

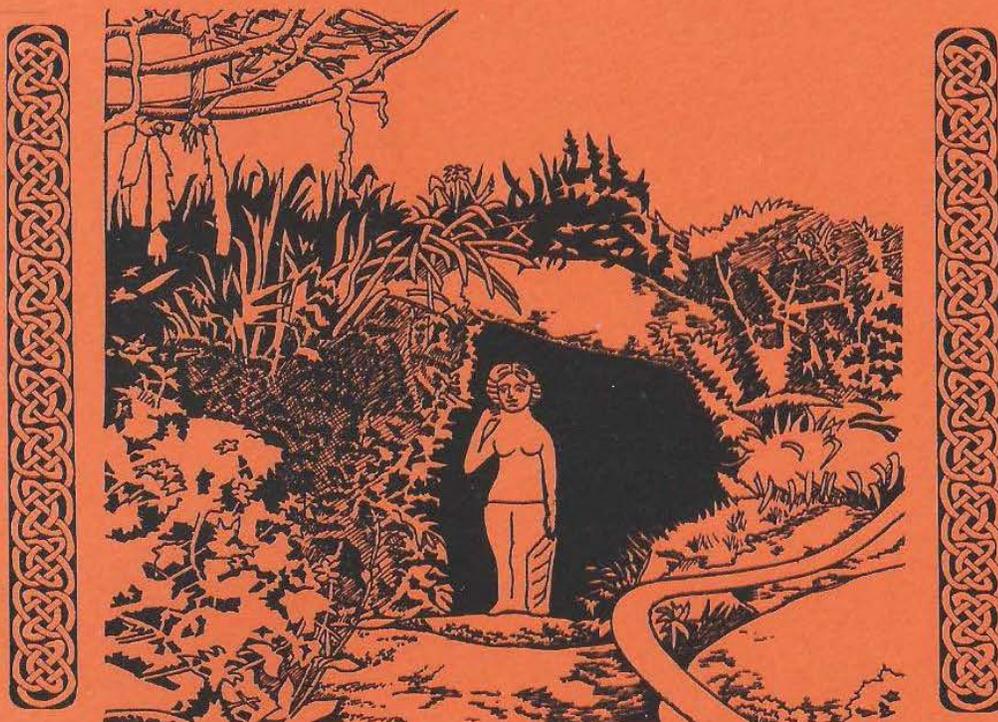
No.71 WINTER/SPRING 2010

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# meyn mamvro

ancient stones and sacred sites in cornuall



MAGNETIC FIELDS ● MAEN TOLL & PEARNE ●  
SILLINA - GODDESS OF THE SCILLIES ● CASPN  
SANCREED WELL ● DOWSING ● NEWS ●  
**\* ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR \***

**CONTENTS**

Editorial .....	p. 1
Dowsing News .....	p. 2
CASPN & LAN .....	p. 4
News: Constantine burial & Carwynnen Quoit .....	p. 5
Lost & Found: Higher Trevowhan menhir .....	p. 6
Magnetic Fields - Raymond Cox .....	p. 7
Missing Menhirs: 3 - Maen Perne .....	p. 10
Maen Toll/Pol & The Tolmen .....	p. 11
In-Site: Eathorne menhir .....	p. 12
Sillina: a Goddess of Scilly - Rory Te'Tigo .....	p. 14
Sancreed Well: 'the dream of earth' - Cheryl Straffon .....	p. 18
Penwith Pagan Moot .....	p. 22
Book Review .....	p. 23
20 years ago: St.Martin's Gold Bracelet .....	p. 24

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# Meyn Mamvro

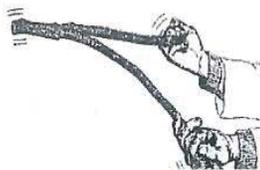
## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

Our campaign to improve disabled access to some of the ancient sites in Cornwall has produced some fruitful reactions. Several readers took up our suggestion and wrote to various bodies, with the result that, at the Merry Maidens at least, we may be able to make some progress. A new Management Agreement with the tenant farmer is about to be made there, and Historic Environment are now seeking to have an access gate put in as part of the Agreement. If this fails, CASPN have decided to launch a public appeal to raise the money to purchase and install a suitable gate. So watch this space, as MM won't let this one go! Lesser abled people deserve just as much access to these sites as the rest of us wherever it is possible and practical. Of course, there are always going to be some sites that can never be easily accessible. And for those that could be, it's never quite as simple as leaving an existing gate unlocked, as some have suggested for the Merry Maidens. An unlocked gate seems to be a green light to some people to drive right on to the field, and the farmer at the Merry Maidens has had problems like this in the past. MM reader Raymond Cox tells us that one day he witnessed a car driver unlocking the gate and then driving his car over the field and up to the circle. The driver then got out and took a picture of the circle with the car in and his wife sitting inside! And it was also reported to us that a 'hippy' family one day drove their old battered van into the field, parked by the circle, and proceeded to settle down with food and drink and children jumping all over the stones for the next few hours!

All this goes to show that CASPN's site wardens and the 'hot line' for reporting vandalism plays a vital rôle in helping to protect the sites. In addition, the appointment a few years ago of an Archaeological Warden for the National Trust in West Penwith was instrumental in helping to look after the sites on their land (which is quite extensive in the area), clearing paths and vegetation that was choking some of the sites, and providing informative guided walks to the sites. All this was admirably undertaken by the post-holder Paul Bonnington (who has written several excellent articles for MM on Chapel Carn Brea and barrows), who not only gave value-added work for his part-time post, but worked voluntarily for it on the other days. Now, with a National Trust regional re-organisation, the post has been abolished, and so much work and valuable projects that were being done will fall by the wayside. It appears that it is now a 'fait accompli', but if you are a NT member and feel strongly that there should be an archaeological post or presence in West Penwith, you may wish to write to Nick Lawrence, the Assistant Director of Operations at the NT at the Regional Office at Lanhydrock, Bodmin PL20 4DE, to say what a retrograde move is this step. They say that they will bring in contractors where needed, but this is no answer at all in an area that needs and deserves an on-going archaeological officer.

## DOWSING NEWS



Dowsing activities by the three Cornish Groups continued throughout the Summer and Autumn of 2009. At the beginning of June, **West Cornwall Dowsers** led by Bart O'Farrell made their annual excursion down the Lizard. This year they went to *Landewednack Church* near the Lizard, to pick up the Athena line and follow it to Bass Point. They also found that an energy line they had been following from St. Agnes Beacon, through Menagissey holed stone [SW7126 4673], Carn Marth, Carvennel menhir [SW7116 3877 - see *MM68 p.6*], Stithians cupmarked stone, Bonallack Barrow, Halligye fogou, tumulus on Goonhilly Downs and St. Ruans Well, continued down to Landewednack Church and then headed out to Hot Point on the coast. The field between the church and the coast had a marker stone in it, a 3ft stone that was directly on the energy line [see photo right]. The Group then went to visit *Hervan standing stone* [SW6957 1645] at the entrance to Predannack Airfield, and dowsed the original position of the stone, from where it had been moved into the hedge. Finally, they went to the ruins of *St. Rumon's Church* before finishing a good day's dowsing with a cream tea.



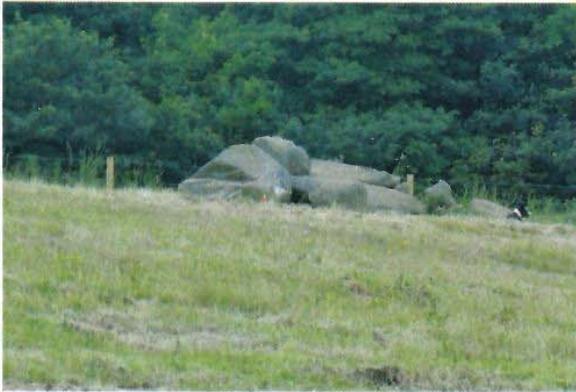
*Markstone on Lizard line*

The next Sunday, June 14th, found the **Tamar Dowsers** at the opposite end of the county at *Calstock Church*, site of the recent excavation of a Roman fort. Here they were able to dowse through several millennia of human habitation, from Bronze Age peoples (whose hut circles could be traced amongst the graves), overlaid by a series of Iron Age round houses of varying sizes. These appeared to have been still in use, perhaps within a hilltop defensive structure, when the Romans arrived to muscle in on the lucrative mining business. The general view of the Group was that there had been a substantial military presence for at least part of the period of occupation. They dowsed several stretches of the Roman road network (part of which had been previously excavated and date-verified), and then found traces of the earliest Christian activity on the site, dating from the 8thC CE, when a small wooden structure had been built. No energy or ley lines were found at the site, which was unusual, and they felt that this was because it had not been a sacred site in prehistory. All in all, a fascinating day with much to discover and uncover.

A week later **Celtic Dowsers** were at *Kus-Skewes Farm*, David & Mandy's home at Nancegollan, a multi-layered site with memories of a Neolithic settlement, Bronze and Iron age hut circles and Romano-British buildings. They discovered that the Mary Line also sashays across the area on its way to Crowan Beacon, and the location of a former standing stone on the front lawn was found. A BBQ completed an enjoyable day's dowsing.

Finally, a busy June month concluded with the **Tamar Dowzers** at *Poundstock* in North Cornwall. Here they dowsed in the Gildhouse, the Church and the Holy Well. The church was dedicated to St. Winwaloe, who interestingly was also the patron saint of Landewednack Church down the Lizard, visited by West Cornwall Dowzers at the beginning of the month. At Poundstock they found water and energy lines crossing at the Church, and an energy spiral at the restored Holy Well, which increased by several feet while they were there, doubtless an interaction between the dowzers and the site itself.

Into July, and there was a special day's dowsing at *Carwynnen Quoit* newly purchased by the Sustainable Trust [see p.5] to try and determine if the Quoit was in its original position or not. It was felt by most dowzers present that it had been moved several times in prehistory, but that it had been where it now stood for some considerable period. Dowsing of the surrounding field revealed some strong energy lines, and the position of a former 7ft standing stone, about 120 yds NE of the Quoit was identified at SW6510 3728.



*The Quoit viewed from standing stone location*

August 9th brought the **West Cornwall Dowzers** to *Gwinear Church*, a site that lies on the Great Fault/Mineral Line that runs from Mulfra Quoit to Twelve O'Clock Rock on Trink Hill (visited in March by the group) to Beersheba menhir and then through Gwinear Church to Carn Brea and beyond. The original Celtic wooden church in the Lan was located, some feet from the present building, and a pre-Christian spot that originally had a standing stone was found in the graveyard. In the afternoon the Group visited a house behind the church that had been the Vicarage, with special permission from the owners.

A week later, the **Tamar Dowzers** went to *The Hurlers* on Bodmin Moor with British Society of Dowzers researchers David Lockwood and Adrian Incedon-Webber. These two out-of-Cornwall dowzers have some odd, not to say batty, ideas about the site, including that the 3 extant circles were originally laid out by "The Shining Ones" in 3128 BCE before leaving the planet; that the circles were later added to by 'the Druids' making 12 in total; and that Cornwall was called Kernow after the cairns on Caradon Hill!! These eccentric ideas however did not prevent (perhaps attracted?) a good turnout, with over 30 dowzers and assorted others, and some serious dowsing took place, with flags set up to mark out the lines and patterns of circles at the site. The Michael and Mary lines cross at the Hurlers, and Tamar Dowzers organiser Nigel Twinn observed that while they were dowsing, these lines moved and widened. Clearly there is much of interest at this site.

*Details of Autumn & Winter 2009 dowsing activities can be found in the next issue of MM.*

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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



The West Penwith clear-ups continued successfully every month during the Autumn and three Settlement sites were tackled: Mulfra Courtyard Houses in September (where the Group began to open up the wider site on the other side of the track); Bosulow Trehyllis Courtyard Houses in October; and Bodrifty Round Houses in November. The 2010 Clear-ups have now been arranged, and as usual include some familiar sites, with a return to sites not visited for a while (such as Sperris Quoit & Roundhouses in May), and a new site, Portheras Common barrow in March. All are welcome to these clear-ups and details can be found on the back page of this MM and on the website.

The programme has also been arranged for the popular FOCAS weekend, Pathways to the Past, now in its 4th year. A weekend of walks and talks amongst the ancient sites in West Penwith is open to everyone (and free to FOCAS members), so make a note in your diaries now - Sat May 29th & Sun May 30th. Walks this year will include Barry Reilly on 'Morning with Bran' (Caer Bran & Brane Barrow), David Giddings on 'A beeline to Bosphorthennis', and Paul Bonnington on 'Foage & Zennor - meeting the ancestors'. Talks will be Paul on 'Digging up the past', Steve Hartgroves on 'Cornwall from the air' and the Sunday evening social with Anna Tyacke on 'Found in Cornwall'. Not to be missed!

LAN (Lizard Ancient Sites Network) also continues to flourish. It has continued with clear-ups at Chynhalls Point cliff castle (Sept), where part of the rampart was uncovered, St.Rumons Church graveyard (Oct) & Croft Pascoe Barrow (Nov), where a kerb stone was found. A full programme for 2010 is available (details on back page and on CASPN website) and all are welcome. The Sites Monitors also met up in November for a walk around the Drytree area, to view the standing stone and the barrow that was cleared earlier in the year, finishing off with a good Sunday lunch at the Ship Inn at Mawgan!



### **CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]**

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

**Web site:** [www.cornishancientsites.com](http://www.cornishancientsites.com) **E-mail:** [secretary@cornishancientsites.com](mailto: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](mailto:focas@cornishancientsites.com), visit CASPN web site for downloadable application form, or write to: 24 Queen Street, St.Just, Penzance TR19 7JW

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**Sites Clear-Ups:** Dave Munday 01736-787230 e-mail: [dave@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:dave@cornishancientsites.com)

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

**LIZARD ANCIENT SITES NETWORK [LAN]** via CASPN address (above)

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**Sites Clear-Ups:** Graham Folkherd 01326-241450 e-mail: [info@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:info@cornishancientsites.com)

## ***NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS***

### **BRONZE AGE SKELETON FOUND IN CONSTANTINE GRAVE**

An excavation by the National Trust at a barrow on Constantine Island, located between Constantine & Booby's Bays, a few miles west of Padstow, has brought to light an intact and undisturbed Bronze Age crouched inhumation burial. This was the first to be excavated in Cornwall in modern times, and a rare example of an intact burial, which survived due to the calcareous conditions of the sandy fill, in contrast to the normally acidic conditions of the soil, which usually destroy any unburnt organic remains in a very short time. The burial turned out to be a middle aged woman in a cist grave, which contained a flat yellowish stone on the right which turned out to be a quartz slab which had been placed as a 'pillow' for the deceased. Quartz stones were also found behind the upright cist slabs, and beneath the cist "floor", and yet more were found within the barrow mound. The cist slabs were slate, presumably from the local beach. The cist grave also contained the remains of 4 other burials, including one cremation, all above the inhumation and therefore likely to be Middle Bronze Age as well. There was a posthole directly beneath the cist which contained a single sherd of Neolithic pottery, illustrating the likelihood of deliberate ritual continuity at the site. In addition numerous Mesolithic flint artefacts were found beneath the barrow in the old land surface, and within the sand mound itself, showing an even older ancestral ritual use at the site.



*Skull and arms from the skeleton*

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### **DATE SET FOR RE-ERECTION OF CARWYNNEN QUOIT**

As reported in the previous issue of MM, Carwynnen Quoit at Pendarves [SW6502 3723] and its surrounding land has now been purchased by the Sustainable Trust. Bids are currently in preparation for a three year project of archaeological investigations and future restoration of the Quoit. Historic Environment [formerly HES] hope to commence a trial excavation in late spring next year accompanied by education and outreach activities from the Sustainable Trust. A detailed excavation and community archaeology project is planned for 2011, with art activities and events, including a website and an exhibition with public participation. Writing workshops will be held alongside a specialised school 'Stone Age Week' at two local Primary Schools, and a film is planned along with a publication detailing the whole project, culminating in the re-erection of the Quoit during Archaeology Week 2012.



*19thC photo of Quoit standing  
{from Gibson collection}*

culminating in the re-erection of the Quoit during Archaeology Week 2012.

## LOST AND FOUND

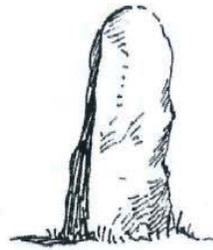
### Higher Trevowhan (Trevean Farm) menhir

One of West Penwith's standing stones that has gone missing in relatively modern times is the Higher Trevowhan menhir on Trevean Farm near Morvah. This standing stone was recorded and illustrated by Charles Henderson in 1914 [*Notebooks of Parochial Antiquities II, 113*] where he called it Carne menhir, after the name of a nearby farm [*drawing right*]. In fact, it stood in a field on what is now Trevean Farm, at SW40895 35135, next to a minor road that runs from Morvah to the Mên-an-Tol turn. We have such a precise location for it, because the OS map of 1908 showed it, and the OS subsequently visited the site in 1961 and 1975 to record it in detail. It has been on the OS 1:25000 Explorer map (102) ever since, although it actually disappeared some time between 1975, the date of the most recent OS visit, and 1982 when Craig Weatherhill recorded that it was no longer there.

Recently, the National Trust took over the land comprising Trevean Farm, and their local archaeologist, Paul Bonnington, together with the NT volunteers, searched for the stone and found it still intact dumped in the corner of the field at SW40858 35147. The stone was originally 1.7m/ 5.5ft high, and the stone in the corner of the field is nearly 2m/6.5ft high, showing that just a foot or so of it was buried in the ground. The stone was originally in a dramatic position, with views to Carn Gulva and the sea coast, and Paul is hopeful that it may be restored once again to its former position in the field.



OS 1908 6" map, showing location of stone



Menhir. CARNE.

Henderson [1914]



OS photo [1961]



Stone today lying in the corner of the field

## **MAGNETIC FIELDS - ANCIENT AMBIENCE & MODERN INTERACTION IN THE LAND'S END PENINSULA**

by **Ray Cox**

*In MM70 Pat Toms wrote an article about an etheric approach to stones and alignments in West Penwith. Here, Raymond Cox independently takes up the etheric theme in his approach to the energies at sites in the same area.*

Many people feel a distinct atmosphere of ancient influence when visiting prehistoric sites. This can offer a clue to an arcane yet real link with the past. In the esoteric tradition, particularly as outlined by Rudolf Steiner, living cosmic formative forces were active in the etheric conditions of the early Earth and are manifest in its geology, especially where there are fault lines, for instance, and the meeting of different geological strata. Often they are where the surface has worn away to expose deeper geological conditions. Such places can be both in high regions and low-lying ones and exist worldwide. The ancient people revered these places and built their monuments there, including stone circles. At a much later time cathedrals and churches were built in some of these places. In this article reference is made particularly to the Land's End Peninsula in Cornwall but there are numerous other places which could also be included. Land's End does have special considerations, even within Cornwall itself. The ambience which may be felt there is enhanced by the igneous granite bones underlying and protruding through the landscape which itself suggests a feeling of ancient connections. Granite, and its quartz constituent, is also a source of radiation in the natural environment.

Quartz is prevalent worldwide and its properties and white appearance would have been of special fascination for ancient people. Quartz was considered as having the ability to split light into a spectrum, and rubbing pieces of quartz together produces a luminescence. There is a very ancient tradition of using quartz pebbles, and quartz was symbolic of, for example, the idea of the soul. Quartz pebbles were deposited in graves as long ago as the Bronze Age, perhaps earlier, and right through to graves of the early Christian era. Quartz was used in monuments, and one distinctive example in the peninsula is the quartz stone in the Boscawen-un stone circle, (St Buryan). (Together with the centre stone of the circle this has been shown to denote the Beltane sunrise and the Samhain sunset.) A stone at a barrow near the Nine Maidens stone circle, (Boskednan), incorporates a distinctive streak of blue-grey crystal. (See photos in *Meyn Mamvro* 64 and 68.). It is significant that quartz refers to and represents people no longer here but who were here in ancient times. If a quartz stone is found today in or near a prehistoric site it is considered an important find and suggests relevance to the site.



*Quartz stone at Boscawen-ûn*

The consideration of anomalous phenomena in the region may also be important. The *Meyn Mamvro* Index lists numerous entries for various happenings which seem at odds with normal human experience, strange lights, odd feelings and time distortions, and these are merely the recorded examples. Such experiences do not occur often or for everybody, but only it seems if conditions are right for the person and the locality at a particular time. One of the most significant was the Newmill event (see this report in *Meyn Mamvro* 52, page 14), where a strange 'object' and 'entity' were seen. Here faulting and the disturbance of the ground through mining and quarrying may have played a part. There are a number of faults and also quarries, both active and disused, in the peninsula and it is interesting that structural alterations were being done to the house alongside which the experience took place. Such disturbance can release an electro-magnetic potential into the atmosphere, especially in areas of faulting. One of the most fascinating aspects of these piezo-electrical properties is that in certain individuals the brain and mind may be affected in various ways. If in modern people so with the ancients, except that there is so much more EM activity in the atmosphere in the modern world.

It can be seen that some, but not all, UFO events could account for such activity, especially such that individuals can experience signs of apparent independent intelligence and sometimes a kind of two-way communication. The exotic reality of such light forms may mean that they have a sentience and respond to human interaction. Examples of other events are the so-called 'humadruz' which is a humming or buzzing sound which has been heard on the moors of the peninsula (see the report in *Meyn Mamvro* 35, page 4); historical ghost reports on the moors; the experiences of 'altered states of consciousness' at the Treen Common circle (*Meyn Mamvro* 58); earthlight phenomena, especially the case at Gear Farm near Gurnard's Head (*Meyn Mamvro* 34, page 24); odd light forms at the Merry Maidens stone circle (*Meyn Mamvro* 46, page 4); and the strange feeling of being 'pixie-led', or being led astray or temporarily lost (see *Meyn Mamvro* 32, page 14), which may be, according to some folklorists, the result of localised geophysical energies on the brain and which, if historical, could be experienced in accordance with the prevalent cultural beliefs of the time. Such experiences are, of course, also found in recent times, and would also be connected to the visionary experiences at such hotspots anywhere where there are geomagnetic anomalies. All these strange and mysterious experiences may again indicate a link between the mind/brain and subtle etheric reality.



*Anomalous light & shadows at the Merry Maidens stone circle [from MM46]*

The concept of subtle energies also suggests a spiritual dimension to the ancient peoples and their feeling for the sacredness of the Earth. Typical means used by these cultures to be in constant touch with the other dimensions of the landscape included music (chanting) and marking certain places with stones, carvings and also rituals involving walking the places of pilgrimage. Alignments, or leys, could have been created as imprints into etheric fabrics of landscapes and stored with their memories linking sacred sites.

The possibility of inorganic plasma life forms as one or partial solution to these signs of intelligence has also been postulated. Evidence produced at the General Physics Institute at the Russian Academy of Science, Max-Planck Institute for Extraterrestrial Physics in Garching, Germany, and the University of Sydney, Australia, suggests that life can exist outside the standard carbon model. Under certain conditions non-organic substances, like microscopic dust, can combine to form complex mixtures that bear evidence of self-organisation which are autonomous, and they reproduce and evolve. They have been detected only in plasma which is the fourth state of matter, (after solid, liquid and gas). Interestingly plasma can be created at the point of a lightning strike. Lightning strikes upon humans have been both harmful and beneficial with people sometimes developing psychic sensitivities with visionary and meaningful experiences. Similarly this has also occurred at points of geopathic stress from faults (as indicated above) and the build-up of piezo-electrical charges in the atmosphere. Such places become 'places of power' and have given rise to much folklore - and also strange missing time experiences. In the modern world artificial EM fields from transmitters etc. can also induce experiences and altered states of consciousness. They can also be harmful. Such 'alien energy' may be indicative of subtle forms of intelligence working through the EM sphere and outside the normal constraints of space-time. They may also be representative of a link with the natural world and so with the past. So a unity of both old and new can be seen as an ever-present reality.

### **SERPENTINE ENERGY LINE REVEALED IN PHOTOGRAPH**

An very curious photograph of what may be a serpentine energy line running to a stone at an ancient settlement has been revealed by dowser Bob Drabwell. Bob was one of the people present during the visit by West Cornwall Dowsers to Nanjulian Iron Age Courtyard House settlement in West Penwith in March 2009 [see

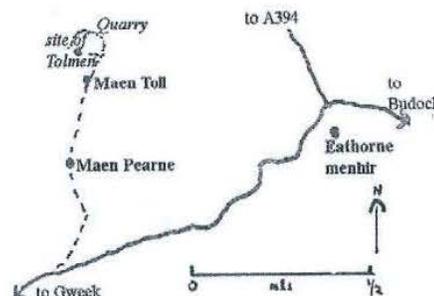
*MM70 p.4*]. He took some photographs while he was there, one of which was of a a stone setting near a Courtyard House that was some yards away from the main settlement. He did not observe anything unusual at the time, nor did the other people present, but when he downloaded his photograph later he was amazed to find a serpentine blue line running across the ground towards the stones. There did not seem to be any faults with his camera, and no other photographs showed up with any unusual marks or odd characteristics. We may have here a genuine photograph of an energy line running across the land.



## MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

### 3: Maen Pearne

Maen Pearne Farm, near Constantine in mid-west Cornwall [SW735 312], formerly held the tallest standing stone in Cornwall, 20ft above ground and 4ft below. The farm still exists, but alas the stone is long gone. William Borlase wrote about the stone in *Parochial Memoranda* in 1752 (reproduced by W.C.Borlase in *Naenia Cornubiae* 1872): "About four years since (i.e 1748), in the garden adjoining to the house, stood a very tall stone, twenty feet above the ground, and four feet below; it was pyramidal in shape, and made above twenty stone posts for gates clove up by the farmer, who gave me the account". Borlase also refers to the Blind Fiddler standing stone in West Penwith as pyramidal in shape, which most people nowadays would describe as an upright vertical standing stone, so we may imagine that Maen Pearne was a similar large and tall standing stone. CEMG visited the site in 2003 and examined the farm's gateposts, but couldn't work out how to fit them back together!



Maen Pearne may have been the tallest standing stone in Cornwall, and one of the tallest in Britain (the Rudston stone near Bridlington is the tallest at 25<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>ft) but it is a pygmy compared to some of the standing stones in Brittany. Both Dol-de-Bretagne (near Mont St.Michel) and Kerloas in Finistère are over 30ft high, making them the tallest standing stones in western Europe. Coincidentally, the meaning of the names of all 3 stones is the same: Maen Pearne probably means "stone of sorrow", Dol means the same, and Kerloas means "the place of sadness".



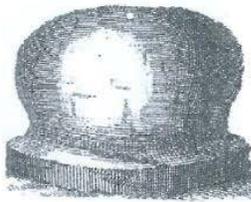
*Kerloas standing stone*

The location of Maen Pearne is also interesting. It lay less than a mile due west from the Eathorne menhir [SW7461 3136], which has also had an unhappy history, but is now replaced in its original position [see centre pages]. The east-west alignment of these two standing stones, in close proximity to each other, may have marked the equinoxial sunrise and sunset for the Bronze Age people who erected them. There are also some other notable stones in the vicinity. Continuing up the lane from Maen Pearne farm one comes to the Maen Toll or Pol egg-shaped boulder and the site of the Tolmen stone. For more information on these sites see article on next page.

## MAEN TOLL/POL & THE TOLMEN

In his book *Antiquities Historical and Monumental of Cornwall* [1754], William Borlase wrote about two natural stones in the area, the Maen Toll or Maen Pol and the Tolmen. 200 or so years later, in *The Living Stones* [1957] Ithell Colquhoun wrote about visiting the site, although she confused the Maen Pearne stone with the Tolmen.

**Maen Toll**, also known as **Maen Pol**, the Omega Stone and the Devil's Nightcap is a huge egg-shaped rocky outcrop in the corner of the lane that runs past Maen Tol farmyard [SW7350 3150]. Ithell Colquhoun suggests that the Maen Perne menhir and this Maen Toll/Pol stone were originally connected in pre-Christian ceremony: "The two great stones were male and female when this place was a centre for that oldest of religions - the cult politely screened under the term 'fertility rites'." She adds: "Echoes of this far-off time still haunt the farm itself, where smaller egg-shaped stones, chosen for their whiteness, ornament the head of gate-jambs or the termination of walls".

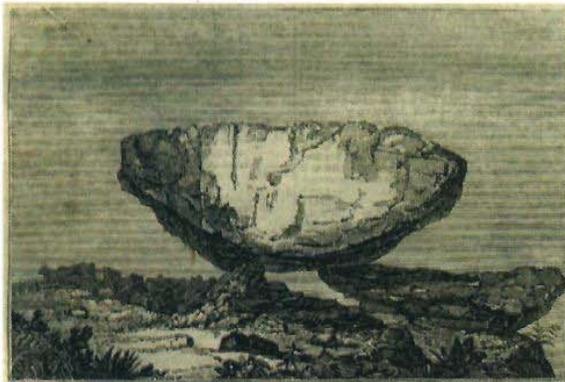


*Maen Toll or Maen Pol  
illustrated by Borlase*

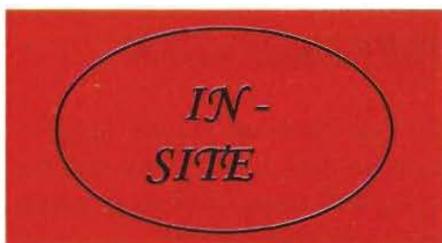


*The Maen Toll or Pol as it is today*

Further north still is the site of **The Tolmen** or Main Rock, which was a massive 750 ton boulder, perched on two supporting rocks at approx. SW735 316. People used to crawl under it for cures, and Borlase thought that the Druids had placed it there, pointing out the pits and channels he said were carved in its upper surface as proof. It was blown up in 1869 by quarrymen who wanted to get at high quality granite underneath it. Ithell Colquhoun comments: "I looked down with melancholy at the fragments still lying in the stained water of the quarry-tarn; grey heavens were weeping a drizzle as I retraced my steps down the track".



*The Tolmen, from an 1835 magazine drawing*



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

As a follow-on from the feature on p.10

this one looks at -

## EATHORNE MENHIR

The Eathorne menhir stood quietly in a field near Constantine [at SW7461 3136] for thousands of years since the Bronze Age, little visited or remarked upon, not even listed on OS maps or even scheduled by English Heritage. It was pictured in Craig Weatherhill's book *Cornovia* in 1985, and in MM8 in 1989 [photo right], both with a brief description. The photographs show a standing stone, some 7.9ft (2.4 metres) with a slim, tapering top. The farm on which the menhir stood was then owned by Philip Clemoes, who, in an act of wanton vandalism, uprooted the standing stone in 1992 and dumped it in a nearby hedge. In the process of doing this, the beautiful slim tapering top of the stone was broken.



*Photo from the mid 1980s*

There was an immediate public outcry, with the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, English Heritage, the Ancient Monuments Commission, the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group and Meyn Mamvro all requesting him to put it back. He refused to do so, and as a born-again Christian, he cited so-called concern that the stone might attract contemporary pagans to it. He was quoted as saying: "Pagans still carry out their practices and until I'm sure that it wouldn't be used for that purpose I won't put it back". In fact, there was absolutely no evidence that any pagans had been there, and even if they had they would be more likely to respect and revere the stone. It was widely believed at the time that Clemoes was encouraged by his evangelical church minister the Rev. Michael Caddick. The matter received wide publicity, both locally and nationally, and many MM readers wrote to Philip Clemoes complaining of his outrageous actions.



*Stone dumped in the hedge in 1992*

Perhaps as a result of this, he reluctantly agreed with the CAU to have the stone put back, but only next to the hedge and not in its original position. The stone took a whole afternoon to shift from the corner of the field where it had been dumped to its new position. Tractor and jeep were used to pull it along on wooden rollers, and it was eventually hauled into place by means of ropes [photo on next page]. Andy Norfolk of the CEMG commented that: "A mutilated stone has now been put back in the wrong place!"

After it was re-erected Clemoes then placed barbed wire along the length of the hedge, with the menhir enclosed by the wire on the hedge side. Over the years, as the hedge grew out, it had the effect of absorbing the standing stone into it, which no doubt was what Clemoes had intended.

And so things remained, until 13 years later an unexpected event occurred. The farm was sold to a new owner Jo Clarkson, who was interested in having it restored to its original position. In August 2006 a team from HES (formerly CAU) did a small excavation at the spot where the stone



*Replacement next to the hedge in 1993*



*Restoration to its original position in 2006*

had originally stood and uncovered both the post hole and a distinctive shaped boulder next to it, which may have been originally used to prop up the stone. Then a team of volunteers removed the stone from its overgrown position in the hedge, and with the aid of a crane provided by the farmer, it was placed back into its original position. Since then, the farmer has surrounded it with a circle of stones.

There is one further extraordinary twist to the tale of this seemingly-innocuous stone. During the excavation of the stone's original socket hole, fragments of charcoal were recovered from an undisturbed layer at the base of the fill beneath where the stone stood. These were carbon 14 dated, and it turned out that the stone had been set up between 70-240 CE (AD) in the Romano-Celtic period, some 2000 or so years later than the Bronze Age!

In a report in *Cornish Archaeology* 45 [pub.2008], Steve Hartgroves, Andy Jones & Graeme Kirkman discuss whether it was a Bronze Age menhir that fell down and was re-erected during the Romano-Celtic period, or a 'new' menhir that was put up for the first time then. No definite conclusions are reached, but whether it was re-erected or created in the Romano-Celtic period it does argue for some degree of veneration by the later RC people of 'ancestral' prehistoric features and the landscape they inhabited. We shall perhaps never know for sure, for the Eathorne menhir continues to hold some secrets from its eventful and fascinating history.



*The standing stone today*

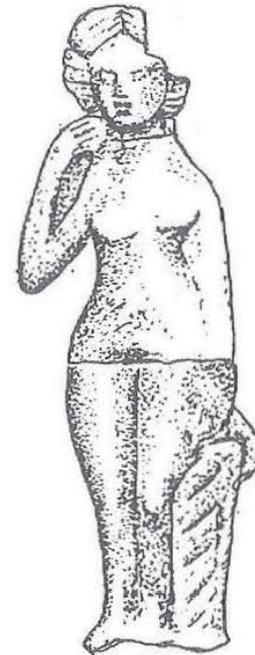
## **SILLINA -**

### **A GODDESS OF THE ISLES OF SCILLY, AND THE WEST COUNTRY**

by **Rory Te'Tigo**

In the Celtic World View, all places had their divine aspects and therefore had goddesses and gods attributed to them. The Druids, the most prominent of the Celtic Priests, did not believe in writing down anything concerning their faith. Instead they memorised all their teachings. As a result, most of what we know of Druidic and Celtic faith has come to us from Roman writers or much later Christian scribes. Due to this, many Celtic religious practices, many Celtic deities, and their places of worship, are forever lost to us. Therefore, all we can do to understand Celtic Religion and Celtic Goddesses and Gods is to carefully interpret archaeological evidence, research Roman and early Christian writings, and follow our heart and its empathic insight.

In this article I will try to combine archaeological finds, and experimental archaeology with my own distant viewing of the Goddess Sillina. The Romans referred to the Isles of Scilly as "Sillina Insula" (singular). This means that during the Romano-Iron Age the Isles of Scilly were still one single island. Professor Charles Thomas wrote in his 1985 book, *Exploration of a drowned Landscape* very inspiringly about this. He claims that a storm surge divided this Island into the current island archipelago as late as the 8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. (Current Era). He translates the name "Sillina Insula", as Island of Sillina, and states that the name Sillina is a Cornish version of Sulis, the Celtic Goddess venerated at the Roman Town of Aqua Sulis, modern Bath, in Somerset. This Goddess was called Sulis/Minerva during the Roman Occupation. The Romans, throughout their Empire, included local deities into their pantheon by double naming them. Thereby the Celtic Sulis became Sulis/Minerva, meaning that Minerva was the Roman goddess that had the closest resemblance to the Celtic goddess Sulis. It is believed that due to the peculiarities of the Cornish Language, the name Sulis became Sillis. This transformed to Sillina and that the Goddess Sillina gave her name first to the Island, and then the Archipelago of the Isles of Scilly. We can assume the nature of Sulis/Sillina by looking at the well documented properties of the Roman goddess Minerva. Minerva is concerned with healing and craftsmanship. She was seen as a sponsor of marriage and childbirth, handicraft, the professions, and the arts. Later she was seen as the goddess for dramatic poets, and actors, and in her aspect of goddess of war, she was the bestower of victory.



*Sillina figurine, found on the island of Nor-Nour*

One other well known goddess that was likened to Minerva was Athena/Minerva. One of Athenas more prominent attributes, her wisdom, was one of the characteristics of Sulis/Sillina. As archaeological finds from Bath suggests, Sulis was a healing goddess, particularly a goddess of healing waters. From the finds at the baths at Bath though, it appears that Sulis was not only concerned with healing. There was also a sacred fire that burned in her shrine, and offerings of coins and bronze jewellery were thrown into the pool of her sacred spring by worshipers. But Sulis also had a darker side. In her sacred spring were found a large quantity of folded pieces of lead sheeting, inscribed with curses. So, whilst the main attribute of Sulis was healing, she was also in charge of executing curses. Translating the name Sulis-Sillis-Sillina from Cornish into English, one can find another aspect of Sillina, as her name translates as: "she who watches, or she who is gazed upon."

Distant viewing Sillina, I got the vision of a young woman sitting on a beach boulder with her legs and nether regions inside the mouth of a salmon. A prototype Mermaid! It was the Celtic salmon of wisdom. Her Athena/Minerva aspect. She was definitely a deity concerned with healing, and well being - a Goddess who looked out for her worshippers, guiding their ships around the Island of Scilly and the West-Country coast. She was also a giver of good fortune and luck, but there was another side to her. In giving she sometimes also took, whilst occasionally, in taking, she gave.

This is best illustrated in a story about the end of the habitation of the now deserted island of Samson in the Isles of Scilly. Neither Paul Ashbee nor Prof. Charles Thomas confirms this story so it is most possibly a fable, but it illustrates Sillina's 'giving in taking', and 'taking in giving' aspect very well. As the fable goes, the men living on the island of Samson salvaged a stricken sailing ship that, abandoned by its crew, had run aground on the shore of their island. They repaired her and set sail in her, with the aim of selling the ship in Plymouth. During this journey a storm came up and the vessel was wrecked a second time. All her Samson crew were drowned. Subsequently, the Island of Samson, having lost nearly all its male inhabitants, had to be abandoned and its remaining population was resettled on St. Mary's and Tresco. So by giving the abandoned ship, Sillina took the lives of the men of Samson, and thereby Samson from its inhabitants. As I mentioned, this story is not confirmed by scholars of recent Scillonian history, but seen as a fable it shows the darker side of Sillina.

Talking of the dark, as Sulis in Bath, Sillina on the Isle of Scilly, may well have had a sacred fire burning in her honour, only that this most possibly took the shape of a lighthouse style beacon. Professor Charles Thomas in his book *Exploration of a Drowned Landscape* states that his studies of place names in Sennen Cove on the mainland of Cornwall, and the area of Nornour on the Scillies, led him to think that there was another aspect to Sillina that may be regarded as Sillina/Vesta. Vesta was the Roman Goddess of the Hearth Fire, tended to by the Vestal Virgins. Was there a Sanctuary/Beacon Fire on the Island of Scilly that was tended by dedicated women, maybe the widows of drowned Scillonian fishermen and sailors?

A great storm during March 1962 eroded further the low sandy cliffs on the south side of Nornour, a small rocky island in the Eastern Islands of the Isles of Scilly Archipelago. The stone walls of buildings were exposed. Broaches and coins were picked up. Therefore in late 1962 an archaeological excavation was started by Miss D. M. Dudley. The remains of several buildings were explored. One of them was a large spectacular Roundhouse. Whilst it was lived in



*Nor Nour settlement*

its layout had been changed. Internal dividing walls had made it into a Wheelhouse. In one of its rooms was found a large number of bronze Finger Rings, bronze Brooches, Beads, Glass fragments, Female Pipe Clay Figurines and Roman Coins, from before 69CE to 371 CE. Much pottery, some of it miniature pots was also found. Miniature pots were previously found elsewhere in the Roman world in a religious context. This important site was further excavated until 1970 and later by Ms. Sania Butcher.

When I first heard of this hoard of finds I thought that they might be the spoils from a wreck of a Roman trading vessel that had gone down on the coast of the Isle of Scilly. But as none of the archaeologists involved had mentioned this possibility, I followed the conclusions of those more learned than I in archaeological matters. Professor Charles Thomas states, that whilst no shrine as such was found, the finds were related to a shrine that was most possibly dedicated to the Goddess Sillina. Proof of a religious context were the miniature pots and in particular the Pipe Clay Figurines. These were of two types: One is known as a Celtic Venus, the other fragments were of a Celtic-Roman Goddess, known as a Dea Nutrix (Nourishing Goddess). Both types were possibly made in North-West Gaul (France). These figurines were made in large quantities and are found all over the former Roman Empire. What makes them significant for us is that their presence near a possible shrine to Sillina tells us of two further aspects of this goddess. One is as Sillina/Dea Nutrix who, as the nurturing Goddess, provides with her fertility for her children (her followers). The other is the aspect of Sillina/Venus. Here she is depicted as a beautiful young naked woman symbolising beauty, the promise of love and future fertility. I choose this Sillina/Venus figurine for an attempt to get closer to an understanding of Sillina. Having previously worked in a pottery, I had a good idea how this little statue had been made so I replicated her as an act of Experimental Archaeology. As other Celtic Venus Figurines that I found in my research for this article were portrayed standing on a cup shaped stone or bolder, I placed my Sillina/Venus on a decorated round mound that symbolised an ocean washed beach bolder. When the statue is turned up side down, this could be used as a chalice. With this Figurine in my hand, it was much easier to distant view and understand Sillina, the Goddess of the Isles of Scilly and the West-Country.

According to Charles Thomas there once was a deep water inlet next to Nornour. This, he alleges, was used as the major harbour of the Island of Scilly. The finds in the wheel shaped roundhouse were offerings to Sillina, most possibly given in gratitude for a safe sea voyage around the Land's End and the Isle of Scilly. Part of Sillina's shrine would have been a beacon fire whose smoke during the day, and light during the night, would have aided ships on the dangerous journey through these perilous waters. My personal extra sensual viewings confirmed the Shrine and the Beacon, but put the Beacon on a small rocky island in the Western Isles of the Isles of Scilly that to this day is called Scilly Rock. This rock was called after Sillina after all. A system of possible causeways between the Islands of St. Martin, St. Mary's, and Tresco may have started out as an all Scillonian pilgrims route from the harbour shrine near Nornour to the beacon on Scilly Rock.

The goddesses and gods of old have an uncanny tendency to still be part of the character of the modern landscape. They never really went away. Instead, they stepped a bit into the background, whilst watching what we, their children, made of our lives under the new god and his emissaries, the saints. So even today, the character of the Isles of Scilly and the West Country, and the character of Sillina, one of its goddesses, are still intertwined. She still offers her promise of health through the waters of her Cornish Holy Wells, of sustenance through her fertile soils, and of riches through her chance gifts from the sea. And sometimes she takes in giving, and gives in taking. So, sit on a rock on a boulder beach. Find a secluded spot in a bluebell wood, on the upland moorlands of the West Country, or the Fenlands of Somerset, and open your heart and mind to Sillina. She never went away: she still watches over those that believe in her. And if you acknowledge her, she will acknowledge you, and let you take part in the rich saga of life, in her realm.

*Sources: Paul Ashbee: Ancient Scilly (1974); Charles Thomas: Exploration of a Drowned Landscape" (1985). Thanks to Craig Weatherhill for help with the Cornish language.*

## THE STONE AGE STUDIO

Ceramic Sillina/Venus Figurines

Pagan Silver Jewellery

Replica Stone Age Drums

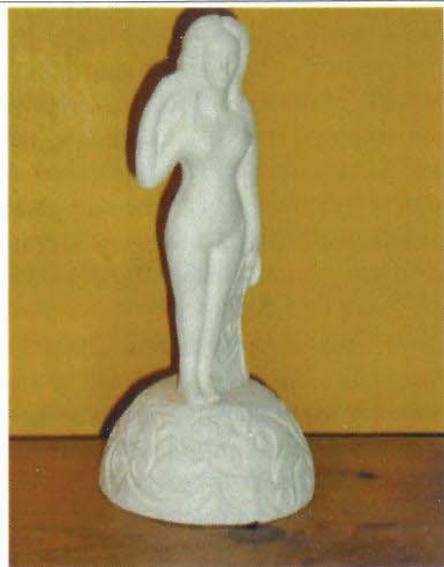
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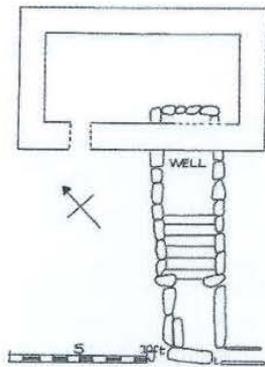
*Sillina statue by Rory Te'Tigo*

## SANCREED WELL - 'THE DREAM OF EARTH'

by Cheryl Traffon

*An article in MM70 about Sancreed Well's mistaken attribution as a 'Crone well' prompted me to investigate the recent history of this iconic site, since its supposed re-discovery in 1879.*

According to all the 'histories' of Sancreed well (also known as Chapel Downs) it was re-discovered by the new Vicar of Sancreed, the Rev. Reginald Basset Rogers in 1879. But did the Reverend Rogers really find it for the first time in living memory, or was it known about all along? The site was alluded to in a book published in 1824: *The History of Cornwall: from the earliest records and traditions, to the present time* in which the authors Hitchins & Drew make reference in the chapter on 'Chapels and Oratories over wells' to the ancient chapel on Chapel Downs, though they do not specifically mention the well.



The first detailed record of the site was made in 1864-5 by J.T.Blight, 15 years before Basset Rogers' re-discovery. Blight's plan [left] in *Ancient chapels in the parish of Sancreed* shows the nearby chapel, much as it is now, but with the well extending beneath it, which is obviously incorrect. However, from his description of the site, it would appear that the structure of the well was overgrown, with the water flowing over the top step into a small enclosed space in front "and thence through a drain at its south angle". We can therefore assume that he never actually got to see the well chamber itself, and therefore imagined that it went back towards and underneath the chapel much further than it in fact does so.

This error was reinforced in 1872 by Joseph Polsue in his *Lake's Complete Parochial History of Cornwall*, in which he says: "The Chapel (on Chapel Downs), locally termed a 'well-chapel' appears to have been an ancient baptistry. Internally it measures 14 feet by 6½ feet, and is partly built over a well". This would mean that by the time Basset Rogers went looking for it nearly a decade later, it was probably completely overgrown and obscured. Quiller Couch in 1894 (in *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*) remarked that: "It was found by the present vicar in 1879, covered with brambles, and has since then been carefully preserved by him".

Ann Preston-Jones has suggested [in *Holy Well on Chapel Downs Sancreed*] that Bassett Rogers also at this time provided a path to the site with steps, iron railing and fencing, a bridge over the overflow channel, and possibly the widening of the overflow channel to the east of the well, to create a small pond backed by a rockery of massive granite boulders. His plantings appear to have included conifers, holly and shrubs, such as privet and rhododendron, and montbretia. A comparison of OS 1878 and 1907 maps shows that the former open downs area where the well and chapel lay had become enclosed in a small plantation. From 1897 to 1912 James Stevens lived at Glebe Farm nearby, and his diary [published 1977] has some entries pertaining to the well, in which he says he brought water from it to the church to baptise his daughter. However, he also piped some of the water away from the well for his cattle troughs, and in answer to a visitor who considered this to be a sacrilegious misuse of holy water, he retorted : “I can think of few sights as pleasing to my creator as a well-watered herd of cows”!

In the mid 20th century, fresh interest in the well and chapel was undertaken by Juliet Shanks, who is commemorated by a plaque attached to the wall of the chapel, which says that she “caused this sanctuary to be cleared and kept in a state befitting a holy place”. According to the plaque, she lived from 1929-1972, dying at the comparatively young age of 43. There is also a plaque to her husband, Michael James Shanks, next to hers. There is no knowledge of Juliet Shanks locally, and even the 90 year old Churchwarden from that time, Alfred Olds, had



*Remains of chapel next to the well*

no memory of her. However, by some diligent Internet searching, I managed to find her son Andrew Shanks, who is now Canon at Manchester Cathedral. So for the first time, we can put some detail on to the bare frame of her name. Andrew wrote: “My mother was the daughter of one of the surgeons at the West Cornwall Hospital in Penzance during the Second World War. The town was bombed quite a bit, so he sent her, with my grandmother, for safety to stay in Sancreed. As a result, she spent quite a lot of her childhood in the village, and formed a particular attachment to the holy well. Also, during my own childhood, I remember several Easter egg hunts, for instance, that she organised there. As I’m a priest, I was also the officiating minister at the scattering of her ashes at the holy well; and again at the scattering of my father’s ashes there, some years later.

“Immediately after my mother’s death, we paid for quite a lot of clearance work at the holy well, which had become very overgrown. Various trees we planted died, but my brother Christopher planted an oak tree that’s still alive. For many years, my wife and I used to spend a day each year hacking away at the overgrowth. In the 1970s I remember it being quite neglected”.

The well remained relatively undisturbed during the later 20th century, with the Rev. Lane-Davies in 1970 [*Holy Wells of Cornwall*] describing it in this way: “This spot always seems to me to possess a greater air of mystery and sanctity than any other in Cornwall”. J.Meyrick [*A Pilgrims Guide to the Holy Wells of Cornwall*] visited it in 1979, and speculated about the dedication of the church to St.Credan, though the well itself does not appear to have any particular dedication. However, St.Credan is an interesting saint. He was supposed to have accidentally killed his father and subsequently become a swineherd. There is a carving of him nursing a pig above the entrance porch to the Church. In Celtic mythology, pigs were totem animals of the Otherworld, and swineherds often have an initiatory significance, representing contact with the Otherworld. The association of a swineherd with Sancreed, with its deep well of the Underworld, may not be a coincidence.

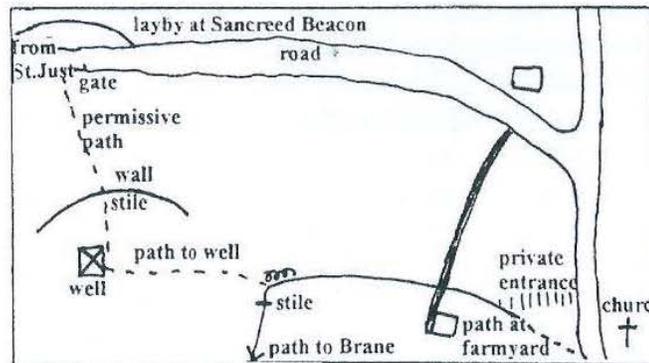
No traditions of healing at the site have been preserved, unlike St. Euny’s Well, about a mile away. The site however was surveyed by Paul Devereux in the late 1980s for his book *Places of Power*, which took radiation readings at selected sites in Britain. The waters at the well gave the highest radiation counts obtained anywhere in Cornwall, registering nearly 200% overall above background. Devereux speculated the presence of such concentrated natural radiation might contribute to feelings of sleepiness and trance states experienced by people at such places. Of Sancreed Well he says: “The prime energy effect of the place is the sense of calm it engenders. Peace. Repose. I have actually seen every person in a group of 15 people enter a deep, languid state here, or fall completely asleep! It is a place to sleep; to have the Dream of Earth”.

By the mid 1990s however, there were several issues affecting the site. Increasing use of the well by pagans for ceremonies, together with a huge increase in the number of rags and ribbons (‘clouties’) tied to the tree overlooking the well, led in 1996 to a drastic removal of the branches and the clouties from the tree. There were letters to *The Cornishman* from distressed local pagans, such as Barry & Kate Reilly, and a reply from William John Thomas, local church warden, who said that local people were fed up with the “goings-on” at the well. There was another burst of branch lopping and cloutie removal in 2001, but this time it was attributed to the work of local Born-Again Christians. However, by this time the Sacred Sites Protection Network had been set up, and were organising clear-ups of ancient sites locally. Sancreed Well was included on this List, and since then every year (usually in January) a team of volunteers go to keep the vegetation cut back and remove the unsightly clouties. This seems to have resolved the dispute, and so far has been successful in helping to manage and preserve the site.

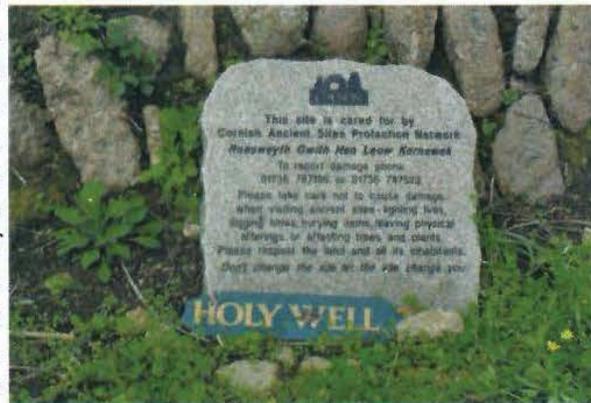


*Well + clouties in the mid 1990s*

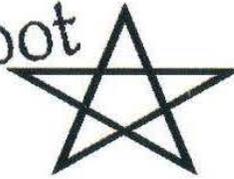
Meanwhile back in the 1990s, the owners of the land over where the path to the well went, Mr & Mrs Hosking, were complaining vociferously about the number of people (especially guided parties) going along the path next to their house. They would often confront these people, leading to a bad atmosphere in the area. The matter was complicated, because only part of the path to the well was a definitive footpath, and somehow a 'missing stretch' from the first stile to the well had been excluded. The matter was finally resolved, partly by the Hoskins' inaugurating a permissive path to the well from opposite Sancreed Beacon, and partly by the Ramblers Association, who applied for a Modification Order to the Definitive Map, and got the missing section reinstated. In 2007 the matter resurfaced briefly, when the new owners of the property next to the path, who continued to object to people and dogs passing close to their property, built a large concrete fence out on to the path. This was brought to the attention of Penwith District Council and Cornwall County Council, who immediately stopped the work, and ensured that the fence was scaled back and the path remained open and free.



The water level in the well had also been dropping down year upon year, and by the end of the decade was at a critically low level, with the bottom of the well now clearly visible for the first time. There was a suggestion that this was because land owners locally had been taking more water from the underground water table by means of bore holes and private wells, but this was never proved. Although the water level has recovered somewhat, it remains at a much lower level than previously, and is still a cause for some concern. But all in all, the site now seems in better shape and condition than it has been for many a year. The establishment of a granite stone by CASPN at the beginning of the church path to the well, stating that the site is under its care and protection, and giving phone numbers for reporting damage, together with the annual FOCAS Clear-ups at the well itself, seem to have done the trick in removing conflict and disharmony at the Well. At the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Well is still a place of pilgrimage and peace, and continues to enchant the many visitors who come to enjoy its special atmosphere, 130 years after it was uncovered and revealed once again to the world.



# Penwith Pagan Moot



by Eve Benney

Continuing this year's fortunate fine weather for rituals, we met to celebrate the **Autumn Equinox** on Chapel Carn Brea in fine autumn sunshine. We began by welcoming the Light of Summer, and a simple cleansing ceremony where we blessed each other in turn around the circle, giving and receiving cleansing in equal measure, reflecting the theme of balance at the time of equinox. We spent some time in meditation in this ancient sacred place, connecting with the spirits of the land and the ancestors. We looked out over a land sinking into her winter sleep, with new life safely hidden in seed and nut and berry. We reflected on the meaning of this within our own lives: the work done and finished, the seeds of next year's harvest to be nurtured through the darkness. We returned to our circle to give and receive blessings, throwing black and white wool to each other, to weave a web of wishes. Holding fast to our web, we turned the Wheel of the Year to a simple chant. To close our ritual, we bade farewell to the Light of Summer on our altar and welcomed our Guide into the Dark of the year, the Lord of Shadows.

At **Samhain** we met in Sancreed House for possibly our final ritual there. The altar was set with skulls and black and scarlet candles. On the brink of the first of winter's storms sweeping in, we were blessed with a calm mild evening. We began by naming our beloved dead, as we placed a small memento on the altar. During a short meditation to music, all the candles in the room save one were extinguished, and in the gathering darkness the Guide of Souls came to lead on a journey into the Otherworld, going first to the Gatekeeper to be anointed with a symbol of protection. We journeyed in silence through the dark, and then gathered together round the fire pit, welcoming beside us those of our beloved dead who wished to join us. After a time of fire-scrying, we cast wishbones – symbols of our earthly gifts to the ancestors, into the flames. We thanked the ancestors and the spirits of the Otherworld for their messages and signs to us with an offering of bread and wine. The Guide then led us back towards the world of light, each of us first going to meet the Cailleach, the Dark Mother, to receive from her a gift to take back with us. Once returned to the world of light, we celebrated with a libation of cherry liqueurs and mead, before welcoming in the New Year in our traditional way, with sparklers, writing our wishes and the names of our honoured dead in bright fire.

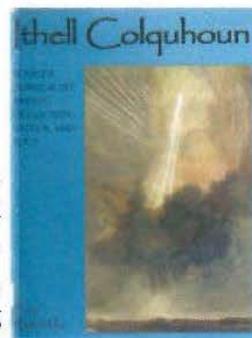
Penwith Pagan Moot celebrated its 15th birthday in November, with cake & candles and party food and some rather splendid silly hats. After a game but rather confused rendition of Happy Birthday to ourselves, one of the astrologers among us who had prepared the chart of the Moot talked us through it – very appropriate, with emphasis on creativity and healing and nurturing aspects. After our birthday Moot, we continue to meet as usual, on the second Tuesday of each month, at the Stellar Maris Centre behind the Healing Star in Penzance, for news, what's on and a different discussion topic each month.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Ithell Colquhoun** by Eric Ratcliffe

[Mandrake of Oxford, 2007 - £19.99]

The subtitle of this book: is “Pioneer Surrealist, Artist, Occultist, Writer and Poet”, and this multifaceted description captures the essence of who and what Ithell Colquhoun was about. Her connection to Cornwall is through the book *The Living Stones*, published in 1957, which was an early contribution to discovering the power of the Cornish landscape, prehistory, traditions and folklore. Even today, it continues to inspire people with its love for the ancient Cornish land.

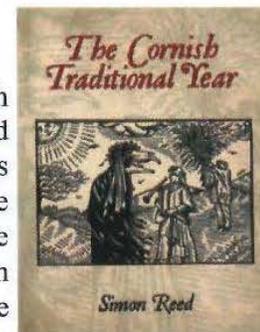


Ithell Colquhoun was born in 1906 and the early part of this book tells of her early life, her entry into the world of surrealist painters, and her interest in occultism, particularly The Order of the Golden Dawn. However it is with her arrival at the end of the 1940s at Vou Cave Studio in the Lamorna valley that the story really takes off for her long lasting love affair with Cornwall. Ratcliffe says that she was a natural ‘sensitive’ who had “an acute sense of life force, psychic power or ancient meaning or message stored in some granite masses, in old stone crosses, stone circles, menhirs, dolmens, etc”. She continued to live and work in and around Lamorna until her death at Menwinnion in 1988. Jo O’Cleirigh, who was called to live in Lamorna by Ithell’s book and who became friends with her in the early 1980s, visited her a couple of weeks before she died, and wrote a tribute to her in an early issue of Meyn Mamvro (no.6). Eric Ratcliffe mentions this, saying that it tells of “Ithell’s animistic feel for the natural world, especially for stones, wells, trees, wild plants and the sea - her interest in Celtic traditions”, and in a footnote he says that *Meyn Mamvro* continues to be published, and “reflects Ithell’s passions for ancient Cornwall”. To be thought of as carrying on the pioneering work of Ithell from half a century ago is praise indeed. Ratcliffe’s biography made me want to go back and re-read *The Living Stones*, and no better thing could be said of a book such as this.

**The Cornish Traditional Year** by Simon Reed

[Troy Books, 2009 - £9.99]

Books about seasonal festivals in Cornwall come out with some regularity: MM reviewed one in 1987, Oakmagic have produced many such booklets over the years, and there have been various articles in MM itself. By now, everything that could be said about the subject has probably been said, but this new book does have some original touches which make it worth while. For one thing, Simon Reed has been closely involved with the revival of some of these customs, such as Golowan, Montol & the May Horns in Penzance, so he is able to bring the story up to date. He also looks at the whole gamut of Cornish festivals (such as Nicky Nan Night & Picrous Night) which do not always fit neatly into a ‘Wheel of the Year’. And it is also a good book for source material, as he quotes liberally from old documents and books and MSs, bringing the material together in one place. A useful book for those who know little about the origins of the festivals, but with enough fresh perspectives to interest those who are familiar with the subject as well.

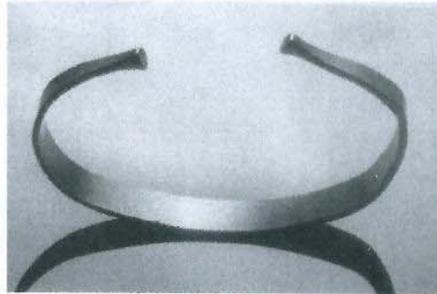


## 20 YEARS AGO

*Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

It was in the spring of 1989 that a Bronze Age gold bracelet was found on the Isles of Scilly by a holidaymaker Peter Dent [reported in MM11 - Spring 1990]. Now for the first time 20 years later, Peter writes of the find for MM:-

“The Spring of 1989 had brought storms together with high tides to the Islands and had damaged the low cliff faces on most of the beaches along that part of St.Martins. When I picked up the bracelet it was



lying in a shallow pool of water at the lower part of the beach below high tide and above low water, and it had suffered some attrition from its time in the sea. On inspection of the cliff face directly above where I picked up the bracelet, I found a burial cist which had lost one side, with the base, the three other sides and the lid remaining intact. So I am certain that the bracelet that I found was washed out of that cist during those storms during the spring of 1989.

After the curator at my local (Guildford) museum told me that it was gold-plated modern costume jewellery, I had to wait until I could take time off work to take it up to the British Museum for dating. I knew by then that it was Welsh gold of about 18 carats, the high silver content giving it a distinctive greenish colour, not at first recognisable as gold, at least not by a non-expert like me. The bracelet fitted very well on my wrist, and I understood that it would have been worn as a symbol of rank amongst the community, and its find proved that the Bronze Age community living there at that time were wealthy enough to have that asset. It was at the time of finding the only ancient gold ever to be found in the Isles of Scilly (and declared I might add), and only 68 other pieces of Bronze Age gold had been found anywhere in Britain. According to the British Museum it is a Brean Down bracelet (as were the Rosemorran and Morvah finds), a relatively rare variety known from southern Britain and Ireland, and dates from c.900-700 BCE. I had wanted the original to remain in the Isles of Scilly as I feel that is where it was always belong, but I was told that the local museum could not afford the security.”

*For an article on Golden Treasures from Cornwall's Past (originally published in MM50, but with more photographs) please go the web site: [www.meynmamvro.co.uk/article2.htm](http://www.meynmamvro.co.uk/article2.htm)*

### **STOP PRESS - ILLUSTRATED BRONZE AGE POT SHERD FOUND ON ST.AGNES**

As we go to press, MM has heard of an amazing discovery on the Scilly island of St.Agnes. While digging the foundations for a new house there, the location of a Bronze Age Round House was found. Amongst the many sherds of pottery recovered was one, which when cleaned, was found to have part of a possible illustration of a Bronze Age ship with masts. If this is confirmed, it will be a unique Bronze Age ship picture inscription.

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