

- STONES OF LAMORNA PLATEAU & CASTALLACK
  - AND DOWN TO LAMORNA ● MISSING MENHIRS ●
  - DOWSING ● FOLKLORE ● ANCIENT TRACKS ●
- \*ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR\****

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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**

It used to be thought that the late 1960s and 1970s was the 'golden age' for landscape geometry, otherwise known as geomancy. After all, that was the time when John Michell came to Cornwall to do his classic work on the alignments of stones at the Land's End peninsula, and the time when the 'Ley Hunter' magazine was flourishing and many of the early researchers and writers of the movement were finding their feet and opening their minds to all sorts of new and original thinking. After that, the movement seemed to split, with the dowsers going off in one direction to find energy lines and dowsable landscape pictograms and other shapes, and the geomantic researchers taking some years to regroup and reform into organisations such as the 'Society of Ley Hunters' and the 'Network of Ley Hunters', both of whom are still active today.

And yet when we look around in Cornwall, it seems as if landscape geomancers and alignment researchers are active as never before. In this issue of MM for example, there is a major article on the alignments of several sets of stones in a little known part of West Penwith, the Lamorna Plateau. Much of this is new research, and has partly come about due to the rise of more modern sophisticated technology, such as Google Maps, which allow us to investigate the prehistoric landscape in ways that could not have been dreamt of 40 years ago. A big impetus for this has been Palden Jenkins' on-line map of West Penwith [which can be found at [www.ancientpenwith.org](http://www.ancientpenwith.org)]. In addition a locally-based astronomer Carolyn Kennett has taken a direct interest in the possible alignments of ancient sites (especially Boscawen-ûn circle) to solar and lunar settings and risings, and the stones that may have been deliberately placed by the megalithic builders to view these phenomena. She uses the latest software technology to calculate these, aided by on-the-ground observations, and a special article by her is currently being prepared for MM. Truly, it is here and now when we may be living in the next 'golden age' of landscape geometry or geomancy.

*Meyn Mamvro* is taking a sabbatical! Or to be more precise, your editor is having 6 months off this year to go to Scotland (to run a Tour of Orkney and Lewis), followed by the summer and autumn in Crete, where she has a home she shares with her partner. This means that the next issue of *Meyn Mamvro* (no.94) will be slightly delayed. Instead of being published in September 2017, it won't be out until November 2017. Subsequent issues will have a slightly later than usual publication date for a while until we catch up, but all postal subscriptions for 3 issues will be honoured. We apologise for this delay, but rest assured that MM will be back later this year, with all its usual features.

## DOWSING NEWS

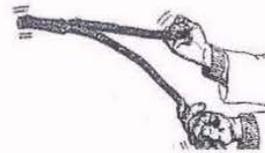


Image [c]  
Jean Hands

The Autumn/Winter 2016 events kicked off in September with a **Trencrom Dowsers** visit to *Bodrifty settlement and Mulfra Quoit*. At the settlement, the focus of interest was the large rock outside the houses at SW44490 35437. Dowsing results suggested that the rock had been the focus of ceremony with formal processions to and from the settlement and well. Interestingly, dowsing also suggested that processions divided around the rock, men to the north and women to the south. They also found that a distinctive channel in the rock provided a kind of 'view frame' to a prominent cairn on Little Galva, in a NW direction, denoting the summer solstice sunset, and an energy line was dowsed marking that orientation.



*Little Galva cairn seen through the notch of the 'sacred stone' at Bodrifty settlement*  
Photo [c] Jill Moss

An energy line also ran from the rock up to the barrow on the hill to the north and another up to Mulfra Quoit. The Group then walked up to Mulfra Quoit, where they dowsed for the boundary of the original earth mound which came out at about 35 feet. The general feeling was that the Quoit had been deliberately decommissioned. Apart from the dowsing results from several people, the missing "leg" of the Quoit suggested that this was the case, as well as the peculiar angle of the capstone. There was speculation that it had been pushed horizontally southwards before dropping steeply to the ground. From there, the Group made their way back down to the settlement, stopping at a large stone, which dowsed as the entrance to what appeared to be the 'shaman's hut' overlooking the settlement. A most interesting afternoon's visit.

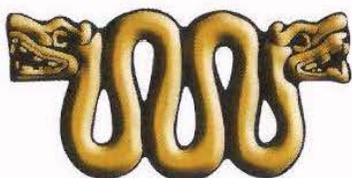
A month later, **Trencrom Dowsers** had their last site visit of the year. On a windy day with passing showers they visited *Rosewall Hill (east) & Trevalgan (Buttermilk) Hill*, overlooking St.Ives. Rosewall Hill east had been visited by West Cornwall Dowsers in Spring 2011 [see MM76 p.2], and the gatepost stone they had found [at SW4904 3290] and dowsed was re-visited - with mixed results! Some of the group confirmed that it was a Bronze Age menhir, subsequently cut down for a gatepost, while others felt that the neighbouring gatepost was of more interest. From there the Group went to the View Frame identified by the late Tony Blackman on the WCD visit, from where they could view the hill outside St.Ives, now crowned with Knill's Monument. There they had lunch, and in the afternoon, they crossed over to Trevalgan Hill, visited by WCD in Autumn 2013 [see MM84 p.2] and Spring 2014 [see MM85 p.3], where they dowsed the cairn (cist) burial at SW4869 3963, which was subsequently added to the HER [Historic Environment Record].



*View through Rosewall Hill  
east view frame [see p.2]*

Later in October, **Tamar Dowzers** had an illustrated talk by *Christopher Clarke* on the native Columbian tribe “The Kogi”, who have a message for the world about environmental concerns. They also have a concept that there are special, sacred nodal points, which are connected by invisible forces or lines, a notion that has a resonance with dowsing. Joining these important places by walking barefoot and laying a symbolic thread between them helps to reinforce and reinvigorate the power of those connections. In November there was a talk/discussion with *Nigel Twinn* on “What are ley lines?”. which, not surprisingly, produced many theories but few definitive answers!

Also in November **Trencrom Dowzers** had a talk by *Andy Norfolk* on “Cornish Song-lines: legends in the landscape”, an idea that will be familiar to MM readers from articles by Andy first espoused in MM62 p.14-18 & MM63 p.14-18, although updated with some new ideas. The follow-up December talk by *Danu Fox* on Song Lines was unfortunately cancelled, due to Danu’s sickness, so the year finished with a **Tamar Dowzers** talk by *Sean Ferris* on “A modern alchemy” which suggested that the cause of much modern malady was the unbalanced state of various metals within the human body.



## Penwith Press

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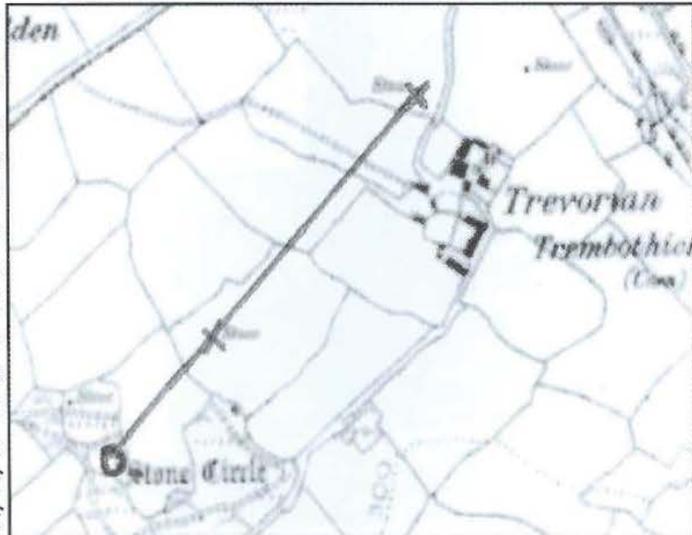
Founded by Hamish Miller in the 1990s, Penwith Press is still based in west Cornwall but now includes titles by some of the best dowsing and earth mysteries’ researchers of this generation: Grahame Gardner, Billy Gawn, Nigel Twinn, David Leesley, Sig Lonegren, Christopher Strong and Palden Jenkins, as well as Hamish Miller’s own perennial favourites and his DVDs produced by Tim Walter.

We also stock the energy current maps for the great dowsing journeys based on the books: “Sun and the Serpent”, (Carn Lês Boel in Cornwall to Hopton in Norfolk) and “Dance of the Dragon”, (Skelligs in Ireland, through Cornwall and away across Europe)

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## ***FEEDBACK ..... on TREVORIAN CIRCLE***

In the last issue of MM92, in the feature on St.Buryan parish [p.13], there was a mention of the Higher Trevorian stone circle [SW4169 2625] which was first identified by W.C.Borlase in 1876 and shown on the 1887 OS map [see right]. MM reader Alan Simkins had a look at this and noticed a number of stones also listed in the nearby fields. He found that two of these to the NE formed a perfect alignment with the circle at an angle of approximately 47 degrees. This of course would denote a midsummer solstice sunrise alignment, so this is a very interesting observation.



*1887 OS map showing Trevorian circle & outliers*

He also had a look at an on-line Bing Maps satellite image of the area [<https://binged.it/2iPLYmf>], and found what could be a crop mark of the circle highlighted. Although nothing now remains of the circle 'in situ' [see MM74 p.14] it was probably finally destroyed and the stones removed as late as the 19th and 20th centuries. A previous owner of the Trevorian Hotel recounted that there was a pile of stones from the circle in a field to the south, and he was warned that "harm would come to anyone who upset them". Nevertheless they are now gone and nothing remains, either of the circle or the stones indicated on the 1887 map.

Because of its relatively recent destruction, it is surprising that the circle is very little known about. Even Andy Jones, Principal Archaeologist with Cornwall Archaeological Unit, knew nothing about it, until MM mentioned it to him. In his chapter "Early landscape and ceremony" [in "Archaeology and Landscape at the Land's End, Cornwall" - reviewed on p.20 of this MM], he says: "Penwith stone circles are commonly found in pairs, closely or widely set. Two stone circles survive at Tregeaseal, and a second stone circle was located near to the Merry Maidens. The Mên-an-Tol (circle) lies 800m to the SW of the Nine Maidens. No stone circle is known in the vicinity of Boscawen-ûn, although ... another circle could have been demolished without a record being made". In fact, Trevorian circle would have stood only 0.7 mile (1.13 km) SE of Boscawen-ûn, so could well have been the 'second circle' of the complex. Despite its total loss, Trevorian circle still has some secrets to share with us.



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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



As has been mentioned in past issues, CASPN is the lead partner of the Ancient Penwith strand of the **Penwith Landscape Partnership project**. For the last 18 months we have been beavering away 'behind the scenes' to develop Landscape Trails and ancient site assessments as part of our contribution to the Landscape Conservation Action Plan. That work is now complete, and the LCAP will be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund later this year in order to release the second tranche of money - and then the Project will really be up and running! We have been proud to have been such a key player in this major project, and look forward to the implementation of the scheme from 2018 - 2022.

Meanwhile, our annual **Pathways to the Past** weekend is nearly upon us - now in its 11th year. As always, we have a varied and interesting programme, and we hope to see as many of you at the different events as possible - all free to FOCAS members (see below).

### **Saturday May 27th**

10.00 - 12.30 Zennor Carn, Quoit etc. Walk with John & Jill Moss. Meet Zennor car park.  
 2.00 - 5.00 From cliff castle to courtyard house. Walk around Bosigran with David Giddings. Meet at Bosigran Engine House layby.  
 8.00 - 10.00 The power of place: reconstructing Cornwall's prehistoric environment.  
 Talk by Paul Bonnington. Old Town Hall, St. Just

### **Sunday May 28th**

11.00 - 12.30 A photographic journey around West Penwith. Talk by James Kitto. Old Town Hall, St. Just.  
 2.00 - 5.00 Fairies and Phantoms, Carns and Confusion. Walk around Tregeseal with Adrian Rodda.  
 8.00 - 9.00 Finds & discoveries in West Penwith. Talk by Rory Te'Tigo North Inn Pendeen

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

**CASPAN 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)  
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#### **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 (PayPal or downloadable application form), or write to: 11 Victoria Row, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7LG

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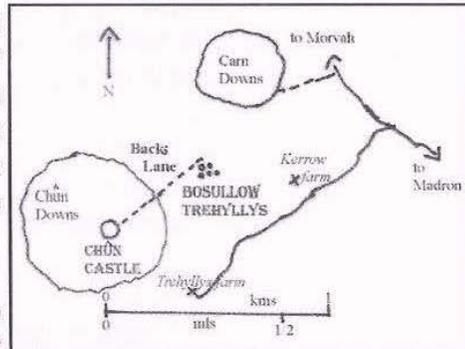
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## ANCIENT TRACKS

### 13: Backs Lane [Chûn Downs to Bosulow Trehyllys]

*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.*

At the foot of Chûn Downs is a short stretch of green lane [from SW4071 3411], known locally as Backs Lane. It can be seen quite clearly from Chûn Castle at the top of the Downs, and a path runs in a north-east direction from the Castle down to the beginning of the path. It can also be approached by a path from Trehyllys Farm.



This stretch of green lane leads directly to Bosulow Trehyllys courtyard house settlement at SW406 342 [see MM87 p.7 'Home sweet ancient home' for more details of the Courtyard House settlement]. This means that not only is it a green lane, but that it is likely to go even further back in time, as it is probable that it was in existence when both Chûn Castle and Bosulow Trehyllys courtyard house settlement were constructed in the Iron Age, about 2500 years ago. Indeed, both sites may have been constructed by the same people, and the track also built at that time to link the two. It may also have been part of the original Tinnars Way across the West Penwith moors, used for transporting goods from inland to the coast. We can infer this, because although Backs Lane now finishes at the settlement, it once continued, following the line of the existing field hedge, and exited at the eastern end of Carn Downs, where another stretch of the same green lane still exists. We therefore have in this short stretch of track the echoes of a world that existed millennia ago, whose way was walked by many Iron Age people.



*View of Backs Lane from Chûn Castle*



*Bosulow Trehyllys towards Carn Downs*

## MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

### 17: Buryas Bridge stones

A probable standing stone, one of 3 originals, has recently been identified on the Megalithic Portal web site by DrNickLeB. It lies to the south of Buryas Bridge on the A30 Penzance to Land's End road, and can be reached by taking the public bridleway heading south from Bridge Cottage. Follow the footpath uphill for about 230 metres until a twisted gate and fallen tree is found on the right. This leads into a field where the northernmost stone of the three now lies [at SW44599 28947]. It was first recorded on the OS 6 inch map of 1887, along with two other stones, one in a field to the south of this one [at approx. 4460 2885], and a third one a couple of fields further south of that [at approx. 4457 2863]. However, by the second edition of the map in 1909, only the northernmost stone remained, so we can assume that the other two were removed between 1887 and 1909.



1887 OS map

The same fate nearly befell the existing northernmost stone, as there are clearly a line of drill holes along one side of the stone, presumably made with a view to blasting it with gunpowder. However, this never occurred, and, although badly mutilated, the stone fortunately remains. It is around 2.17 metres (7ft) in length, and lies close to its original site, as packing stones can be seen around the shallow post hole. The field is a very steep sided one, so the views from the stone are magnificent, all the way to Mounts Bay and to Tregonning and Goldolphin hills beyond.

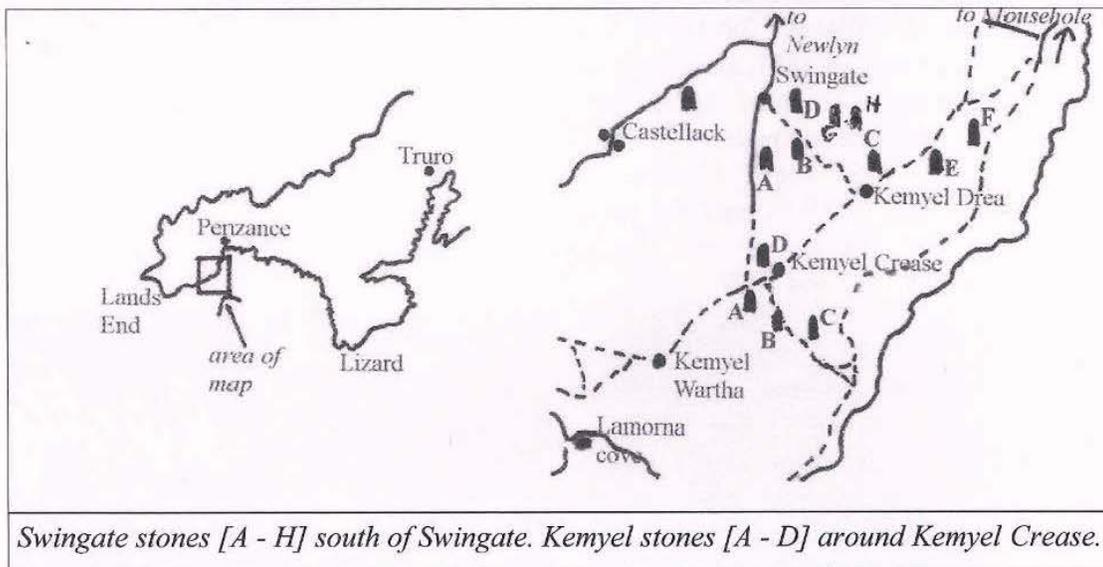


The three original stones are almost in a due north-south line, so may have formed part of the same alignment or stone row. Stone rows are rare in this part of Cornwall, so their loss is greatly to be deplored, and it is sad to think that if today's more enlightened approaches existed about 100 years ago, the stones may have been saved for all time. As it is, we are lucky to have this one stone remaining, and now it has been recorded, let us hope that it stays preserved for the future.



## THE OLD STONES OF LAMORNA PLATEAU REVISITED

In MM25 [Autumn 1994] there was an article on 'The Old Stones of Lamorna Plateau', which explored many of the then largely unknown and unrecorded stones that were widely found off the beaten track in the area between Mousehole and Lamorna. Since then, there has been a greater awareness of these stones, with many of them listed on Google Maps and included in Palden Jenkins' online map of alignments. So recently, MM returned to the area to check out these stones and explore their relationships to each other and the surrounding landscape.



The first stone visited was at **CASTALLACK** a 1.55m (5ft) boulder stone [4540 2545], in a field beside the minor road to Castallack farm. This was originally recorded by John Michell in his book *The Old Stones of Lands End* in the early 1970s. On its eastern side near the ground is a line of seven cup marks with two more below, that could have been drilled in historic times for the purpose of cutting the stone. It is on two of the alignments in this subset of stones, LP4 & LP7 [see p.13], and it



is also on a longer alignment going through a number of other stones to/from Boscawen-ûn circle, marking an astronomical alignment, first identified by Norman Lockyer in 1911. From the circle this marks the Imbolc (Feb) sunset or Samhain (Nov) sunrise.

At 4542 2530 there is a hedge stone menhir, and south of this at 4550 2513 there is a field, originally called Longstone Field, though no trace of any stone now remains [see MM14]. However both stone sites are on a 9 point alignment running from Kemyel B menhir [see p.12] to Tresvennack Pillar menhir. It is also possible that the Longstone Field stone may also have stood on a 3 point alignment to Swingate B & Swingate E stones, which, if it did, would make yet another alignment in this densely packed area.

Moving eastwards, we come to a cluster of stones constituting the Swingate group. The first of these was again identified by John Michell and is now called the **SWINGATE A** menhir. It is a 2m (6½ft) triangular shaped boulder stone that stands in a field west of Swingate B [below] at 4570 2517. Michell said that “Like all except the most famous stones, it is now threatened by changing agricultural methods and the introduction of heavy farm machinery”, but fortunately over 40 years later it remains in place. However, Michell mentioned that a second nearby stone (making them a pair) had recently been destroyed. Swingate A is intervisible with several other stones and is on the subset group alignment LP5 [see p.13]. It is also on a longer alignment through a hedge stone to the Blind Fiddler menhir and Sancreed Beacon.



*Swingate A*

In the early 1980s John Barnatt visited the area for his book *Prehistoric Cornwall*, and recorded two more stones in this group, which he called Swingate B & C. However on the way down the lane from Swingate farmhouse, he missed a further stone in a field opposite the aforementioned farmhouse, now named **SWINGATE D** [4582 2539]. This is another triangular stone, about 1.5m (4.8ft) high, and lies on two alignments LP1 and LP4 [see p.13].



*Swingate D*

As this article was being prepared for publication, Andy Norfolk, who was looking at the Google maps for the area, noticed another two hitherto unidentified stones in adjoining fields south-east of Swingate D. These have now been named **SWINGATE G & SWINGATE H** [photos on p.10]. Swingate G is a boulder stone at 4598 2535, and Swingate H is an upright at 4608 2532. These two stones are likely to be part of this same subset, as they form an alignment LP6 [see p.13] that runs from Swingate D, through G & H and on to Swingate E.



*[left] Swingate G and [right] long distance shot of Swingate H, taken from the field boundary between G & H. Without the field boundaries both stones would have been intervisible with each other and with Swingate D.*

Returning to the lane and continuing down it, we come to a field on the right where **SWINGATE B** stone stands [4582 2524]. It is a 1.65m (5.4ft) upright stone almost due south of Swingate D, and is intervisible with it. It lies on two alignments in this subset LP1 & LP3 [see p.13], but unlike Castallack, Swingate A & Swingate D it is upright in shape rather than triangular.



*Swingate B*

The lane from Swingate Farm leads down to Kemyel Drea Farm where it meets an inland path. Turn left (NE direction) and take the path through the farm, where the next stone **SWINGATE C** stands [4614 2522]. This is a 1.85m (6ft) upright stone, similar to Swingate B, but this time at an angle that points in a NE direction to St. Michael's Mount, denoting a midsummer solstice sunrise alignment. St. Michael's Mount is of course perhaps Cornwall's most famous holy island, and the early name of the Mount even meant "hill of the sun". All this seems to suggest that Swingate C is an ancient standing stone, and one of the stones of this sub-group. It is on alignment LP3 [see p.13], and also on a longer alignment going from it to Redhouse SW menhir, Sancreed church tower, Botrea Barrows (barrow A), Truthwall Common entrance grave C, to Carn Bean B & Carn Bean A cairns.



*Swingate C*

There are two further stones in this Swingate group, **SWINGATE E & SWINGATE F** that, when they were first investigated over 20 years ago, were thought to be rubbing posts. However in the light of the discovery of all the other stones in the group, and the fact that they too are on subset alignments this needs to be reassessed.

They lie further along this inland path from Keyyel Drea Farm towards Mousehole with lovely views over the sea, and were it not for modern hedges, would certainly be intervisible with some of the other Swingate stones. We come first to **SWINGATE E** [4635 2520] which is on three alignments LP2, LP3 and LP6 [see p.13], followed



*Swingate E*



*Swingate F*

by, in an adjoining field eastwards, **SWINGATE F** [4649 2535], which is on alignments LP2 & LP4. Both of these stones are uprights, and seem to be definitely connected with the other Swingate stones.

That completes this group of 7 Swingate stones, which is an incredible concentration for such a small area of about 1 sq. mile. However, we are not finished with stones in this mini area, for less than a mile further south, there are another cluster of 4 stones, known as the Kemyel cluster, around Kemyel Crease farm.

If we reverse direction on this inland path and head back westwards towards Lamorna, we pass Kemyel Drea farm and continue on the footpath through a wooded copse and across a stream until we reach Kemyel Crease farm. From the farm, at a house called Kemyel Point, an old green land heads down towards the sea, perhaps a fisherman's or a smuggler's lane. In the first field to the west of this lane stands **KEMYEL A** menhir [4569 2467], a 1.9m (6¼ft) high stone, which Robin Payne (in *The Romance of the Stones*) describes as "a formidable piece of granite that took a considerable amount of effort to erect". The farmer said that it goes back at least 5 or 6 generations in his family, so it would seem to be a good candidate for a genuine menhir. It points directly to the very tip of the Lizard across the expanse of Mount's Bay at an angle that would give a Samhain (Nov) sunrise or Imbolc (Feb) sunset alignment. It is also on the LP5 alignment [p.13].



*Kemyel A*

Walking further down the green lane, at a bend in the lane, where it turns in a SE direction, there is a stone in the hedge at 4573 2466 called **KEMYEL B**. This dowses as a genuine menhir, and is clearly not a gatepost stone, as it stands behind two gatepost stones. Since first discovered by MM in 1994, it has become more overgrown but is still identifiable. It lies on the LP2 alignment [see p.13], and also marks the start point of a longer 9 point alignment that ends at Tresvennack Pillar menhir.



*Kemyel B*

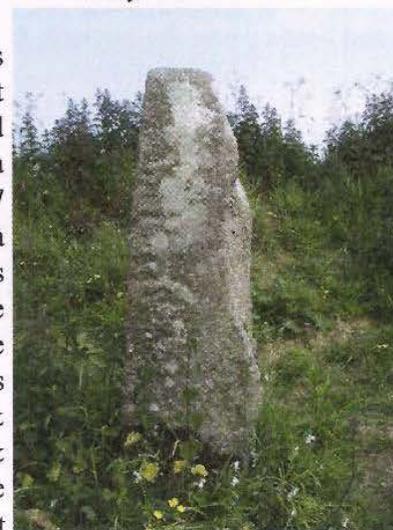
Further down the lane in a field to the east at 4587 2458 stands **KEMYEL C** stone. This is another triangular stone 1.75m (5.75ft) standing in a slight hollow. Again, there are extensive views out to sea, and in the far distance the coastline of the Lizard peninsula stretches away to the SE.

This stone is on two of the sub-set alignments, LP1 & LP7 [see p.13], but LP7 is also part of a longer alignment that goes from this stone and 2 others in the sub-set through the Redhouse menhirs to Kerris Round and Kerris menhir. These latter stones are only a short distance to the NW of this subset on the Lamorna plateau, and form a good 6-point alignment within a few miles of each other.



*Kemyel C*

Finally, we come to the last stone in this Kemyel group, **KEMYEL D** [4568 2486], the most recent to be identified. It stands in a field immediately behind the Kemyel Crease farm buildings beside a public footpath, and is an upright stone, about 1.5m (5ft) high. Its position right at the edge of the field next to some wire fencing does not suggest that it is a rubbing post, and indeed it is on alignment LP7 [see p.13] that can be extended to Kerris Round & Menhir. It has a similar shape to the Swingate B stone, and it is a curious observation that all the stones in this sub group can be divided either into upright stones (Swingate B, Swingate C, Swingate H, Kemyel B & Kemyel D); triangular stones (Swingate D, Swingate E, Swingate F, Kemyel A & Kemyel C); or boulder shaped (Castallack, Swingate A & Swingate G). This is a most interesting - and still little known - set of stones in this little-visited corner of West Penwith that repay visiting and studying further.



*Kemyel D*



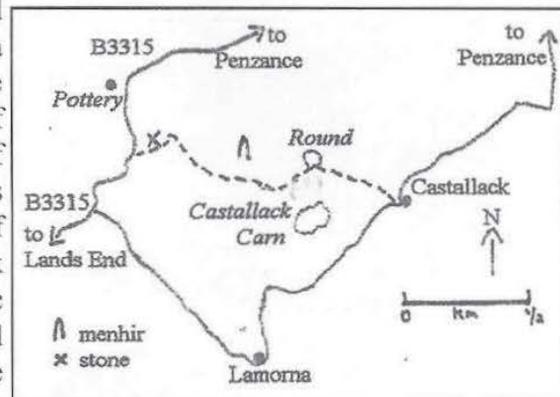
## CASTALLACK'S HISTORIC SITES

by Raymond Cox

(Castell – Cornish for “the place of castle, village or tor”)

The area around Castallack Carn and the hamlet of Castallack above the Lamorna valley was rich in ancient remains. Some are there today and are indications of the life of old communities. Of course many areas of West Penwith can be easily designated as multi-period landscapes when sites of varying eras are seen together. Castallack has the extant, the hidden, the destroyed, the repaired, the artefacts, the imaginative – and the questionable – in addition to one of the beautiful bridle paths of the region [see

*MM91 p.6*]. This leads west from the hamlet, passes a mysterious disused quarry hidden away just off the path in enclosed vegetation, and opens out into a field with far-reaching views before becoming a wide green lane to the valley.



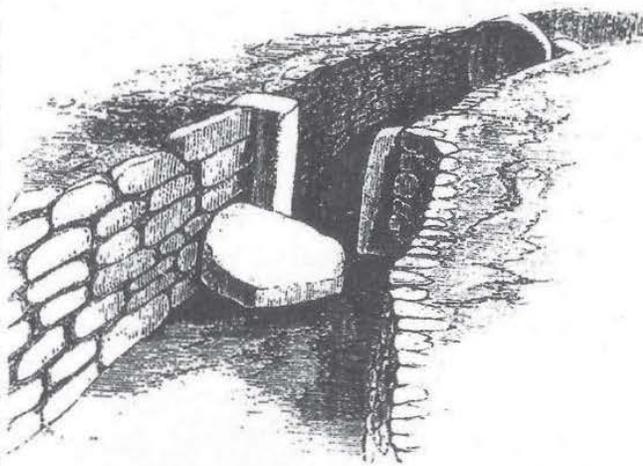
When the Heritage Environmental Record (HER) states that the large Roundago, (SW 448 254), (the Cornish name for Round or Tor,) may be associated with the nearby hut circle, courtyard house and field system it's worth taking note. Indeed, a courtyard house was once identified within the Round itself from artefacts found in the 19th century, as well as one just outside it to the east which was identified from crop marks. Then there was the hut circle very close to the northeast, and a field system. They are no longer there as they were unfortunately destroyed by a local person or persons who wanted the stone. There are no natural stones in great number in this area unlike many places in Penwith.

The Roundago, a Romano-British Round, has been a scheduled monument since 1972. It is the large central feature of the Castallack sites and measures about 55m (180ft) by 49m (160ft). The entrance was on the south side. Part of the enclosure wall, about half the length, is extant and is about 1.5m (4.9ft) high and varying in thickness. Evidence came to light of wall rebuilding in the past, but the Roundago was partially destroyed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Ordnance Survey's 1st Edition 25" map shows the site incorporated into the modern field landscape with segments of the wall missing. Nevertheless it remains a good example of this type of monument, and in 2001 the Cornwall Archaeological Unit replaced fallen slabs. The OS survey in 1960 indicates that it is situated on high ground, but the position was not a good defensive one. An interesting thought, and evidence perhaps that Rounds, less defensible enclosures than hill forts, were, for the farming communities, better suited to keep out livestock, wild animals and – ironically – thieves than to defy attacks.

But both these similar types of monuments were closely suggestive of the role they played at the end of summer when the beasts were rounded up. Also they may have been useful for storing the grain harvests.

The historical story is revealing. In 1847 J.O.Halliwell (*Rambles in Western Cornwall*) describes a large oval outer enclosure surrounded by a thick earth- and- stone wall, and a small inner enclosure. Then he mentions a passage of upright stones which led from the outer to the inner enclosure. Yet, intriguingly, when J.T.Blight visited the site eighteen years later, in 1865, he found no such avenue of stones and only slight traces of the inner enclosure remaining. Perhaps locals wanted stone again. Blight did find a cupped (cup-marked) stone - since moved to the grounds of a cottage in Castallack - in the wall on the western interior. Such artefacts offer evidence of courtyard houses of which they are a feature. Blight also found a broken granite rotary quern. This indicated agriculture and probably the grinding of alluvial tin ore from deposits in the Lamorna valley. The detailed description and plan of the Round by C. Henderson in 1914 (*Notebook of Parochial Activities* – an unpublished document) shows three segments of the wall incorporated into the modern field boundary, with varying thickness. He found nothing visible of the inner enclosure described by Blight.

Another feature of courtyard house settlements is of course an accompanying fogou. There was one at nearby Castallack Farm — at approximately SW4515 2531. In 1866 some labourers, while levelling ground, came upon a walled trench which the tenant of the estate had already cleared, as he had been curious as to what it could have been. Blight visited the site and found it to be similar to other well-known fogous, although it was comparatively small. The walls were built of smaller than usual stones for fogous. The walled passage, in a reasonable state of preservation, was divided into two sections by a small doorway, the lintel stone of which was missing. The eastern end had another doorway into a section of passage which was unroofed. Blight thought that both the doorways and the western extremity of the long passage were blocked by large stones intentionally indicating “that the doorways were not formed to admit of frequent ingress and egress”. Pottery fragments and whetstones had been found at the site as well as traces of primitive furnaces. Ian Cooke in his book *Mother and Sun – The Cornish Fogou* classifies the fogou in his list of ‘definites’, but states that its classification is not as conclusive as others in that category. The site is now covered by a modern barn.



*Castallack fogou passage [J.T.Blight, 1867]*

The pasture land to the east of the Roundago is of great contrast to the land to the west which is wild with much bracken and other vegetation. It is here, about 45.7 m (150ft) to the west of the Roundago that the Castallack Carn menhir (4474 2537) may be found. Its dimensions are 1.5m (4.9ft) high and 0.38m (1.25ft) thick, tapering towards the top. For some time this stone had been well hidden in the vegetation and therefore little visited, but a clear narrow path to it has been made leading off the bridle path at SW44749 25331. A visit in June 2016 revealed the stone tucked away among a profusion of red campion and other flowers which surrounded it.



Alignments running through the stone include:-

1. Boskenna Gate cross/The Pipers (between the two stones)/Castallack Carn menhir/Castallack Round.
2. Brea barrow/Bunkers Hill W menhir (*not extant*)/Pridden menhir/Castallack Carn menhir.
3. Runnel Stone/Treryn Dinas cliff castle/Boskenna tumuli/Castallack Carn menhir.

Visiting all the sites and even the locations of the non-extant sites at Castallack, quiet and remote above Lamorna, can be a rewarding and reflective experience.

## **AND DOWN TO LAMORNA**

by **Cheryl Traffon**

The road from Castallack twists and turns a short distance down to Lamorna valley. Is this the quiet back road the way these early visitors to this area climbed up from the safe harbour entrance of Lamorna, on to the Lamorna plateau, where they put up all their standing stones and markposts for a reason that we now puzzle over? In any case, the road turns the last corner, crosses a foot bridge by the Old Mill House, and here you are in the Lamorna Valley, a place where time has stood still. Up the other side, cars and their occupants whizz down the main road to the Cove, look around, buy an ice cream and whizz back up again. Or they may linger longer at 'The Wink', the old hostelry which has served many a passing traveller for many a year.

But here in the valley itself you are in touch with something much older. It is not easily accessible, and for that reason it keeps its secrets well. Along the stream there is a hidden well, known only to locals. And further upstream there is a private place that I got to know when I first moved here over 30 years ago. In an old gipsy caravan in the woods lived the earth loving pagan Jo, and together we built a small stone circle in a clearing. Here we dedicated the site and performed rituals in honour of Mother Earth and the Goddess in this safe and secluded spot.

Later, he told me stories of how the original Woodcutters, artistes and Quakers who were conscientious objectors in World War II, had come to live here and work on the land. Their story is told in full in the book by Ithel Colquhoun *The Living Stones*. Jo herself knew Ithel, who also had lived nearby in the same woods in a hut that she had called 'the Vow Cave'. In her book she talked about hearing 'sounds and sweet airs' in the valley, but also experiencing ghostly figures and eerie-blue misty lights, and experienced it as a haunted and otherworldly place. But as well as fearing, she also rejoiced in its forms, both corporeal and ethereal, as this extract shows:

*"Valley of streams and moon-leaves, wet scents and all that cries with the owl's voice, all that flies with a bat's wing, peace! Influences, essences, presences, whatever is here - in my name of a stream in a valley, I salute you; I share this place with you. Stirrings of life, expanding spores, limbo of germination, for all you give me I offer thanks. O rooted here without time, I bathe in you; genius of the fern-loved gully, do not molest me; and may you remain for ever unmolested."*

Even after I stopped going to Jo's place, it continued to have a strange hold on me. In the late 1990's, 'S' and I used to visit the small stone circle in the woods to make our own connection with the Goddess, sometimes bumping into Jo, who was by then only living there sporadically. We thought no more about this until the day when S's father came over from Canada to visit us. We wanted to show him the circle in the woods, so with Jo's permission went to visit it. As we entered the clearing he stared hard at Jo's caravan and said "I think I've been here"! How could that possibly be? It turned out that after the war, as part of the Quaker network, he had come on honeymoon with his wife, and stayed in the very same caravan, the place where S had been conceived! She knew absolutely nothing about this, and yet in some strange way our destinies had become linked through this spot in Lamorna Woods.

So Lamorna Woods are certainly 'haunted' for me, though not in the conventional sense of the word. It is as if layers of time meet each other here, like ripples from a stone dropped into a stream. The veil between the present and the past is very thin here and who knows, perhaps the future as well. These first travellers, who came up this valley from the Cove, have left their imprint behind. Some climbed up to the patch of land at the head of the valley, where they built the Dans Maen - the Merry Maidens stone circle and outliers. But others had a different intent: they turned north-eastwards and climbed a path to Castalack ( the road by which we descended earlier ). Here on this plateau above the valley, they built the complex of stones described on pages 8 - 13. They must have been connected to the Merry Maidens builders, but were they a different group, or was this perhaps a 'training ground' for apprentice megalithic builders? Perhaps this was their research ground where they plotted the passage of the sun and moon and stars across the dark skies before they incorporated the knowledge into the building of the Merry Maidens. Whatever the reason, their spirits dwell there still - in the stones, in the soil, and down in the valley itself. If you leave the beaten path, the busy roadway, the tourist honeyspot, you can still glimpse a little of the magic of Lamorna valley as it once was.

## CORNISH FOLKLORE

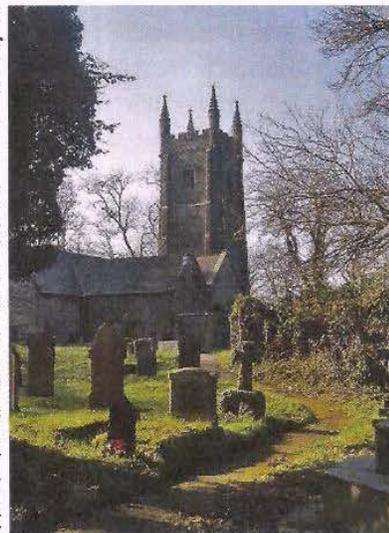
*A regular column by folklorist Alex Langstone*

### Saints, Demons and Conjurors

The village of Ladock lies in the heart of the mid-Cornwall countryside a few miles to the north-east of the city of Truro. The settlement is named after Lodoca, a 6<sup>th</sup> Century Irish Abbess, who, like so many of her contemporaries, came to Cornwall to set up a religious community. She is thought to have founded her settlement close to the holy well, at Fentonladock. There is an old story associated with her and her neighbouring missionaries, Grace and Probus. One day they all decided that the boundary between their two villages should be formally marked. They would each rise at dawn, and walk towards their neighbour's settlement, and where they met would be the new boundary. Probus set off at dawn, but Ladoca decided to brush her very long hair before she set off. By the time she had finished, Probus had almost arrived at Lodoca's settlement, hence the current parish boundaries uneven size. Ladock Glebe holy well. on the valley floor below the church, is where water has traditionally been collected for baptisms, and this beautiful holy well sits in an enchanting green dell amid oak, holly and beech trees, with the church tower clearly visible on the hill to the south.

The village is also home to the amazing tales of Parson Wood, Ghost layer extraordinaire. William Wood was rector at Ladock between 1704 and 1749, a time when many Cornish clergy were involved in lavish exorcisms of demons and ghosts. Rev. Wood was a skilled exorcist, astrologer and occultist and he was kept busy keeping many undesirable entities at bay. He was respected by all his parishioners and was at the heart of village life, being actively involved in the continued survival of traditional Cornish wrestling and hurling. He was the official keeper of the silver hurling ball, and encouraged the game in the parish. When out, the Parson would carry a fancy ebony walking stick. It had a massive silver finial on which was engraved a pentacle, and just below this, on the dark shaft

of the stick was a band of silver, engraved with planetary symbols and mystical figures. He is famous for laying many ghosts and devils, and he was usually a match for most demons, whom he would change into animals and dispatch with his whip.



*[above] St.Ladock's church*

*[c] Alex Langstone*

*[below] St.Ladoca's holy well*

*[c] Cam Longmuir*

However, one of his most famous exorcisms proved to be more problematic. This particular demon took the shape of a terrifying bird like figure that took the church tower as his home. The demon was very large with coal-black plumage and fiery eyes. The feathered fiend, which looked like no known bird, would make a hideous racket, which would bellow down the tower, petrifying the bell-ringers. The Parson was having trouble laying the demon by his usual methods, as he kept hiding behind the pinnacles on the tower, and Wood eventually devised a plan of exorcism using newly baptised children to rid the village of this noisy menace. He gathered nine unbaptised children to the church. Once baptised, the children were presented around the base of the tower along with mothers, who each held their children aloft, whilst Parson Wood walked around them all, muttering and cutting the air in various figures with his walking stick. The fiend eventually took flight, after one last prolonged screech, and he darted straight up flapping his dark and demonic wings, from which fiery sparks



*Parson Wood's walking stick by Paul Atlas-Saunders*

and flames of blue were seen billowing, as the demon headed for St Enoder. The Parson was also famous for foiling an attempt by the Devil to beat local Cornish wrestling hero John 'Jackey' Trevail at a clandestine midnight wrestling match on Le Pens Plat Common, and it was rumoured that the devil in question may have been sent by the neighbouring St Enoder witches, who could often be seen flying on their ragwort stems during the time of the full moon or heading home after their midnight meetings in the shape of hares.

There is mention of a "celebrated Ladock conjuror", in Richard Polwhele's *Traditions and Recollections volume 2, 1826*. This particular conjuror is reported to have found a man who had fallen into a shaft of Creekbraw's Mine, using some sort of remote viewing, and was able to recover stolen money by occult means. Was this conjuror Parson Wood? Maybe, but Polwhele seems to hint that it was a different person, with the following passage –

*"In the last age, some of the rusticated clergy used to favour the popular superstition, by pretending to the power of laying ghosts... I could mention the names of several persons whose influence over their flock was solely attributable to this circumstance. By far other means, we now endeavour to secure the good opinion of those who are committed to our care"*

So, who was this mysterious "celebrated Ladock conjuror"? I doubt we will ever know for sure, and it is probable that Parson William Wood himself was the source for these anonymous enigmatic tales.

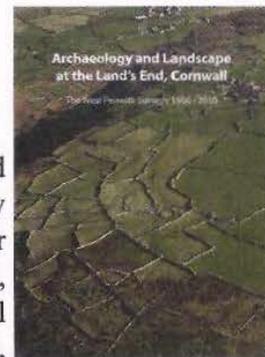
*Taken from the forthcoming book "From Granite to Sea: the Folklore of Bodmin Moor and East Cornwall" by Alex Langstone, due to be published later this year.*

*For more Cornish Folklore see Alex's Facebook page "Cornish Folklore".*

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Archaeology and Landscape at the Land's End, Cornwall - The West Penwith Surveys 1980-2010

[Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 2016. Hbk £29.00]



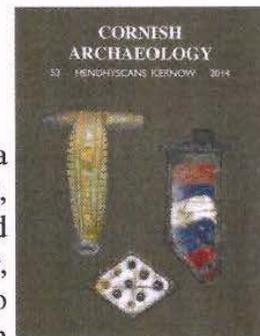
This is a major work on the West Penwith prehistoric and historic landscape, based on Archaeological Surveys undertaken by the CAU between 1980 to 2010. 11 chapters by authors Peter Herring, Nicholas Johnson, Andy M Jones, Jacqueline Nowakowski, Adam Sharpe and Andrew Young, explore, in roughly chronological order, the story of the development of the landscape, the monuments, the settlements and the farms. The book is profusely illustrated with colour photographs, maps and site plans, and is a tremendous resource with much of interest to both professional and armchair archaeologists.

After an overview of West Penwith's landscape (by Peter Herring) and the surveys undertaken from 1980-2010 (by Nicholas Johnson), there is a chapter on 'Understanding the Landscape' (by Peter Herring and Andrew Young), which shows the different categories of land and boundary markers. This is followed by a case study of Bosigran and Bosporthennis (by Peter Herring), which has some very interesting observations about sites that are aligned on to Carn Gulva [*more on this in the next issue of MM*]. Herring also argues that the Bosporthennis Beehive Hut, which has always been thought of as being prehistoric and connected to the nearby Courtyard House settlement [*see MM84 p.7*] is in fact a post-medieval 'crow' (a small stone-built animal house) which will cause some controversy! However, it is perhaps the next chapter (Ch.5) entitled 'Early landscape and ceremony' (by Andy M Jones) which will be of greatest interest to MM readers - though it too is not without its controversial nature! Throughout this chapter, he persists in calling cromlechs or dolmens (colloquially 'Quoits') 'chambered tombs', a term that in the past has been used as an alternative for 'entrance graves', which are an entirely different class of monument to cromlechs/dolmens. This is a confusing and an unnecessary distraction. However, on the plus side, he does throughout emphasise that these and other contemporary monuments (such as stone circles and standing stones) were "ceremonial" and that ritual and ceremony were an important part of prehistoric activity at these places. He also discusses barrows, and includes a particularly good landscape exemplar for these type of monuments, focussed around Chapel Carn Brea. Chapters 6 & 7 (by Jackie Nowakowski) look at 'Prehistoric Settlement' in the later Iron Age and Romano-Cornish periods, including roundhouses, fields, courtyard house settlements, hill forts, cliff castles and rounds. This contains useful and informative detail, including the fact that many courtyard houses were built on earlier roundhouses. However, she has a real blind spot about fogous, saying they were "most likely" used for storage, and thus ignoring all the archaeological evidence to the contrary. Chapters 8 & 9 (by Peter Herring) look at medieval and post-medieval West Penwith, and the book is completed by the Industrial Landscape by Adam Sharpe. All in all, this is a 'must have' book for anyone interested in the prehistoric landscape of West Penwith and its development over the centuries.

### Cornish Archaeology 53 [2014]

Published by Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2016

Available from: <http://cornisharchaeology.org.uk/publications/>



The most recent annual volume of *Cornish Archaeology* has a distinctive Isles of Scilly focus, with a number of interesting articles, including a catalogue and discussion of over 300 Roman-period brooches deposited as votive offerings on the island of Nornour, found during the excavations there in 1962-3; the discovery of two nested vessels on St. Agnes in 1970; and some unusual pottery from Bryher. However, the main article of interest is by Peter Herring on Boscawen-ûn stone circle, examining in some detail the circle and its setting, based on a detailed survey undertaken in 1999. Herring examines its place within the prehistoric landscape, and suggests that the circle was positioned partly in relation to the rocky outcrop of Creeg Tol, “so that those gathered there appreciated this view”. He looks at perspectives from the circle, and notes that to the NE, the top of Chapel Carn Brea is dramatically seen, and to the south in the distance is seen a view of a tiny splash of sea, and the Pipers standing stones of the Merry Maidens circle. As well as an interesting history of the site and its place within a prehistoric ceremonial landscape, Herring recognises its continuing use and significance today: “Pagans and others sensitive to earth mysteries make active and respectful use of it”. The circle is then examined in depth, and Herring suggests that the centre stone was placed there first before the circle. He also examines the ‘axe head’ carvings on that stone, but is unlucky that Tom Goskar’s photogrammetry work suggesting they represent feet came too late to be included in the main article. But overall, a particularly interesting volume.

## WELLS CORNER

**The Tide Well, Roche Rock [SW 9912 5970]**

Thomas Quiller-Couch in the book *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall* [published 1894] mentions a well or spring near Roche Rock in mid-Cornwall: not the well-known St. Gundred's Well [SW985 617] which lies nearly a mile to the north, but a well in a rock at the foot of Roche Rocks itself. Quiller-Couch refers to the first mention of this well or spring by Richard Carew (1555-1620) who, in his *Survey of Cornwall*, writes that “near the foot of [Roche Rock] lieth a rock nearly level with the ground above and hollow downwards, with a winding depth which contains water reported by some of the neighbours to ebb and flow with the sea”. Quiller-Couch adds: “This receptacle for water contained, on my last visit, but a scant supply, being only seven inches in diameter and about a foot in depth; a perfect cul-de-sac”. He also says that the two wells have often been confused, but the Roche Rock one “has lost the name of St. Gundred”. The location of the Roche Rock one has sometimes been in doubt, but recently Andy Norfolk believes he has found it [photo above] as it fits Quiller-Couch’s description: “The stone it is in appears to be earth fast and the well is the cylindrical hole you see in the photo”. Facebook: *Holy Wells of Cornwall*



## 20 YEARS AGO

### *Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

In MM32 [Winter/Spring 1997], there was a report of a most interesting figurine at the then Camborne Museum, about which very little was known. The figurine was about 18.7cm (7 inches) high and made of stone. In “A Corpus of religious material from the civilian areas of Roman Britain” [BAR 24, 1976 p.128] Miranda Green said of it: “Stone figure seated on chair or stool, which has horizontal ribbing at the back. Head very large for body and brow lowering. Features are very Celtic with lentoid eyes, long shapeless nose and trap mouth. Rear seems over-developed. Possibly crude local mother-goddess although breasts not indicated”. The figure was also listed and illustrated in “Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani Vol 1 Facs.7 (Roman Sculpture from the Cotswold Region with Devon and Cornwall)” [OUP, 1993], where editor Martin Henig said of it: “It has characteristic Celtic physiognomy, with triangular nose and lentoid eyes. There is no certain indication of sex, but the very prominent buttocks suggest that the figure is female. There is a tradition of nude goddesses in the south-west as attested by bronze figurines from Henley Wood, Yatton”. This refers to a Goddess figurine found there during an excavation of the Roman Temple in the 1960s.



MM was intrigued by this unique Cornish find, and investigated further to try and discover its provenience. The late Professor Charles Thomas told us: “This little stone figure is odd, and to begin with I don’t think it is local stone at all. It was found around 1950 by someone who picked it off the top of a hedge, I think around the back and top of Redruth, a lane going up off Albany/Clifton roads to Pednandrea and Mt.Ambrose. I found out that a whole heap of rubbish had been shot over this hedge into the mine burrows”. So where it originally came from was a mystery. Charles Thomas wasn’t even sure it was local in origin, and wondered if it might have been bought by a collector of miscellaneous ‘antiquities’ in the area, quite a few of whom lived there when he was young. There was one further mystery with it. While examining it in the Museum with the curator Martin Matthews, MM noticed some inscriptions along the top which looked like: -

|| ^ ||| H or the other way up H ||| V ||

Miranda Green suggested they were either lettering or hair, MM speculated numerals, and Charles Thomas suggested rustic ‘capitalis’. They added an enigma to the existing mystery.

Some years ago Camborne Museum closed, and its contents dispersed, mainly to Helston Museum. The whereabouts of the figurine was lost, but MM asked Anna Tyake of the Royal Cornwall Museum to investigate and, together with Carl Thorpe, they eventually located a cast replica, that had been done by the late Charles Thomas, to a store in Truro. The original however remains elusive, and a search of Helston Museum yielded nothing.

## 30 YEARS AGO

### *Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

By issue no.3 of MM in 1987, the magazine was showing its interest in alternative spirituality and the Celtic Otherworld, with articles on 'Living with a fogou' by Jo May, 'The Faery Folk' by Sue French, and 'The Sacred Earth' by Marilyn Spencer. To give a flavour of the times, we are reprinting part of the article 'Oakdragon comes to Penwith':

"The sun shone on the gaily coloured tents, all shapes, sizes and colours, like broken pieces of mosaic against the green/brown of a Cornish Spring landscape. The wind blew through the site on a farm near Grumbla under the Sancreed Beacon as if to blow away the death of Winter on a lovely May weekend in 1987. It was the Beltane Dragon Camp, a week-long event (organised by Palden Jenkins) celebrating Earth Mysteries in West Penwith, with ancient cultures, shaman work, ecology and inner growth. Billed as 'a living university on the green earth', Oakdragon is a spin-off from the old Glastonbury camps, with the avowed aim of stimulating and awakening people, 'a participatory journey into a new way of being.' West Penwith was chosen to be the first venue of the new venture, and welcomed the awakening dragon with pleasure.

A friendly mix of all ages and kinds of people gathered in the magical landscape of West Penwith for a week of 'tea and metaphysics' in the tents and circle areas! A stone circle had been built in one area of the camp, and there were projects, workshops and experiments on labyrinths, leys, dowsing, earth healing and living the ancient Cornish landscape. There were visits to ancient sites such as Sancreed Beacon to see the panorama of 'Gwlas an howlsedhas' - the Land of the Setting Sun, to holy wells for sacred healing, to stretches of the ancient Tinnens Way, and to that most secret, stirring and humbling place - Boscawen-ûn stone circle. There were talks about the ecology of the earth and the astrology of personal growth, there was path-working and maze-walking, there was music-making and ritual chanting. There were workshops and group activities during the day on tarot and runes and dowsing and meditation and much more besides, and there was spontaneous friendship and conversation around the camp fires at night. It was a special time in a special place 'on the toe of Albion, in a megalithic landscape of mystery and power.'

The Sunday was thrown open to West Penwith and many came to join in the labyrinth path working with Sig Lonegren, well-known to ley hunters. The afternoon developed into a pagan wedding festival as the couple were led blindfold around the maze and into the tent where spontaneous music was made in celebration and flowers and love were given. And the rest of the week continued in the same vein in a timeless atmosphere of community and co-existence, which both gave and drew power and sustenance from the land of West Penwith."

So, 30 years later, where are we at? Oakdragon was the forerunner of many pagan and spiritual camps, that are still around today. Its organiser, Palden Jenkins, has returned to West Penwith, where he now lives and works, and Sig Lonegren returned to give a talk and build a labyrinth for Trencrom Dowzers in 2013. Plus ça change, plus ça même chose!



## THE PIPER'S TUNE

BBC TV South-west's documentary programme

**Carolyn Kennett**, whose dissertation on the archaeo-astronomy of Boscawen-ûn stone circle, was mentioned in the previous Piper's Tune feature in MM92, has now completed her project. In many ways it confirms some of the observations made by Peter Herring at this site [*see Book Reviews on p.21 of this issue*], such as the brief view of the sea at the Lamorna Gap when viewed from the circle (which Carolyn points out is in the direction of the Winter Solstice sunrise), and also of the importance of the rocky outcrop of Creeg Tol, which she believes was used for a double sunrise and sunset phenomenon.

From about 50 possible alignments to neighbouring sites in the vicinity (many of which are sadly no longer extant) Carolyn applied strict criteria about visibility and horizon features. Even having done so, 7 distinct solar and lunar alignments remained, which she believes were deliberately created by the builders of the circle. One of these is the summer solstice sunrise alignment at the circle, first identified by Norman Lockyer at the turn of the 20th century. This goes from the quartz stone to the cist on the edge of the circle and on to the hedge stone a couple of fields away, and Carolyn believes that there may have been a further stone between the circle and the hedge stone to make them intervisible. The other 6 notable alignments are equally fascinating, and Carolyn has promised MM readers an article for a future issue, to summarise her findings at this site.

**Inside Out** in January visited Padstow for their Mummings Day (formerly Darkie Day) celebrations that take place on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. They sent reporter Athar Ahmed from their Asian Network, who didn't really know what to make of it all, but gave the impression that he was rather shocked, muttering that it was not something he would have expected to see anywhere else. Most of the locals refused to speak to him about it, but those he did manage to interview, including the Grand Bard of the Gorseth Merv Davey, felt that the blacking up was not racist and was not meant to be offensive. It was pointed out that it was a winter festival going back hundreds of years ("and some say it goes back to pagan times"!), and that most of the songs had been rewritten to get rid of any racist words. A black man was interviewed who said he had been living in Cornwall for 12 years and didn't find it offensive in any way.

The possible origins of the Festival were explored. One idea was that it went back to the days of slavery, and that a slave ship bound for Bristol came ashore at Padstow, where the slaves were temporarily freed and went dancing through the streets. Merv Davey said that there was no evidence for that, but that it might be a remnant of an old Festival of misrule, whereby the participants blacked up their faces to avoid being recognised. He pointed out that there was an old dialect Cornish word 'darkie', meaning to black one's face up. Apparently, the tradition had almost died out in the 1960s, when it was revived as a children's event, which, being Padstow, had "since morphed into some kind of musical pub crawl"! Ahmed concluded his report by saying: "This is a tradition some would rather see die out, while others would hate for it to be lost".

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