

STONES & ALIGNMENTS - AN ETHERIC APPROACH
DARK MOON ● LOST & FOUND MENHIRS ●
MÊN-AN-TOL ● DOWSING ● NEWS ●

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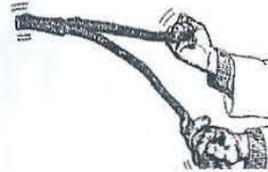
STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

EARTH ENERGIES * ANCIENT STONES * SACRED SITES * PAGANISM * LEYPATHS
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Another summer passes, and another load of idiots have been and gone! This year, it seemed to be the Merry Maidens stone circle that received the brunt of inappropriate attention. The first incident was the loosening of one of the stones near the eastern entrance to the circle, presumably by rocking the stone and attempting to uproot it. This was followed a few weeks later by someone setting up a tpee in the field, complete with camping gear and sleeping bags! Meanwhile, Boscawen-ûn circle gained its usual firepit, and one of CASPN's site monitors reported someone climbing the centre leaning stone. She managed to dissuade him from it, but one does wonder what goes on at some of these sites when no-one is around. English Heritage is perhaps missing a trick here: it could easily charge an entrance fee at the Merry Maidens, and provide ice creams and a snack bar on site, with perhaps a resident Druid, suitably attired, to collect the money and give the punters a guided tour of the site! Meanwhile, genuine visitors, if they are less than fully able bodied, are dissuaded from visiting it - and most other sites. The stile at the bottom of the field where the Merry Maidens stand, is impossible for anyone with a walking disability, but there is a gate at the top of the field that could easily be left unlocked to allow disabled access. Unfortunately, the farmer, because of a dispute with the late Penwith Council, refuses to unlock it - so stalemate prevails, and the only ones to suffer are those whose lives would be greatly enhanced if they were able to visit.

There are so few sites that are suitable for the less able-bodied to visit, it is a shame that the few that could be made accessible are not. Another case in point is Lanyon Quoit. It has been proposed for ages now that a simple opening to the surrounding hedge (which is not an ancient Cornish hedge) would allow disabled access to this site. But year upon year passes, and neither English Heritage nor the National Trust, who manage the site, seem to have the political will to put it into effect. Obviously if you are able-bodied, it must seem a lot of effort for little effect, but in these days of so-called inclusiveness and minority rights, it seems very negligent that nothing continues to be done. If you feel strongly about this issue, then for the Merry Maidens please write to: The Tregothnan Estate, Tregothnan, Truro TR2 4AN, and for Lanyon Quoit write to: The National Trust, Treveal, Zennor TR26 3BW, and/or English Heritage Sites & Monuments Officer, Historic Environment, Old County Hall, Truro TR1 3AY. If you can think of any other sites that could be opened up to the less able-bodied, then mention these as well. Perhaps together, we could persuade some of these bodies to get their acts together and make a difference where it could most easily be achieved, which would make it so much more enjoyable for disabled people.

DOWSING NEWS



The 2009 season opened in January with a talk to the **Tamar Dowzers** by Cheryl Traffon on 'Sun, Moon & standing stones', and in February one by Alan Neil on 'Orbs, lights and circles', both of which were particularly well attended & provoked much interest. On-site dowsing activities re-started in March with a visit by **West Cornwall Dowzers** to *Trencrom Hill*, where the Athena and B-lines were found to cross on top of the hill, and the node point where they crossed a good-feeling spiral energy descending upwards was identified. Nearby to this, however, was found another vortex, this one with bad energy descending downwards, a mirror-image of the node point. In the afternoon the dowzers went to nearby *Trink Hill* to dowse the Twelve O'Clock Rock. Here they found a line, running from Mulfra Quoit to Twelve O'Clock Rock and on to Beersheeba menhir, Gwinear Church, Carn Brea and beyond. There was some speculation that this line may be a mineral lode or geological fault line. It was a lovely day with great visibility all around.

Later in the month **Tamar Dowzers** went to *Pencarrow House* near Bodmin, where there was much to dowse in the grounds, including a Celtic cross, which was found to have been moved several times, and the cross head to have been carved from the top section of a former standing stone. In the afternoon the Group investigated the Iron Age 'Hill Fort' at the end of Mile Long Drive. They found that the site stood on earlier embankments going back through the Bronze Age, and possibly into the late Neolithic - nearly 5000 years ago. In the Round they found traces of former hut circles, and there was a wide ley line across the central clearing of the Round, implying that human activity at this elevated site could date from the most ancient of times.

A week later on a beautiful Spring day the **West Cornwall Dowzers** went to *Nanjulian* in West Penwith to visit the little-known Courtyard House settlement. A strong energy line was found to be running from the Brisons rocks off-shore through the Settlement and on to Chapel Carn Brea hilltop, which had a fabulous view from the Settlement. The 'spiritual centre' of the Settlement was identified, and the dowzers then turned their attention to the location of the possible fogou, which all agreed was away from, and at right angles to, the location suggested by the archaeologists, which may in fact have been a well. In the afternoon they went to visit the remains of barrows on the cliff-top, and found some powerful energy patterns there. A most enjoyable and interesting day.



In April, the **West Cornwall Dowzers** went to *Lanivet Church* and *Helman Tor* (the latter previously visited by Celtic Dowzers in Nov 2008 - see MM69). At Lanivet Church - "the centre of Cornwall" [see article in MM22 p.12-13], the cross in front of the Church was perceived as having lights/auras around it, and there was also a node point there from where lines radiated out. At the rear of the Church the cross was on a powerful energy spot, sited on various alignments. At Helman Tor, the Group found the Neolithic ritual centre of the site on flat ground to the NW, and also felt that the people had excarnated their dead bodies on top of the Tor and then put the bones in the crevices of the rocks, a fascinating but feasible idea. They found the Logan Rock on the Tor, and then came down and followed the Saints Way [see MM63 p.20] to a previously unrecorded 8ft standing stone [SX064 614] [photo right] standing in a field amongst gorse at the base of the Tor. One face of this menhir pointed towards Brown Willy, while the other looked up a little valley towards Lanlivery Church. Finally, they continued down the Saints Way to another Logan Stone, intervisible with the standing stone, to round off a day of many discoveries and ideas.



A week later, **Celtic Dowzers** went to *King Arthur's Hall* on Bodmin Moor, a site visited by Tamar Dowzers on an early outing in 2002, but this time with much better weather. They felt that the site, unique in Cornwall, was built not by local people but by outsiders (Phoenicians?) and that it dated back some 3000-3500 years BP. It was discovered that natural serpentine rock formed its base, and there was a strong indication that it had been used as some kind of healing centre. Energy lines were found to criss-cross the site over three natural springs, but the energy seemed to be contained within the structure itself. Certainly an enigmatic site that revealed at least some of its secrets.



Finally, in May all 3 groups (**West Cornwall, Celtic & Tamar**) met up at *Trerose Manor* near Helford, where they found habitation traces from the Iron Age for well over 200 years to the 17th century. A visit to the nearby *Mawnan Church* [also visited by Celtic Dowzers in July 2008 - see MM68 p.2] found evidence of a tunnel leading to the church from a medieval sanctuary, and another leading from the church towards the estuary. The Group also examined the fragment of a cross built into the west wall, reputed to date from the C6th. There was much to ponder during this interesting day's dowsing activities.

SPRING into SUMMER 2009 EVENTS

For the 4th year [see MM61 p.3 & MM67 p.3], the revived tradition of visiting **Fenton Bebibell Well** - “the well of the little people” - on Nine Maidens Downs on Good Friday (this year 10th April) was observed. Over a dozen people turned up on a lovely sunny day to clear out the well, baptise the dolls in the time-honoured tradition, and bless the well itself. There was a debate about whether the well should be kept from draining out or not, and the morning finished with a shared libation and a satisfying feeling.



There was another lovely sunny evening a few weeks later for the 21st year of the Carn Bosavern May Day Eve **Maypole Dance** at St. Just. About 30 or so people came as usual to dance in the summer, and it was generally agreed that it was one of the best Maypole Dances there has been for its enthusiastic dancers, great energy and lovely atmosphere - no mean feat after 21 years! There was also a lot of jumping over the Beltane fire afterwards, and a feeling that summer had been well and truly welcomed in.



After **Padstow's Obby Oss** on May Day itself, the Saturday (2nd) was marked by both the Penwith Pagan Moot's **Beltane celebration** [see p.22] and the Redruth/Truro Moot's one. Sunday (3rd) saw over a dozen people setting off on a lovely day for the 21st **Three Wells Walk**. As usual it went from Sancreed in the morning to Chapel Euny wells and back to Sancreed Well for lunch; and then by green lanes and (very muddy) paths to Madron well for the mixing of the three waters and the blessing for Summer. A final



return to Sancreed and a Cornish Cream Tea at Sancreed House rounded off a perfect day. However, for those with any energy left to spare, there was the second **Penzance May Horns** ceremony in the evening, revived after a long gap [see MM69 p.22]. Some 100 people joined in the procession, with an assorted bunch of musicians, and the 'Mayers' dressed in white or green and draped in flowers and greenery. Summer had well and truly comin' in!

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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



The FOCAS (Friends of Cornwall's Ancient Sites) 3rd annual weekend of walks and talks in May was very successful and enjoyable. Craig Weatherhill led a walk to Tregeseal, where he told local stories and legends, and identified the site of the well where in the story of the Kenidjack Witch, the miners' sister had an encounter with the ghost of old Moll; Ian Cooke led a circular walk over Nine Maidens Downs; Paul Bonnington gave a fascinating talk about William Copeland Borlase; Cheryl Traffon gave a slide talk on Sun, Moon and Standing Stones; Paul Bonnington led a great stank to Watch Croft and Carn Gulva hills; and Steve Patterson talked about the folklore of the area. Old friends came for all or part of the weekend, and new members were signed up as well.

CASP.N/FOCAS continued with its monthly Clear-up of ancient sites, with Grumbla Cromlech (May), Nine Maidens Barrows (June), Boscawen-ûn circle (July) & Tregeseal circle (Aug) already done this year. Sites for Autumn clearances are on the back page. All are welcome at these Clear-ups which are good fun, friendly and very useful.

CASP.N's sister group LAN (Lizard Ancient Sites Network) also continues to thrive. It now has 15 site monitors signed up, covering all the major, and many of the lesser-known, sites on the Lizard peninsula, including barrows, standing stones, settlements, wells, cliff castles and rounds. It works closely with the Lizard National Nature Reserve Manager and the local National Trust Officer, and liaises regularly with local archaeological and environmental groups. It too has been doing monthly Clear-ups of sites, and so far this year has cleared Drytree Barrow (Mar), Poldowrian hut circle (April), a house at Kynance Gate settlement (May), Piskey Hall fogou (July) and a return visit to Kynance Gate (Aug). Sites for the rest of this year are also on the back page.



If you would like to support the work of CASP.N & LAN in any way, either by joining FOCAS, or coming to Clear-ups, full details are given below.

CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]

CASP.N Address: Whitewaves, Boscaswell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, TR19 7EP

Web site: www.cornishancientsites.com **E-mail:** secretary@cornishancientsites.com

FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS]

To join FOCAS (£8/year waged- £5 unwaged) tel: FOCAS Administrator Eve Benney 01736-793905 or e-mail focas@cornishancientsites.com, visit CASP.N web site for downloadable application form, or write to: 24 Queen Street, St.Just, Penzance TR19 7JW

Adopt-a-Site scheme: e-mail: focas@cornishancientsites.com

Sites Clear-Ups: Dave Munday 01736-787230 e-mail: dave@cornishancientsites.com

Report damage at sites: Tel: 01736-787186 or 01736-787522

LIZARD ANCIENT SITES NETWORK [LAN] via CASP.N address (above)

Adopt-a-Site scheme: e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com, or phone 01736-787186

Sites Clear-Ups: Graham Folkherd 01326-241450 e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com

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CARWYNNEN QUOIT PURCHASED

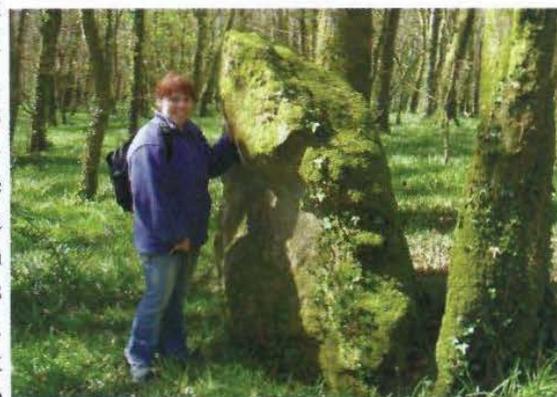
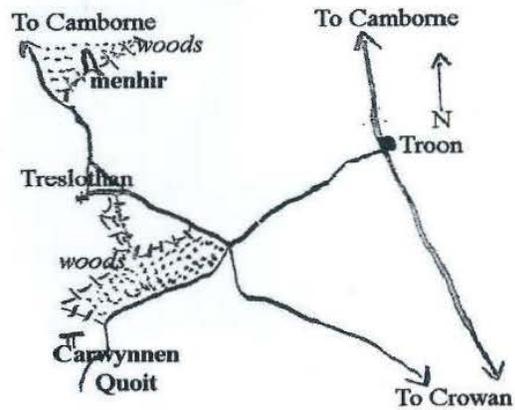
After a long wait, the sale of Carwynnen Quoit at Pendarves (SW6502 3723), also known as The Giant's Quoit, to the Sustainable Trust has been completed [see MM62 p.6]. With help from various foundations and trusts, the Trust bought a 5 acre site that includes the ruined Quoit, and their aim is to eventually re-erect the monument. The HES & CAS have organised a geophysical survey at the site, and there is some suggestion that the Quoit may have been moved at some point in the past, and that there was formerly a circle of stones nearby.



A 19thC print showing the Quoit standing

TRESLOTHAN STANDING STONE FOUND

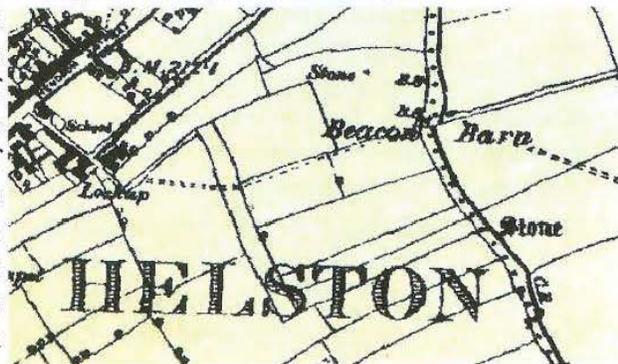
Meanwhile, less than a mile to the north of Carwynnen Quoit, a probable prehistoric standing stone has been newly identified in the woods of the private Pendarves Estate. These woods were formerly owned by Cornwall's most famous archaeologist Professor Charles Thomas, who first came across the stone some years ago. It stands at SW6509 3839, and is an irregular shaped 6ft high granite menhir (at its highest point), studded with small quartz pieces. Charles Thomas says he is in no doubt it is a genuine menhir, lying as it does close to some prehistoric field systems. The stone has a different appearance when viewed from different angles, and from one side looks like a hooded crone or perhaps a bear. Nearby in the woods are some natural rock formations, and it is interesting to speculate as to whether there would originally have been a sacred pathway leading from the standing stone to these rocks, or whether there was also a relationship between the menhir and Carwynnen Quoit to the south.



MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

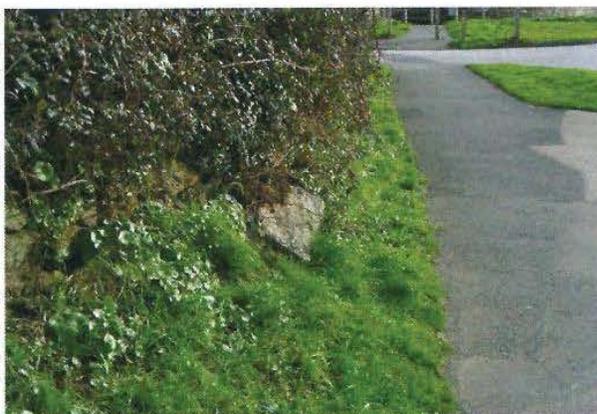
2: Helston Beacon

Amongst Cornwall's missing, lost and destroyed stones, the menhir that used to stand at Helston must be one of the most forgotten today. The stone was recorded on the 1888 OS Map [right] as standing at SW6658 2750 beside Clodgy Lane (now the A394) about 50 yards south of an elevated piece of ground called The Beacon, which lay to the east of Helston overlooking the town. Opposite the Beacon was a Quarry and a Barn (the land now has a Mormon Church there), and a path leading east from the Barn site leads to the remains of an Iron Age Round at Crasken.



But it is the (presumably Bronze Age) standing stone just south of the Beacon that holds the most interest. Sometime between 1888 and 1908 it was uprooted, because the 1909 OS map marks it in the same place as "site of stone". In 1917 Charles Henderson recorded the stone in his *Notebooks of Parochial Antiquities [Vol 1, 184]* and has a photo of it built horizontally into a hedge. The Sites and Monuments Register at HES lists it as being 15ft high, so it must have been a notable landmark in the area. From this point, in former times, there would have been good views in an easterly direction across to a tumulus on Boskenwryn Downs, and south-east towards Goonhilly Downs and the Drytree menhir.

MM went to investigate the site and found at the map location for the stone there was an interesting piece of quartz that was close in to the modern hedge but not built completely into it [photo right]. When dowsed, it indicated that it was indeed part of the original standing stone that was here in 1888. Where the rest of the stone has gone is not known (probably broken up for building material), but it does seem as if a small piece of it is still there.



Also on the 1888 map, a hundred yards or so further north-west, another "stone" is located, albeit in much smaller type. No trace of this stone remains either, but interestingly this site is now occupied by a Catholic church and a shrine with an inbuilt statue of Our Lady. It seems as if this area has always been a sacred place and continues so today.

WEST PENWITH STONES & ALIGNMENTS - AN ETHERIC APPROACH

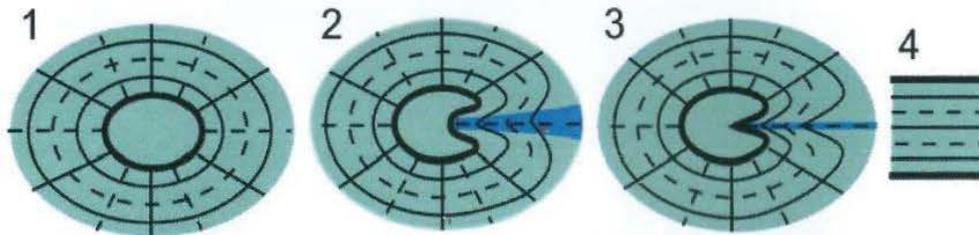
by Pat Toms

On a visit to Penwith for a week that included the Society of Leyhunter's three day Moot I explored a few sites. When I explore places I adopt a particular etheric approach developed over many years of investigation. I use a sense of place that involves intuitive association with the geometry of the form of things, in particular topographical and geological forms in the landscape. To do so I use dowsing, but other intuitive techniques of investigation can be used. This approach is just one of many possible ways of associating intuitively with the landscape, but it enables me to explain some aspects of the layout of many ancient and traditional sites. I have led many field trips with the West of Scotland Dowzers using this approach to exploration; people have tried it and verify its usefulness. Maybe ancient peoples used some such mode of association with their surroundings.

Description of the following stones and sites can be construed to concern location and alignment, but I looked at them in an etheric context – an experience, only certain aspects of which can be described easily with words. Particular concepts are needed to describe etheric experience of associating with the form of things. They can't basically be specific, as a scientific approach demands, but need to be able to represent the harmony of living things experienced sensually and geometrically. In a way everything is alive and changing, it's a living relationship between things that is being describe.

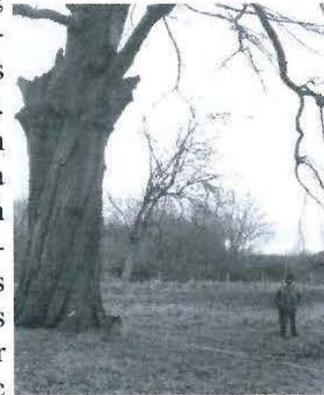
Etheric context

Associating with the geometry of the form of things, such as topographical and geological forms in the landscape, is not simply a matter of considering things in alignments or in patterns. It is about the way things ray etherically when their forms are associated together and resonate etherically, and about the way etheric currents arise from resonance set up. Terminology used here to describe the etheric experience includes: **association with form** - protrusions and intrusion are polar forms (mountains, hills; caves and valleys); **etheric influence** - experienced as resonance and currents; **etheric intensities** - vary and manifest as fields of form represented geometrically with points, lines, planes and surfaces. Consider a protrusion, drawn in plan here as an ellipse (1).



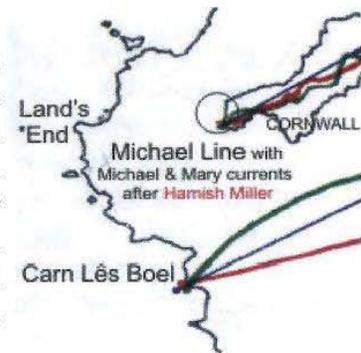
Association with the form, using an intuitive technique such as dowsing, sets up *etheric resonance as a field of form* comprising rays and peripheral lines spaces harmoniously. When associating with the fields of form, a current is experienced. For the ellipse its intensity and etheric flow is constant, shown by the light blue background. When an intrusion is present (2) association with the form creates a current with opposite polar characteristics, the dark blue background. It appears where the curvature of the peripheral resonant lines reverse. For a sharp intrusion (3) the current can become a line. Perception of direction of currents and lines depends on what someone is rooted to. Something living has to be associated with its surroundings, or it wouldn't exist. When associating with form, usually people are rooted to Earth but this can be switched, with practice, at will. Root to a local point, on Earth, or to the infinite, the Heavens, as polar opposites.

The word etheric is used here, not the word energetic as in scientific parlance. Energy arises with the motion of substantial things. Here we are talking of mindful experience arising from a living intent. A field of form is not electromagnetic (or gravitational or nuclear), which arises in relation to substances and can be measured physically. Etheric fields are of living association, the human mind; they arise from a mindful association with the geometry of the form of something. Living things use fields of form to determine their form of growth and change - see book *The Vortex of Life* by Lawrence Edwards - so etheric influences arising from a living association are *formative*. Associations are set up constitutionally to create natural formations to archetypes. A tree associates with the radial aspects of an earthly field of form when growing. This field spirals over the crossing of fissures (white lines in photo), so some trees will twist - they are growing straight in a spiralling field. Inappropriate associations can disrupt growth maybe causing discomfort or disease (sometimes called geopathic stress). It's a mystery how a living thing associates constitutionally with its surroundings; it can be described as spiritual activity. Everywhere polar influences come together living formation can be promoted. A conscious intuitive etheric association can be used to find hidden things, as when dowsing.



Carn Lês Boel

I visited the headland where the Michael line described by John Michell commences. Carn Lês Boel is the place where Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst also found the start of two cross-country serpentine currents they called the Michael and Mary currents. In *The Sun and the Serpent* they describe a stone standing sentinel-like on the headland at the start of the lines. I went to look at it; I was so amazed at what I found I had to go back next day to look again and discover more!





The boulder, crevice and sentinel stones



A large stone stands sentinel-like positioned vertically on small packing stones with its long axis north-south and a side facing east. Finding intense etheric rays when associating with the geometry of the stone aroused suspicion. Two other large boulders, one on a flat area and another straddling a crevice were soon found on rays nearby. The three huge stones define a north-south line, the sixty-degree Michael line and the Michael and Mary currents.

The crevice and sentinel stones define a sixty-degree line

The huge boulder sitting on a table has its axis aligned north-south through the sentinel stone



The stones have been orientated to resonate etherically with each other and the Earth

These huge stones are enlivened etherically by being placed on geological fissures and features. A stone protrusion is placed over an intrusive feature. On association the location rays etherically. Associating with the field of form of several stones taken together creates the etheric currents, straight cross-country and serpentine. A large eroded cliff-side fissure and an intrusive feature can be seen in the photos.

The sharp edge of the crevice stones defines a sixty degree line - its two chamfered faces create the polar Michael and Mary currents.



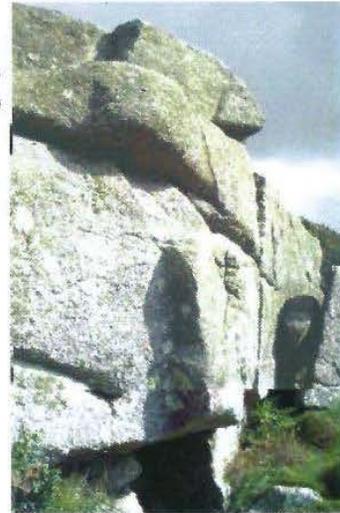
One of the features

The stones are enlivened etherically by geological features and fissures

Huge boulders

In other places I saw boulders apparently deliberately placed, presumably to create etheric currents (I didn't have time to investigate them all).

The well in the side of Tren crom Hill is an opening cut into the rock where geological fissures enable water to emanate. Climb onto the top of the rock above the well and two huge boulders can be seen. They seem to have been placed there deliberately. One is directly over the well and its fissures. The other straddles a crevice nearby. They will ray and create currents.

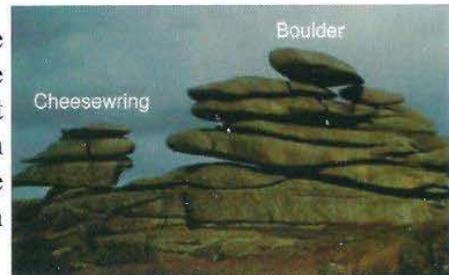


At Zennor Head I sought the Athena current found by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst - " through a gap in a prominent rock outcrop on the western side". Near the cliff top are rock protrusions with a distinctive large crevice. Bridging this crevice at its top is a huge boulder – someone has placed it there. It creates a 'hole' accentuating etheric current passing through.



North of the Cheesewring is another natural stone stack several hundred feet away, but it has a huge boulder placed on it (see photograph). Both this stack and the Cheesewring appear to be on a north-south line through the centre of the Hurlers stone circles in which the Michael and Mary currents cross. Viewed from the circle the Cheesewring is quite a long way away, so the stone stack behind it blurs together with it – they are in line. Does the boulder perched on the stack mark the north-south line accurately (time and rain precluded investigation)? It is carefully positioned to create a cavity to entrain a current, as such it seems to be a more important feature than the Cheesewring.

It seems the stone circle was laid out due south of the two natural stone stacks that happen to be on a north-south alignment. This enables the marriage of the place with Earth etherically.



*IN -
SITE*

The centre-page feature that focusses on one particular site each time and looks at it in depth.

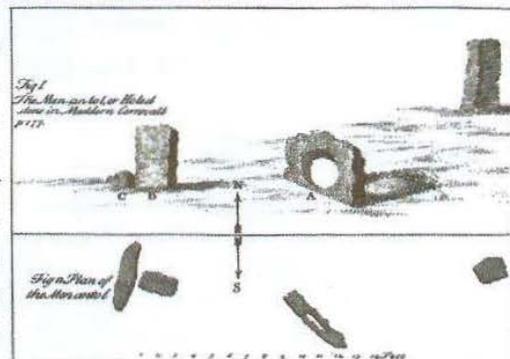
As a background to the article on p.14-17
this one looks at -

THE MÊN-AN-TOL

The Mên-an-Tol (Cornish for 'Stone of the Hole') consists of a holed stone 1.2m (4ft) across with a large round hole 51cm (20 in) in diameter, large enough for a grown person to crawl through. Either side of it are two upright stones, 1.3m (4½ft) high. There is also a fallen stone, and leading away around the edge the visible remains of other stones.

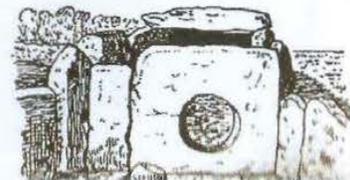


The setting of the holed stone and two uprights was first drawn by William Borlase in 1754, although according to his plan, they were not in a straight line. It has been suggested that his work may have been inaccurate, but in the text of his book ('Antiquities of Cornwall') he specifically says that the stones are on "a triangular plan". This indicates that at least one of the stones (the centre or one of the uprights) has since then been moved to its present position [photo above].



Plan by William Borlase (1754)

This may not have been the first time it has been moved. When they cleared the site some years ago, the Cornwall Archaeological Unit suggested that what can be seen today are the remains of a stone circle, which probably originally consisted of 19 stones (as do the other circles in West Penwith) with traces of 11 stone stumps still visible. It is not clear where the holed stone fitted into this circle. It may have formed the entrance to a small burial chamber abutting on to the circle: there appears to be the remains of a small stone mound next to the holed stone, which could have been the base of a small chamber. There are no other known sites such as this in Cornwall, but similar sites have been recorded in places such as Gloucestershire in England, and in France and Belgium.



Dolmen at Constans, France

Alternatively, the holed stone could have been set at the edge of the circle, either freestanding, or indeed on top of the mound if there was one (some burial mounds in Brittany had standing stones on top of them, and Newgrange in Ireland may also have done). The CAU had suggested that the stone was originally at right angles to its present position with the hole facing out of the circle, so in MM29 Andy Norfolk ran some computer alignments for 2000 BCE & 1800 BCE, and discovered that an observer in the centre of the circle would have seen the moon rise over a barrow to the NE of the circle at the northern major standstill. Furthermore, at the southern major standstill moonrise the moon would have been seen to rise above the horizon and be framed perfectly by the holed stone itself - a wonderful piece of megalithic magic!



The closeness of holed stones to stone circles is recorded at other places. For example, at Tregeseal stone circle near St. Just there are a line of holed stones near to the Circle, and at the Merry Maidens stone circle near Lamorna there were a number of holed stones with relatively small holes, forming a straight alignment over 1200m (1300yds), four of which are on an azimuth close to the midwinter moonrise at its most northerly extreme, something that parallels the Mên-an-Tol. On the Orkney islands, there was formerly a holed stone, the Stone of Odin, that lay between two stone circles. There is also half of another holed stone in the hedge of the lane opposite the entrance to the Mên-an-Tol. It may be unconnected to the monument, but its proximity is curious.

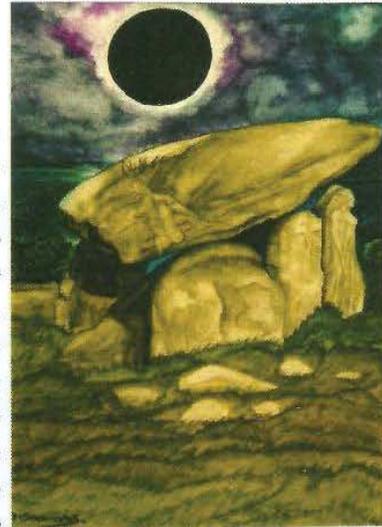
The holed stone has long been the subject of legends relating to healing and divination. Formerly known as the Crick stone, it was thought that to crawl through the hole nine times widdershins (against the sun or anti-clockwise) was a cure for backache, rickets and scrofula. Children would be passed through three times. Also, if a brass pin was placed on the stone, questions could be answered by the movement of the pin. It has also been suggested that the stone could have served as a means of passing through the bones of the dead ancestors for use in fertility rituals, and that the stone could have provided a symbolic 'rebirthing' for the people at various 'rites of passage' in their lives. Whatever the original, or later, meaning of the site, it remains in use today for countless visitors to crawl through and for pagan and spiritual rituals.



DARK MOON

by Robin Ellis

The recent total eclipse of the sun in east Asia reminds us that ten years ago in 1999 West Cornwall was rocked by two major events: in August there was a total eclipse of the sun, and three months later on the evening of November 5th the Mên-an-Tol and Lanyon Quoit monuments were set ablaze with home-made napalm. The events were extensively covered in Meyn Mamvro at the time [see MMs no.39-42], but although the perpetrators of the napalm attack were later caught and convicted, questions remained about their role in what happened and the forces that had been at work that they may have tapped into. In this article Robin Ellis re-visits the events and offers some insights into the energies of a decade ago.



Painting [c] Denyse Shorrocks

For ten miles or so between St.Just and St.Ives, the B3306 twists along above the Atlantic ramparts of isolated Cornwall's furthest coast. From this granite shoreline one can move inland across moors strewn with abandoned tin mines and prehistoric remains. On sunny summer days flocks of visitors also like to head up the B3306 to a side road between Morvah and Madron, from where they can walk to the Mên-an-Tol, a doughnut-shaped stone flanked by two perpendicular menhirs. These stones had been set up in Neolithic times as part of a rather unusual stone circle, with an earth chamber attached, the holed stone providing a 15in circular entrance to it. In more recent ages, and as part of the local, traditional practice of witchcraft, babies were passed through the hole nine times widdershins (against the sun or counterclockwise) as a cure for scofula or rickets [See MM42 p.10-11 for an account of one such ritual observed in modern times].

A blunt statement could be made that unknown powers were still presumed to linger on in the moors and the tors surrounding the Mên-an-Tol. On the horizon our visitors might discover the circle of standing stones known as the Nine Maidens, which, like the nineteen Merry Maidens at Boleigh, some miles to the south, gives hints of a time when the Goddess and her Priestesses held sway in the land. If our visitors could dowse (and, who cannot?) they might well dowse the holed stone and discover a circular band of wavy red lines on a green energy field (one dowsers' perception of emanations from the holed stone), and in the centre of this field they might find one of the red lines swirling down into the hole, sucked in like a black hole. This is similar, but different, to the energy fields surrounding the Rocky Valley maze carvings [see *The Mystery of the Labyrinth* by Robin Ellis - MM40 p.14-18]. At that our accomplished visitors would realise something significant about the Mên-an-Tol: that it is not just a lump of rock, or a piece of art, but it is a functioning artefact. High on its windswept moor at the end of Britain, the Mên-an-Tol is an earth mystery mysterious enough for anyone!

However, on the night of November 5th 1999, its peaceful and retired seclusion was disturbed, if not shattered, by an attack as appalling as it was unexpected. On the morning of November 6th, visitors to the Mên-an-Tol, and the nearby Lanyon Quoit, were horrified to discover that considerable fire damage had been caused to these monuments. Assistance was procured, and a universal consternation was experienced by all the inhabitants of West Penwith, upon the discovery that the monuments had been the subject of a destructive and potentially ruinous assault, utilizing low-grade napalm. There is evidence that the attackers believed their home-made napalm (petrol and polystyrene) was better quality than it was, and that their aim was the complete destruction of the monuments. It may be this lack of technical expertise that prevented further fire attacks, though these were threatened, in a 'communique' sent to 'The Cornishman' newspaper - along with a threat to 'kidnap' the Mên-an-Tol and blow up Lanyon Quoit! Despite this statement, and the arrest of the two, obviously minor, figures in the Group, the authors of this mysterious outrage were, like the Mên-an-Tol itself, shrouded in mystery, and the most active conjecture failed to suggest an adequate solution of the reason behind the appalling occurrence.



Photo of fire attack on Nov 5th 1999 [c] Meyn Mamvro

Though this incident stands out in its ferocity, it does not stand alone. During the long hot summer of 1999, certain sacred wells, representing key sites in the energy matrix of West Penwith, were subject to various forms of harassment. Due to a territorial dispute, Sancreed Well became difficult to access. Alsia Well was vandalised, and offerings to the well-spirit were destroyed. Most serious of all, Madron Well suffered serious acts of sabotage. Part of the Chapel was damaged and the water flow to the 'Christianized' Baptistry well was shut off with rubble, forcing the Energies to concentrate on the 'Pagan' well, whether they liked it or not! All this coincided with a period of factional infighting amongst the large modern West Penwith Pagan movement, weakening it at a crucial time.

The storm cloud burst in August, when the peaceful seclusion of all of West Penwith was disturbed, if not shattered, by an event as appalling as, this time, it was expected: a total eclipse of the sun. The modern pagan movement in West Penwith faulted down the middle. Some sought to co-operate with the media, hoping to minimise the damage. A few, a very few, possibly saw a chance to fuel personal ambition. Sites which for centuries had known nothing but peace and silence and sacred mystery felt the full glare of publicity - including the Mên-an-Tol. Some pagans resisted, threatening to bring down the wrath of the negative Cornish earth spirits, the spriggans, upon their enemies' heads. A few, a very few, possibly turned to violence, as Resistance Groups often do.

To understand *why* the Mên-an-Tol was attacked, it might help if we knew what its function is, or was. In East Anglia, holed stones, known as 'Hagg Stones' were often hung in barns to protect the horses from 'evil' witchcraft. When the lead mines were opened under Greenhow Moor in Wharfedale, Yorkshire, the miners were subject to every conceivable manifestation of subterranean horror. Most of the miners came from Cornwall, and took 'protective devices' into the mines with them. These 'devices' were naturally-holed stones, created by the action of water. They were known as 'Dobbie Stones' (mouth stones) and were hung around the neck for personal protection, or hung up in galleries or at mine-heads, as a protection against negative forces. Is it possible that the Mên-an-Tol was some kind of gigantic 'Dobbie Stone', built to resist unbalanced and negative energy? Such a large 'mouth' could have accommodated a great deal of 'dark energy', and the Mên-an-Tol may well have covered all the upland moors of West Penwith. In fact all of the area was burned in an arson attack, only weeks after the incident at the Mên-an-Tol itself!

Every 18.6 years, the earth mound would probably have become saturated with negative energy, and it would have to be dissipated to diffuse the dangerous forces with which it was dealing. It would then be replaced with fresh earth, and the whole process would begin again. In the meantime, the unknown power of the moon at its major southern standstill point would shine directly through the hole, re-charging and re-vitalising the unknown forces within.

Eventually the Neolithic passed away. The earth mound was scattered and not replaced, and the stone circle destroyed. But the awesome presence of the holed stone and its nearest menhirs would have prevented their destruction. Eventually someone who knew, or guessed, something of its function, turned the holed stone 90° so that its menhirs could channel earth energy through the hole, replicating in a makeshift way its original function.

However, we must not forget that the Mên-an-Tol was not the only monument to be fire-bombed that night. This is a light that makes the darkness blacker, for if the Mên-an-Tol is unique among megaliths, so Lanyon Quoit is among quoits. It has been repeatedly pointed out that the one thing that these two monuments have in common is that they are both reconstructions. Lanyon Quoit was damaged in a powerful storm in the Autumn of 1815, leaving only the northern support still standing. It was carelessly re-erected in 1824, lower and in a different position, making it totally dissimilar to other quoits in West Penwith.



We have surely now got to the nitty-gritty of the matter!

Whatever position Lanyon Quoit used to occupy within the landscape matrix, it does not now, and therefore any specific alignments it once had are no longer accessible. It has therefore become 'unplugged' from the energy web. It may even be seen to have become a liability, draining off useful power. But if Lanyon Quoit has become unplugged, so has the Mên-an-Tol. At one time the holed stone was the beneficiary of a very powerful lunar energy every 18.6 years at its major standstill point. In its present position the holed stone is aligned to nothing in particular. But the Mên-an-Tol is no passive instrument for aligning energy, but a powerful generator in its own right. Lanyon Quoit's previous alignments are probably irrecoverable. But the Mên-an-Tol's previous main relationship was lunar - and something very important happened to the moon in 1999!

The solar eclipse was a natural event forecast for ages before. Even so, it was also an elemental force of immense potency, which could have been tapped and utilized by those who knew what they were doing. During the 'night of the eclipse', the shadow of the moon might well have unleashed an unknown and strange power - a primeaval psychic force of immense magnitude, collectively personified as the Dark Moon Goddess, ruler of chaos, darkness and disorder. She is the representation of a raw force, or magical current, and different people could experience Her in different ways. This chaotic psychic force was purely that: an elemental power that had shrouded the countryside, and dissipated as first light returned the landscape to a sense of reality.

There the matter might have rested had not certain practitioners of the ancient moon magic decided to seize the opportunity to contain and wield its power for their own ends. However, one obstacle had still remained between the Dark Moon Goddess and Her domination of the energy matrix of West Penwith: the harmonious and protective energies of the Mên-an-Tol, no longer allied to the lunar energies. As long as the Mên-an-Tol remained in place, it would prevent her full manifestation and stop whatever her followers had in mind for West Penwith. It therefore had to be removed, or damaged in some way, and fire is the other great magic - one that destroys! Time to remove an energy drain at the same time - and Lanyon Quoit's fate was sealed.

What dark purpose lay behind all these events is uncertain. Can it really be possible that certain elements within the traditional shamanic witchcraft of West Penwith were able to utilize a unique event to access an immensely ancient power of tremendous potency? Were they seeking to transform the energy matrix of West Penwith to suit their own more ancient magick? Were they seeking to set themselves up as a self-appointed Priesthood, making a bid for power and authority over the modern West Penwith Pagan movement, as was suggested in a letter to 'The Cornishman' at the time? If some new/old psychic force was released onto the moors and tors of West Penwith by the solar eclipse of 1999, it is important to find out more about it, and to bring it into harmony with the rest of the energy matrix. For, whether it has remained active or not, it *will* be back. For on September 23rd 2090 (well within the lifetime of someone born today), and June 4th 2160, the Dark Moon will again shroud Cornwall - come what may!

PATHWAYS TO THE PAST

From the Tamar to Lands End: 3

by Cheryl Traffon

In September 2007 I celebrated my 60th Birthday with a walk through Cornwall from the banks of the River Tamar where I grew up, to Pendeen on the Lands End peninsula where I now live. The 100 mile walk was along green lanes, footpaths and farm tracks, through a Cornwall far removed from the hustle and bustle of 21st century busyness, and including wherever possible ancient and sacred sites. The walk took some 2½ weeks and I was sometimes accompanied by my friends or my partner and sometimes had the days to myself. This last part goes from Wheal Rose to the end at Pendeen.

I left Wheal Rose on Day 12 of the Walk, accompanied by Geraldine and Patrick who walked with me to Mawla, from where I picked up the old Tramway route down into Portreath. Before I got there, I stopped off at Bridge for a bite of lunch in the pub, and was amazed to be recognised by the Landlord who had met me some years before and had my books on shelves in the pub, which he got me to sign in exchange for a free lunch! We shared a cup of mead before I left to make my way into Portreath, from where I took the Incline and climbed up through some woods to Feadon Farm and out on to the road opposite the Eastern Lodge entrance to Tehidy Woods. I took the path leading to South Drive car park, from where Lana came to collect me and take me to her place for the night.

The next day we returned to South Drive and took the path that ran straight through the woods and out the western end at Coombe. There we picked up the path running down by the Red River which came out at Menadarva. We then cut across fields to Carleen Farm and came down to the sea for the first time in all the Walk at **Godrevey**. It was a magnificent sight in the afternoon sunshine, and I was reminded that we were now into the ancient hundred of East Penwith.



Godrevey headland

Bronze Age barrows were constructed here, remains of which can be seen at Myrtle Farm [SW6020 3945] and Godrevey headland [SW5810 4338]. Bronze Age and Romano-Celtic period (3rdC CE approx.) settlements were also discovered here and excavated in the mid 1950s by Prof. Charles Thomas and others [see article in *MM56* p.14-19 and feature on 'Gwithian Revealed: Dark Age secrets from the dunes' in *Current Archaeology* 220]. There was also a Roman-style villa at Magor [SW6368 4235] and a homestead at Godrevey Farm on the headland [SW5825 4285] from the Romano-Celtic period, and from the early Christian period, St.Gothian's Chapel [SW5885 4185] which today lies buried in the sands of Gwithian. It is an area rich in prehistory, and yet little known by the holidaymakers who flock to this lovely spot.

The next day (Day 14) we set off across the dunes to Hayle, possibly the hardest walking of the whole journey! We emerged at Riviere Towans and then walked back inland to **Phillack**, stopping off to look at the holy well [SW5650 3840], consisting of a hole in the ground with a stone surround. A certain Erasmus Pascoe, Sherriff of Cornwall in 1720, used the well to wash his mangy dog. However, his son died two months later, he himself suffered a dreadful death, and the family was reduced to poverty, becoming extinct within 20 years. It was clearly not a well to be messed with, so we hastily moved on and took some back lanes down to the Hayle estuary and into Hayle itself.

After the peace and tranquility of the Walk over the last two weeks, the busy town of Hayle was something of a shock to the senses, and on the next day (Day 15) we moved on to Lelant Downs. We took a path off the Lelant road that brought us out to Splattenridden Farm, where the helpful farmer advised us to take a track that led across fields, down over a stream and up to the village of Gorran. We walked to the end of the village and were rewarded with a magnificent green lane that went on for several miles, flanking **Trencrom Hill** to the north, an Iron Age hillfort [SW518 362], making a wonderful view as we went. At one point we crossed the St. Michael Way going N-S across the Penwith peninsula, and at another point we could see **St. Michael's Mount** [SW515 299] in the distance. We were truly now in West Penwith, and on the final leg of the Walk.

The green lane eventually came out on a minor road near Nancledra, and we walked on to Borea where we took another good track that came out near Georgia Farm. After stopping for a rest and some late lunch at the back of the farm, we attempted to take the path that led up to Lady Downs and the Tinnars Way, the final stretch of the journey. Unfortunately, we couldn't find a way through the thick gorse and heather and at one time found ourselves walking back with St. Ives Island in view! However, finally we hopped over a hedge and there was the Tinnars Way, just as I remembered it when I had first walked it with Hugh Miners 20 years ago. In the distance was **Zennor Quoit** [SW4688 3801], a dramatic sight with its massive nine ton capstone and seven huge uprights, a reminder that we were now on the West Penwith Moors, with their wealth of ancient monuments, and were walking in the footsteps of our Neolithic and Bronze Age ancestors.



Zennor Quoit on the Penwith Moors

We walked to the Bishops Head and Foot, the meeting point of the three parishes of Zennor, Towednack and Gulval, formerly marked by a stone cross, but now by a relatively modern rectangular granite slab set in the middle of the lane. From here we followed the track down to **Kerrowe** past the overgrown well at SW4629 3620 & down to the Gurnards Head-Penzance road, and found our accommodation on the last night of the Walk.

Day 16 dawned, the final day of the great Walk westwards. Sheila joined me for this last stretch, and we set off from the Madron-Morvah road along the Tinnars Way. We flanked **Mulfra Hill**, with its Quoit [SW4518 3536] just out of sight over the top, and then scrambled up through the thick gorse of Nine Maidens Downs to the **Nine Maidens Boskednan** stone circle [SW4343 3512]. Here is one of the loneliest spots anywhere on the West Penwith moors, with its wide open skies and views stretching in all directions. From here we took the track that led down beside the **Mên-an-Tol** [SW4264 3493], crossed the Madron-Morvah road and continued along to Trehyllis Farm. Here a track went up on the Moors to **Chûn Castle & Quoit** [SW4023 3396], but we continued along the flanks of Chûn Downs and across the Gump to Trewellard Road.



Nine Maidens Boskednan stone circle

Now we crossed the road and took some back lanes to the well at **Higher Boscaswell** [SW3870 3410], near to where Sheila lived. We stopped for a blessing and thanks for my safe journey, as I had done right at the beginning of the Walk at Dupath Well near Callington. We wanted a photograph of us at the well to commemorate it, and sent out a prayer to the Universe for someone to come along. After a while, someone duly did - but with exquisite irony he turned out to be a blind man! Nevertheless, on the principle that you take what is offered, we asked him anyway and he happily managed to take quite a reasonable photo!



From here it was but a short walk to Boscaswell Stores and then down the road to my house. Sheila took the final photo of me on the path by my front door and I was home! We cracked open a bottle of champagne, and I reflected on the 100 mile walk. It was a personal journey through time from my childhood to my third age, a journey through my Motherland of Cornwall, a voyage of discovery about the land of my ancestors and forebears, and a voyage of discovery about myself too. I had walked forgotten trackways and paths that petered out, beautiful green lanes and muddy farm tracks, and had experienced a wide variety of terrain from woods to pretty valleys, moorlands and hills, little streams with delightful bridges, and ancient and sacred sites along the way. Some of it was physically demanding and tiring, some of it frustrating, but overall it was a wonderful experience filled with the bliss of the open air and the joy of companionship and friendship. And now I've done it I don't need to do it again (for a while)!

SANCREED'S WELLS - old 'crone' & newly uncovered

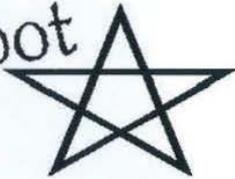
Recently a wholly erroneous notion has arisen that Sancreed Holy Well in West Penwith is called "the Crone well". This has been given apparent credence in two books on Sancreed: *A History of Sancreed Parish* by Ian Soulsby (2006) and *People and Places in Sancreed Parish* by Jim Hosking (2008). It has also appeared on a Noticeboard in the porch of Sancreed Church, which gives some information about the Church and the holy well. Discovering the source of this attribution has not been easy. Ian Soulsby told MM that he got it from someone locally, but he couldn't remember who. The earliest reference I (ed.) have been able to find to it was made on the New Antiquarian web site in 2002 by someone called 'Hamish'. Hamish is in reality Michael Murray, a Scotsman, who lived for a while in Cornwall and now lives in Bristol. In reply to an e-mail asking him where he had obtained this information about it being a 'crone' well, he replied that he was told it by "a lady with a child" from whom he sought directions to the well some years ago.

All of this points to recent hearsay; specifically that one or two people living locally, or visiting the well, came up with the notion that it was a "crone well". This kind of thing is unfortunately not uncommon. 'New Agers' often make definitive statements about ancient sites based on what they 'feel' or have 'intuited' without ever bothering to do any reading up on the site, and without any knowledge or awareness of what is known about the place. In this case, the whole notion of Crone (with its attendant states of Mother and Maiden) is really a neo-pagan revival. The old woman, the Cailleach, was certainly widely known in Ireland, Scotland (and in Wales as Cerridwen), and many places are named after her in those countries. But Cornwall has no similar tradition, and a reading of all the early collectors of folklore and local legend, Hunt, Bottrell, Courtney, Hamilton Jenkin, etc, will show that the word 'crone' is never used, the nearest being perhaps 'old dame'. I could find nothing that linked Sancreed well to any 'crone' or indeed old woman. The unfortunate outcome of this is that visitors who may read these books, or visit Sancreed Church, will come away with the idea that it is indeed known locally as a 'crone well' (whatever that is?), when it probably originally came from the imagination of just one or two people. It also goes to show how a simple erroneous notion can be picked up and repeated until it gains some sort of spurious credibility.

Meanwhile, nearby in Sancreed on the land of Plan-it Earth, an ecological and holiday project, another well has recently been uncovered [*photo right*]. Like Sancreed well itself, it rises from a fresh spring, has two lintels covering the entrance, has a number of steps down to it, and goes deep down into the earth. No history or legends are recorded from this well, but it is certainly an interesting second well at this interesting area.



Penwith Pagan Moot



by **Eve Benney**

Despite a summer more memorable for the rain than the sunshine, our Moot rituals have continued to be blessed weather-wise this year. We met at Sancreed field in fine spring sunshine for our **Beltane** ritual. This year we chose to celebrate this festival of fertility and abundance with a maypole. One of our more creative moot members came up with a tall cylindrical garden trellis, which, when covered with greenery, crowned by flowing ribbons, and flanked by two small circular altars, made a rather excellent phallic symbol for the focus of our energies. We began with a ceremony of self purification, using scallop shells, symbol of pilgrimage, and water from Sancreed Well. We then spent some time meditating on the masculine principle in our lives and what it means to us. Honouring this masculine energy, we dressed the maypole with flowers, naming that which we were honouring. We danced and chanted around the maypole to raise the energy, linking feminine and masculine energies in our dance, and then the women blessed the maypole by casting flowers upon it. Continuing the Beltane theme of revelling in the sensations and joys of our earthly bodies, we then enjoyed a rather suggestively appropriate libation of chocolate fingers dipped in cream.

The fine weather continued for our **Midsummer** celebration at Ballowal, where our ritual was a celebration of fire. We called upon the Sun King to draw down the gift of fire from the sun to light the fire in our cauldron, and this year the sun shone obligingly to raise a flame through our glass. After a short meditation, we fed the fire with sticks, to symbolise feeding our inner fires of passion and purpose. We then made together our symbol of fire, tying our paper wishes onto a wooden wheel to create our own sun disc, which we passed around the circle to a chant, turning the Wheel of the Year. Echoing the traditions in many places at Midsummer, we finished by lighting our disc with a torch from our cauldron, and then rolling our fiery wheel towards the cliffs. We blessed each other round the circle in a shower of flower petals that left a golden circle, (no doubt to the puzzlement of passers-by later!), and shared a suitably summery libation of honey mead and strawberries and cream.

After a wet July, the sun finally shone for our **Lughnasadh** ritual. With many of our regulars away, a smaller group than usual explored the stories of Demeter, Bringer of the Seasons, and Lugh, the Year King. After listening to their stories, we meditated on Demeter's gifts for ourselves by making our own corn dollies and placing them on the altar in thanks for our own personal harvests. Then, to honour Lugh and the Lughnasadh games he decreed in honour of his foster mother Tailtiu, we played our own game of tug-of-war with jelly baby prizes, everybody joining in with much heaving, clapping and cheering, (and then volunteering for another go!). With drum beat and banners, we processed into a nearby field to ask for blessings on the fields and crops, before returning to our circle and sharing some excellent home-brewed barley beer and Lammas bread for our libation.

BOOK REVIEW

Cornovia: Ancient Sites of Cornwall & Scilly 4000 BC-1000 AD

by **Craig Weatherhill**

[Halsgrove Publishing, 2009 £16.99]



Craig Weatherhill is one of the most respected 'amateur' archaeologists in Cornwall: his books 'Belerion' and 'Cornovia', published in the 1980s, which listed ancient sites in West Penwith & the Cornwall respectively, were classics of their kind: accessible, useful and virtually unique in popularising Cornwall's ancient heritage. Since then, Craig has written a number of times for *Meyn Mamvro* and given popular talks and walks for CEMG & CASPN. Although the world has moved on since the 1980s, with a number of books published on aspects of Cornwall's sites by various writers and researchers, Craig remains in the forefront of Cornish archaeology.

So it is with pleasure that we can recommend this completely new version of *Cornovia*. Now published in hardback with some beautiful colour photos, this is a revised and fully updated version of the two former books, long out of print. There is a very useful 'time line' introduction, incorporating all the latest research in Cornish prehistory, followed by a 5 section Gazetteer of principal sites in Cornwall and on Scilly. The information is concise and practical, with little speculation about astronomical or energy alignments or any other 'Earth Mysteries' ideas, but it is none the less a great basic reference book. Not all sites have photographs, but there is a wealth of site diagrams as well as photos. My only niggles would be that 8 figure, rather than 6 figure, map references would have been useful, and that more detailed maps for each of the 5 areas would also have been more helpful, rather than just one general map at the beginning. But that aside, this is definitely *the* one standard reference book to have for visiting and learning about most ancient sites in Cornwall & Scilly.

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THE PIPERS TUNE

The on-going rivalry between the two Penglaz(e)s, Penzance's competing Obby Osses [see MM68 p8-9 for the background] was brought into dramatic focus this Summer at the Mazey Eve celebrations. Earlier that week, the Golowan Penglaze (male Oss) had appeared at the Torchlight Procession, so on Mazey Eve, it was the Penglaz (female Oss) teased by Cassandra Latham (+ a new apprentice) who emerged from the stable and danced



Photo [c] Jane Cox

through the streets with her followers. This continued until, at a certain point, the Golowan Penglaze suddenly appeared, the first time that the two Osses have been seen together. In an encounter that had echoes of the two Padstow Obby Osses dancing together around the Maypole, Penglaz (1) and Penglaze (2) did a spontaneous dance together, which unlike the challenge dance of Padstow's Osses, was more of a tender mating dance. However, despite the friendly overtures of the mare Penglaz, the stallion Penglaze did not, in the words of Cassandra "rise to the occasion"! Instead of giving chase and following Penglaz back to the stable, Penglaze, the male stallion, took off himself with the band and continued the dance through the streets, leaving Penglaz to return alone to her stable. This was not the plan, and it has left Penglaz and her followers feeling rather sidelined and excluded. It will be interesting to see what happens with the Osses at Montol in December this year.



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SPIRIT OF WEST PENWITH

by **Hugh Miners**

[First published in MM5, Feb 1988]

“The mist rolls in from the restless sea enveloping carn and cromlech, bracken and bog, muffling sound, a great grey blanket of soft moisture which slows life to a stand-still and hides the secret places of our incomparable land. Through the silence, the voices of our distant past float down from their immortal home; voices of those to whom this land was once theirs as it is now ours, telling of their lives and loves, warning us to care for the land as they cared for it, taking from it, by gentle means, alone, our sustenance, and returning sustenance to it, a harmony of Sowing and Reaping, Harvesting and Sowing, in which all natural life partakes equally. As season followed season, they gloried in the unique opportunity by which each enhanced the others: Spring rains swelled the new-sown seed, Summer’s sun gave growth and strength to the nearing crop, Autumn’s glory brought colour and ripeness, Winter’s sleep descended upon and rested all. A natural, flowing symbiosis from which all benefited.

Could this ordered world of Penwith, this harmony of man and beast and Nature have come of its own accord? The Ancients thought not. In the Beginning, they said, was the Mother - Earth - with her fullness awaiting the impregnating force of the Sun God. As the cold grip of Winter gave way to Spring, she wooed him and transformed him, beckoning him through fickle March, then hiding till he pursued her and, locked in a deep embrace, they brought back all Life again. For life comes early to this thrice-blessed land. Man, wayward, wanton man, is just one part of the great orchestra of Life, but it is the tragedy of our time that, all too often, he will play his own discordant notes, thinking, as a wilful child, that his is the right tune and that all other players must harmonise with him. He will assert his rightness, his self-taught authority, his own notes which, ever and anon, produce a hideous cacophony which blights our landscape and demeans us all. Ancient moors are ploughed, gorse and heather laid waste, the lives of all natural things poisoned and stunted, blasted and burned, including his own existence. Man creates myths and theories, mutually-antagonistic mono-theistic religions which breed tyranny and cruelty in his bigoted mind.

Wars and strife, tyranny and ugliness will continue to stalk this fair Earth until, once again, we acknowledge the goodness and the bounty, the beauty, warmth and love of our Mother and her noble consort in whatever guise we may see them. Their love and their union are the true mysteries of Earth and of Life, but they are here, around us, for us to serve and to follow, in this magic land which our fore-fathers so aptly called, in their tongue GWALAS AN HOWLSEDHAS - “The Land of the Setting Sun”. When we watch, evening after evening, the cosmic fires blazing beyond the Western sky, and the purpling darkness descending upon Trendrine and Mulfra, Kerrowe and Treen - musical names whose notes were first struck in a past we cannot comprehend - then we should sink to our knees in humility and thankfulness to the gods who, with love and devotion, fashioned this magic Land of Penwith.”

HUGH MINERS 1915-2009

I first met Hugh Miners on a Tinnens Way walk in the summer of 1986 that he was leading. He had just researched and rediscovered the route of the 14 mile track across the West Penwith Moors from St.Ives to St.Just, and no fewer than 75 people came on that historic occasion. I had just moved back to Cornwall after a 19 year absence, and was planning on starting a new earth mysteries magazine *Meyn Mamvro*, and, somewhat cheekily, asked him if he would contribute (for free) to the first issue. He scrutinised me closely, cross examined me about my Cornish ancestry, and, apparently satisfied, readily agreed to do an article on the Cornish Gorseth, of which he was then the Grand Bard. He was as good as his word, and the article duly appeared, as the first article ever in the very first issue of MM in December of that year.

Subsequently, Hugh and I became firm friends, and he contributed further articles to MM: one on the Tinnens Way (“Walking into the Sunset”) in MM2; one on “Old Pagan Customs” in MM3 and a beautifully-written one for The Spirit of West Penwith column in MM5 [*reproduced on the next page*]. He and I walked across Bodmin Moor one weekend, when he was researching his idea for a trackway running from Land’s End to Stonehenge, a time I remember with great pleasure, and he recently reminded me of it when I was doing my great 60th birthday walk through Cornwall. He was a man in love with Cornwall, and her traditions and customs, and took every opportunity to promote it. I learned my few bits of Cornish from him, and he inspired and encouraged many whom he believed had Cornwall’s interests at heart. Equally, he was outspoken and contemptuous of those whom he thought were insensitive to Cornwall’s history and hell-bent on destroying its uniqueness. He continued to support MM over the next two decades, and right up to his death was a regular subscriber of the magazine. We corresponded and met from time to time and he always had something interesting to share.

Hugh was the last of the generation who remembered a very different Cornwall during his boyhood in the 1920s. He wrote of it: “Penwith was largely still isolated from the rest of the country, and the sterile, clinical materialism of the English conurbations affected us but little. Instead, we continued to live in a settled rural style which owed much to the Celtic (and earlier) paganism, blended with an almost equally earthy Methodism, a mixture which produced a rich spiritual milieu for whose loss we are surely the poorer today, in spite of our washing machines, satellites and the like” [*Old Pagan Customs in MM3*]. He went on to write about the May Day customs that he remembered, which have now been revived once again in Penzance. So, fortunately his fears that the old Celtic customs would one day die out do not seem to have been realised. His legacy to us all was to keep the knowledge of those customs alive, and to bequeath the popular Tinnens Way, which has given so much walking pleasure to so many people, for future generations. He loved being alone up on the Penwith moors, where he once told me that he felt the spirits of the ancestors all around him. Although in the latter years, he could no longer do his long walks, he was active right up to his peaceful death in February 2009, aged 94. May he rest in peace with the ancestors of the Land that he loved so much. [CS]

THE LAND'S END

by John Michell

[from *The Old Stones of Land's End*, 1974]

“The western extremity of the English mainland, the district of Land’s End, formerly known as Bolerium or Bellarian and now West Penwith, is a country of unique character. Isolated, almost an island, it consists of a hard, high, granite plateau, joined to the rest of Cornwall by a strip of marshland only four miles wide between Hayle on the north coast and Marazion on the south. There are few trees to break the force of the Atlantic winds, but everywhere there are rocks, strewn across the surface of the land, piled up in heaps and cairns. The early history of this country is preserved in its stone monuments which are among the most remarkable in Britain.

In the religious history of Britain the few square miles of the Land’s End peninsula have played a notable part from the earliest times. The magnetic attraction of the area, evident now in the size of its artistic and mystical population, is not merely the effect of its rich mineral resources and fine scenery. It is a quality of the country itself that made it, in the words of Mr. J.O.Halliwell ‘anciently the chosen land of giants’, the favourite residence, playground and ultimate refuge of the majestic race that inhabited, and in some cases constructed, the cairns, tors and high places of the West of England before their defeat and extermination by Brutus’s Trojan invaders. So say the old English histories, and so in their innocence said the old Cornish people until the rise of Methodism and the March of Intellect stopped their tongues and diverted their imagination to more profitable objects. The giants are no more, but their monuments are in the landscape they helped to shape, and their preference for this district has been followed by the great powers in every age. Annual assemblies at the shrines of various local spirits were once essential to the economy of the people, providing the calendar for their cycle of activities, which remained the same whatever system of religion might prevail.

Sacred territory, as well as the individual shrines within it, belongs to the country rather than to its inhabitants; for while those come and go, the native gods remain constant as at the beginning. Thus the western end of Cornwall was a place of ritual magic and invocation long before it became a sanctuary of the Celts, Druid and Christian. The parish of St.Buryan, which was a Celtic *llan* or sacred enclosure, contains more stone crosses than any other English parish, and is also famous for the great number of its megalithic monuments, the erect stones of a people who occupied the country two thousand years and more before Christianity. In the fields of St.Buryan and the neighbouring parishes and across the northern moors, stand many of these old stones, and although many more were replaced by the crosses and chapels of the early Christians and, in modern times, have been overthrown, built into hedges or broken up for use as gateposts, lintels and hardcore for roads, sufficient yet remain to indicate the extent to which they once thronged the landscape. Clearly the whole of West Penwith, like Carnac in Brittany, was dedicated by the megalith builders to the purpose for which the stones were erected.”

JOHN MICHELL 1933-2009

John Michell was one of the great ikons of the 1960s, and the man who popularised the subject that later became known as 'Earth Mysteries' through his books *The View over Atlantis* and *City of Revelation*. I was first getting interested in the subject at that time when I lived in London, and John was a major influence on those of us who were involved with ley lines and earth energies. Underlying his work was the thesis that number and geometry were earthly manifestations of divine creation, and that ancient astronomer-priests encoded this information in their megalithic monuments. It has often rightly been said that virtually every idea in Earth Mysteries that emerged over the next few decades was presaged by John in his early books.

However, John was not just an 'ideas' man, but also a great lover of the stones and sites, and nowhere more so than in the west of Cornwall. It was here in West Penwith that he visited, researched and wrote about the *The Old Stones of Land's End*, which was published in the early 1970s. And it was here that John and I met quite often when he revisited the land he had grown to love. I have vivid memories of our expeditions out into the land to look for stones and alignments, with John in his old Morris Minor with its rolled down top, as he drove with one hand and studied his large scale maps with the other! We found several unrecorded stones together, as we followed the ley lines across the land, sometimes serving as gateposts, or built into hedges. They were exciting, adventurous times, and John often used to refer to them when we met up from time to time over the years.



John at a standing stone gatepost at Towednack

Despite his learning (he was educated at Eton and Cambridge) and his knowledge, John was a modest man and a kind and loyal friend. He would always promote the work that *Meyn Mamvro* has done over the years, and I think that he saw it as continuing the legacy of love and care for the stones that he had initiated decades earlier. He came down and spoke to the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group in 1993, a talk that was reproduced in MM23, and he continued to subscribe to the magazine right up to his peaceful death in April this year. My last memory of him is on the railway station at Castle Cary in Somerset last year: I was meeting someone on her way to Glastonbury and he was on his way to London. The train was delayed by about an hour, so it gave us the chance for a good catch-up and reminiscence on the platform. He was still bursting with ideas for preserving the stones, and, as he reminded me, no-one had ever managed to undermine the alignments that he found in West Penwith, whereby the ancient megaliths lined up with 'rifle-barrel accuracy'. John was still the inspiration that he had been to me 40 years earlier, and the world is a much poorer place without his enthusiasm, wit, ideas and warmth, and perhaps, above all, his love and respect for the megalithic sites and their meaning. [CS]