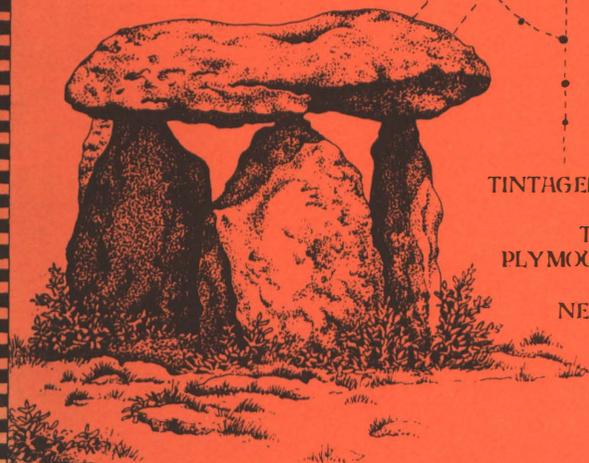
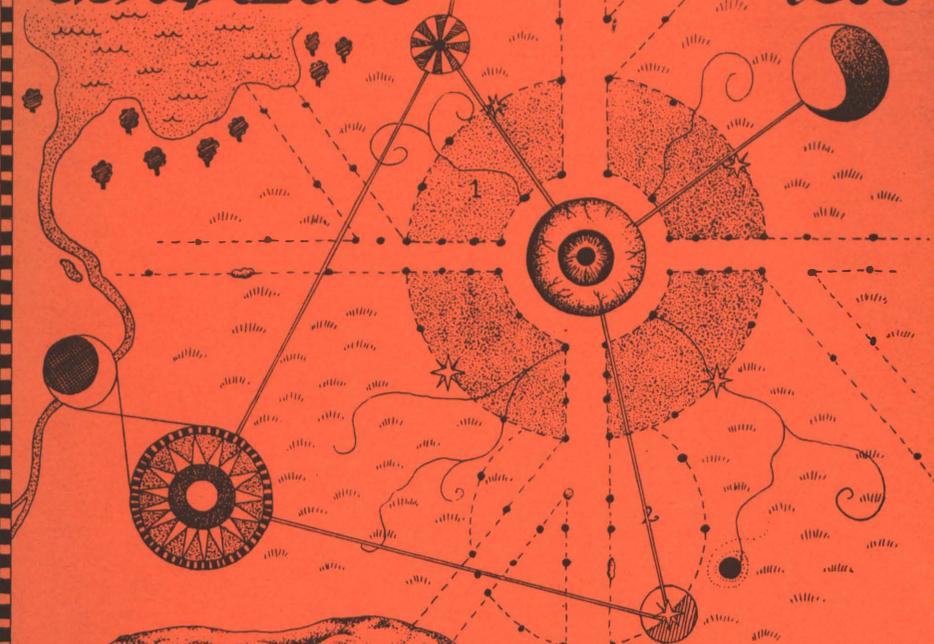


WISHT MAEN

DEVON EARTH MYSTERIES

MAGAZINE

No. 3



TINTAGEL & THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE
KINGSHIP
THE TINNERS RABBITS
PLYMOUTH'S ANCIENT TRACKWAYS
SPINSTERS ROCKS
NEWS : POETRY : LETTERS

£2.30

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All Artwork & Titles by ANNA CLARKE
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A DEVON MEMORY

I remember you, Tamara.
 Many years have passed since then,
 When I saw the hills of Cornwall
 And your banks of summer green.
 When I walked the streets of Plymouth
 And the Devon country lanes
 Did I know how life would grieve me?
 I must find my love again.
 Comes once more the time of harvest,
 And the ripening of the corn -
 To us all the Goddess whispers
 That our love will be reborn.
 So the wheel of Love Eternal
 Within this ancient land
 Is something that, Tamara,
 We both can understand.

PAMELA HARVEY

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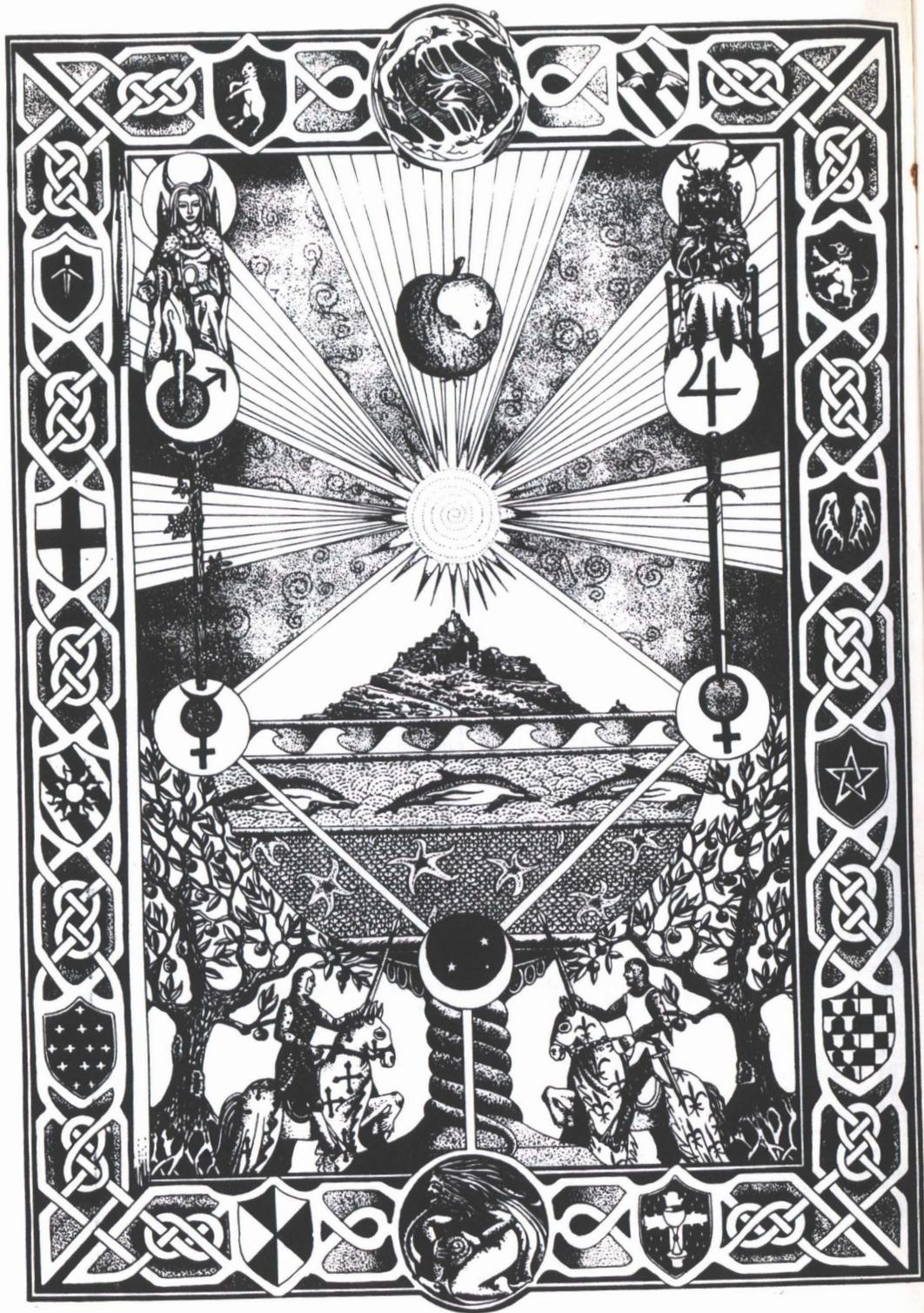
DEVON EARTH MYSTERIES

DEVON AND DARTMOUTH MYTHS, LEGENDS
 AND FOLKLORE, PREHISTORY AND CULTURE -
 ANCIENT AND SACRED SITES, EARTH
 ENERGIES AND RELATED PHENOMENA,
 ALTERNATIVE SPIRITUALITY.

At last WM 3 is here, I have to apologise yet again for this issue's tardy appearance. I work on a very old computer which exploded in June and was only repaired in late September, thank you to all those subscribers who did not bombard me with letters of complaint. It's a hard slog but bear with me and we'll get there! In future all issues will come out in numerical order rather than solstitial/equinoxial order as most other magazines do. I find it very difficult to stick to a deadline, which in itself causes pressure and headaches, of which I have enough already! Anna (the artist who embellishes Wisht Maen so beautifully) and I have to squeeze in the time to do the work for Wisht Maen when we can.

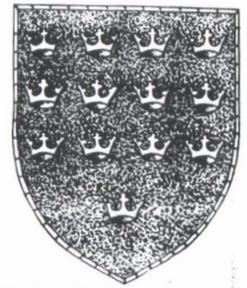
Paper prices have escalated BIG TIME so we are staying with the A5 format for now. (This is also why the price of the magazine is staying as it is). I wanted to go to A4 as Anna's artwork looks superb on A3, OK on A4 but A5 does not do it justice at all. Many details and shading is lost when the artwork is reduced on a photocopier. If you would like an A3 poster of the artwork in Wisht Maen (i.e. Tintagel & The Arthurian Mythos; The Watchers; Bride (Issue 2) or the Wisht Maen poster please send £1.70 (includes p+p) payable to ANNA CLARKE at the Wisht Maen address.

Plans are afoot for a Devon E.M. Moot next year - just a small one, speakers we hope to bully into appearing include a few Wisht Maen writers - some quite famous ones! - and maybe even Paul Devereux! After his complaint in Northern Earth magazine (that he never gets asked to appear at local EM gatherings) he will no doubt get bombarded with requests, so we'll see. Contributions of articles are still needed, covering aspects of folklore, legend, EM subjects pertaining to Devon. What happened to Totnes, a place I thought would elicit a barrage of interest in a publication like this? No-one has expressed any interest in subscribing, let alone submitting an article about the old English Riviera country. The main "alternative" shop there - Totnes' answer to Gothic Image - refused to even look at the magazine, as space is needed on the counter to sell birthstone cards and other New Age tat, plus the credit card machine took up most of the selling space, amongst stacks of cards advertising Megabucks Therapies of a bewildering quantity and diversity. (I myself find there's nothing more therapeutic than sitting in Exeter Library reading through all the Transactions of The Devonshire Association, there's so many of them, I love it, I really love it. There's no time to be confused or depressed after that, mark my words. Better than a £50 Rebirthing.) On a more comforting note though; I've often read, in the various EM journals I exchange with, many writers/editors bemoaning The New Age and the dread they feel at Earth Mysteries being lumped in with it. From the Devon evidence, there's no danger of that. There's no crossover of interest at all, and this is from a place I once heard described as "The New Age capital of the South West" - a place where I once saw a newspaper bulletin board proclaiming "WEIRD TOTNES PUTTING OFF TOURISTS"!! Is there life after the Isolation Tank? I think not.



C and the mystery of I D A G L

and the mystery of
divine kingship.
paul broadhurst.

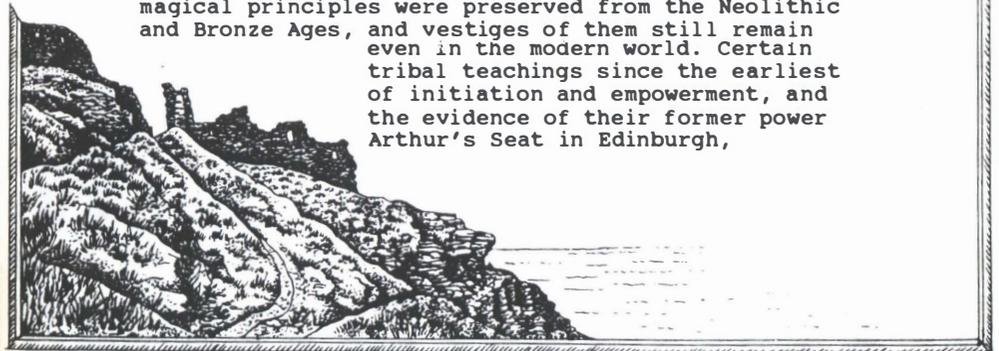


In trying to understand many of the Mysteries of the ancient world, one needs to look no further than the legends. Whilst these are often thought by historians to be simply superstitious accretions from more credulous times, they in fact conceal in riddle and code (the universal method employed for the transmission of Knowledge) secrets of considerable significance.

The problem is that we live in a world devoid of mythology. We have forgotten its power to shape our lives, our dreams. We are ignorant of the Cosmic truths hidden in stories that deal in archetypes. And yet this is what gives such tales their extraordinary energy to touch us all, and to filter down the centuries even to our own mythless times.

In a similar way, the notion of Kingship is presently a subject of common contempt. But in its essence, it speaks of a once-universal system where the ruler of the land is a magical god-king who is the channel for divine forces. From the histories of cultures throughout the world we know that the kings were thought to be Sun-kings, embodying the principle of Light. Consequently, the health and fertility of the land were their personal responsibility, and if these failed a sacrifice was necessary. Here is the root of the crucified Christ/wounded Arthur archetype.

In Celtic lands the Cosmic dimension of these magical principles were preserved from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages, and vestiges of them still remain even in the modern world. Certain tribal teachings since the earliest of initiation and empowerment, and the evidence of their former power Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh,



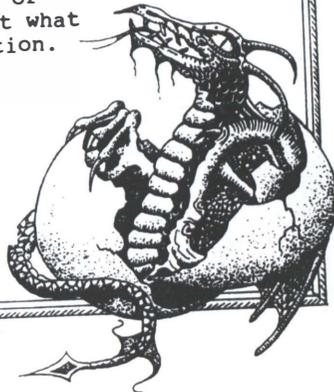
Arthur's Tomb at Glastonbury and Arthur's Birthplace at Tintagel are merely some of the many places that lay claim to the illustrious king. There are hundreds more across Europe and even further afield. Was Arthur really so well-travelled? No - the solution is that the name was a title of kingship, and any spot with Arthur's name attached indicates that it was once a place of power over the surrounding country. History remembers a few of these 'Arthurs', but the flesh-and-blood warrior chieftain beloved of analytical historians can never explain the great influence that Arthurian ideals have had over human hearts and minds.

As we are now beginning to realise, these old sacred places which once influenced the well-being of the land and its people were very carefully determined. They were positioned according to celestial events, the rising and setting of the Sun at the solstices being perhaps the most crucial. At the Midwinter solstice the Sun is reborn. It was the time when the rituals of initiation and empowerment reflected the Cosmic death and rebirth in the heavens. The 'birth' of the new King, and the new year, was synchronized to be in god-like harmony with the wider heavenly environment. As on Earth, so in Heaven. As above, so below.

It is a curious fact that although many places claim to mark the spot where Arthur lies slumbering, waiting to awaken when the land is in desperate need of him, only one has ever insisted that it was the place of his birth. This is Tintagel, that dramatic, brooding cliff-top island now with a ruined Norman castle clinging to its storm-lashed rocks. It seems clear that the reason for building this castle was not one of military, but magical, strategy. The Normans acknowledged that the place now known to us as Tintagel was deeply connected with the power in the land, and the indigenous ancient British psyche.

This was first recorded in manuscript form by a Welsh Church scholar known as Geoffrey of Monmouth. In his History of the Kings of Britian, published towards the middle of the twelfth century, Tintagel is described in graphic detail and the miraculous conception of Arthur recounted through the magical workings of a far older Druidic tradition. Geoffrey himself wrote that he copied the details from a very old book in the "ancient British tongue". This was a common way in his day of saying that he was committing to parchment what had previously been a strictly oral tradition.

In those dying days of the old ways, it seems significant that a monk should be responsible for preserving the powerful and ancient legend of Tintagel. And also to write so profusely about the arcane workings of the mysterious figure of Merlin, who is the controlling



intelligence behind Arthur's Birth/the initiation of Kings. Geoffrey also tells us that Stonehenge (constructed according to the Summer Solstice sunrise) was built by Merlin. In fact there is a solstice alignment that forms the axis of Stonehenge and continues through other prehistoric sites down to the Cerne Abbas Giant in Dorset, a giant hill-figure that embodies the fertility of the Sun God at the height of his powers.

And what of Tintagel? Take away the crumbling castle and there is still plenty of physical evidence that it was one of the 'most significant sites in western Britain. At the very summit of the island, King Arthur's Footprint, as it is quaintly known, is only now beginning to be recognised as a place of ritual initiation, with similar examples in other Celtic regions. There is also the enigma of an ancient chapel that predates the castle and stamps the island with a sacred character. A rock-cut tunnel, strange Druidic alcoves set towards the rising Sun, wells and of course Merlin's Cave all point towards a ritual centre of considerable importance. Archaeologists have excavated over three-quarters of a hundredweight of the finest Dark Age pottery ever found in Britain (originating from North Africa and the Mediterranean), leading them to believe that some sort of royal celebrations were held there during the 5th-6th century.

Take the wider view, and more mysteries beckon. A curious straight road on the edge of Bodmin Moor coincidentally marks an axis determined by the rising of the Sun at the Midwinter Solstice. Not only, it appears, were Kingship rituals synchronized to the magical energies believed to be created between the Sun and Earth at the moment of the Sun's rebirth, but the landscape itself was somehow conceived as an integral part of the Cosmic/mythological cycle.

This axis is marked at its most northerly point by Tintagel. On Bodmin Moor it passes through one of the greatest Neolithic ritual centres in Cornwall, called Stowe's Hill, devastatingly disfigured by stone-cutters and quarrymen but still famous for its remaining rock-pile known as The Cheesewring. To the south-east, this solstitial alignment runs across Plymouth Hoe. And here is an interesting example of how, concealed in the old myths, there are tantalizing glimpses of timeless traditions. Until the middle of the seventeenth century a large turf-cut figure called Gogmagog existed on the Hoe. It was said to be the spot where the last Cornish giant was killed, hurled from the cliff to be smashed on the rocks below. In mythological terms, this appears to speak of a time when a solar-based religion took over from a more primitive nature-worshipping age, symbolized by the Giants that inhabited the mountains and caves of Cornish legend. This axis creates an earthly alignment that links the moment of the Sun's rebirth with the initiation of a Divine priest/king at the rocky sanctuary of Tintagel.

It echoes the Stonehenge solstice line in leading to the site of a giant hill-figure, undoubtedly the place of former ritual observance. The source of this story takes us back to the shadowy figure of Geoffrey of Monmouth, for it is within the pages of his book that the first literary reference to the slaying of Gogmagog is made. He is killed by a general under the command of Brutus, who landed at Totnes (the famous stone can still be seen in the High Street), and after whom Britian is named. It was Brutus, a Trojan (although some think this

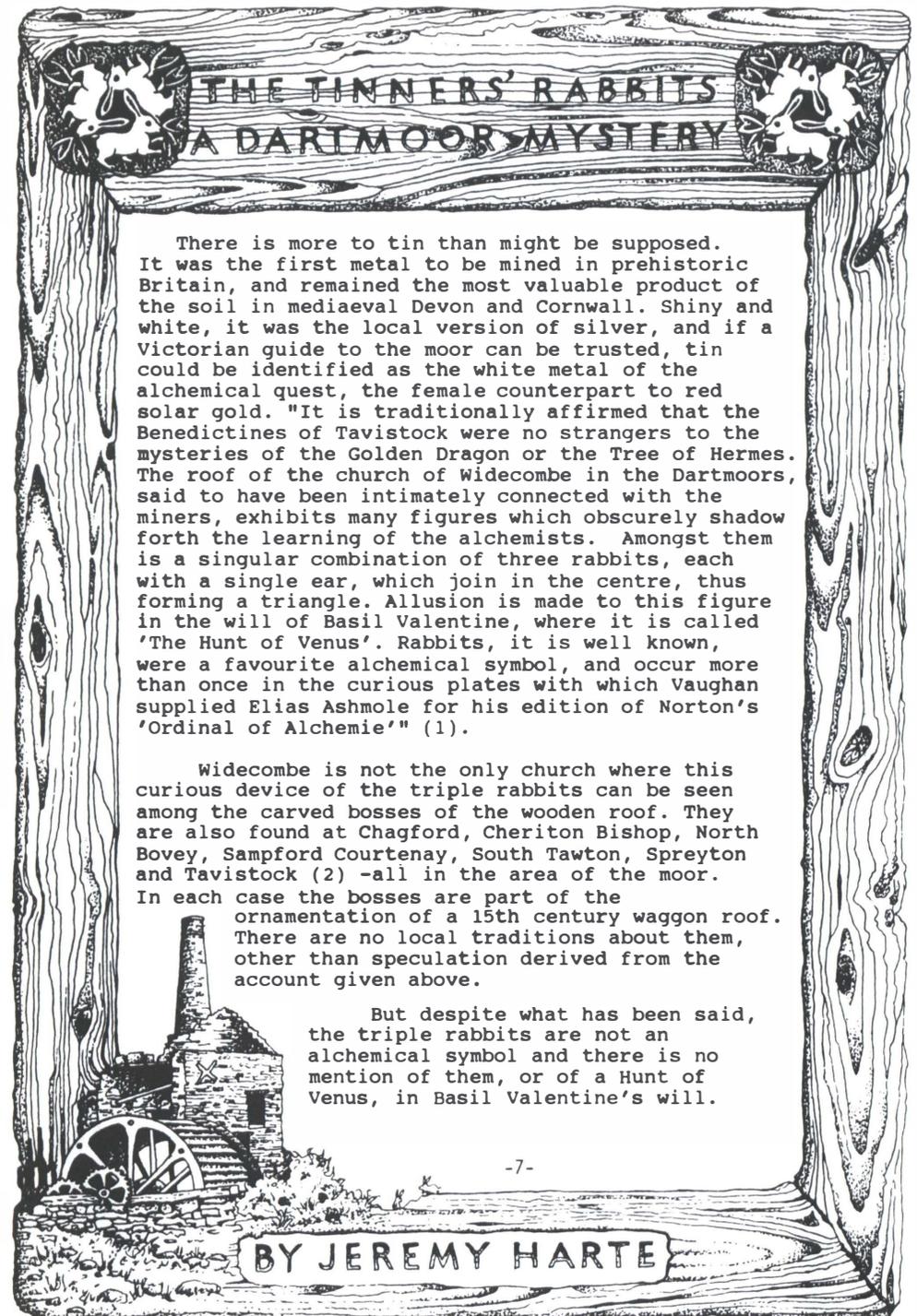
another way of saying he was an Atlantean) who brought a new Cosmology to these islands, banishing the Giants to their rocks and caves and founding a dynasty of Divine Kings that included Arthur as the epitome of Solar consciousness, surrounded by his twelve knights/apostles/zodiacal archetypes.

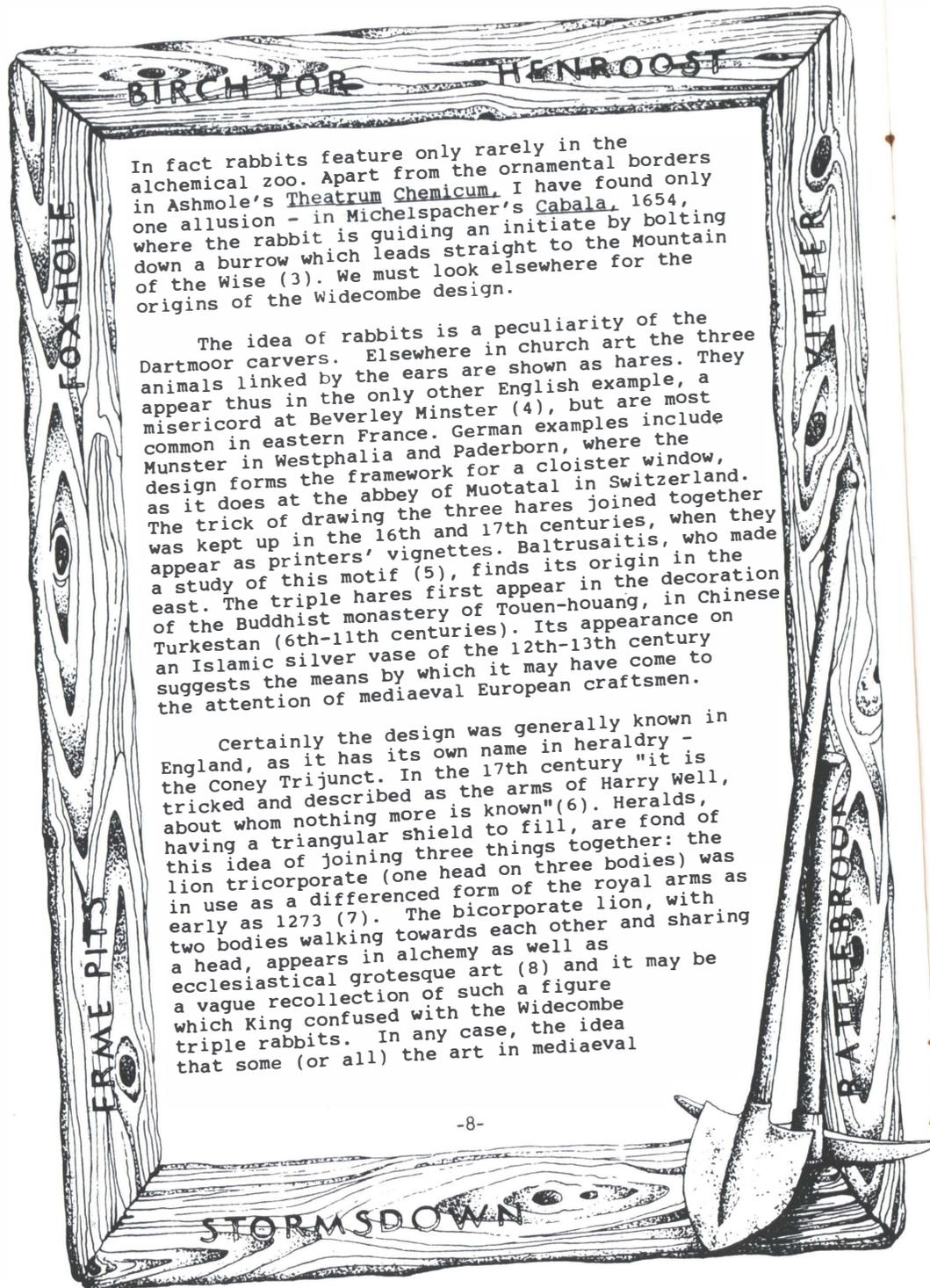
It seems clear that Geoffrey's writings contain a memory of a time when the landscape reflected the energies of the celestial bodies and the evolutionary changes brought on by shifts in human consciousness. It is strange that later history echoes the Arthurian tradition, for Sir Francis Drake (whose name means 'dragon' in Old English) was M.P. for Bossiney and Tintagel, elected atop an ancient mound from which local legend says King Arthur's Round Table rises on the eve of the midsummer solstice to illuminate the sky before disappearing into the Earth for another year. Drake, a maritime Arthur, was one of the great figures behind the Elizabethan expansion of British influence and the creation of the British Empire as envisaged by the notable magician and Arthurian scholar John Dee. He sailed from Plymouth Hoe and his statue still gazes seawards a few yards from another depicting Britannia, the female protective spirit of Britain. We are left wondering why such a powerful man like Drake should choose to have become M.P. for such a poor and isolated place as Tintagel, unless he was deliberately invoking the spirit of Arthur.

Another curious thing about Geoffrey of Monmouth is the amount of space he devotes to the magical manipulations of Merlin. Merlin is responsible for the creation of Stonehenge, and also the birth of Arthur. In the terms outlined above, the name 'Merlin' may mean the adepts of Natural Magic who originally laid out the landscape according to celestial phenomena. The core of Geoffrey's History is almost a separate book, *The Prophecies of Merlin*, full of strange writings cloaked in the obscure language of allegory, symbol and Celtic magic. Fourteen years after this he published another book, *The Life of Merlin*. His evocative description of the land echoes a long-lost dream deep within our collective consciousness, and perhaps a vision of the future when Arthur, and Merlin, have awakened from their slumbers to fulfil the destiny of Albion;

"Of these (island realms) Britain is said to be foremost and best, producing in its fruitfulness every single thing. For it bears crops which throughout the year give the noble gifts of fragrance for the use of man, and it has woods and glades with honey dripping in them, and lofty mountains and broad green fields, fountains and rivers, fishes and cattle and wild beasts, fruit trees, gems, precious metals, and whatever creative nature is in the habit of furnishing."

TINTAGEL AND THE ARTHURIAN MYTHOS by Paul Broadhurst is available in a finely-produced limited edition, signed and numbered, from Pendragon Press, P O Box 888, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 7YH, price £35.00 post free. It will be in paperback next year.





In fact rabbits feature only rarely in the alchemical zoo. Apart from the ornamental borders in Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum*, I have found only one allusion - in Michelspacher's *Cabala*, 1654, where the rabbit is guiding an initiate by bolting down a burrow which leads straight to the Mountain of the Wise (3). We must look elsewhere for the origins of the Widecombe design.

The idea of rabbits is a peculiarity of the Dartmoor carvers. Elsewhere in church art the three animals linked by the ears are shown as hares. They appear thus in the only other English example, a misericord at Beverley Minster (4), but are most common in eastern France. German examples include Munster in Westphalia and Paderborn, where the design forms the framework for a cloister window, as it does at the abbey of Muotatal in Switzerland. The trick of drawing the three hares joined together was kept up in the 16th and 17th centuries, when they appear as printers' vignettes. Baltrusaitis, who made a study of this motif (5), finds its origin in the east. The triple hares first appear in the decoration of the Buddhist monastery of Touen-houang, in Chinese Turkestan (6th-11th centuries). Its appearance on an Islamic silver vase of the 12th-13th century suggests the means by which it may have come to the attention of mediaeval European craftsmen.

Certainly the design was generally known in England, as it has its own name in heraldry - the Coney Trijunct. In the 17th century "it is tricked and described as the arms of Harry Well, about whom nothing more is known" (6). Heraldry, fond of having a triangular shield to fill, are fond of this idea of joining three things together: the lion tricorporate (one head on three bodies) was in use as a differenced form of the royal arms as early as 1273 (7). The bicorporate lion, with two bodies walking towards each other and sharing a head, appears in alchemy as well as ecclesiastical grotesque art (8) and it may be a vague recollection of such a figure which King confused with the Widecombe triple rabbits. In any case, the idea that some (or all) the art in mediaeval

churches had an esoteric, hermetic meaning has a venerable pedigree, running from the Nicholas Flamel story circulated in 1612 to the books of Fulcanelli the Master Alchemist (9).

Does the motif of the triple rabbits have any meaning? When it was first imitated from Oriental artefacts, it must have been taken as pure decoration: and there is nothing in the various French carvings to suggest that it was seen as anything more than that. The image of three-in-one might be used to symbolise the Trinity, and another similar design - the three joined faces with only four eyes between them - was sometimes interpreted in this way (10). But this does not fit the fact that at Lyons and elsewhere the sculpture is of four rabbits joined by the ears, not three.

It is curious that the Dartmoor woodcarvers depicted rabbits rather than hares. The rabbit was introduced into England in the 12th century (its natural home is in Spain and Portugal) as a semi-domesticated food supply, like deer, pigeons or carp. The first introductions were delicate animals, incapable of surviving unaided in the British climate - burrows had to be excavated for them in raised mounds - and it was not until the close of the Middle Ages that they evolved a strain hardy enough to survive on Dartmoor (11). The fecundity of rabbits, and their association with burrows, were a godsend to mediaeval wits in search of a double-entendre, and rabbit-hunting became a colloquial synonym for sex. Our word 'rabbit' was introduced in the 17th century, after the original name 'coney' (rhyming with honey) had become unfit for modest ears (12).

This explains why three running rabbits could be called the Hunt of Venus, but it does not suggest any connection with tinnners. Rabbits, burrows and mines were certainly linked together in the military mind - sappers who undermined castle walls were nicknamed 'coney' (13) - but the only recorded connection with civilian mining is a recent one, from the Island of Portland. Here it is forbidden to say the word 'rabbit', supposedly because the animals through their burrowing had once endangered the stone quarries on the island (14).

In brief, there is no proven connection between the triple rabbit carvings of Dartmoor churches and tin-miners - or alchemy, or the Trinity, or indeed any symbolic topic. The distribution of the motif coincides with the area of tin production, however, and at Widecombe it is at least accepted that tinnners paid for the church tower (15). It is tempting to imagine the scene in the village alehouse on the eve of this great project of rebuilding the church. Masons and carpenters jostle with miners and farmhands; designs are being traced on the table with spilt beer and charcoal from the fire when some apprentice, by way of light relief, sketches out the triple rabbit design. That's it, says the man on the bench next to him, that can be the badge of the tinnners, we burrow into the ground and we all stick together. Then someone starts up a rude song about rabbit-hunting, and the company breaks up for the evening, and the symbol becomes part of history.....

References: (1) R J King THE FOREST OF DARTMOOR London 1856 p77 (2) Charles J P Cave ROOF BOSSES IN MEDIAEVAL CHURCHES Cambridge 1948 (3) Reproduced in Carl G Jung COLLECTED WORKS VOL 12 PSYCHOLOGY & ALCHEMY fog 93. Rabbits also appear, without symbolic associations, on the Monte delli Ebrei reproduced in Stanislas K de Rola ALCHEMY: The Secret Art - London 1973 colour plate 30 (4) T Tindall Wildridge THE GROTESQUE IN CHURCH ART London 1899 p182 (5) Jurgis Baltrusaitis LE MOYEN AGE FANTASTIQUE Paris 1955 p137. The French instances are at Saint-Maurice de Vienne, the chapel of the Hotel de Cluny, Saint-Benoit-le-Chateau, Thielouse and Xertigny. (6) Rodney Dennis THE HERALDIC IMAGINATION London 1975 p154 (7) Ibid p138 (8) Ronald Sheridan and Anne Ross GROTESQUES AND GARGOYLES Newton Abbot 1975 p77-9; and, e.g. John Read, Prelude To Chemistry - London 1936 plate 11 from the Museum Hermeticum. continued on page 19



Until post-war expansion Plymouth sat snugly between two rivers, the Tamar to the west, being both city and county boundary with Celtic Cornwall (Kernow); and to the east the Plym, beyond which lay the old Stannary town of Plympton and the South Hams agricultural belt. Besides creating natural boundaries the rivers had a couple of other things in common, (a) both have female, perhaps ultimately goddess associations; (b) they were interlinked via an ancient trackway still largely traceable over modern roads (1). This track in turn is believed to be connected with the Fosse and Icknield Ways. The east-west river link formed a crossroads at Torr (from the Cornish for 'belly') in the Hartley area with another route that ran north to south. These two primary tracks, along with a series of secondary or other minor tracks established a communications network that linked Plymouth to all four points of the compass and more.

Of these routes the east-west is perhaps the most readily discernable through the interesting tell-tale placenames along its course. Plympton's Ridgeway has long been considered locally to be a Roman road (2). The identification of this section as 'Ryggewey Strete' in a 13th century document would seem to bear this out, as do a number of local placenames nearby, such as Voss, and Dark Street Lane, being very similar to those found in other areas which had a strong Roman presence. In this case the Romans probably made good use of an already existing British trackway. Alternatively an old tourist guide book (3) shows the Roman road as being one that looped off the Ridgeway rather than ran over it, if so this may actually be Dark Street Lane itself.

Running off the Ridgeway we find a few notable sites. The Norman castle at Plympton Erle (St Maurice) sits atop what is believed to be a far older earthen mound, and the parish church of St Mary's being constructed on part of the site of a once wealthy priory is the subject of a re-siting legend (4). Whilst watching over both Plymptons is the brooding mass of Dorsmouth Rock, once the popular venue for community celebrations, including beacons and bonfires. Access to the rock is now possible only once a year, when local churches gather to hold an Easter service of witness up there. After St Mary's the track was largely lost to a swathe of marshland and resumed at Crabtree, (originally Ebford) the other side of Marsh Mills. Here it climbed up over Compton, where a hoard of Roman coins was found, to Torr, then proceeded through Pennycross, a name with Celtic associations, to Weston Hill; thence climbed up over Kings Tamerton, where it becomes Roman Way. The spectacular panoramic views obtainable from this lofty site makes it a more natural contender for the location of 'Tamara', a Roman signal station, than the creek-side Tamerton Foliot. Close to

Kings Tamerton may also be found Roman Road, Plaistow Hill ('playing place'), and Bridwell Road (often a reference to Bride or Brigit, goddess and patroness of wells). After Kings Tamerton the track descends to the Tamar, where it is resumed on the Cornish side at Saltash, one of several salt-production localities in and around Plymouth, thence on through Cornwall to terminate in the West Penwith area, so rich in ancient sites.

Besides its association with the Roman site, the name Tamara is of course identified with the River Tamar, which folklore records as having originated from the metamorphosis of Tamara, a beautiful nymph punished for refusing to marry either of her unwanted suitors, the giants Tavy and Torridge; by being turned into a river by her father (5) (also see WM No 2 p23). Giants feature again at the Plym end of the route. Nordic tradition tells us that having been ousted out by the arrival of Christianity the old gods and goddesses sometimes took refuge in the rivers. Where once benign, some became embittered and began demanding sacrifices (6). The Tamar, like the Dart, is such a river, demanding a minimum of one life a year. The lower reaches of the Tamar, from Gunnislake to beneath the Tamar Bridges and out into the Hamoaze has witnessed many inexplicable accidents, including in 1796 the loss of the French frigate 'Ampion' with all 300 crew and guests on board (7).

Linking Dartmoor to the sea, the north-south track is believed to date from the Bronze Age, and for the most part may still be followed over Tavistock road (8). Just beyond the George Hotel at Roborough a secondary route, probably a medieval pilgrims trail, branched off to Tamerton Foliot. Here the upper end of the parish - rich horticultural land - was known as Southway, recording its close proximity to the 'Southern Way' to the sea, still retained in the name of the urban sprawl that now fills the area. Tamerton Foliot has associations with Celtic saints Budoc and Dominic, and provided at least two hostelries for pilgrims and monastics en route to Plympton Priory and Buckfast Abbey, remembered in the modern 'Abbots Way' pub just off Southway Drive. Near here too we have Longstone Avenue, a contemporary echo of a lost track-marker perhaps?

It is likely that this route may have cut through Bircham Valley, via a stopover at Derriford Barton which also has ecclesiastical associations, passing perhaps a lost landscape feature, the 'Rock' which gave Estover its original name, down to Mainstone, documented as Meynston in 1392 (9), suggesting the existence near here of another menhir or track-marker. Professor Ekwall, noted placename historian, offers another suggestion, equally plausible, that it was 'maegan-stan' meaning 'mighty rock', referring to the rocky mass that must have once dominated the local landscape around here (10), of course there may well have been both! From Mainstone the 'Pilgrim Trail' would have descended to the 13th Plym Bridge with its miracle-working shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary (11), such dedications often masking a much earlier association of the site with the 'Mary of the Irish', Brigit-Bride. From here the connection would have been made with the two abbeys.

The Plym Valley at its moorland reaches, not far beyond city borders, has its own landmark rock, the mighty Dewerstone, traditionally the haunt of the Wild Hunt, whilst Cadover Bridge close by has various interpretations. The name has been suggested to be

perhaps a variation on Cadaford (12), possibly meaning 'Cattle Ford', or a slight mis-spelling of the Latin for corpse, remembering the time when moorland tenants used the river to convey their dead to burial sites insisted upon by their monastic landlords. The prefix 'Cad', thought to be the river's original name is of course to be found associated with a number of ancient battle-sites, most notably Cadbury, and it is interesting that from time to time there are reports of a spectral Celtic battle witnessed here. 'Cad' is picked up again, with variation, closer to the sea in the names Cattedown and Cattewater.

From Roborough the north-west route crosses Torr over Mutley Plain, a levelled hill top. From there it continues through Greenbank, passing close to Ladywell Place with its obvious associations, before plunging down North Street and Sutton Harbour, location of 'Bilbury', an early encampment. Placed in context with its surroundings Bilbury must have occupied quite an important site. Directly facing the settlement site is Mount Batten, which has yielded, along with Jenny Cliff and Staddon Heights behind it, a wealth of finds covering the Bronze Age to Roman occupation eras. Facing Mount Batten across the Cattewater (or Dead Man's Bay) are the archaeologically rich Cattedown caves, whilst reaching into this estuary of the Plym, above Radford Lake at Plymstock rises Burrow Hill, where the only barrow within city boundaries to survive the bulldozer now serves to host the local war memorial. Running along behind this is Burrow Lane, the remnant of a track that connected Mount Batten with Dartmoor. Looking directly across the Cattewater from the barrow looms the Barbican's Lambhay Hill, visible even before entering North Street, the location of the turf-cut figures of a pair of club-wielding giants Gog and Magog, believed to have been similar in style to the famous Cerne Abbas giant in Dorset (see also Paul Broadhurst's article this issue).

This intriguing network of trackways - along with the former existence of the Hoe carvings, so rare beyond chalk country - surely indicated that Plymouth once played an important part in the scheme of things on this island of Albion.

(1) History of Plymouth (author uncredited). (2) Plymouth: A New History by C Gill. (3) The Panorama of Plymouth by S Rowe. (4) Mysterious Britain by J & C Bord. (5) Westcountry Rivers: The Tamar - A Great Little River by R Furneaux. (6) Readers Digest Folklore Myths and Legends of Britain. (7) as (5). (8) Evening Herald 8.11.90. (9) The Placenames of Devon by Gover, Mawer & Stenton. (10) Evening Herald 21.5.94. (11) The Bridges of Devon by C Henderson 1938. (12) Devon & Cornwall Notes & Queries Vol XXIV.

The illustrated poem on page 14, THE WATCHERS, was inspired by Union Street, a not-terribly-desirable area of Plymouth - now home to nightclubs, Plymouth's little Soho. It was written by Mary Coombs and illustrated by Anna Clarke, as a companion to this article.

Ancient trackways: major routes, Plymouth area.

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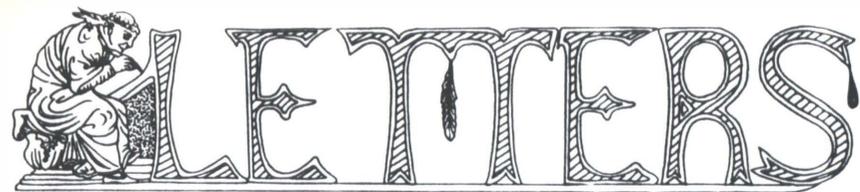
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Dear Wisht Maen

Does anyone know anything about Well Dressing? Honouring and paying respect to the many old wells to be found in Devon and of course elsewhere, is an ancient custom long neglected, and I would be interested to find out more. Miss C Marshall 2 National Terrace Bampton Devon EX16 9LX

Dear Wisht Maen

Firstly I want to tell you how pleased I was to come across Wisht Maen in "In Other Words" bookshop in Plymouth. It's something I'd wondered about after seeing Meyn Mamvro for the first time last year, and pondered on whether or not there as a similar magazine for Devon. After reading Paul Broadhurst's beautiful evocative book on the holy wells of Cornwall, I looked for something similar for Devon - alas, there's nothing of that quality or spirit around, so I am at the moment researching Holy Wells of Devon, with the help of the Local History Library in Plymouth. Would it be possible to ask your readers for any information on Holy/healing wells, especially legend/lore where possible, and any pointers to relevant books/journals that might help. Annie Craze 22 Phillimore Street Plymouth PL2 1JF

Dear Wisht Maen

I'm writing to ask whether you have any information about St Anns Well at St Anns Chapel east of Plymouth (OS 202, SX665474). I visited it recently, though there's not much to see. I wanted to include the well in the book I'm writing for the Women's Environmental Network as an example of a neglected well. There's no possibility of including many wells as that would involve about 10 year's work! What I'd like to do is to encourage others to investigate their own wells locally. If your readers have any information on St Anns Well, please write. Bronwen Griffiths 30 Bois Hall Road Addlestone Surrey KT15 2JL

NB: See NEWS page for details of SOURCE, the journal of British Holy Wells, which has returned to circulation! (Ed.)

Dear Editor

Cheryl Traffon's article on Goddesses and Gods of Devon (WM No 2) makes interesting reading. The stories collected by her are certainly witness to a spiritual or supernatural presence in the landscape; but are they really as old as she hopes?

The legend of Tamara, Torridge and Tavy, as given from Coxhead's Devon Traditions and Fairy Tales, is an amplification of a simpler C17th version, recorded in prose by Westcote and in verse by Tristram Risdon. Here Torridge and Tavy are allegorised as two brothers separated in a race from their spring to the sea. The tenor of the story, and Westcote's use of words such as 'nymphs' and 'genii', suggest that it



THE WATCHERS

GARISH CLUBS AND
BACK-DOOR VENUES
PACE, WHERE WATERS
WASHED ACROSS SALT-MARSH
AND SIGHING SEDGE,
ISLETS AND LONG-FINGERED
PENINSULAS HARBOURED
DEFENSIVE STOCKADES,
WHERE BROODING DOLMENS
WATCHED TO EAST
PROUD BATTEN'S SEA-BORNE
TRADE, TO WEST
HAZE-MUTED, SEA-MURMERED
DREAMS OF DISTANT LYONESSE,

MARY COOMBS

does not come from rural sources (which Westcote treats in a more cursory fashion) but from a literary background. The tale reads much like something from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which had been available in Golding's translation for fifty years.

The 'faithless wives and fickle maidens' story from Scorhill, on the other hand, is recorded for the first and only time in 1965 by Ruth St Leger Gordon (Witchcraft and Folklore of Dartmoor). Before speculating on whether this misogynist skit is a transformation of some more sympathetic original, we ought to have some evidence that it is not the work of a modern story-teller imposing on a female folklorist. The citation of three prehistoric monuments in one narrative is unusual and suggests the use of tourist or antiquarian guides.

Legends of petrified dancers are a more authentic tradition, with early versions from several sites, and seem to derive from the Middle Ages. But where is the pagan connection? Stories of divine punishment for violating the sabbath apply not just to dancing but to gathering firewood, hanging out clothes to dry and numerous other activities. Mediaeval moralists condemn dancing *per se*, not dancing-as-paganism; Thomas of Cantimpre regards it as lustful, but allowable at weddings; had he thought it pagan, he would not have spared his denunciations. Granted that there were already legends about stones as petrified people, a stone circle would naturally suggest people in a circle-dance, and the story follows on from there.

Is it necessary to interpret Tom White's experience at Bellever Tor as evidence for prehistoric rituals? If, as the story says, he saw dancing pixies, then that is just what he saw and his encounter with them was a personal experience, not a folk-memory. The same objection applies to the reported hauntings of Shaugh Bridge by the Wild Hunt. In any case this phenomenon, as it appeared in England since the Peterborough sighting of 1127, belongs to a peculiarly Christian dread: it is a hunt by devils for souls. It seems unnecessary to regard this as the transformation of an (entirely hypothetical) pagan hunt by a Celtic horned god, the more so when we remember that the Christian Devil was not regarded as having horns until the 13th century.

"Hares were originally sacred to the Goddess and were a special epiphany to Her". Which goddess are we talking about? Neo-pagans believe in a single, pantheistic Goddess but our pre-Christian ancestors worshipped dozens of deities, some male and some female. Their gods were separate and individual personalities, not aspects of a single transcendent Being. As for hares, their flesh was taboo according to Caesar; and Dio Cassius says Boudicca used one for divination; they appear in ritual decoration and as sacrifices; but is there any evidence for a goddess who was patron of hares, or who was said to have turned herself into one? The stories of witch-hares seem to be a quite different tradition from divine epiphanies, for the belief that malevolent hags can turn themselves into small animals goes back independently into pagan times: see Apuleius' *Golden Ass*.

I have much respect for Cheryl Straffon's work in geomythics. And I think that her approach to sacred sites is a genuine key to unlocking their spiritual realities. But, from a purely historical point of view, I cannot agree with the projection of a 20th-century religion like neo-paganism into the remote past. There is very little primary evidence for prehistoric religion in Britain: but the gaps in our

knowledge will never be filled by treating a heterogeneous assembly of legends from different ages as if they were survivals from a lost, and largely imaginary, Elysium. Jeremy Harte, Ewell, Surrey

Dear Editor

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity of replying to Jeremy Harte's letter. Jeremy is an experienced folklore researcher, and I too have much respect for his work. He is of course quite correct in pointing out the dangers of projecting a 20th century belief onto the remote past: we can never know for certain exactly what our ancestors believed or how they worshipped, but like most of the disciplines that deal with the past, archaeology and history, we can make some educated guesses based on the evidence that we do have.

It is true that there is no written evidence of the belief systems of our prehistoric ancestors, but there is plenty of circumstantial evidence in the form of extant images, artefacts and legends. The iconographic significance of the former are well documented in Professor Miranda Green's books: "The Sun-Gods of Ancient Europe" and "The Gods of the Celts", where she says that animals (including hares) "possessed a sanctity and divine element". The hare was mentioned in classical sources as a ritual sacrifice to the British war-goddess Andraste; it was also sacred to Eostre, the goddess of Spring. It was the moon-hare who was sacred to the (local) Goddess in many cultures. In Britain Queen Boadicia's banners bore the image of the moon-hare, dedicated to Eostre at her rites of Spring - hence the "Easter Bunny".

In my book "Pagan Cornwall - Land of the Goddess" I have argued that the Goddess tradition never completely disappeared, but merely went underground and shape-shifted into a new form under Christianity. My contention is that the witches and wise-women were the natural inheritors of this tradition, even if they did not articulate it as such, and there are many legends of witches turning themselves into hares. Many archaeologists nowadays accept that legends and folklore may contain an aspect of earlier belief and culture (such as the legends of saints coming to Dumnonia - Cornwall and Devon - from Ireland and Wales), so although one has to be careful about their provenance, it does seem quite reasonable to look at the underlying meaning behind the legends themselves. It seems to me not an unreasonable interpretation of the legend of the petrified dancing maidens that it relates back to a distant folk-memory of priestesses dancing at the sites, especially when we know from archaeological evidence (soil analysis) that our Neolithic ancestors did dance at the sites, and from paleolithic cave-paintings that groups of 9 women did dance in a circle. The whole notion of nine maidens, nine as a magic number in so many country spells and customs, and the significance of 3 and 9 for the Celtic (and earlier) peoples seems to me too much of a coincidence to be one. (Ed: And so numerous and widespread are these legends of circles of stone being petrified dancing women, it's a logical explanation).

Of course you can try and explain all legend and folklore away as medieval morality or 17th century fiction, but in reality there is no certainty that these were 'invented' then, merely that they were first recorded then, a very different state of affairs. I don't want to labour each point raised by Jeremy, save to say that it is generally recognised that the gods and goddesses of the old religion become the devils and giants and fairies of the new. So, the pagan horned Cernunnos becomes the Christianised Old Nick, Odin and his wild hunt the devil hunting for human souls, the territorial Goddess of the river

Tamar the nymph Tamara, and so on. We have documented evidence from the 3rd-6th centuries CE that the papal envoys were instructed precisely to do this in the pagan lands where they went to convert the people.. Long-standing beliefs do not easily disappear, so they have to be transformed and metamorphosed into a new belief structure, and where they cannot be easily accommodated (such as Goddesses under a patriarchal religion like Christianity) they are turned into hags, crones and witches. Thus folklore and legend is born.

At the end of the day it all comes down to a matter of interpretation. However we individually interpret the meanings of the legends, we need to respect each other's point of view. None of us can know for sure if we have 'got it right', but if we can argue our case well and support it by plausible examples, then we may justifiably feel we are offering at least a possible or probable insight into the beliefs of our prehistoric ancestors. Cheryl Straffon St Just Cornwall

William Saxton sent Wisht Maen a copy of a letter he sent to the DNPA concerning the Ladywells at Cator (see News, Issue 2). We reproduce some of it here:-

"I received my DPA magazine yesterday and was surprised to read that Ladywell, Cator was two. When I rough cleared the debris and photographed the place a couple of years ago, I was taking it as three, of course. So I went and visited. It is now even more clear that it is three; the top one is more knocked up by age, but its original state is in no doubt. It has to be three: the Celts as much as the Christians were keen on triples. (You will know, of course, that the Celts spoke of the maidens', or ladies' well, and Christian legitimacy demanded -since the girls were still going to go there, whatever the priest said, to ask the goddess for husbands or children -that it be made over to their Blessed Virgin, and ladies' became Lady's).

When my family and I had five churches in South Wales, I "did" wells. Near our Marros church was a 'Ladywells Cottage'. This ruin I cleared of ivy etc and found it no cottage, but a chapel - correction, well-house. The water ran in at the top and straight down the middle and out. The stream bed doubled as the official path. You entered at the bottom and the virgin's water was on the left, in what looked like a terrace-house's fireplace (no chimney of course). Up, left from it, was a niche for the virgin's statue and collecting box. To the right of the path was a similar 'fireplace' but no niche. This was the pagan water-source. (Bran to be precise; there were other Brandy Wells in the area, named after Bran-de-lis). Follow the path out at the top arch, and you were faced with a pool, kept deep by a curved three foot wall on the right. This was the dipping pool; both pagan and Celtic Christian went in for immersion to cleanse from offence given. (There was even an Anglican church in Pembrokeshire which had an immersion baptistry).

Anyway, there was your three wells, without bothering to seek out any of those numerous holy sites where the martyr's lopped off head bounced three times producing three 'puddles' in sequence down the slope, as at Cator. Nearby, there was a 'three' site - at Gumfreton, which was on the flat, and had stone surrounds, but flat, like a middle-east loo, rather than vertical as at Cator. The tradition there was that each healed a different part of the body, on immersion. I was able to verify that in spite of their being so close together, the mineral content was not identical. Off in the other direction was a dry well, also used for healing except in the hot summer I went there. This one had the traditional thorn tree nearby with the remnants of the sleeve or whatever you put on it, again according to the part of the body you

wanted healed. It had a footpath, still public and recorded, there and back. As a lawyer, I know that this kind is the only one where the law does not require a terminus a quo and a terminus ad quem but is content with a there and back, as at Brixham's Ladywell - now unfortunately absorbed into a housing development - but I saw it before. The other Ladywell I had an amusing experience of was that in the goyle down from Haldon. There are the ruins of a chapel there, which were, in good tradition, kept clean by the local Girl Guides. I am not saying they were responsible, even unofficially, for the pentacle and votive penny I found!" William Saxton, Widecombe, Devon



BOOK REVIEWS

TRADITIONAL BRITISH HONEY DRINKS - Francis Beswick. Heart of Albion Press £2.50 + 40p p+p from 2 Cross Hill Close Wymeswold Loughborough LE12 6UJ. This book gives details of a wide range of honey-based alcoholic drinks, with histories and recipes. However the author specifically warns against experimenting with the secret of the Pictish 'heather ale' which may have contained magic mushrooms and have been used as part of shamanic rituals. Not one to try at the village cheese & wine then? TB

THE WITCHCRAFT AND FOLKLORE OF DARTMOOR - Ruth E St Leger-Gordon. Peninsula Press £6.99. Now out with new publishers in softback, this is a must for Dartmoor folklore and EM buffs. TB

A GLIMPSE OF DARTMOOR - FOLKLORE - Belinda Whitworth. Peninsula Press £1.99. Condensed snippets but helpfully gives OS references and a calendar of fairs and festivals. TB

IN SEARCH OF OLD DEVONIAN - THE OLD CELTIC LANGUAGE OF SOUTHWEST BRITAIN CIRCA 700AD - Joseph Biddulph at the Language Information Centre 32 Stryd Ebeneser Pontypridd CF37 5PB 1987 (no price given). A useful (if too technical) booklet on root words (i.e. tor/torr = womb/belly or upright finger of rock) and a page called "Let's Count In Old Devonian"! TB

A BOOK OF FOLKLORE - Sabine Baring-Gould. Praxis Books £5.00 "Sheridan" Broomers Hill Lane Pulborough W Sussex RH20 2DU. A little gem this, with many old stories and myths that are little-known and not recorded anywhere else. A classic source book. Shame more attention was not given on the typesetting and binding, pages are missed out and some are doubles. TB

THE TINNERS RABBITS
references continued.

This motif is also found in heraldry - see Dennys op.cit. p137 (9) Fulcanelli LE MYSTERE DES CATHEDRALES Suffolk 1971 passim, esp. the citations on p109, 111, 114 & 115 (10) Wildridge op.cit. p180. Another motif, the three fish sharing one head, might have been adopted for its trinitarian associations: it is discussed in Baltrusaitis op.cit. (11) Oliver Rackham THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRYSIDE London 1986 p47-49 (12) Malcolm Jones "Folklore Motifs in Late Mediaeval Art III: Erotic Animal Imagery" FOLKLORE 102 1991 p195-199. The same associations apply to hares; 'pussy' could apply to a hare as well as a cat and there is a bawdy ballad 'Hunt The Bonny Black Hare', best known in the Fairport Convention recording (13) Beryl Rowland, ANIMALS WITH HUMAN FACES London 1974 p135 (14) Kingsley Palmer ORAL FOLK-TALES OF WESSEX Newton Abbot 1973 p102 (15) W G Hoakins and H P R Finberg DEVONSHIRE STUDIES London 1952. Phevi

SPINSTERS' ROCKS

HUGH FRANKLIN

Unravelling any mystery is not an easy task to undertake; one is continually led from one interesting aspect to another and what at first appeared to be a straightforward line of enquiry ends (if it ever does end) in a knotted mess with loose threads poking out here and there. Never enough time to cast on new stitches and start again. This is how a venture to Spinsters Rocks has terminated, there is something behind it all but the warp and weft of the story form a distorted pattern.

William Chapple started the trail. Son of a farmer from Washford, his education sponsored in Exeter, he wrote in 1779 a description of his investigations at the dolmen. I read it through with mounting excitement as on 20th August 1777 he paid his second visit to the site fully equipped with plane table and compass, to complete his work....."variation at Exeter 13 Mar 1717 13° 20'W, 20 Aug 1777 23° 35'W".....and there the book ends abruptly, nothing else. There is no other copy known, not even in the British Museum. He died in 1780.

He must have been a remarkable character for his time, an early 'archaeo-astronomer', and I shall quote some of his snippets now and then. After a preamble into the assumed history of Drewsteignton at that time, he notes that from Donne's recent map of Devon that the centre of Devon is 1 mile SW of Hittisleigh church, "if the coastline is correct". Borlase's description is acknowledged from the 1754 Antiquities of Cornwall but he wishes "that it were reviewed and examined by some judicious person". There follows a

-20-

description of the stones forming the dolmen and his measurements refer to a plan he made, but it is not present in the book. He was much taken with the 'Table stone' as he called it, its regularity of shape and its lower surface ..."originally was almost everywhere a plane free from irregularities or bunches, making an angle with the plane of the horizon of about 3° 55', as the 3 supporters are of unequal height and so it inclines downward....the dip to the SW was not accidental but designedly chosen...if it had been out the error would now be discoverable." He deduces it was "not primarily intended as a religious structure or sepulchre, but was partly designed for Sciatherical (shadow) purposes and in general the apparatus of an Astronomical Observatory...I imagined that if the part so depressed were meant to betoken any such veneration (of the sun god Apollo), it would be directed to that part of the horizon where he arises.." and continues .."such a Brobdinagian tripod as this, might by the like adjustment of lines, angles and circles, be exhibited as a specimen of ancient ingenuity...".

He mentions that other nearby structures have been blown up and that the tenant had a bonfire of furze under the table stone and kept the ashes hot for 2-3 days, so that he (the tenant) was able to take off blackened scales ..."1ft by 6" by 1", but was not allowed by the land-lord to do it again".

THE NAME

Chapple does speculate on the origin of the name, but not at all clearly, (or is it my notes that are not distinct?!),"why not (he says) let them have called it "the place of the open or hollow observatory" or "the open star gazing place"...."Swp pynnerog" - from which I can just make out Spinner rock. W Page (p197) quotes him as saying "Le Ysspiennwr rhongca" or "Yspiennddyn Ser rongca", but I did not see this in Chapple.

We can have Germanic "spinnen" = to spin, or from "spien" = to look out, to watch, to 'spy' in other words. A 'Rock' is a distaff (O.E.D., origin unknown), and a distaff is a stick or rod used for spinning. (Rocka is also Italian for a fortress, and Rocca for a reel/distaff).

The sign on the entrance gate to Spinsters Rock says that "Three spinsters set it up before breakfast". And this must not be dismissed. Remember the Three Fates or Wyrð, the women who destined the lives of men? The second one was reknowned for her 'spinning' the fate, and one was Meton, the measurer. Breakfast has early-morning connotations, and morning brings the rising sun. So there is a selection here from which one can take a pick, and added to them is "Diesse", a bunch of flax used in spinning, and the Danish word "dysse" for a dolmen.

To the Saxons of course, it was a "shelf-stone", and Shilstone Farm opposite retains this name still. Whether the Druids did actually perform their rites here we may never know. It is better to accept for Drewsteignton the derivation of "farm on the Teign of the Drews or Drogos" than "stones of the Druids".

Others followed in the wake of Chapple, but he is my firm favourite. Polwhele, Swete, Colt Hoare, Lyson, Ormerod, Grey. All have contributed a little to the history. Polwhele and Swete (previously a 'Trainee' of Modbury) assisted Chapple, but did not publish anything at that

-21-

time, indeed Polwhele was somewhat scathing of his erstwhile companion in his later history..... "So numerous were the scientific properties which he attributed to the Drews' cromlech that he (Chapple) could have written volumes (as he often said) in describing them. The first thing he mentioned was a most exact meridian line made by the coincidence of the three supporters, i.e. the outside edge of 2 and the inside edge of the third are so truly fixed on the meridian as could possibly be done by the most accurate astronomer....the latitude which was shown by some part of the cromlech even to the nearest minute as were the suns greatest meridian altitude in summer, the least in winter and consequently the obliquity of the ecliptic....2200 years had elapsed since the cromlech was erected...he found that there was a certain point under the cromlech whence reflections should be cast and by removing the earth from that spot he discovered a curious little triangular stone which must have been placed there for that purpose..."

Polwhele goes on to say that he (Polwhele) ..."would as soon believe that the Earth was formed by a concourse of atoms as that four rude and shapeless stones selected for their magnitude, should exhibit an exact correspondence with every circle of the heavens...and such traits of the Asiatic genius (talking about Stonehenge here) are as obvious in the cromlech at Drews' as in those ruins..".

Polwheles' continuing account of the remains is identical with that of Swete (which have now disappeared), but he does mention other stones and structures. Next on the scene in 1838 was the Revd W Grey, to be followed by G W Ormerod with publications in 1858 and 1873, and on through Rowe and Worth to Major F C Tyler's description and excavations in 1929. Major Tyler would also appear to be a character worth following up if anyone has the inclination. He was a companion of Alfred Watkins of "The Old Straight Track" fame to which he contributed many leys including some from Dartmoor, but apart from his paper on "The Stone Remains in Drewsteignton" I know very little about him. His account is worth reading in its own right, for it contains a resume of the discoveries of the people I have mentioned, but had not space to discuss. His is the first plan I have seen of the other circles and stones presumed to have formed part of the Spinsters Rock complex. As you can see from it, circles and avenues could just be in the eye of the beholder, and now nearly seventy years on there is nothing left but the Shelfstone and an odd gatepost.

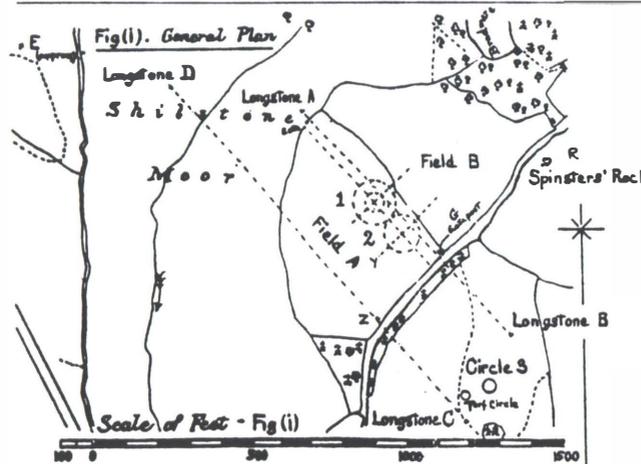
Now that the trees to the south have been cut down, one can appreciate what a beautiful place it must have been; before the roadside hedges were planted there was a vista all around - except to the rising summer sun. Here Chapple may not have been far out in his surmising, for I measured the angle of the hill in this direction and found it to be 3° 48', close to the angle of the capstone in its original position. The sun could have been viewed coming up over the hill when sighted along the under edge. The edges of two stones do point to the south, but the structure fell on Friday 31st January 1862, two days after Ormerod's camera lucida pictures (there has got to be a mistake in drawing No.1 - he must mean the Easterly stone was broken). The Rev Wm Ponsford had them re-erected using drawings done on 9 September 1858, and of course the Easterly stone did not go back to its original position. The capstone now lies in a notch on the Northerly stone and is practically level. A pavement of large granite blocks were laid in the base and an iron bar (still visible) now couples the stones together. The capstone was laid horizontally on two beams and raised by

a pulley on a framework built over the stones. Thomas Ball, carpenter, and an appropriately named William Stone, builder of Chagford, finished work on Friday 7th November 1862.

Back to Major Tyler. Discounting the circles he reckons to have found, it was the more enduring "Longstones" which captured my attention. His map was less than perfect and the dots marking the position of these stones could have had a ground measure of 10ft. None the less, following in Mr Chapple's footsteps, I thought it might make an exercise to see if these stones could have been used as direction or azimuth markers in conjunction with the dolmen. Using Hawkins and Wood's methods of calculation, grid azimuths and horizon elevations calculated from O.S. maps, the following table of results was obtained for the object tangent on the horizon. As rough and ready as the plan was, these results show a strong indication that the Spinsters Rock complex functioned in the way Chapple was sure it did. It was a great pity he died before completing his book, and a shame that Tyler had not found a copy to read, he might then have been more aware of astronomical implications and followed up with better plans.

The threads on the distaff remain tangled. The three acres of Bradley pool still have a story to tell. A magical spring, tinnerns ditches and shafts under the dolmen, a tradition of Noah and his sons making their way to the pool from off the moor. The Saxon charter boundary of 'Hyple's Old Land', at or near Whiddon Down, mentions a place called the 'Three Posts'. The setting points for the sun and moon fall on the high ground to the North of the old A30 to the West of Martins Farm within an odd shaped extension to Drewsteignton parish boundary. There are no 'posts' here now which could have been markers, but the pub at the bottom of the hill is called 'The Post Inn'!

	True Azimuth	Object	Horizon	Vertical error
A-B	315.82 °	Moon + 29.023°	.9217 °	.5092 °
C-D	317.07 °	Moon + 29.023°	.9018 °	-.0914 °
B-E	299.47 °	Moon + 18.723°	.227 °	-.181 °
E-C	309.07 °	Sun + 23.873°	.666 °	-.0633 °
G-R	228.67 °	Sun - 23.873°	1.726 °	-.598 °



References; Chapple, William DESCRIPTION AND EXEGESIS OF THE DREWSTEIGNTON CROMLECH Exeter 1779. Tyler, Major F C THE STONE REMAINS IN DREWSTEIGNTON Transactions of the Devonshire Association 1930 Vol IXII pp249-260. Ormerod G W THE FALL AND RESTORATION OF THE CROMLECH AT DREWSTEIGNTON IN THE COUNTY OF DEVON Read at Bideford August 1871. See also Journal of the Royal Arch. Institute Vol 29 1872. Polwhele HISTORY OF DEVONSHIRE 1793.

Left: Major Tyler's Map

MILES AND MEGALITHIC YARDS

HUGH FRANKLIN

This article is condensed from a longer paper, but the subject matter is felt to be important and needs to be given an airing. The implications, and the individual conclusions drawn, should produce lively debate.

There are two questions which have been occupying my mind :-

- (1) Was the Earth measured in the remote past?
- (2) What are the 'odds' on inventing an arbitrary linear measure and subsequently finding that it fits the figure of the Earth?

The answer to (2) must be 'astronomical', the answer to (1) I give in the statement " The Earth was given a measure in antiquity, a measure we may have used for millenia, and which only now with our current state of technology, can be recognised. That measure is the 'mile', the Imperial, English statute mile."

Explanation? A square with a diagonal of π units will have an area of 4.9348022 sq.units. If this is multiplied by 10 million and called the area of a circle, this circle will have the following dimensions :-

Area	=	49348022 sq.units	
Radius	=	3963.32729 units.	[$\sqrt{(5 \text{ million} \times \pi)}$]
Diameter	=	7926.65459 units.	[$\sqrt{(20 \text{ million} \times \pi)}$]
Circumference	=	24902.31984 units	

A unit circle (diameter = 1), has an area of π sq.units, if 10 million of these sq.units are put into a square, it will have sides of $\sqrt{31415926.54} = 5604.99122$ units.

This is the inscribed square of the above circle, and if the units are called 'miles' the figure represents a cross section of the Earth at the equator.

Current earth dimensions (presumably by satellite survey), give the circumference of the earth at 0° latitude as 24901.47261 miles (Darton & Clarke), the difference with the above circumference being .84723 miles.

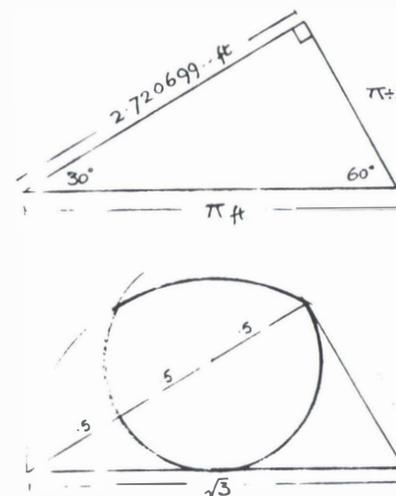
It is remarkable that the dimensions constructed from the cosmological constant ' π ' are in such accord with present survey figures.

This discrepancy could mean that either the satellites are not measuring accurately, or that they are using an inaccurate measure for the mile.

If our current 'inch' were to be decreased by .000034 inches, or the mile by 2.156 inches (yet still containing 63360 inches), the two equatorial measures would be the same. It would be surprising if the measuring of a standard mile had not varied over the centuries, I am surprised it has altered by such a small amount.

I feel we are trying to measure something which has already been decreed.

It is important now to introduce a $\sqrt{3}$ triangle, that is a right angled triangle with angles of 30° and 60°, and construct one on each side of the diameter of the earth, making a rectangle. This will have an area of radius squared $\times \sqrt{3} = 27206990.46..$ sq.miles, and it is this sequence which should be kept in mind, for if we have a 30°/60° triangle with a hypoteneuse of π feet, the other two sides will be $\pi+2$ and 2.72069904 feet.



Could we dare call this a 'Megalithic yard'? It falls within the parameters set by Thom.

Does it occur elsewhere? Yes!

If it is allied to π it must inevitably turn up, it is part and parcel of circular measure and of our number system, especially when in conjunction with $\sqrt{3}$ triangles.

It is there if you want to find it.

Draw a unit diameter circle, construct a $\sqrt{3}$ triangle and complete the semi-circle arc. (Fig. opposite.)

The hypoteneuse/diameter will be $\sqrt{3}$ and the length of the semi-circle will be $\sqrt{3} \times \pi + 2 = 2.720699..$

Thus the relationship of the unit diameter of the small circle to the semi-circle is 1 : 2.720699.., always.

Look again at the figure - the flat arc and the remainder of the small circle (outlined) is exactly the shape of Thom's type 'B' flattened stone circles, albeit drawn by a different method (Wood, p.42.). The perimeter is close to three times the diameter, and the area of the complete small circle is 1/3rd of a complete large circle.

If the diameter had been 3ft., the flat arc would have been 2.720699..ft. Relationship: diameter to flat arc = 1 : .90689..

The Roman 'mile'. It has always been considered that 'our' mile is ultimately derived from the Roman 'mille passus', a thousand paces. I would like to reverse this view. Using the above figure with a semi-circle of 2.5 miles, the diameter of the small circle would be $2.5 + 2.720699.. = .91888$ miles = 4851.69428 ft. The Roman 'pace' is considered to be c.4.856ft., (Skinner, p.68.), thus the small diameter is 1000 paces.

Stonehenge. Before applying this method of circle construction and formulae to prehistoric sites, I would like to show that it is inextricably linked to the figure of the earth. Take a small circle diameter of 5.44139..ft., (2 'Megalithic yards'. 2MY.), then the flat arc of an imposed semi-circle is $.90689.. \times 5.44139.. = 4.9348..$, the number we first started with for area!

Now what can these hypoteneuse of $\sqrt{3}$ and π have to do with Stonehenge?

Thom reckoned the Sarsen ring was contained within two concentric circles of 326.4 ft. and 306 ft..(Burl, p.183.). 120 MY (of 2.720699..ft.) = 326.48388..ft., (pretty close!) giving a diameter of 103.9230..ft. This is $60 \sqrt{3}$ ft. A flat arc formed on this diameter is 94.2467..ft., (30π), 1/3rd of an expected/intended Aubrey ring diameter of 282.743..ft., (90π). (Wood, p.163. gives 283.46 ft.).

The Aubrey Ring and the outer Sarsen circle are in the proportion 1 : 2.72.. yet each was built by a different race of people some 1000 years apart.

EAST DEVON WAYS

STEVEN SHIPP

The area of the Aubrey ring is 7.402.. times that of the outer Sarsen circle, and the square root of 7.402.. is 2.72069..

You can see that a pattern of interplay develops between π , $\sqrt{3}$ and 2.72

No. of $\sqrt{3}$ ft. in diameter = No. of MY in semi-circumference.

No. of feet in diameter \div sin 60° = No. of MY in circumference.

No. of π ft." " " = No. of MY on 3rd side of $\sqrt{3}$ triangle.

To introduce sin 60° (.866025) here may look a little odd, but consider a 10MY circumference circle. It will have a diameter of $10 \div \pi$, = 3.1831 MY = 8.66025ft I call this an 'MMY', so there are 12 MMY in the diameter of the outer Sarsen circle, equating with 120 MY in the circumference.

The diameter of a semi-circle imposed on the outer Sarsen circle would be 180ft., and perhaps it is important to note that the diameter of the outer ditch of Stonehenge I is given as 360ft. (Burl. p.50.). Stonehenge has not yet given up all it's secrets.

Woodhenge. The distance between the rings of the egg-shaped Woodhenge is given as 2.64 metres. (Wood. p.45).. and 8.66025..ft. is 2.6396..metres, thus the $\sqrt{3}$ triangle plays a full part in it's construction as it does in any other site if it is reckoned to contain Megalithic yards.

The diameter of the 'blunt' end of Woodhenge would appear to be 15 MMY = 129.9..ft. thus the semi-circumference is 75MY, (150MY \div 2), and the 3rd side of a $\sqrt{3}$ triangle built on this diameter is 112.5ft. It is also the radius used for marking the central flat arcs as drawn by Thom. (see digram Wood. p. 45.).

This measure also connects the two monuments, for a rectangle with sides of 112.5 ft and 259.807.. (2 'blunt' end diameters), gives the dimensions of the enigmatic Station Stone rectangle at Stonehenge with a diagonal of 283.11..ft.

The 306ft circumference of the inner Sarsen circle, is of course, 112.5 \times 2.720699...! (306.0786ft. - within an inch of 306ft.).

And finally. It has been necessary to be brief with the $\sqrt{3}$ method, and to assume that the reader has some familiarity with simple geometry and has access to plans of Stonehenge and Woodhenge, but the maths should stand the test of checking. I have but given a taste, for there are many interesting points I have had to leave out. It was through working with our old Imperial units that these patterns of numbers became apparent, using the metric system conceals (to me) their recognition and significance. Who would imagine that 81366876.17 sq.kilometres was equivalent to $10^6 \times \pi$ sq.miles.

2.72...ft. surfaces from a 1ft. circle, and from a $\sqrt{3}$ triangle with π ft. for a hypotenuse. This mathematical "MY" buries Thom's accurate measuring rods (relief for archaeologists!), but where the MY is found, as in the Sarsen measurements and Thom's other work, then so is the foot. The mile contains 'feet', and the mile is inseparable from both π and the figure of the earth. To whom or to what can the earth be connected?

Sampford Courtenay, August 1994.

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Wood.J.E. *Sun, Moon and Standing Stones*. O.U.P. 1980.

The churches of East Devon have a rich vein of history running through them and many go back to Saxon origin. They have withstood the ravages of modern times (save the Victorians) which has destroyed so much of our landscape. They are like time capsules full of fascinating ancient artefacts, while others are associated with legends.

If we venture along the small country road on Farway Hill (an important prehistoric centre), we come to a place known as Money Acre Cross, or Money Acre Corner. It was at this spot that a legend tells us of an event that brought good fortune to the church of Farway which lies deep in the valley below at Church Green.

Early in the 17th century a yeoman called Humphrie Hutchins was ploughing ground adjacent to this spot when he turned up an old iron crock. On examination it was found to contain a large quantity of gold as well as a piece of written parchment. Being illiterate, Humphrie went to the rector of Farway, Thomas Foster, who told him that it instructed the finder of the crock to use the gold to repair the ancient church first (surprise surprise!), before spending any for their own personal use.

This is obviously what happened and the aisle of the church was repaired accordingly. On the north wall of this aisle there is a bust of Hutchins beneath which an inscription tells of his benevolence. If you visit Farway church, don't miss the magnificent ancient Yew tree in the churchyard.

The pretty though straddling village of East Budleigh boasts an ancient history. Its church of All Saints which dates back to Saxon times is famous for the unique carved wooden bench ends - some of which depict strange and wonderful beasts. But it's outside the building which is of interest to us. The church is orientated along the traditional north-south axis, with church land either side. However, until 1830 no burials took place on the north side as both superstition and the opinion that this was unhallowed ground due to witchcraft, stopped people being buried there. Only the south side was used, resulting in burials being made on the top of earlier ones. Eventually, due to successive burials this side rose some ten feet above the surrounding land. It wasn't uncommon to find old headstones when new graves were being sunk! The north part of the churchyard was also used for pagan fairs and feasts - these being recorded as quite riotous, with people running amok over the church and on the tower.

The tower itself lends to a legend of an attempt to fly by one Radulphus Node. Sometime in the 14th century he fell to his death as he tried to fly from the tower. His headstone now lies propped up against the south-west wall of the tower.

The church of St Giles in picturesque Sidbury is well worth a visit as it is full of interesting pieces of our past. There is no doubt that the Saxons constructed the first church on the site; the evidence for which was discovered in 1898 when a Saxon crypt was found beneath the floor of the chancel. The crypt, measuring about 10'x9', is

very rare indeed and there are only five others known of in England. The walls made of chert (a flint-like quartz) are 6' high on the north side but much lower to the south and east, with four steps on the west side which originally led into the church. It is believed that the crypt had a stone barrel vault. It can be visited during the week in late summer - usually on a Thursday in September.

The octagonal font in the church has a wooden cover of 1620 and a rare surviving ancient lock plate. This was installed to stop witches and other ill-disposed people from using the holy water in the font for love potions and other so-called misdemeanours. The practise of locking fonts was abandoned in the middle of the 16th century, when the custom of keeping them continuously filled with holy water was no longer adhered to. The fonts were then filled and emptied for each baptism. The lock plate, which may possibly be the only one existing in the country has not been dated; however it was recorded as being repaired in 1309. Interesting, the last recorded case of "witch scratching" (cursing) in the country occurred in Sidbury earlier this century.

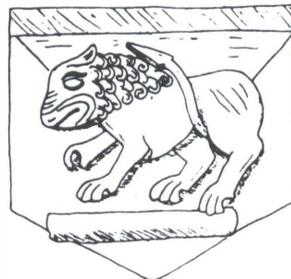
Other points of interest in this church are the Norman carvings in the tower roof - one of which is a strange kind of lion beast, and another which looks like a cat mask! In the south transept is an 18th century Bier - an ingenious four-wheeled contraption used to carry coffins to the church for the burial. And finally in the churchyard are fine examples of 'devil spikes' on the headstones and tombs to keep the devil away.

The Norman tower of St Andrew's church in Colyton has a rare octagonal lantern built on top of it. This unusual but beautiful 15th century lantern was originally intended as a navigational light for sailing vessels approaching the village along the River Coly. In 1933 faulty wiring in the church caused a disastrous fire, with both the south aisle and nave roofs being completely destroyed. However, as a result of this great fire, a hidden Saxon Cross was discovered. This magnificent treasure dated at between 900-1000CE has been described as the best pre-Conquest sculpture in the county. One side of the shaft is plain while the other is decorated with the "inhabited vine scroll".

Other churches worth visiting are St Winifreds in Branscombe which has an ancient font decorated with a Green Man; St Andrews in Collumpton where you can find the unique Golgotha or Calvary, which are huge blocks of oak carved with skulls, rocks and bones; and finally, St Marys at Luppitt which is home to a thousand year old font carved with masks, fighting dragons and strange beasts.



LUPPITT - Norman Font



BEAST figure in Sidbury Church

The second meeting of the MID-DEVON EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP, formed by WISHT MAEN subscribers in the Crediton area (which has shown a great deal of interest in the magazine - we have more subscribers in the Crediton area than anywhere else; perhaps its something they put in the water?) will be held on Thursday 3rd November 1994. The first field trip is to the Merrivale complex on Sunday 13th November, meet 12 noon at the car park. Details from John & Dee (0363 866839 daytime) or Jonathan & Angela (0363 775831 evenings). See you there.

KRIS BOND thinks he may have noticed a midsummer sunrise alignment running from Goonhilly Downs, over to the standing stones of Essa (SX138510), then on to Duloe stone circle (SX23575830), then via various bridges, Castlewich Henge (SX37086854), then via various churches, bridges, crossroads and towns with meaningful names, straight across North West Dartmoor, Bridgewater, across the Mendips and through the Long Barrow country, then over to the Fens before finally bursting through the Wash. With the exception of the Cornish sites he did not have the equipment or maps to check it in detail, but at first sight it seemed fairly strong. He also found a N-S ley on Dartmoor:

Ugborough Kerbed Cairn	- SX66745877
Ugborough Cairn	- SX66745893
Ugborough Beacon	- SX66745911
Blocking Stone at SW end of Brent Fore Hill	
Double Stone Row (row orientated on 54)	- SX66746126 Cairn
at end of Holne Ridge Double Stone Row	- SX66747107
Thornworthy Intake Cairn Circle & Cist	- SX66748433

It would be highly interesting (he says) to find any sites on the line from Dyfed, Gwynned, Dumfriesshire, Tayside, West Grampian and Caithness, all areas rich in prehistoric and later monuments and all lying due north of Dartmoor.

SOURCE, the holy wells journal, has returned. Published quarterly, the first issue (out now) includes articles by Janet & Colin Bord on British 'Cursing' wells, and Miranda Green on the symbolism of water cults in the pre-Christian period. It is very good indeed. Address and details in EXCHANGE MAGAZINES listings.

The following carvings were found on the famous hammer-shaped Drizzlecombe terminal stone menhir, SX593671. Very worn, they were only spotted when someone was looking through a camera to take a picture. Various explanations have been offered (C17th doodles, coded symbols for witches, trade insignias (masonic?) of the men who re-erected the menhir in 1893) - does anyone else have any theories?



THE CAULDRON Pagan journal of the Old Religion; Wicca & Earth Mysteries. £1.50 single, £6 sub. M A Howard, Caemorgan Cottage, Caemorgan Rd, Cardigan, Dyfed, SA43 1QU. **CELTIC CONNECTIONS** Journal of Celtic and related subjects. £5.50 sub. David James, Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9DF. **DALRIADA** Journal of the Native Celtic Tradition. £6 sub, single £1.75. "Clan Dalriada", Dun-na-Beatha, 2 Brathwic Plc, Brodick, Isle of Arran, Scotland, KA27 8BN. **THE DRAGON CHRONICLE** Eclectic pagan ideology, dragon-inspired. £5 sub, £1.50 single. P O Box 3369 London SW6 6JN. **FORTTEAN TIMES** Journal of strange phenomena. Essential reading and devastatingly funny. £12 for 6. Box 2409, London NW5 4NP. **GREENLEAF** Robin's Greenwood Gang -free lifestyles, travellers to trees, festivals/sites. £3.50 sub, 75p single. George Firsoff, 96 Church Rd, Redfield, Bristol 5. **LONDON PSYCHOGEOGRAPHICAL ASSOCIATION (LPA)** 6 2nd class stamps for 4 issues. **LPA(ELS)** Box 15, 138 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS. **MERCIAN MYSTERIES** Alternative studies of past/place with a Midlands emphasis. £2.00 sample, £7 sub. 2 Cross Hill Close, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Leics LE12 6UJ. **MEYN NAMVRO** Ancient/sacred sites in Cornwall and related EM studies. £5.50 sub, £1.90 single. 51 Carn Bosavern, St Just in Penwith, Penzance, Cornwall, TR19 7QX. **NORTHERN EARTH** Long established radical journal of EM, antiquarianism & cultural tradition. £5 sub, £1.50 single. 10 Jubilee St, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W Yorks HX7 5NP. **PENDRAGON** Arthurian history, mythology, legend. £6 sub. Smithy House, Newton-by-Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 6SX. **PHOENIX** Wide-ranging lively pagan issues. £2.75. 25 Rose Terrace, Moorview Park, Newcastle on Tyne NE5 3AU. **THE LEY HUNTER** Foremost in EM studies worldwide. £5.25 sub. P O Box 92 Penzance Cornwall TR18 2XL. **SOURCE** Holy Wells. £8 4 issues £2.25 sample. Pen-y-Bont, Bont Newydd, Cefn, St Asaph, Clwyd LL17 0HH. **TUAR CEATHA** Green spirituality, politics etc. 50p. One World Centre, Canavan House, Nun's Island, Galway. 3rd **STONE** Let he who is without sin cast the first?..£2.50 from G.E.M. P O Box 258 Cheltenham Glos GL53 0HR. **WHITE DRAGON** Mercia pagan occult issues. £6 year, £1.75 sample. Cheques: Paganlink Mercia. 103 Abbotswood Close, Redditch, Worcs, B98 0QF. **LOCAL PUBLICATIONS & GROUPS** The Dartmoor Newsletter - current Moor issues, history, walks, book reviews. £6 sub, 6 issues. Paul Rendell, 20 Rolston Close, Southway, Plymouth, Devon, PL6 6PE. **AQUARIAN DISCUSSION GROUP** - Gaia Earth healing, leys, crystals, spirituality, meditation, healing. Lois Lloyd Plymouth 0752 786716. **DARTMOOR PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION - fighting to keep the Moor free. Membership £5 year. OAPE & under 23's £2.50. FREEPOST PLYMOUTH DEVON PL1 1BR.** **DEVON CROP CIRCLES GROUP** Jenny & Pat Selfe, Higher Knowle, Aveton Gifford Devon TQ7 4NJ. **DEVON DOWSERS** -Field trips, lectures, classes, courses, library & social events. Membership £10 year. Corfe Close, High Bickington, Umberleigh, Devon EX37 9AY. **MID-DEVON EARTH MYSTERIES GROUP** Field trips, meetings and esoteric guides to oblivion! 0363 775831

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Exeter, Devon: Evolution.
Okehampton, Devon: Dartmoor Museum; The Dandy-Lion.
Plymouth, Devon: In Other Words (Mutley Plain).
Princetown, Devon: Past & Present.
Tintagel, Cornwall: Dragon's Breath; Legends.
Tiverton, Devon: The Dandy-Lion.
Yealmpton, Devon: Kitley Farm Shop.