

A place so called and by tradition helde to be a place  
whereunto that famous K. Arthur resorted ...  
their standeth a stange or Poole of water

**DECODING KING ARTHUR'S HALL ● MONTOL ●  
STORIES AT BOLEIGH FOGOU ● CORNISH GOLD  
DOWSING ● CASPN & LAN ● ANCIENT TRACKS  
\*ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR\***

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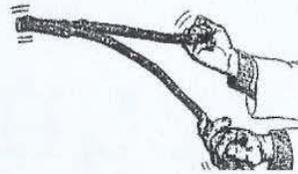
## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

In the face of what sometimes seems like overwhelming odds stacked in favour of the 'system', occasionally 'people power' can win through. Two recent planning decisions give some hope about developments that could have adversely affected ancient sites. Both were mentioned in the Editorials in MM86 and MM87. The first was the application for a new phone mast in a field near the Merry Maidens stone circle in West Penwith. If it had gone through, it would have been very visible from the circle and its environs. Fortunately a local group, led by local councillor Peter Jenkins, ran a concerted campaign in opposition to the application, which has resulted in it being withdrawn. And on St.Breck Down (at Scotland Corner), an application for a new wind farm adjacent to the Nine Maidens stone row, was defeated by Cornwall Council, despite a recommendation from the Planners that it should go ahead, and supported by, of all bodies, English Heritage (now Historic England). Unfortunately it was only defeated by one vote, which has encouraged the applicants, Coriolis Energy, to re-submit the application, whereby they have reduced the height of the wind turbines from 110 metres to 100 metres! 100 metres is still 325ft, which means that the turbines would tower over the stone row and totally dominate the countryside and the Downs. This re-application was re-submitted almost immediately after the original one was defeated, in apparent contradiction to the Government's recent statement that there were now enough onshore wind farms and that we did not need any more, and that local communities should have more of a say in their siting and approval. Presumably Historic England will once again support the application, despite Nick Russell from HE previously saying: "The Scotland Corner wind farm, by dint of its sheer scale poses a very real potential for serious harm to the monuments setting, sitting as it does on the edges of an area already well served with renewable energy schemes". In the light of this, their support for the application seems incomprehensible.

Andrew Kerr, the retiring Chief Executive of Cornwall Council, said in a recent speech that planning in Cornwall was now 'developer-led', and that the Council were virtually rolling over and submitting to applications. One such application that was recently passed was for 750 houses + a hotel, pub and shops on the edge of Bodmin, right up against Castle Canyke, the largest hill fort in Cornwall. It is not only a scheduled site, but a place of great historical significance. As always in these cases, the developers have money and resources on their side, while ordinary citizens have very little power or money to throw into their opposition. But when that opposition is co-ordinated and vociferous, as was the case with the phone mast application at the Merry Maidens, it shows what can sometimes be achieved. All power to those who give up their time to campaign against these threats.

## DOWSING NEWS



2015 started with a talk organised by **Trencrom Dowsers** in Marazion by **Paul Gerry**, clinical neurophysiologist and dowser, on recording brain wave activity. Paul used a scanner linked up to a screen and some volunteers to demonstrate the different brain wave patterns emitted by various states of meditating, healing and dowsing. When one subject, Gregory, dowsed in the room while attached to the machine, it could be clearly seen that all the frequencies in his brain wave patterns changed when he found an energy line. A fascinating afternoon, that revealed an area of developing research into dowsing.

Also in January **Tamar Dowsers** had a presentation and demonstration by **Wendy Scott** on sound emanations. It has been observed that the effect of playing a Chinese gong at sunrise next to a menhir has a dramatic effect on the energy of the menhir, and during the performance by Wendy in the room it was shown by dowsing that a typical human aura doubles in size, presumably in direct response to the sound vibrations. In addition, an energy line in the room expanded by several widths, and a detrimental energy spot disappeared. Again, this is an area of research that needs further investigation.

There were more talks by **Tamar Dowsers** in February, when **Nigel Twinn** mused about 'Making sense of the new reality' and in March, when **Paul Broadhurst** talked about his new book 'The Greenwich Meridian - Axis of Heaven'.

After a winter of indoor activities, it was good to get out into the land again, and on the last Sunday in April both the Trencrom and West Cornwall Dowsers were out and about. **Trencrom Dowsers** went to *Zennor hill and Quoit*. On Zennor hill, some of the group discovered a Propped Stone [SW46396 38147], which had been positioned purposely so that anyone walking along the ridge of the hill towards it would have their view to Zennor Quoit obscured until they reached the Propped Stone itself, when the view would open out to the Quoit. The Athena Line also comes in here, from the Giants Rock below and on to the Quoit, and the Group tracked and measured it at the Quoit itself.



*Propped Stone on Zennor hill*

Meanwhile **West Cornwall Dowsers** were down the Lizard peninsula, visiting *Grade church and holy well*. Grade church is on an ancient Lan at the end of a green lane, and nearby is the holy well of St. Ruans. After lunch they moved on to *Landewednack church and holy well*. The two holy wells were found to be linked by a N-S energy line from Figgy Dowdy's well at Carn Marth and Halligye fogou, before disappearing off the Lizard coast at Hot Point [see *MM71 p.2*].

On the May bank holiday weekend, as part of International Dowsing Day, **Trencrom Dowzers** walked member John Watts' labyrinth in Polgigga, near Land's End [see p.4 for more details]. The Group dowsed for energy and water lines at the site, and planned to do so again a few months later to compare results. After a picnic they walked to Carn Lês Boel, the very beautiful headland and node point for the Michael and Mary energy lines. As always the place was sparkling with energy, which was enhanced by Danu Fox leading some singing: down into the rock at the node point, across the sea, and over the land. The widths of the lines were dowsed before and after their interaction, and the widths of both increased by about two-thirds, Michael more than Mary.



*Singing the lines at Carn Les Boel*

In June **West Cornwall Dowzers** re-visited *Kus-Skewes Farm*, home of two of its members David & Mandy Bolitho. Prior to the visit Group leader Bart O'Farrell had conducted a stone column experiment there. Two seven-stone columns of granite (magnetic rock) and one of limestone (organic rock) were constructed, echoing the seven transmitter points in a standing stone, and replicating the sarsen and dolomite (bluestones) stones at Stonehenge. The area defined by the three columns (similar to a three pillared dolmen or quoit) created a healing space, strongest at ground level. The aura from the stones noticeably energised the surrounding area for 50 paces and was still expanding when they were dismantled. They experimented further, creating more stone generators and transmitters, suggesting that prehistoric monuments, such as quoits, circles, barrows, etc, created a structural landscape, not just for ceremonial, ritual and healing use, but to energise the landscape and fertilise the land with energy. This 'Lost Science of the Stone Age' was demonstrated and investigated further on the day, pushing out the boundaries of what dowsing can teach us about the past. They also found that both the Michael and Mary lines had moved and crossed at a node point near the farm itself. Finally, the Group also found traces of an original Round enclosure on the farm, which, despite 19th century mining, still retains traces of the henge-like structure today.

Finally, on a lovely day at the beginning of July, **Trencrom Dowzers** visited *Lesingey Round* which gave the group some productive dowsing. John dowsed the centre of the hill fort and found a 13 petal pattern of energy, while Gregory and some others dowsed the perimeter ditch and found several vortices and spiral patterns, which were reflected in the way that the trees had grown and fallen. Ba found a strong energy line to St. Michael's Mount, and Nathascha found a spot just outside the interior space where she and several other people got a very strong reaction. She felt that it had been a place where an Iron Age chieftain had come to 'marry' the land, or gain his right to rule from the Sovereignty Goddess of the Land. Such places are known about elsewhere, including King Arthur's Footprint at Tintagel Castle [see MM72 p.13]. After lunch, the Group drove over to *Boleigh fogou* to visit the site, and finished off with a Cornish cream tea at Lamorna!

## SPRING INTO SUMMER 2015

Good Friday morning saw the 10th year of the revived tradition of visiting **Fenton Bebibell** well on the West Penwith moors. Although there was heavy rain first thing, it had stopped by the time people arrived, and it stayed dry for the rest of the event. There were a number of adults (including visitors from St. Agnes, St. Mawes & Falmouth), some children and two dogs, both called Luna! The well was cleared and dollies were baptised, followed by the customary blessing and libation of Cornish mead and cold cross buns. The whole event this year was photographed and featured in 'The Cornishman' newspaper.



Meanwhile, on the same day, and reviving the same custom, members of the Betwixt Moot met at **Figgy Dowdy's well** on Carn Marth near Redruth for their dolly-dunking. This was the third year since the custom was revived by them in 2013.

A few weeks later it was time for the May festivals, as busy as ever in Cornwall. On May Day Eve, the **Maypole Dance** took place at Bosavern Community Farm, and attracted over 40 people, showing that it continues to command widespread support. The next day of course was **Padstow Obby Oss day**, where dampish weather did not seem to affect the dancing in of summer by the red and blue Osses. This was the 30th consecutive year that your editor had been there, when many of the Padstonians dancing with the Osses had not yet been born! Back in West Penwith, the Trencrom Dowsers celebrated **International Labyrinth Day** on Sunday 3rd May by walking John Watts' labyrinth in Polgigga, near Land's End. People in 23 countries celebrated this event and it was a particularly happy occasion for the TDs to mark the beginnings of John's new labyrinth in his wildflower meadow. John Moss provided notes about the history, use and significance of labyrinths. The Bank Holiday weekend concluded with **Penzance May Horns** procession, the annual celebration of spring and the start of summer and an attempt to "drive the devil of winter out". After being overcome by winter and falling dead on the floor, Old Ned, the Penzance crow was brought back to life by the sound of drums, horns and whistles loudly blown by the residents of Penzance.

This revived May Horns tradition in Penzance was the work of Simon Reed, who has now formed a Cornish Cultural Association, with the intent of keeping alive some of these old festivals. At the **Midsummer solstice** eve of 20th June, the Association had a bonfire at Marazion, which was followed three evenings later by the Old Cornwall Society midsummer bonfires on hilltops throughout Cornwall, from Chapel Carn Brea to Kit Hill. The solstice also saw celebrations at the **Seed of Life** circle at Trencrom (organised by Nathascha Heijen), when many people came to enjoy fire, songs, poems, storytelling and food. The following weekend, celebrations concluded with Penzance's **Mazey Day**.



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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



The 9th annual Pathways to The Past weekend of walks and talks was blessed with fine weather and an excellent turnout. It began on Saturday May 30<sup>th</sup> with a guided walk by **Cheryl Traffon & Lana Jarvis** entitled *Catching the light of the sun and moon*. The circular walk started at the Mên-an-Tol, where the lunar standstill was explained; then a walk across the bluebell-strewn moors led to the Nine Maidens stone circle, with the truncated outlier stone that marked the midsummer solstice sunset. Then to Bosiliack Barrow, with its midwinter solstice sunrise alignment, before returning to the start. In the afternoon **David Giddings** took the group to Nanjulian Courtyard House settlement in a walk entitled *Living on the Edge*. The features of the settlement were explained, and then the walk continued down the cliff path with stunning views to Nanjulian cove and some barrows on the headland. In the evening **Paul Bonnington** returned to give a talk on *Hot Metal: the discoveries that changed the world*. He showed how the invention of metal making had such a profound effect on Copper and Bronze Age societies, visiting many places in the Near East before bringing the story back to Cornwall.

On the Sunday morning, archaeologist **Charlie Johns** gave a beautiful slide presentation on *Ancient sites on the Isles of Scilly*, in which he was able to show not only the wide variety of sites in their context, but also the up-to-date research that has been going on over there. This was followed in the afternoon by a guided walk and poems (entitled *Stories in the Stones*) with **Adrian Rodda**, who this year took a record 56 people to a number of sites in the Merry Maidens area. Finally, the codicile to the weekend was a fascinating talk by **John Moss** at the North Inn at Pendeen on *Dowsing at ancient sites*. This completed a weekend of much interest and discussion of ideas, good friendships made and renewed, and some splendid weather for all the walks.

The date for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend in 2016 is Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May.

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

**CASP 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)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups](http://www.facebook.com/groups) [search for C.A.S.P.N & Lizard Ancient Sites]

### **FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS]**

**To join FOCAS** (£10/year waged, £14 couples, £7 unwaged) tel: Eve Salthouse 07927 671612 or e-mail [focas@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:focas@cornishancientsites.com), visit CASPN web site for downloadable application form, or write to: 11 Victoria Row, St.Just, Penzance TR19 7LG

**Adopt-a-Site scheme:** e-mail: [focas@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:focas@cornishancientsites.com)

**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)

**Adopt-a-Site scheme:** e-mail: [info@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:info@cornishancientsites.com), or phone 01736-787186

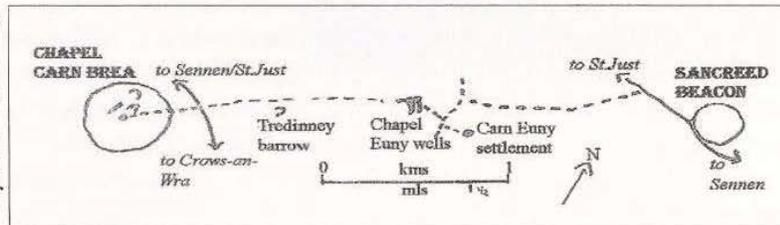
**Sites Clear-Ups:** Tel: 01736-787186 e-mail: [info@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:info@cornishancientsites.com)

## ANCIENT TRACKS

### 8: Vounder Gogglas (western section)

*A series that looks at some pathways to ancient sites in West Penwith that may be the tracks where our ancestors walked. Many of the old tracks exist as the old churchway paths connecting settlements to the parish churches, but parts of them, especially those with tall hedges may define old estate boundaries or are older than those. These deeply sunken tracks, especially those that pass or go to ancient sites, are the essence and heart of this time-worn land.*

Vounder Gogglas (from the Cornish *Bownder Gogleth* = North Lane) is an ancient route, that largely defines the north boundary of St. Buryan parish.



Most of its eastern extent is roadway, running from Gulval churchtown to Heamoor and then on to Tremethick Cross and finishing at Sancreed. However, from the western foot of Sancreed Beacon it then runs as a track [starting at SW4095 2952] and goes to the west of Caer Bran and down past Carn Euny settlement to Chapel Euny wells [SW3999 2990]. It runs between these two adjoining wells, and follows a route across Tredinney Common, on the southern flanks of Bartinney Hill, past a barrow at SW3925 2845, to finish at Chapel Carn Brea, the 'first and last' hill in Britain. Tredinney Common barrow was visited by CEMG and West Cornwall Dowzers in 2007 [see *MM65* p2 & 3], and Chapel Carn Brea was a sacred hill in prehistoric times, with its Neolithic long barrow, its Bronze Age entrance grave and other barrows. From Chapel Carn Brea, the track can be followed down the southerly flank of the hill to the A30 at Newshop, after which it peters out, though Craig Weatherhill has suggested [in *'Belerion'* in 1981] that it originally went on to Sennen and Land's End.

The route may originally have been a long-distance trading route, and probably the best part to walk nowadays is the western section from Sancreed Beacon to Chapel Carn Brea, with its wonderful vistas, and network of energy lines stretching in all directions from its summit.



*The main Chapel Euny well*



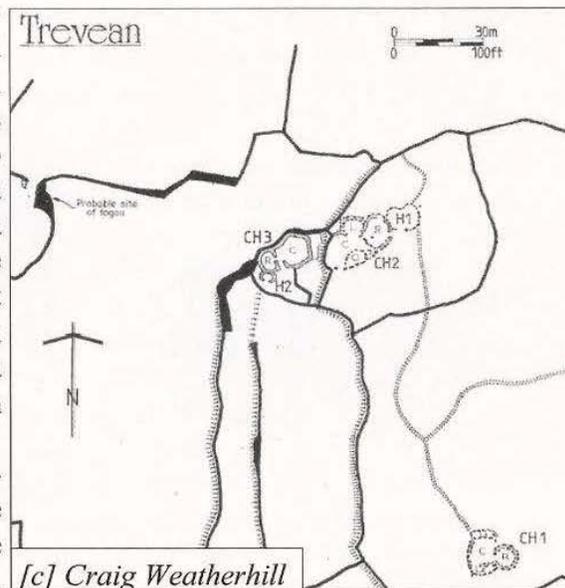
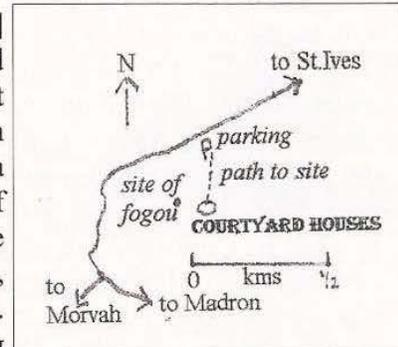
*Chapel Carn Brea entrance grave*

## HOME SWEET ANCIENT HOME

### WHERE OUR ANCESTORS LIVED: 9 - Trevean

Trevean Courtyard House settlement [SW413 357] is situated in a most attractive setting, on a terraced west-facing slope 168m (550ft) above sea level at the foot of Watch Croft. Furthermore, although it is on Trevean Farm, there is a short footpath to it from the parking area beside the B3306 road from St.Just to St.Ives just east of Morvah. The site consists of two Courtyard Houses, one of which (CH2) is well preserved, with a main courtyard, a small oval room, a long room, and a round room. Attached to it is a Round House (H1). The neighbouring Courtyard House (CH3) is less well preserved, and is more rectilinear in shape, and may have been modified in the Medieval period or later. Nevertheless, there is another possible Round House attached to it. The third Courtyard House (CH1) is a field away to the south, and consists of a courtyard flanked by two long rooms on the north and south sides, with a round room at the eastern end of the house. Further south of the site (about 550m or 600yds) lies a fine example of an Iron Age Round, which may have been used as a cattle enclosure.

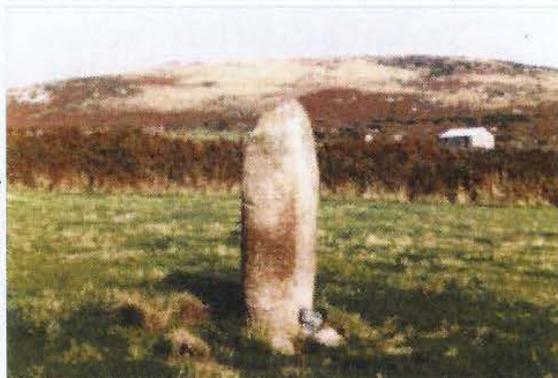
To the north-west of the main structure (CH2 & CH3) is the site of a probable fogou in a hedge [SW4121 3578], the remains of which were destroyed in 1913. It was apparently an above-ground fogou, its traceable remains at that time being about 1.8m (6ft) long, 1.2m (4ft) wide and 1.5m (5ft) high. Its roof of long slabs was covered with small stones, overgrown by bramble. Two steps led up to it from the east, then two more led down into its north-facing entrance. The original extent of the fogou is not known, but it was obviously connected to this small, peaceful and lovely Courtyard House Settlement.



## MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

### 15: Brea farm menhirs

Brea farm menhir formerly stood in a field to the west of Chapel Carn Brea at SW3812 2798, until it was ripped out by the farmer, Mr. Clifton at the end of 1984, despite it having been scheduled in 1972. This was one of the worst recorded cases of archaeological vandalism by a farmer recorded in Cornwall, and to their eternal shame English Heritage did not proceed with any kind of prosecution. The stone was 2.1m (6¾ft) high, and was visited and photographed by John Michell in 1974 for his book *The Old Stones of Land's End*, and drawn by Rosemarie Lewsey for Robin Payne's book *The Romance of the Stones* (published 1999).



*Brea menhir (before destruction) looking towards Chapel Carn Brea [c] HEP*

Michell recorded three alignments through the stone:

[1] Sennen church - tumulus at 3745 2728 - **Brea menhir** - Bartinney Castle - tumulus at 4138 3131 - Carfury menhir.

[2] Aire Point - **Brea menhir** - Stone in hedge at Boscawen-ûn - Trenuggo Cross - vanished stone at 4497 2747 - Roskilly Rock.

[3] **Brea menhir** - Boscawen-ûn circle - Redhouse NE stone - lost stone at 4559 2648 - St.Clements Isle.

MM visited the site of the Brea menhir recently and found fragments of the destroyed stone in a nearby hedge.

Although this stone is now gone and can never be restored, megalithic researcher David Cheepen has recently identified what is possibly another standing stone nearby. It too is in a field to the west of Chapel Carn Brea, although closer to the hill than the destroyed menhir. It stands at approx. 3820 2800 at the end of a Cornish hedge of large stones next to a gate, and curiously resembles the destroyed Brea menhir. Could these two stones have originally been a pair, similar to other paired stones in West Penwith, such as the ones at Drift [SW4371/2 2831] and the ones recorded at Cheynhal [SW4491 2745 & 4497 2746] and at Selena farm [SW3974 2399] [see *Missing Menhirs no 4 in MM72 p.5*], both sets now missing?



*The second Brea menhir*

## PREHISTORIC CORNISH GOLD

Archaeologists have discovered evidence of an ancient gold trade route between Cornwall and Ireland. A detailed analysis of some of Western Europe's most beautiful prehistoric gold artefacts suggests that Cornwall was the source of much of the gold used in them. Geological estimates indicate that up to 200 kilos of gold, worth in modern terms almost £5 million, was extracted in the Early Bronze Age from Cornwall and West Devon rivers. Substantial amounts were exported to Ireland, with smaller quantities going to France, Wessex and Wales. Dr. Chris Standish of Southampton University led a team who used a



*Gold bracelets from Co.Limerick in Ireland - made from Cornish gold.*

technique called laser ablation mass spectrometry to sample the gold from 50 Bronze Age artefacts in the National Museum of Ireland. He believes that although Cornwall's prehistoric gold production was of considerable cultural and potentially political significance, it was, for the most part, a by-product of an even more important industry - tin extraction, used in the making of bronze. Both the tin and the gold were found in the sand and gravel streams of rivers, and were then exported. Geologist Simon Camm, author of the book *Gold in the Counties of Cornwall and Devon* said: "Back in the Bronze Age, gold deposits in the headwaters of many Cornish and West Devon rivers would have been very much richer than now". Interestingly, some Cornish gold artefacts seem to have been made with Irish gold, such as the Morvah bracelets [see *MM85 p.24*], so the story may have been more complex than previously thought. About 270 gold artefacts in total from the Bronze Age in Britain and Ireland have been found, so a great deal more Cornish gold was probably in use, but then repeatedly melted down over the centuries to make later artefacts. There may of course have been more items buried that are yet to be found.

One piece that has come to light recently was found by metal detectorist Shane Swanson in a field near St.Austell. The rare Bronze Age gold strap was found in March 2013 but an inquest to decide whether it was indeed treasure was only held at Truro Coroners' Court earlier this year. The strap is around 95mm in length and around 10mm



wide. It is 86 to 88 per cent gold and weighs just over 5g. The inquest heard the British Museum was interested in acquiring it, although it has yet to be valued. Mr.Swanson said he had been scanning the field for around two and a half hours when he came across the gold strap: "I thought it was a piece of brass," he said. "I put it in my pocket and carried on, and then took it home later and washed it and wondered exactly what it could be." He contacted Anna Tyacke, finds liaison officer at the Royal Cornwall Museum, who confirmed that it was gold and it was then sent off to the British Museum for further analysis.

## TREE HOUSE SPIRITUAL CENTRE

Tree House is an eco-house built near Stithians in 2009 on the site of the old village farm. The walls are box-encased straw bale, and the floors and ceilings are box-encased sheep's wool, all held together within a wooden frame. It is reverse-level with the whole upstairs being the ultra light main room. The house is on a 'spur' of the Mary earth energy line, the main line running very close to the property. The energy of Mary, unlike Michael's powerfully invigorating energy, is gentle, supportive and encouraging, and many people love to just be at Tree House and soak up the atmosphere. Since the building of a new stone circle in 2012 [photo above], it seems the Mary line has strengthened at Tree House. The stones were already on the land and are lintels from the old village church which used to be next door but was demolished in the 1970s. In addition, a labyrinth has been constructed on the site. Tree House is used for spiritual healing courses and b&b: details may be found at [www.thebodywonderful.com/tree-house.html](http://www.thebodywonderful.com/tree-house.html) or by phoning Annie Turner on 01209-861001.



*Tree House stone circle*

## WELLS CORNER

*A regular feature on Cornwall's holy wells*

### **St.Morwenna's well. Morwenstow [SS198 153]**

Morwenna was one of the children of King Brychan of Wales and St.Morwenna's well is perhaps Cornwall's most remote (a few miles from the border with Devon) and certainly most inaccessible well. It lies 150ft down a cliff, reached only by a virtually inaccessible path. It was visited in 2002 for CS's book *Fentynew Kernow*, when local researcher Alan Rowland, accompanied by the National Trust and some sturdy ropes, organised a visit for local children and others, but since then both the path and the surrounding vegetation have grown even denser. However, recently two contributors to the Cornish Holy Wells Facebook page have separately made the descent, John Litton and Nic Phillips, the latter of whom managed to get Alan Rowland to show him the overgrown path to it. Both reported that the well was still OK, though now both the path and the well are hidden by vegetation. As a result of this, the Facebook moderator Cam Longmuir organised a special day there on St.Morwenna's Feast Day July 5th, when volunteers came to cut a way through and visit Morwenna's sacred well again.

*[www.facebook.com/groups/holywells\\_of\\_Cornwall](http://www.facebook.com/groups/holywells_of_Cornwall)*



## MORE ON MORVAH

Following the feature on Morvah parish in MM87, reader **Chris Jenkins** writes:-

“I have a theory that there is more to Morvah than meets the eye. The name Genevra is redolent of Guinevere. Guinevere is Anglicised Gwenhwyfar (white phantom), and Genevra would simply be one of the many variants on her name. Jack the Hammer looks suspiciously like Arthur. Consider the fact that Arthur’s counterpart in Norse myth is Thor with his hammer: hence Thurs-day (Thor’s day) which we may relate to Ar-thur. Arthur, in Welsh myth, wields several weapons (although not a hammer as such) but, as scholars have pointed out, he was a weather God where his lance is lightning, and the ancient British God Sucellus, who carries a hammer, is probably a weather God. The old folk rhyme Arthur O’Bower is a memory of this weather God status.

If I am correct in this surmise, then it must be relevant that Bosigran, presumed to be the House of Igraine, is the name of Arthur’s mother in the myth at Tintagel. Bosigran is about 2 miles NE of Morvah (the cliff castle being in a similar position to Tintagel). Furthermore, about 3 miles to the east of Morvah is the Nine Maidens stone circle, a familiar name for other stone circles in Cornwall, Derbyshire, etc. Arthur’s sister Morgana was the eldest of nine sisters, so her presence is distinctly possible here as well. Morgana (in Irish Morrigana) is probably also remembered in the name Morvah itself, if the Celtic variant Morvetha means ‘sea’ (the Breton equivalent Morverch means ‘woman of the sea’). As has been noted in previous MMs [*see MM28 p.6-8 & MM52 p.8*], Morvah and Tregaminion are both dedicated to St. Morvetha (and possibly the Irish St.Bridget as well).

However, even more striking is that not only is Madron likely to be Morgana once more (from the Welsh Modron meaning ‘Mother Goddess’), but also Fox Carn [SW396 361] just to the west of the holy well of Tregaminion, and NW of Morvah, would be our foxy lady Morgana/Modron. In Welsh ‘fox’ is madryn, but of course it is the redness of the vixen which is most pertinent here. The fact that Fox Carn is right on the coast, is directly comparable with Brandy’s (1 mile NE of Morvah), which if not a smugglers term, would be the Celtic (Welsh & Cornish) phrase Bran Dhu (= black crow).

The fact that Jack the Hammer and Genevra marry at Morvah, apparently on August 1st (Lugh or Lleu’s feastday) reminds us of the Tailtu myth in Ireland, where marriages were celebrated at precisely this date in Telltown (Tailtu’s town) through handfasting. Again, the ritual at the Giant’s Grave on this day, hard by the sea, for gaining knowledge of the future, would have Morgana written all over it. In Ireland the Morrigana is the crow, and possibly Brandy’s could simply be her presence once more. After all, Arthur after death became a chough, or a crow in variant folklore. The same pattern can be observed with the Giant’s Rock and the tale of the Mermaid of Zennor, also by the coast, where the mermaid is simply our Morgana once more. Again as Arthur and the four kings were said to feast on their Giant Rock, the comparison is obvious.”

## DECODING KING ARTHUR'S HALL

by Roy Goutté

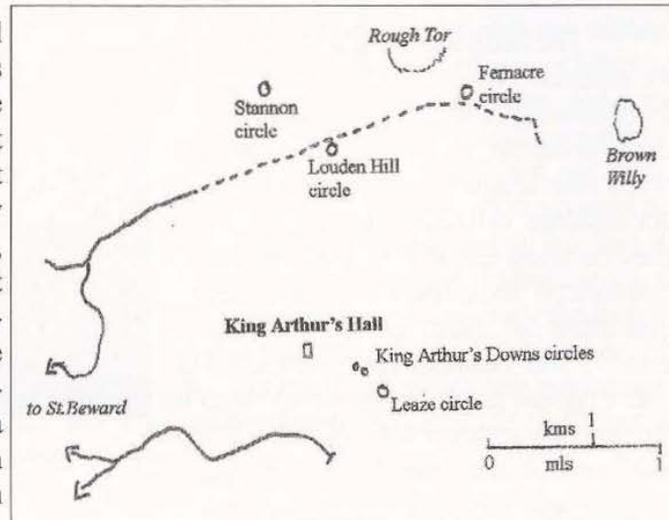
Many, many years ago, nobody really knows quite when, work began on constructing a banked 'enclosure' on the north-west corner of Bodmin Moor near St Breward, an area known for its collection of early stone circles, cairns, hut circles and settlements. The enclosure was eventually to become known as King Arthur's Hall and the portion of moor it was located on, King Arthur's Downs. But what was the exact purpose of this Scheduled Monument?



Many ideas have been put forward, including things as diverse as a Neolithic mortuary enclosure, a Medieval animal pound, a gathering place for ceremonial or ritualistic purposes or an ancient reservoir, but until it has been professionally excavated and dated in the quest for clues, its use has to remain speculative as there is little or nothing with which to compare it. Basically, earth appears to have been extracted from a rectangular north to south orientated area 49 x 20m (160 x 66ft), and banked up on the four sides, thereby forming a type of sub-level 'tank' with an 2.5m (8ft) 'apron' between that excavated area and the banks. Removing the earth to form the banks from the centre of the structure strongly suggests that the sunken tanked appearance was a pre-requisite, otherwise the soil would surely have been either imported from elsewhere, or obtained from the immediate area surrounding the entire structure, thereby leaving a level surface internally. This lowered area must then surely be our first clue as to its possible use.

It then appeared that granite standing stones of varying heights and profiles were erected to the inner face of the banks on the apron in what appears to be a continuous pattern of stone-gap, stone-gap sequence until reaching what could have been an original entrance to the south-west corner. However, I have now, due to a recent fortuitous discovery made by myself and a co worker as part of a team of clearance workers, re-named these standing stones the façade stones, as they stand immediately in front of what appears to be a revetment wall built to retain the inner bank that had never been recorded before as far as I can determine as it lay hidden within the banks. Due to time, and one assumes roaming cattle, sheep and ponies over the centuries clambering over the banks, and those same banks being washed over the top of the revetment wall, the majority of what was once around 140 uprights have now either fallen and lie buried beneath the ground surface, lying recumbent on the surface itself, or indeed still standing but angulated. Discovering this revetment wall has made me rethink what the original sequence of build was and whether the upright standing stones were an original feature, or introduced later and if so, for what purpose?

Prior to the revetment wall discovery, the former description is really all we knew about its possible method of build, but nothing about its age and purpose. I believe it could be much older and possibly Bronze Age or even Late Neolithic, in keeping with many of the ancient remains over this moorland landscape: for example, the three 'ceremonial' stone circles of Stannon, Louden and Fernacre about a mile or so to the north; the twin stone circles on Emblance Down (King Arthur's Downs circles) to the south-east; and Leaze stone circle just beyond them about half a mile away from the Hall. To the immediate west and east are the settlements of Candra and Garrow. King Arthur's Hall sits comfortably in the centre of this wonderful landscape overseen by both Roughtor and Brown Willy and it would be easy to believe that there just may be a shared connection between them all. I would seriously like to think that is indeed the case!

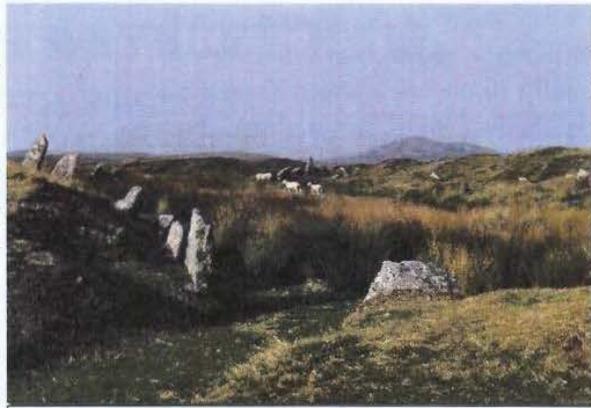


So what exactly could its purpose have been and why are there not more structures identical to this spread over the vast expanse of Bodmin Moor, known historically for its roaming cattle, sheep and ponies, if indeed it was just an animal pound as suggested in a study carried out by Cornwall Archaeological Unit in 1991:-

*“Although King Arthur’s Hall is actually on King Arthur’s Down in the Manor of Hamatethy, it features significantly in the landscape of the Manor of Blisland. The rectangular earthwork is considered to be originally an early medieval animal pound for the hundred of Trigg, later retained for both the manors of Hamatethy and Blisland”.*

A ‘pound’ was where straying animals were impounded. Some probably date from the Bronze Age but most of them won’t be more than around 1400-1500 years old. When some of the early Cornish settlements were evolving into villages, many of the ancient Commons became literally just open fields. Although most of them were hedged, the banks were often quite low and often in need of repair. As no-one in particular would have been responsible for their upkeep, other than collectively, they would, on occasion fail and stock escape. Livestock allowed to wander and roam free on the Common land were often found straying on to someone’s private land so would have been driven into the local pound from which the owner could only retrieve them by paying a fine. About fifty of these pounds, or the remains of them, have been found in Cornwall although there would originally have been many more because every Parish had them, sometimes two or three. In fact Mawgen-in-Pydar is recorded as having four! They weren’t always huge secure areas either as they varied according to the size of the parish and the likely amount of stock likely to be escapees. The pound at Stratton for instance only measured 6 x 7.3m (20 x 24ft) and was still in use in 1826 when its 2.7m (9ft) high walls were rebuilt.

The hedges around a pound had to be especially stock-proof in order to keep in livestock which had already strayed from home so were often built more as walls than hedges. Anyone who has sheep for instance will know that the first thing they do when introduced to a new field or paddock is look for a way to escape... and often do! There are too many differences I feel between King Arthur's Hall and a typical pound in Medieval times on Bodmin's various moors. Where is there another that has been built in the same manner and so grand? A level patch of scrubby land with a basic wall/hedge or timber stockade high enough to prevent an animal escaping was good enough without going to all the trouble of digging out a massive hole by hand, banking all



*King Arthur's Hall prior to its perimeter fencing being seriously erected. These sheep had no trouble getting in as well as out! Note the gap between the façade stones which would have allowed for an easy escape route at any stage in its history*

the soil up around it and held back by a revetment wall that had to be built, then lining it with granite standing stones of varying heights, some only about 2ft high! Add the 2ft wide gap between most of them that an animal could walk over or through and it's like being jailed in an open prison! It makes no sense at all.

Assuming the sub-level tanked area of King Arthur's Hall was indeed an integral part of its usage and purpose which seems highly probable, then it would obviously have filled with water, either rising or from rainfall being the two natural ways. Now, was that water purposely retained until overflowing, or was it drained out automatically by a purpose made ditch or possibly a stone-lined gully to keep it dry or at least free of standing water if not a pre-requisite? There is an entrance-way to the south-west corner but that may be more recent, and as it stands higher than the excavated base of the tank any drainage construct would have to be formed underground. This is an important point as it would help our understanding more of what possibly the Hall was used for. Obviously if the water was retained then it would certainly not have been built as an animal pound that's for sure and if constantly damp would turn into a mud swamp if it was! The depth of the excavated area seems to be variable but is now entirely silted up with sedge-type grass growing profusely to the outer perimeters of the tank and to around a quarter of its length to the southern end. It is this and the other vegetation/plant life that proliferates here that indicates to the trained eye that the excavated area to this southern end and to a lesser degree the northern end and all perimeters is shallower than the more central parts and this could be significant. I have plumbed the depth as best I can with rods and have found the southern and northern ends to be two feet deep increasing to nearly three feet as you move further away from their perimeters. At the end of the sedge grassed areas the plant life changes and the depth increases and it gives an indication of being 'stepped' as the depth increases slowly.

I was able to rod down to around 6ft toward the centre on one occasion but unable to reach the absolute centre as it became very bog like underfoot and dangerous as water is always present! I had to wonder if the base has been paved or actually taken down to bedrock as all my probing, with the exception of near the centre, was met with a solid feel to the heavily silted base. On another occasion when accompanied by a friend, we were only able to reach a depth of just over a metre when nearing the centre. Without dating or a fully investigative excavation having taken place, the mind is allowed to go into a speculative mode and consider alternatives to an animal pound. I'm not suggesting for a moment that it wasn't used as a pound at some stage in its history, but too many things tell me that wasn't its initial purpose, one being that there are no others like it on any of Bodmin's collection of Moors and Downs which are famous for its wandering ponies and other livestock. In fact there is nothing like it anywhere in the UK! Why not if it's just a pound?

And why so complex for just a pound? Surely a stockade fence/wall erected on a level surface would have done the job in a fraction of the time and negated the need for this hand dug mammoth excavation! Aside from the excavation, the building of the revetment wall and the façade of standing stones that would have had to have been dragged over the moor from wherever they came from would have taken considerably more time? I can't see it as much as I try. Even English Heritage's own website, PastScapes, doubts it:-



*"There are no traces of associated linear banks or earthworks. The origins and purpose of the enclosure remains obscure but the effort required to both excavate or import material for a bank of such proportions and to erect the slabs suggests that it had a more important function than just an animal pound".*

I've always felt it was a gathering place, but for people (and maybe not all living ones), not animals, so the term 'hall' may not be far off the mark. The 'tank' is the sticking point because what would it have been used for other than containing water? If what I'm saying is proven to be accurate, then it has a longish southern shallow end and sides with a deeper middle. What does that suggest to you in Neolithic or Bronze-Age terms... a pool where a possible 'ritualistic' or 'ceremonial' practise took place taking into account ancient people's apparent reverence for water and the belief in the underworld and afterlife? Water rising out of the ground via a spring, a distinct possibility here as I have never once, neither in the height of summer or winter, not seen water in the centre section of the enclosure. This would have been seen as a very 'holy' place indeed if ever proven to be far earlier than Medieval times and purposely built directly over an active spring!

More recently, after gaining permission to undertake a small remedial clearance excavation, a granite paved area was discovered by myself and two other Heritage Trust members when removing the turf from what was taken to be a fallen upright that was thought to have broken off from its base to the eastern bank. The 'fallen upright' although identified as such by probing, was actually paving with a raised centre-line and not a stone at all. It abutted the remains of the façade stone perfectly and gave the appearance of a possible buttress to it. If it was intended as a buttress, then it has succeeded, because the standing stone it abutted to is one of the only ones to have remained completely perpendicular! The paving itself was 'proper paving' inasmuch that it was around two/three inches thick, laid flat with no upturned corners and selected or cut to fit its allocated position perfectly. It is said that another small paved area was discovered in the north-west corner either on the apron leading up to the façade stones or indeed in the shallow area of the tank many years ago, but I don't have, or know of, any official documentation for this claim. But why would you require paving for an animal pound? I can't think of a reason, but can it be for people to walk on or to cover something up!

While we were there a small incision was made above the assumed line of the newly discovered revetment wall in a northerly direction. I am happy to say that it did indeed continue and probing along the western bank at the same level also produced a positive result and at one point, stone was beginning to reveal itself naturally. We were more than a little surprised that this walling had not been detected before by more qualified people.

I am of the opinion that this entire site should be re-evaluated because I believe there is far more to it than currently understood as proven by the new findings. What else lies hidden here you have to ask? A section cut through a bank to confirm its construction and to determine the original land surface would be a good start, plus an excavation within the 'tank' to see what lies beneath... and of course a dating! At least that would really tell us what exactly we have and whether or not Cornwall has something really special and unusual on its hands... a distinct possibility... or just that Medieval animal pound all along! Easily said, but how does one go about making it happen when there is likely to be no funding available and possibly not enough interest shown anyway. I firmly believe that this is a special place and hope that one day someone with more authority and knowledge than myself will finally get someone to listen!

*Photographs [c] Roy Goutté. This article was first published on the Heritage Journal web site: <https://heritageaction.wordpress.com>.*

*Roy has made 3 videos on his findings at the site, all of which can be viewed on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) under the titles 'King Arthur's Hall revetment', 'King Arthur's Hall Investigation Part 1' and 'King Arthur's Hall Investigation Part 2'.*

*In the next issue of MM, Roy writes about a visit by West Cornwall Dowsers to the site, and the findings that they made there. For a Review of Roy's book on Trethevy Quoit see p.22.*

## THE ROUGH TOR TRIANGLE

Roy Goutté has also been investigating the trio of stone circles to the north of King Arthur's Hall: Stannon, Fernacre and Louden [see map on p.13], and in a recent article in the on-line journal Heritage Action, he suggests that there is something significant about the siting and location of the three circles. He first observed that the three circles, contemporary with each other (Late Neolithic) were very similar in design, with each having an original 40-80 small stones defining their perimeters. He further noted that in each of the circles there was a prominent triangular stone (or tri-stone as he calls them), each of which appeared to point to nearby Rough Tor, which is thought to be the principal 'sacred hill' on Bodmin Moor to which many of the sites were aligned or referenced. [see 'The Roughtor Effect' by Peter Herring in MM85 & 86 for more details]



*The Roughtor triangle. showing the location of the three circles in relationship to each other and to Rough Tor.  
image © Roy Goutté*

*Triangular stones pointing at Rough Tor from Stannon circle [top], Fernacre circle [middle] and Louden circle [below] ©MM*

He then noticed that the circle to the east (Fernacre) has its tri-stone positioned due east in its setting, the circle to the west (Stannon) has its tri-stone positioned due west in its setting, and the circle to the south (Louden) has its tri-stone positioned due south in its setting. Finally, if that were not enough, when he plotted the three circles on an OS map, he found that they formed a scalene triangle, which created a shape that was the mirror image of Rough Tor itself [see photo above]. Goutté feels that the likelihood of this all being just 'chance' is very slim indeed, and that the prehistoric peoples who constructed these circles were creating a deliberate sacred landscape pattern. He concludes by saying: "Did our prehistoric ancestors not only live, work and get buried within sight of Rough Tor, but also within its mirrored image?"

## TELLING STORIES AT BOLEIGH FOGO

by Elyn Aviva

My husband, Gary, and I recently went to Cornwall to walk meandering paths with a small group. At least, that was the story. One morning over breakfast at Rosemerryn House in Lamorna Valley, one of our group revealed she is a professional storyteller. She described learning to take storytelling seriously. “After all,” she mused, “We don’t usually think stories are important. At least, not in the *real* world.” I realized that often the word “story” is used as a code word for “false.” As in: “Oh, that’s a likely story! You don’t really expect me to believe you, do you?” Or it’s trivialized to mean something soothing, as in, “Tell me a bedtime story.” Of course, a story is much more than that: it is how we make meaning out of our experiences—as in, “telling the story of my life.” Sometimes I identify so much with my story that instead of me telling “it,” it starts telling “me.” That morning the group set off on a journey to Boscawen-ûn stone circle. Usually, my story would have been to go along. But I decided to tell a different story: a story of following where I lead myself instead of where I am led by others.

I set off on a different journey—a journey to 2500-year-old Boleigh Fogou, an underground, stone-lined passageway (in Cornish, *fogo* means “cave”) hidden in nearby Rosemerryn woods. There is much debate about the original purpose of fogous (storage? hiding places?), but it seems clear that they were primarily used for community ritual and ceremony. As a guest at Rosemerryn B&B, I had permission to visit the fogou. Eager but trepidatious about venturing into this mysterious place alone, I picked up my walking sticks and my flashlight, and started off into the woods. The path led across dew-covered grass, then crunchy gravel. Soon I turned to the left onto a short dirt trail nearly hidden by exuberant ferns and bright pink foxgloves. A large beech tree loomed like a guardian in the overgrowth. Faded ribbons (cloutie offerings) dangled from its lower branches. A sharp-leaved holly bush shaded a low, overgrown mound that opened into a dark, downward-slanting hole in the ground. The fogou. A gaping-mouth stone toad (or was it a gremlin?) perched like a sentinel above the entrance.



Nearly hidden in the vegetation, Boleigh Fogou warned me about entering without an invitation. At least that was the story it seemed to tell. Pausing on the steeply sloping, leaf-strewn path, I asked permission. I waited and heard no reply. I asked again. Still no response. The third time (I’d been told once that asking three times proves you are serious) I thought I heard a faint acknowledgement, a guarded “maybe” that gave me courage to continue.

To the left just inside the entrance is a large upright stone with an enigmatic carving—a Rorschach test of the imagination, a story waiting to be told. For Jo May, the previous owner of Rosemerryn, the severely worn sculpture shows a Celtic healing god holding a twining snake in his left hand, a spear in his right. I saw a woman with upraised arms and a pronounced pubic “V.” Carefully planting my hiking sticks on the slippery surface, I bent down and entered darkness. I didn’t want to use my flashlight yet, hoping my eyes would adjust, so I descended blindly, sensing without seeing the ground beneath my feet. I could feel it turn into mud, cold and damp, sliding into my sandals and between my toes. I thought: I should have entered this place barefoot.

Faint forms seemed to flicker and swoop in the central passageway—insects disturbed by my presence—or something else? Cautiously I stepped forward into deeper, thicker mud. No sound, no sound at all except the mud sucking at my feet. My eyes adapted to the dark, aided by the faint daylight entering from a ragged hole at the end of the curving, 36-foot-long passage. The light entered from the northeast. Now I could make out the rough granite stones stacked one upon the other to form the walls of the passage, and the large horizontal slabs that formed the six foot high ceiling. An empty tea-candle casing on top of a protruding stone told a story of previous visitors and untold ceremony.



An L-shaped side passage leads off from the main chamber to the left and is nearly 13 feet long. Its curvaceous entrance beckoned. I turned on my flashlight for a moment to see what lay within, then bent down and squeezed through the low, narrow doorway. It was a tight fit. I felt like I was entering a birth canal. To the right on the leaf-strewn earthen floor was a small offering altar, a spiraling shape of shells, the remains of a candle perched on a stone. At the elbow of the “L” was a large, semi-recumbent stone, shaped like a chaise lounge. I lay back against its hard, cold surface. A perfect fit. Resting in darkness, that was oddly tinged with something almost like light, or like a memory of light, I asked the Spirit of the Place, the Consciousness of Boleigh Fogou, to tell me its story. I asked three times and waited for a reply. The response came slowly, as if from a great distance. I “heard” a deep resonant voice that spoke in images, not words. I “saw” butterfly wings fluttering in the darkness. I understood that the human stories of this place were as ephemeral as the fluttering wings of butterflies compared to the lengthy slow breath of stone. Flickering and flittering, they lasted a moment and were gone. I “saw” a wrapped body being laid to rest in the Underworld at the beginning of its journey to the Otherworld. It wasn’t buried in the fogou but was placed here temporarily while the community members honored their companion’s returning to the Womb of the Mother. There was no weeping. Instead there was acceptance of the inevitable cycle of life and death. Perhaps, now, I am telling a story—or maybe the story of the fogou is telling me. And whether it is Truth or “just a story” I no longer know.

## MONTOL AT THE WINTER SOLSTICE

by Alex Langstone

At the Winter Solstice 2007, a Penzance folk festival, missing from the Cornish calendar for over one hundred years, was re-born. The modern festival is called Montol and seeks to revive some of the ancient mid-winter and Victorian Christmas customs of Cornish culture. The name "Montol" or "An Vontol" means Winter Solstice according to the Cornish language site *Teer Ha Tavaz*, and is taken from Edward Lhuyd's *MSS Vocabulary* from 1700. The festival has undergone many transformations since it began eight years ago. In the beginning was a festival full of Cornish culture, reviving the Victorian Christmas traditions of Guising, and blending it with older pagan traditions of the Winter Solstice. Over the years, different formats and ideas have been tried to greater and sometimes lesser effect. However Montol 2014 saw a welcome return to the festivals origins.

In the early 1800s, Penzance could boast a Christmas tradition like no other. Guise Bands would cause misrule around the town, and the most well-known of these were the Corn-Market Revellers and Tinkerlers Shop and in the 1830's the Corn-Market Revellers became the most notorious guise band in the whole of Cornwall. The President of the Royal Society wrote about them, the great Christmas books of the era spoke of them highly and they were even mentioned in the Times. William Sandys wrote about the Corn Market Revellers, and much of what we see today is based on his observations.

The modern guise bands, now fully revived and renamed as *guise guilds*, are flourishing. *'The Glorious Company of the Egyptian House'*, *'The Corn Market Revellers'* and *'The Noble Company of the Turks Head'* are the official Montol guilds and they seek to continue the Cornish guising traditions so beloved of Victorian Penzance. Colourful and unusual guise costumes are worn, giving a feel of mystery, unease and misrule.



*The Glorious Company of the Egyptian House*

Alongside the costumes of the guilds are the guise beasts. Again William Sandys observed *'Old Penglaze then comes in on his horse which winces and capers about grotesquely'*. In 2014 these beasts have mutated into an interesting and highly mysterious cast. *'Old Ned'* the crow appears throughout the evening dancing covertly with his teaser to the jingle-jangle of many bells. *'Ramesses'* the ram-skulled beast of the Glorious Company of the Egyptian House moves between guisers adorned in Egyptian masks and headgear to the haunting sound of a hurdy-gurdy.

'Kasek-Nos', the nightmare 'Oss is teased and conjured from the Admiral Benbow pub, to lead the 10pm procession, which winds its way down to the docks, where a fire is lit and *the mock* is chalked, before being ceremoniously burned on the Montol fire, symbolising the end of the old and the beginning of the new.



*Kasek-Nos*

Montol 2014 was a spectacular event, full of colour, music, misrule and mystery. The great thing about this festival is the community focus on participation. Alongside the Guise Guilds are many other guisers, who made the night a cornucopia of bizarre artistry, all upon the same collective Montol theme of guise and misrule. Most importantly this community festival brought many folk together from across Cornwall. Penzance truly came alive on the winter solstice of 2014, helping to bring light from dark and colour, music and dance from the deepest recesses of winter, as is the custom at this time of year.

*Montol is organised by the Cornish Culture Association. [www.cornishculture.co.uk](http://www.cornishculture.co.uk).  
Photographs © John Stedman*

### **West Penwith: Ancient Sites and Alignments online map**

Penwith Ancient Sites and Alignments is an online map showing the ancient-to-medieval sites of West Penwith and the known straight-line alignments running between them, in the tradition of Alfred Watkins and John Michell. It was created during last winter on Google Maps by Palden Jenkins, drawing on a list of alignments put together by Raymond Cox with data from past issues of Meyn Mamvro and from John Michell and other researchers over the years. Palden had already done a printed map of the Glastonbury area and felt a map might be useful for West Penwith, it being such a special area geomantically and also geographically quite distinct for mapping. Palden has added further alignments, discovered while constructing the map, and the next stage is to invite others to add or suggest any more that they know of or can find, and to inspect those already on the map. It includes the Isles of Scilly, the Lizard, East Penwith and the Kerrier area, and it is hoped that people familiar with these areas might add some input. Google Maps, using satellite photography, has introduced a new level of mapping accuracy, sparking a review of all known alignments. The hope is that it will inspire further geomantic research, proving useful to people who walk the landscape and know and love the sites. works, generally and in relation to specific sites? It has raised some interesting questions, which Palden addresses in a series of supplements with this and future issues of MM. To find the map online, go to [www.meynmamvro.co.uk/perwith-ancient-sites.php](http://www.meynmamvro.co.uk/perwith-ancient-sites.php), or to [www.ancientpenwith.org](http://www.ancientpenwith.org).

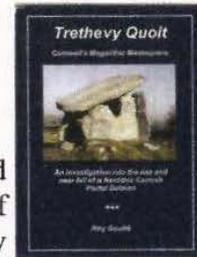


## BOOK REVIEWS

### Trethevy Quoit: Cornwall's Megalithic Masterpiece

by Roy Goulté [2013]

[Available from [www.trethevyquoit.co.uk](http://www.trethevyquoit.co.uk) @for £8.70 (inc. p & p)]

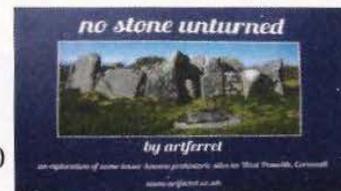


Trethevy Quoit, on the edge of Bodmin Moor, was first mentioned in 1584 by John Norden in a topographical and historical account of Britain, but this account was not published until 1728. In the 19th century William Copeland Borlase studied the site and made drawings of it. Otherwise it seems to have been little investigated - until Roy Goulté made this detailed investigation of it. This booklet of 50 pages, with many coloured photographs, firstly looks at the structure of the monument as it appears today, and then takes the monument apart and rebuilds it as he thinks it was originally intended. In this reconstruction, he shows that 4 out of the 8 stones that make up the structure are out of position, and suggests that the monument was originally built in a different way, fell, and then was reconstructed in its current form. He also discusses whether it was ever covered with a mound or not, and concludes that it wasn't, but it may have been surrounded by a ring of stones. The reconstruction of the site is argued in fine detail, and one is left with the impression that his theory is certainly a possible one. This booklet is well worth the purchase price.

### No Stone Unturned

by 'Artferret' (Linda King) [2015]

[Available from [www.artferret.co.uk](http://www.artferret.co.uk) @ £11.99(inc p & p)]



'No Stone Unturned' is a delightful booklet of some 50 pages by artist and megalith afficianado Linda King of Hayle. She says that as an artist she finds the prehistoric sites extremely alluring, and in this she is following in the honourable footsteps of a long line of antiquarians. The booklet focusses mainly on the West Penwith area, and although some well known sites are featured, she concentrates mainly on the lesser-known and more obscure ones, sometimes difficult to find, but more of a pilgrimage to do so. This is enhanced by her mode of transport as she travels around the peninsula looking for the stones, which is by bus and bike. The booklet includes a total of 30 sites, including hillforts, such as Trencrom and Lesingey Round; cliff castles, such as Carn Lês Boel and Treryn Dinas; standing stones, such as Beersheba, Carfury, Boswens, Trevorgans, Gûn Rith, and Tresvennack; entrance graves, such as Treen, Bosiliack and Tregiffian Vean; settlements, such as Bodrifty; quoits, such as West Lanyon; fogous, such as Lower Boscaswell and Boleigh; and barrows, such as Portheras Common, Balowall and Brane: in short, all the kind of less-well known sites beloved by Meyn Mamvro readers. Each entry is given directions to get there, and a brief, but accurate, description, and is accompanied by some excellent colour photographs. There are also illustrations of some of her artwork, and some idiosyncratic observations on anything from the weather to Doctor Who! A little gem of a booklet.

**A Wreck Upon The Ocean:  
Cornish Folklore in the Age of the Industrial Revolution**  
by **Brendan McMahon** [2015]  
[Published by Evertype pbk £9.95]



Brendan McMahon is a renowned researcher into Celtic folklore, and he has contributed a couple of articles to MM in the past (“A Cornish Shaman” in MM28 and “Pixies and standing stones: a cult of the dead” in MM76). Now he has expanded some of his ideas, and added new material, in this book, which explores some of the meanings behind the 19thC folk tales collected by Robert Hunt and William Bottrell and others. He is by profession a teacher and psychotherapist, and it is this background that informs much of his insights into the meanings of the tales. He explores stories of pixies, giants, knockers, mermaids, and Arthurian myths to see if they can shed light on both the socio-economic conditions of people in 19th century Cornwall, and also the psychological, sexual and spiritual forces that affected people’s lives at the time. As he says: “Stories that are told in hard pressed communities ... help us to deal with the tensions and conflicts that shape our lives, so these stories teem with desire and death, love and loss”. In the 19th century, the small nation of Cornwall underwent profound social and economic change, and at this precise time, Hunt and Bottrell began collecting the ancient Celtic stories that had been handed down by generations of fisherfolk and tanners since time immemorial in the far west. McMahon analyses these stories and draws out their meanings and significance for the society that told them in a deft and original way.

**Celtic Saints of Western Britain**  
by **Nic Phillips** [2015]  
[Published by Avalonia Books pbk £17.99]



Although this book purports to be about the Celtic Saints of Wales, Cornwall, Devon and Somerset, in fact most of the material relates to Cornwall. It has been said that there are more saints in Cornwall than in heaven, and this book is a living testimony of that! Nic Phillips recounts the legends attached to many of them, by drawing on historical and archaeological research, medieval hagiographies, place names and folk remembrances, and generally makes a good job of untangling some of their complex and interwoven stories, as well as the different versions of their legends. There is one major slip-up, where he writes of St.Nectan “spending much of his time at the beautiful glen and waterfall now known as St.Nectan’s Glen near Tintagel” and goes on to recount all the legends associated with Nectan there. However, as we now know, the linking of St.Nectan with this spot (from Hartland in Devon) was only made by the Rev. Stephen Hawker in the mid-19th century: before that it was known as ‘Nathan’s Cave’. It’s a shame that Nic Phillips did not research this a little more before going into print, but notwithstanding that error (and it is one made by most people who write of this place), the rest of his research seems impeccable, and there is certainly much good information and source material in this book for anyone interested in the legendary stories of these early Christian saints.

## 20 YEARS AGO

*Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

MM27 (Summer 1995) and MM28 (Summer/Autumn 1995) were ‘classic’ Meyn Mamvros, with articles on landscape patterns, holy wells, alignments and new folklore research. Amongst the news items were the news that the Channel 4 Time Team programme was coming to Cornwall to investigate Boleigh fogou; that someone had attempted to steal one of the stones in the Merry Maidens circle; and that, thanks to some new owners, the Grumbla Cromlech on Caer Bran farm near Sancreed had been rediscovered [*photo right*]. There was also news of clashes between Christians and pagans at Madron Baptistry.



Articles on landscape patterns included one by Andy Collins on his discovery of the simulacra of a giant figure in the rocks at Lizard point and a midwinter sunset alignment from Pistol Meadow cove over the Man of War rock out to sea; a pentagon of church sites in the Bodmin/North Cornwall area by Bruce Macfarlane; and a suggestion by Jimmy Goddard that the individual islands of the Isles of Scilly form a ‘seascape’ zodiac representing the figures of Taurus, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra and Scorpio. There was also news of a midsummer solstice shadow path alignment made by Kenny May at Caer Bran.

The two issues were also notable for some original research on the interpretation of historical legends and folklore. Cheryl Traffon & Caeia March investigated mention of a Chapel to Mary at Lanyon and one to St. Bridget at Tregaminion near Morvah; Jill Harris searched for the Goddess in the stories of the early saints; Brendan McMahon revealed his theory that in the legend of Tom the Tinkeard, the giant Jack was a disguised form of a Neolithic shaman (an idea which 20 years later has just resurfaced in Brendan’s new book, reviewed on p.23 of this MM); and Andy Norfolk cast doubt on a Goddess ‘Kerrid’ that had appeared in a Cornwall Heritage Project booklet on Liskeard and a poster at the railway station! However, Andy also found a Goddess of his own, when he put forward his original theory that the old Cornish rhyme about ‘Margery Daw’ contained within it a memory of a harvest Goddess. He suggested that the names Margery Daw, Madge Figgy and Figgy Dowdy may have been derived from ancient Cornish names for this goddess, and could mean “The Good Reaper” or “the reaper Goddess”, “The Harvest Scythe” and “The Good Goddess of the Scythe”. He also suggested, with examples from folklore and legend, that dollies representing this Goddess used to be carried from house to house and around the fields to “awaken the newly sown seed”. This was a major piece of original research, and although it was challenged by Jeremy Harte in the following issue, it was strongly defended by Andy, and 20 years later, it still remains an important and original idea about how celebration of a Cornish God or Goddess can be rediscovered and reclaimed.

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# Thoughts and Observations

## About the Map of Penwith Ancient Sites and Alignments

by *Palden Jenkins* - Part 1

While constructing the map of ancient sites and alignments in West Penwith, starting in December 2014 and through to May 2015, a number of patterns and details have emerged, even before a more serious analysis takes place. So let's look at them, together with some contextual issues.

### What qualifies as an alignment?

In this map we are dealing with straight alignments of ancient sites, not with dowsed or intuitively sensed energy-lines. These are different and should not be confused, though they both constitute part of the geomantic wholeness that is implicit in the patterns of ancient sites seen on the map. These ancient sites, when plotted on a map, demonstrate that they have been located very deliberately, not just randomly or wherever their builders fancied at the time. Alignments between them are accurate, clearly playing a part in the location of sites. There are other locational factors too, which we aren't dealing with here. One is underground water-flows, particularly so-called blind springs (called water domes in USA). These set up energy-patterns that are a big factor in the location of many ancient sites. Another factor is the visible landscape – for example, both Tregeseal and Nine Maidens stone circles lie overshadowed by prominent hills that form part of their scenic totality – Carn Kenidjak and Carn Galva respectively. Then there's astronomy – particularly the rising and setting points of the sun at the solstices and other key times of year, and those of the moon at its major and minor standstills. Characteristics of the mythic landscape are another factor, and there are probably more that we're not fully aware of.



*Carn Galva from the Nine Maidens*

Let's look at three major example alignments:

- Nine Maidens stone circle, Lanyon Quoit, Boscawen-ûn stone circle and Treen Circle at Treryn Dinas are all exactly aligned. These are four of the more important sites in Penwith.
- Then Boscawen-ûn is also aligned with St Michael's Mount, Maen Castle near Sennen and one of the more prominent sites on the Isles of Scilly at Bonfire Carn on South Hill, Bryher.
- Meanwhile, Lanyon Quoit is located on an alignment between St Michael's Mount and Pendeen Watch (which this map reveals to be a significant site, even though there is no known 'cliff castle' there).

By just mentioning these three alignments, the beginnings of a locational order begins to take shape, suggesting that sites such as Boscawen-ûn and Lanyon Quoit are very deliberately located, not just in their immediate micro-milieu but also in a wider archaeo-geographic scheme in Penwith. This is interesting because, if you were the designer of this network of sites, faced with a blank canvas of the Penwith landscape, you wouldn't necessarily choose the sites where they are located as places for important sites. But the ancients had more reasons than just landscape settings.

In constructing the map, inaccuracies of alignment of up to only three metres have been accepted, with occasional acceptance of a five metre inaccuracy in some cases when major sites are involved. That's quite a tight accuracy standard. To qualify as an accepted alignment there must be a minimum of four points accurately located on it. Some geomancers would accept no less than five points, but I believe this rule exists mainly to answer doubters and sceptics, or perhaps it pertains more appropriately upcountry in England. But here in Penwith, omitting four-point alignments would miss much potentially valuable data and many geomantic possibilities and patterns. This map isn't made for convincing sceptics – it's made meticulously yet within rounded parameters, in an attempt to gain a feel for the likely thoughts and sentiments of Penwith's ancient megalith builders who, mercifully, were not brought up with a modern Western education, and they didn't have the detachedly disengaged 'objective' consciousness we now proudly possess. They did what they felt best reflected the intelligence within nature, dialoguing with their world as a living being, yet in quite sophisticated ways.

There are cases where three points have been accepted. This has been done in the following instances:

- when an alignment is clearly obvious by dint of its landscape position or by the sites located on it;
- there are short-distance alignments radiating from stone circles, probably astronomically or mathematically oriented (this needs further research);
- there is a collection of alignments connecting the quoits in the northern half of Penwith (about which, more later). These are nearly all three-point alignments and, since there's a distinct pattern here, these alignments are accepted;
- three-point lines have also been accepted on the Isles of Scilly, since distances there are short and locational permutations are fewer than on the mainland;
- and three-point lines are accepted in the Kemyel/Swingate group of menhirs just east of Lamorna, which seems to be a sub-system of menhirs erected for a purpose we're yet to discover.



*Some of the  
Kemyel/Swingate  
stones  
Left - Swingate A  
Centre - Swingate  
C  
Right - Kemyel A*

If you examine these various instances on the map, you'll probably see why this decision has been made. Apart from these exceptions, all alignments have four or more points on them. This said, if we modern folk weren't so desperate for incontrovertible proof, we'd also even recognise some two-point alignments – sight-lines that stand out when we're out in the landscape. Stand on Trencrom Hill, and Godrevy, Carn Brea, Godolphin Hill, Tregonning Hill and St Michael's Mount simply yell at you unavoidably, and this is disputable only when the land is blanketed with fog. Carn Kenidjak and Carn Galva in the north and Chapel Carn Brea and Bartinney in the west are also dominant in Penwith's landscape, not just visually but also in terms of *presence*. They loom large or they're often part of the scenic backdrop.



*Trencrom Hill*

One interesting thing in a magical landscape is that the presence of a hill or headland isn't just about height. Carn Galva looks dominant, yet Watch Croft, the next hill along from it, is higher, but it doesn't stand out in the same way. Psychologically or from a viewpoint of feeling or second sight, Carn Galva is the dominant presence in that area. Similarly, in Victorian times Cape Cornwall was regarded as the land's end, not least because it looks and feels like it – it has presence, drama and enchantment. Land's End itself is not so remarkable, even though, technically, it's a little west of Cape Cornwall. It's where the tourists go. It is likely that the ancients regarded their world and its major psycho-geographic features as entities, presences and beings – alluded to in the giant-filled and character-rich myths and traditions of the area – and the hills and headlands will have constituted big presences in these people's lives. These hills, together with major coastal headlands – misleadingly called 'cliff castles' – form key features in the landscape canvas upon which the ancient sites and their alignments system were laid from 3500 BCE onward, in the late neolithic and bronze age periods. That's roughly when humans began tampering with the land in this area, carrying out agriculture, earth-moving and building projects. The older field systems of Penwith, such as those around Zennor, were established by the late bronze age (1000 BCE). Up to the neolithic, people lived lightly, with hilltops, trees, rocks, cliffs, wells and glades as their special places, and wood and organic materials as their building ingredients.

The sites that have been accepted as valid alignment points are the following:

- Significant hilltops, headlands, carns (natural tors & outcrops) and large rocks;
- Stone circles, quoits (cromlechs) and menhirs (standing stones);
- Holed stones, old boundary stones and other placed stones;
- Hill enclosures ('hillforts'), cliff strongholds and rounds (lowland enclosures);
- Cairns, barrows and tumuli (chambered and solid);
- Ancient settlements and villages;
- Fogous (underground chambers) and holy wells;
- Old churches and early Christian crosses.

## Alignments

The alignments on the map are numbered, but there is no particular order to that numbering or significance to that order – it's simply the sequence with which the alignments revealed themselves and were recorded. But alignments have been grouped somewhat, by type. Although we draw lines across maps to identify alignments, it doesn't mean they actually *are lines*. Upcountry in England there are instances of roads, tracks and boundaries following alignments or leys, marking out alignments in concrete form, but that's not very common, and this is hardly seen in Penwith. All we can genuinely assert is that they are *alignments of carefully positioned points*. Drawing a line on a map is figurative, not literal. However they did it, the ancients located standing stones, mounds and other sites precisely and deliberately, lining them up with each other. But I do not believe they were thinking in terms of actual lines – they simply lined things up. Imagine lining up Lego blocks – they are aligned, but there's no line running between them. An image that comes to mind is that of resonance – setting these stones, banks and mounds in such a way that they cross-resonate with each other, at least in the minds of their ancient builders. Another image is of a circuit board with many lights on it, connected to circuitry that is invisible to anyone who doesn't know it's there – and they each blink independently but there are also patterns to their blinking. These images are but hypothetical, albeit interesting and possible.

But the alignment of sites is verifiable and incontrovertible, an evidential fact that archaeologists and historical geographers unfortunately choose not to face. Dowsers detect energy-lines moving between sites, and some energy-lines indeed coincide with alignments. What proportion of them do so, no one has systematically researched, but it's possibly more the exception than the rule. I would guess at 20%. So we're talking mainly about the *location of points*, not the drawing of lines. We need to give this its proper poetic justice: if, for example, some bronze age sheet music were found, we could do analyses of where notes fall and the distribution of notes, combinations and sequences but, in the end, it's the playing and hearing of music that does the business – and the feeling in that music is to a large degree interpretational. The ancients of Penwith had clear ideas about location, taking the matter to great lengths. While many sites have visually impressive locations, this is not always the case, and visual sight-lines between sites apply only in a proportion of cases.

An example of a relatively unimpressive location is Carfury menhir, a major alignment hub, sitting on a valley side in a position one would not guess to be a great place for a menhir. It has a fine view of St Michael's Mount, but otherwise its positioning is unremarkable. Yet its nodality as an alignment hub in a wider system suggests that it's important. I would imagine a dowser might have a few things to say about its energy-location too. But go over the hill to Bosiliack Barrow, and you'll see visual connections with several sites, including Lanyon Quoit, Carn Kenidjak, Mulfra Quoit, Sancreed Beacon and Watch Croft (West Penwith's highest hill). It's brilliantly located. Move 100 metres in any direction and these connections start disappearing. From a distance, it's often not clear why an ancient site is placed where it is. But go to the site itself and something clicks – and you feel like you're standing at the centre of the universe with everything revolving around you. That's a key secret to these places - the ancient Greeks called them an *omphalos*, a psychic gravity-centre.