [*photo on p.12*] not only frames Rough Tor, but seems to have a stone-cut seat for easy viewing. On Alex Tor [*photo on p.12*] the capstone of the frame has been broken off and dragged across. You can still see how the break jigsaw fits onto the slab from which it was torn. At several points on Alex Tor a fissure is capped to form a frame, but any fissure that almost, but not quite, points to Rough Tor has no cap. I have never found a frame in a location that does not focus on a significant tor. This is the strongest, albeit negative, indication of their use.

The Elephant Stone on the Beacon [*photo on p.12*] is too heavy to lift. It was tilted and propped into position by a football size stone. Such tell-tale signs of propping are ubiquitous, Leskernick Pseudo-Quoit and Caradon propstone being fine examples.



Propped stone of Leskernick Quoit



I know of no significant hilltop without a view frame. One must conclude that they were essential for the correctness of ceremonial practice. Nowhere are there more frames than on Hill Tor [photo on p.13]. Why are there five frames ranging from the fragile to the massive on this small and nowadays unfrequented site? The answer lies in its position mid-way between, and on a direct line to, Rough Tor and Stowe's Pound. Each of these Tors can be viewed by standing on opposite sides of these unique two-way frames.

What part did view frames play as ceremonial monuments? A comparison may help. A worshipper in an orthodox church both offers devotion to an icon, and receives blessing across a sacred space. The view frame enabled Bronze Age people to devote full attention to the Tor and benefit from its transformative power. As explained in the earlier article, for anyone being due north of a stone circle, stars will at that point only skim the horizon, emerging from the side of tors. This may have been seen as embodying the spirit of the dead, who would then join the nightly parade of stars circling what might have been seen as the original progenitor, the Pole Star. A second image is that of the cartouche, that rectangle framing the name of a pharaoh, that emphasised the ruler's power. In the same way, a monument setting power in a stone frame is an eternal affirmation by its builders.

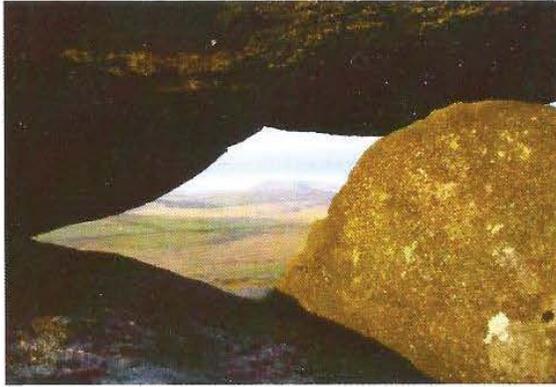
See p.12-13 for colour photographs of view frames on Bodmin Moor.



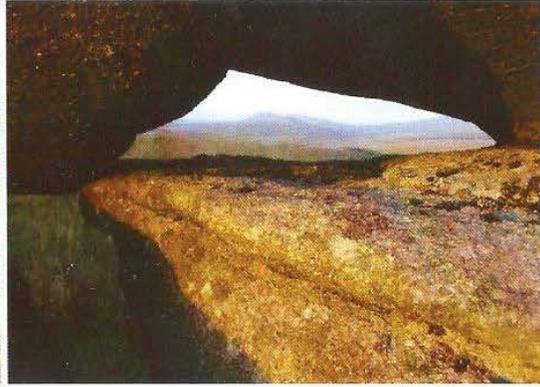
Rough Tor viewed from Stannon stone circle

BODMIN MOOR VIEW FRAMES

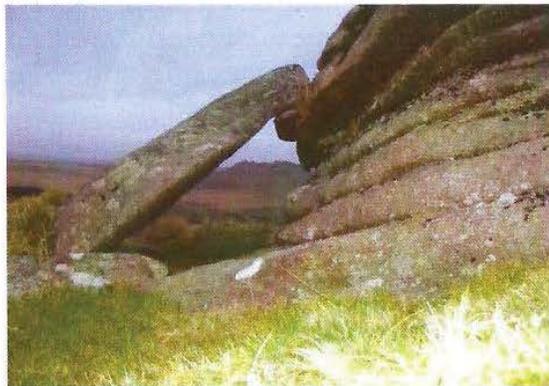
Some of the Bodmin Moor view frames from article on p.10-11



Hawk's Tor



Hawk's Tor



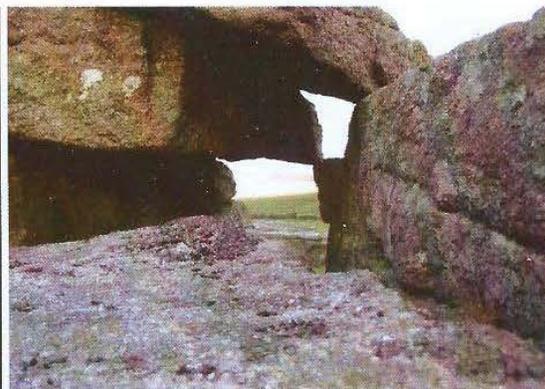
Brown Willy



Cannon Stone, Carburrow Tor



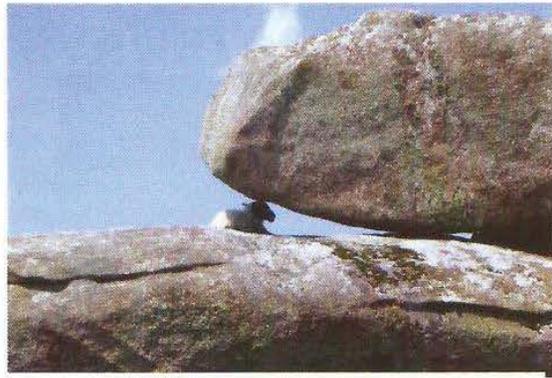
Alex Tor



Alex Tor



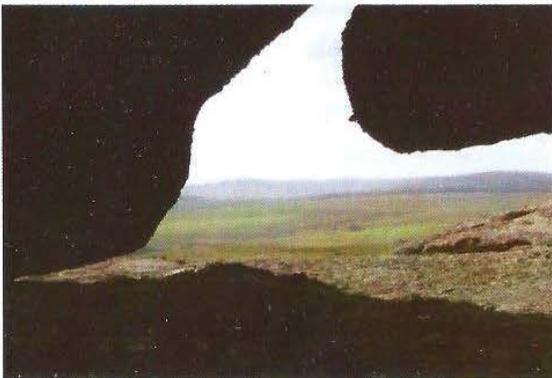
Hill Tor



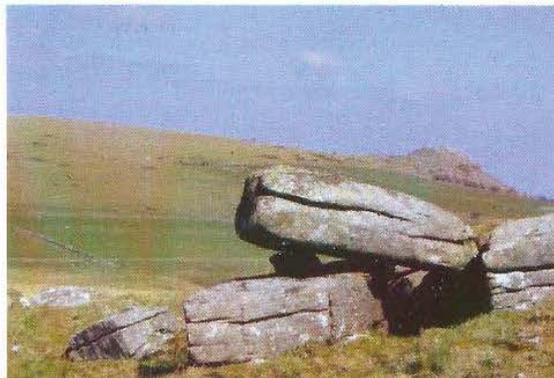
Elephant Rock (with sheep!)



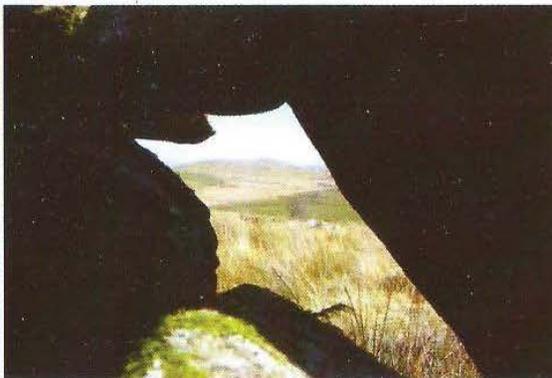
Fox Tor



Kilmar Tor



near Sharptor



Newel Tor

All photographs [c] Roger Farnworth

PATHWAYS TO THE PAST

The Mên-an-Tol Circular

The CEMG walk of July 2007 was led by author and researcher **Ian Cooke** and followed a circular route of a few miles that took in at least half a dozen ancient sites. The walk started at the layby opposite the Mên-an-Tol Studio on the Madron-Morvah road.

Walking up the lane from the car parking area, we soon arrived at the **Mên-an-Tol** (Literally, 'stone of the hole') [SW4264 3493]. Much has been written about this site, that consists of a holed stone about 3½ft high, the hole being about 1½ft diameter. Either side of it are two upright stones of about 4ft high.

The Cornwall Archaeological Unit suggested in 1992 that the site was originally part of a stone circle consisting of 19 stones, the post holes of which can still be identified, measuring about 55ft in diameter (The picture *right* shows how the circle may have looked).



The CAU also suggested that the holed stone may originally have been at right angles to where it now stands, and when the possible alignments from this position were run through a computer programme [see MM29 p.5-7] it showed that the most northerly standstill of the moon would have risen between two tumuli on a ridge to the NE of the site, and the most southerly standstill of the moon would have been framed by the holed stone itself to the SE. At the site visit in July, the dowsers present confirmed that the holed stone did indeed originally stand at almost right angles to its present position, and that it was originally set up in order to view the moon. Other uses of the site were also mentioned: for healing, as a blessing for children [see MM42 p.10-11], as a portal to another world, for fertility rituals [see MM40 p.18-19], and for divination.

From the Mên-an-Tol we continued up the lane for 300 yds and soon reached the **Mên Scryfa** standing stone [SW4268 3529] in a field on the left of the lane. This 6ft high standing stone points directly into the notch of Carn Gulva as you approach it in a northerly direction. Carn Gulva was a 'holy hilltop' and possible tor enclosure in prehistoric times, so the positioning of the stone may not be accidental. The stone was probably adapted in the Celtic Iron Age period with a Romanised Cornish inscription carved down its northern face that reads *Rialobrani Cunovali (Fili)* which means "Royal Raven (son of) the Famous Leader/Glorious Prince".



From here we continued to the end of the land, where the **Four Parishes Stone** lies on the ground, marking the junction of the parishes of Zennor, Gulval, Madron and Morvah. To the east of here about 250 yds along an indistinct track lies the holy well of **Fenton Bebibell** [SW4296 3520] Cornish for "well of the little people". This well was much visited in the past on Good Friday by young girls who went to baptise their dolls, and was recently re-discovered and cleared by members of the FOCAS Group and the tradition revived [see MM61 p.3].

The walk now continued on to Nine Maidens Downs, following the path that leads up to the stone circle. Approaching the circle, we came to a **barrow** [SW4237 3531] that was cleared by FOCAS in 2005, during which a very distinctive kerb stone was uncovered with a seam of blue-grey crystal in a distinctive ^ shaped notch [photo right & see MM58 p.5]. This stone was presumably deliberately chosen because of its special appearance.



After lunch in the barrow, we approached **Nine Maidens (Boskednan)** stone circle [SW4343 3512] [photo on next page]. This Bronze Age circle, much disturbed by mine workings nearby, now has only 11 stones standing or leaning out of a probable original 19. Two stones were re-erected in 2004 [see MM55 p.4], and now the two portal stones frame the view to the rocky outcrop of Carn Gulva on the horizon. There may originally have been a processional way from the circle to this 'holy hilltop', perhaps thought of as the dwelling place of the spirits of the ancestors, or the Gods/Goddesses. Ian also pointed out the stump of a standing stone that was an outlier to the circle, 43 paces to the NW, which marked the direction of the midsummer sunset.



Nine Maidens [Boskednan] stone circle looking towards Carn Gulva

From the stone circle we continued along the track to the south and after about a hundred yards came to the remains of a large **barrow** [SW4350 3496] that was also cleared by FOCAS members in 2006. The Group noticed that the barrow was positioned so that it had direct visual alignment with Carn Gulva to the north and St. Michael's Mount to the south, and the dowsers present found that it was on a direct energy line going to and from those sites. At the time the barrow was built, Mounts Bay was wooded, but the Mount would probably have been seen rising dramatically out of the forest. The barrow itself may even have been constructed as a landscape feature to reflect the shapes of Carn Gulva and the Mount, which would have been seen as sacred hilltops.

The path now led on to Greenburrows (Ding Dong) mine shaft, and then headed south past some spoil tips. A few yards further on lay the reconstructed site of **Bosiliack Barrow** [SW4311 3422] beside the path. This barrow belongs to a class of monument called Entrance Graves or Chambered Tombs, consisting of a circular kerb of stones with an entrance passage, the whole of which would originally have been covered by a mound of earth and stones. The barrow is 16½ft in diameter with a probable original height of 5ft. It was excavated in 1984 when a primary deposit in a pot was discovered, as well as topsoil and turf that might have been placed in the chamber as ritual deposits associated with the fertility of the land. Ian told of how he came out to check the alignment of the entrance passage early one midwinter morning and discovered it was perfectly aligned to the rising sun.



From Bosiliack Barrow, we took a meandering path that led to **Lanyon Quoit** [SW4298 3369]. This site is perhaps the best known and most photographed of any of Cornwall's prehistoric monuments - but it is unfortunately one of the least authentic! It originally dated from the early Neolithic period (3500-2500 BCE) and consisted of a large capstone 17½ft long and 9ft wide on 4 upright stones.



However, in 1815 it collapsed in a storm and some stones were fractured, so that when it was re-erected in 1824 (at right angles to its original position) the capstone was placed on only 3 uprights which were shortened and squared off. It is thus much lower than before, and does not retain the distinctive rectangular box-like appearance of other Quoits. It originally stood at the northern end of a burial mound 90ft long & 40ft broad, the outline of which is still visible. At the southern end is a collection of stones which may originally have formed a small chamber or cist.

Lanyon Quoit brought us back to the Madron-Morvah road, so we turned right and made our way along the road to Lanyon Farmhouse, where welcoming cream teas are served! Afterwards, some of the Group went to visit **West Lanyon Quoit** [SW4231 3379] which lies in a field to the south of the road. There is no public access to this site, so permission should be sought from the Farm. In 1790 a mound in this field was cleared and the remains of this Quoit were discovered. It consists of a fallen capstone 13ft long by 10½ft wide, propped up against one upright stone, with another broken one underneath. Large deposits of bones were found when it was discovered, and possibly bronze and copper objects as well (present location unknown).



From here it was but a short stroll back to the beginning of the walk and the end of a marvellous 'pathway to the past', which in the space of just a few miles, manages to pack in a wealth of fascinating ancient sites.

*For downloadable leaflets on most of these featured sites go to www.cornishancientsites.com/topsites.htm and click on *Mên-an-Tol* and *Lanyon Quoit*.*

LUGHNASA IN CORNWALL

by Cheryl Straffon

MM Editor Cheryl Straffon's new book 'Daughters of the Earth' [O Books] was published at the end of July/beginning of August this year, at the festival of Lughnasa or Lammass. The following extracts from the book are taken from the chapter on the Lughnasa festival.

Although Lughnasa is celebrated by neo-pagans as the festival of Lugh, in actual fact Lugh is only the 'front-man' for a far older Festival, and one, we shall not be surprised to learn, that was dedicated to a Goddess. Lughnasa in fact more accurately should be called 'Taitunasa', for a reading of the ancient Irish myths reveals that the Festival was actually held by Lugh in honour of his foster-mother Taitu. And the story of Taitu is a fascinating one. Taitu was the wife of Eochaidh mac Erc, the last of the mythical Fir Bolg people, and after his defeat she married Eochaidh Garbh of the victorious Tuatha de Danaan. This makes her a Goddess of sovereignty, or well-being of the Land. She came to the plains of Meath and cleared the great forest of Coill Chuan, creating a great fertile plain that was covered with clover. She died as a result of her labours, but before Her death asked that the cleared plain be named after Her and that She should be buried there. The men of Ireland gathered at her death-bed and She asked them to hold funeral-games to lament her. She died on the Calends of August ('Luain Loga Lughnasa', the word Lughnasa meaning the month of August in Gaelic) and was buried at the place where the Games were then held. We may have here the memory of the coming of agriculture to the early Neolithic and Bronze-Age peoples, with Taitu as the Earth Mother, who died in August as the harvest was cut. She may have been the original Goddess of the harvest, with her spirit remaining in the last sheaf of corn that was cut down annually at the Harvest Festival. Lughnasa was a time of great joy and celebration in the season's round, when the fullness of the harvest began to be gathered in and the people went to hill tops to gather fruit and celebrate. The Earth Mother, the great Goddess Taitu stands over it all, even when Her name had been forgotten, and Her story lost.



In my native country of Cornwall, there are the fragmentary remains of a Lughnasa Fair at Morvah in West Penwith, only a few miles from where I live. The story surrounding this has a personal significance for me, which relates to the mysterious ways in which the Goddess moves! When I first moved to this part of Cornwall about 20 years ago, I began working with the Celtic Wheel of the Year and researching local traditions and stories. Particular places in the landscape became favourite ones at which to do the different festivals.

For the Lughnasa Ritual our Group had to find a place that was large enough, remote enough and one that also had an ancient site. Choices were limited in Cornwall in August. It is one of the most popular holiday destinations in Britain, and the population of half a million people swells to four or five times that number during the Summer months. So, we needed somewhere where people would be unlikely to go, where we could remain undisturbed for a reasonable length of time. It came to me (perhaps 'channelled' from the Goddess?) that Bosporthennis (pronounced *Bosprennis*) would be a good choice. It lay in the middle of the moors several miles from the nearest village, Morvah. There was a large field there, surrounded by a tall Cornish hedge, in the corner of which was an ancient Beehive Hut, dating from the Iron Age. It lay on the plain under the distinctive hill of Bosporthennis Croft. So it was there that we went, and it proved so successful, that I have been going there with various Groups ever since.

At that time, I knew nothing about Morvah Fair, other than there had been one there in the past on the first Sunday in August, but it had died out, and then revived in recent years as 'Morvah Pasty Day'. However, *after* having been to Bosporthennis for our first Lughnasa Ritual, I came across the writings of William Bottrell (*Traditions and Hearth-side Stories of West Cornwall*, 1870) and Robert Hunt (*Popular Romances of the West of England*, 1865). Both of them record the celebration of Morvah Fair, which took place in the village, during which many of the youngsters would go out to gather 'hurts' (whortleberries) on the nearby hill of Carn Gulva. Bottrell recounts the legend of the arrival of a giant called Jack the Tinkard with an impenetrable black bull-hide and a hammer. He challenges the incumbent hero Tom, but they make friends, though Jack kills another giant who lives at Morvah and becomes the possessor of his domain. Finally, Jack marries Tom's daughter, and it is their wedding that is celebrated every year at the Morvah Fair. Hunt adds the most interesting information that the giant on 1st August would "walk up to Bosprennis Croft, and there perform some magical rites, which were either never known, or they have been forgotten". He then adds: "At length the giant died, but the gathering on the 1st August has never been given up, or rather the day shifts and is made to agree with Morvah Feast, which is held on the first Sunday in August". Bottrell tells a similar story, but places the celebration on "the first day of the harvest moon".

So what do we have here? A Feast that took place on 1st August that was the festival of Lughnasa. The date may have originally have been fixed by the new moon, and some researchers have suggested that all the Celtic Quarter-days were originally lunar ones. The arrival of Jack the Tinkard with his magic bull-hide and his hammer, and his ousting of the Morvah giant, make him a figure that has a lot in common with the Irish God Lugh. And his performing of ancient magic rites took place at Bosporthennis Croft, the very place where we had 'unwittingly' chosen to do our Lughnasa Ritual! It would be wonderful if we knew what those "rites" consisted of, and whether they may have been the celebration of the Cornish equivalent of Jack/Lugh's foster-mother the Goddess Tailtu. At any rate, we had brought the Goddess back to Morvah and once again celebrated Her at the place of a Lughnasa gathering.

Lughnasa/Lammas Ritual

“We met up after lunch in early August to make our flower crowns, full of the early August montbretia and beautiful sunflowers and poppies. We then went off to find a field that had some unharvested corn, and asked the Goddess if She would mind if we cut a little from the edge of the field. She was perfectly happy for us to do that, so we hoped the farmer would be too! Then we set off for Morvah, and, parking outside the village set off to walk across the fields to the Beehive Hut at Bosporthennis. We had a lot to carry: ‘props’ for the ritual, musical instruments and a sumptuous sacred feast, so we were sweating a bit by the time we got there!

It was now mid-afternoon when we arrived, so the first thing we did was to mark a labyrinth out with flour and red thread in the grass. This was a classic seven-circuit Cretan labyrinth shape, and not as easy to do in rough grass as it sounds! However, eventually it all came together, and we stood back and admired our handiwork and hoped that the cows in a nearby field would not come in and trample it all down!

Then we closed the circle, and the woman who had carried Maeve in the Summer Solstice ritual and the woman who was carrying Tailtu in this one went off to prepare. The rest of us started invoking Maeve, and soon She arrived, still the Goddess of the Land and Sovereignty, but now ready to pass aspect on to her sister Goddess Tailtu. Maeve brought a scythe from the Summer Solstice which she handed over to the women for later use. Then She bid them farewell, and, a little nostalgically, made her exit, looking wistfully back across the field, while the women called to Tailtu with a chant:

“Summer, summer, milk of the heiffers, we will bring the harvest in
Yellow summer, brilliant daisies, we are calling Tailtu in”.*

Tailtu took a while to arrive, perhaps because She was a very ancient Goddess with a long way to come. She met up with Maeve as She was leaving, and Maeve handed over her crown of Sovereignty to Her, and both sister-Goddesses embraced before Maeve finally disappeared behind a hedge. Tailtu now came forward and spoke of having come from the hills above with the gift of grain for the women. She was wearing a golden skirt and a dark red top and carrying an earthy coloured bag. She made Her way to the centre of the labyrinth, while the women watched from outside. Once there, she displayed her abundance, as she took from the bag vegetables, grapes, tomatoes, wine, strawberries, peaches, melon and nuts. She removed her top and then squeezed the ripe strawberries into her mouth so that the juice ran down over her bare breasts. The women were transfixed! She then showed them the miracle of bread, by producing sheaves of wheat, stripping it into a basket, winnowing it to remove the husks, and then pulling out from under her skirt a newly baked granary loaf with sheaves of wheat coming out of it. It was the gift of the harvest and the teaching of the making of the food from the grain. At this, there was much rejoicing, singing and dancing by the women standing around.

* *Adapted from lyrics by Ruth Barrett & Cynthia Smith from an original Gaelic song.*



Then Tailtu invited each woman in turn into the labyrinth, and each made her way round the circuits and back until she reached the centre and came face-to-face with Tailtu. While each woman was doing this, the others sang softly outside:

“Round and round the maze we go, waking the Earth from Her dream below,
Waking the maker, shaper of green, open our eyes to the ancient dream.
Open our eyes to the ancient dream, born on the wheel of the season’s green”. *

When each woman in turn reached the centre, she spoke to Tailtu of those things in her life which she wished to harvest from the summer, and those things that she now wished to leave behind in the centre of the labyrinth. Tailtu blessed her, offered her a piece of the bread to eat and some strawberry mead to drink. Meanwhile, one of the women who had been around and back out the labyrinth, and who was to carry the Goddess at the Autumn Equinox and Samhain, quietly left the field, taking the scythe with her.

The last woman left the labyrinth, but Tailtu remained inside, sipping strawberry mead and singing quietly and happily to herself about the fruitfulness of the earth and all she had grown. The womens’ attention was still on Tailtu, and many of them had no idea of what was to come next. Suddenly, a dark shadow appeared in the corner of the field, and a black hooded figure came swiftly across the grass, scything it down as She came. It was the first brief appearance of the Hag, the Crone, the Goddess of the winter to come. There was a gasp from the women when they realised what was happening. The Hag cut right across the labyrinth, and Tailtu, who was looking the other way, was suddenly surprised by Her appearance. She faltered for a moment, and then from deep within her memory, a look of recognition came into her eyes. She knew that this was her dark Sister, the Goddess of the Winter, making a brief appearance, like a sudden cloud over the sun on a hot summer’s day. And more than that, She knew that she had to offer herself, her grain, for sacrifice, so that the endless cycle of the wheel of the year could continue. She bowed Her head, and the Hag placed the sharp steel of the scythe on Her neck for a brief moment, before hurrying on and disappearing out of the other side of the field.

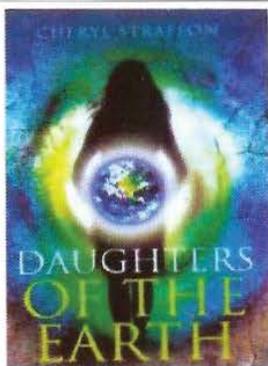
There was an audible gasp from the women, as Tailtu sunk back into the Earth, but with the Hag’s leaving, the cloud passed and the sun came out again. Tailtu pulled Herself back up, still the Goddess of the Harvest, but with the knowledge that Her time with us was now only a brief one. She came out of the labyrinth, and we all gathered around Her, with our grains and grasses and corn and flowers and ribbons we had brought. She then helped us make a ‘Corn Dolly’, a Corn Mother whom we decorated. When she was finished Tailtu breathed life into Her, and then left her for us, a token of remembrance of Her and Her visit and Her gifts.

* *Words by Michael Woolf from ‘Ancient Dream’ by Aeolian Songspell*

Tailtu now said goodbye and left, and we carried the Corn Mother into the Beehive Hut, where there was a small recess in one of the walls, which may originally have been the shrine. We placed the Corn Mother in the recess and said blessings over Her, thanking the Goddess for all the bounty of the harvest and the richness in our lives. We also spoke of those in the world who did not have enough to eat, and did not know Her bounty, and raised energy by chanting and drumming to send it out to them with hope that they too may soon have enough to eat. Many of us also work in practical ways to try and help with the imbalance of resources in the world, but this was our magical way of transferring energy.



Then we left the Beehive Hut, and the woman who had carried Tailtu returned, and we all joined together in a sumptuous summer picnic, as the sun began to sink lower in the sky. We had been at the site for a time out of time, but now as we came back to everyday reality, we realised it had been nearly 6 hours since we had set off! We opened the circle, gathered our stuff together and made our way back to the cars, full of the amazingly deep and powerful experience of our Lammis ceremony.”



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HOW CELTIC IS CORNWALL?

It is an ongoing controversy in Cornwall as to how 'Celtic' the Duchy really is. On the one side, there are those who claim that Cornwall was, and is, separate from England, in the same way as are Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Mann and Brittany. On the other side, there are those (including the British Government) who say that it is simply one area of the South-West 'region' of England. Now, the latest DNA research carried out by Oxford University and the Wellcome Trust has shown that Cornwall is indeed a Celtic place, and has much more in common with, for example, Wales than it does with the Anglo-Saxons in England.

To unravel the threads that made Cornwall Cornish we have to go back to the earliest inhabitants of what is now Britain - the paleolithic hunter-gatherers who arrived here after the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago. Fast forward to about 500 BCE, and their descendants were the Celts, who were still genetically the same as the paleolithic/mesolithic peoples, and probably spoke a variation of the same language, called Brythonic. Most historians now do not believe that there were any mass 'Celtic' invasions of Britain, but that the indigenous people adopted some of the lifestyle and customs of their continental Celtic neighbours. However, what happened next was a succession of invaders and immigrants from outside Britain, including Romans, Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Normans. These did not, by and large, integrate with the native Celtic people, but occupied their lands and gradually drove the Celts to the northern and western fringes of the country. This is in fact the traditional model of Celtic dispersal into Wales, Cornwall, etc, which has been largely discounted in recent years. However, this new DNA evidence now puts this model firmly back into place.

This new DNA material has been featured in the Channel 4 TV series *The Face of Britain* and its accompanying book by Robin McKie (Simon & Schuster, 2007). Several Cornish people, who could trace their lineage back several generations were DNA sampled, and the results showed that they were several times more likely to have the distinctive 'Celtic' gene than the Anglo-Saxon one. They were also more likely to have distinctive facial and hair features (such as red or ginger hair). The series and the book were careful to point out that there was probably no such thing as a 'Celtic' nation or culture, but they do unequivocally conclude that the people who can trace their ancestry back and live in Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, etc "have the oldest bloodline in the country and speak the oldest language in the British Isles". It adds: "That makes them a little bit separate and a little bit special".

So, it would seem that the Cornish after all are descended from the original inhabitants of Britain, those that built the megalithic sites, and first settled and farmed this land. The Cornish who come from Cornwall are the great-great grandchildren of the earliest hunter-gatherers who first arrived here 10,000 years ago, and eventually settled down to become our Neolithic & Bronze Age ancestors.

CD REVIEW



Songs of Witchcraft & Magic - Songs & Ballads compiled by the Museum of Witchcraft with WildGoose Records. £14 (inc p & p) from The Museum of Witchcraft, The Harbour, Boscastle, Cornwall PL35 0HD, or purchase from: www.theoccultartcompany.co.uk

This is an excellent production: a beautifully produced CD with 15 songs from a variety of professional artists, including Martin Carthy, Frankie Armstrong, Ruth Barrett, etc, performing mainly traditional songs from the British folk tradition, all of which have elements of strange witchcraft and magic in them. As the sleeve notes say: "Magic inhabits the borderland where the psychological and the spiritual meet ... a vivid and compelling world of powerful emotions and intense experiences." It is a world of humans and magical animals, shape shifters, seers and riddle-makers, of ill-wishing and quests, of witches and spells and the Otherworld - "a world of moonlight, blood and the roaring of the sea". Accompanying the CD is a 32 page booklet of the words of the songs and interpretations, illustrated with a wide variety of artefacts from the collection of the Witchcraft Museum. This CD is highly recommended, both for its songs and its detailed sleeve notes

THE PIPERS TUNE

Early in the summer the pagan community heard that Cornwall SACRE (the organisation responsible for the curriculum of religious teaching in schools) had finally decided to refuse the application for Pagan representation on it, which was then ratified by the County Council. The argument was that although "it was not difficult to identify the specifically religious elements of paganism", the problem lay in the fact that it was not a religion in the 'traditional' sense of the word, it had no formally constituted pagan community, and its diffuse nature (with pagans, wiccans, druids, heathens, etc) made it not accountable. The feeling among the pagan community was that SACRE just didn't want pagans on its committee, and were thrashing about for arguments to justify its anti-pagan stance. It seems extraordinary in this day of an accepted multi-faith country that pagans still bear the brunt of such prejudice.

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 Tel: 01637-873024

CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP

Sun Dec 23rd **Chûn Quoit sunset** meet at 4pm to see winter solstice sunset, followed by Yule story-telling indoors. Bring food & drink to share and perhaps a story to tell? Further details: 01736-787186

PAGAN MOOTS

Penzance - meets 2nd Tues each month 7.15pm at 53 Morrab Rd

Also - seasonal rituals

Tel: Sarah 01736-787522

E-mail: vivianatfarwest@supanet.com

Earth Moot - Penzance meets last Weds each month 7.15pm at Stella

Maris Centre at Healing Star

Tel: Rod 01736-731548

Redruth/Truro/Falmouth - meets 3rd Mon each month 7.30pm

Tel: Ann or Lawrence 01872-863970

Bodmin - Pagan Paths meets first Weds each month in Lanivet nr.

Bodmin. Tel: Wendy 01208-832977

E-mail: paganpaths05@aol.com

Bude - For more details

Tel: Lorraine 01288-359463

E-mail: silverwitch-poo@tiscali.co.uk