

**\*\*100th issue\*\***

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Articles [c] MM & authors.

Thanks to Andy Norfolk for front cover artwork.

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# Meyn Mamvro

## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

EARTH ENERGIES \* ANCIENT STONES \* SACRED SITES \* PAGANISM \* LEYPATHS  
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33 years ago I sat down to write the Editorial for the very first issue of MM. In it I said: "Meyn Mamvro aims to provide a forum, an outlet, for an exchange of ideas and interests in the fields of earth studies, archaeology, Cornish culture and paganism. These different categories are not mutually exclusive - what they all have in common is a respect for our land, a great interest in the monuments and sites of the past built on it and in relationship to it, and a desire to protect and preserve both the land itself and the way in which men and women have responded to that land". This agenda has remained consistent through the ensuing 33 years, though had I realised at the time that MM would endure and thrive for all this time, I would have laughed at you! Naively, I thought there might be enough material and interest for perhaps a dozen or so issues. I certainly had no idea that we would be celebrating the 100th issue of the magazine over three decades later! This issue celebrates it with features and articles by some of MM's regular contributors.

Having reached issue 100, I have given a great deal of thought as to where we go from here. One thing that I have been wanting to do is to convert all 100 issues into digital form, so that all the varied news items, articles, theories, ideas and photographs may be preserved for posterity and be accessible to everyone. Opportunity has now arrived to do just that, thanks to the generosity of Palden Jenkins, who has offered to take on the considerable task of creating this archive. Work has already begun on it, so check the website [www.meynmamvro.co.uk](http://www.meynmamvro.co.uk) for future progress on this. It also seemed apt to finish this first series of MM with this issue, no.100; but as there still seems to be life and interest in the magazine, I plan to continue with a Second Series, starting next year, 2020. It will be published twice a year, in the Spring and the Autumn, and details may be found at the website, and on a flier enclosed with this issue. Please subscribe so that MM may continue on.

*Join in three days of practical investigation*

*28-30 March 2020*

*Participate for some or all days!*

*Are the Michael Line & Michael-Mary  
currents physical or etheric phenomena?*

Consider straight and serpentine currents at  
Cam Lès Boel, Gumard's Head & Zennor;  
also etheric alignments of standing stones  
and the shape & orientation of stone rings.

Consider how our innate intuitive  
sense of place and form can  
manifest etheric fields of form,  
experience their subtle influences  
& geometrical disposition  
in measures.

Led by Pat Toms

- see article in MM99

For details & itinerary  
contact [pat@toms.org](mailto:pat@toms.org)

*A SoL pop-up Moot*



## DOWSING NEWS

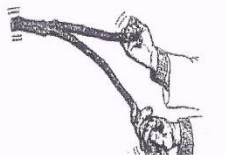


Image [c]  
Jean Hands

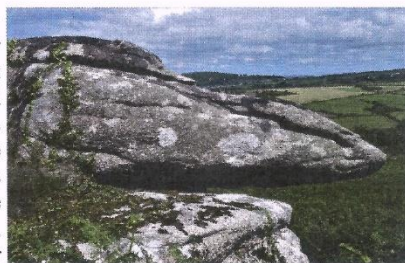
At the beginning of June, **Tamar Dowzers** organised a trip with *Mary and Derek Scofield* to sacred sites in East Cornwall. They gathered at *Haltan Quay*, reputed to be the landing place of two 7thC saints, Indract and his sister Dominica, both of royal Irish descent. A well was found, that did not dowse as a holy well. They then walked up to *Monk's Field*, which reputedly has never been ploughed (because of monks buried there), and elements of geopathic stress were found there. Lunch was taken at Woodland Farm, where a ley was dowsed and found to go straight through *St. Indract's holy well*. In the afternoon they went to *Pentillie Castle*, where a 21st century stone circle has been placed on a hill [see *MM95 p.24*]. Crossing energies were dowsed through the centre and an inter-lacing energy line found around the stones. It also dowsed as being very appropriately situated over a blind spring of water. Finally, the group went to *Dupath Well*, where Alan Neal used a Mager Rosette to determine what minerals were dissolved in the water and to confirm that it was indeed a holy well. A varied and enjoyable day's dowsing.



*Dupath Well [c] Tamar Dowzers*

At the Summer Solstice **Tamar Dowzers** again went to *The Hurlers* where member Stuart Dow experienced the rapid growth of a flower of life manifestation of energy in the entire circle, during and after the singing and dancing provided by a Morris group.

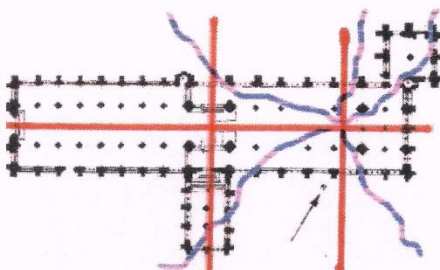
Then at the end of the month, **Trencrom Dowzers** went to *Carn Brea* near Redruth, which includes a tor enclosure (built 6000 years ago), traces of Iron Age round houses, rectangular houses and a Giant's Well. It was a warm clear June day, but the summer's growth of bracken and brambles obscured some of the round houses and made parts of the hill quite inaccessible. However, the sizeable group split into separate smaller groups to study the energy lines, currents and leys at different parts of the hill. An extraordinary concentration of energy was found at rock formations on the south side, some of which had an anthropomorphic shape.



*Carn Brea rock formations  
[c] Trencrom Dowzers*



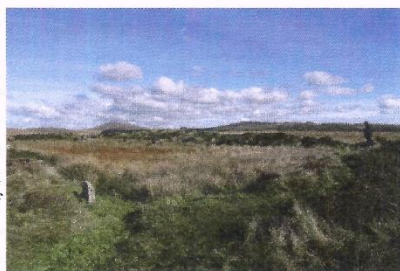
In July, the **Trencrom Dowzers** went to the ruined and beautiful *St Co-han's church in Merther*, near Tresillian. Still energetically strong, despite its crumbling state in the lovely landscape, it was clearly an ancient pre-Christian site, indicated by the oval raised churchyard. The Group measured water and energy lines running through the building, confirming the usual blind spring under the altar, though the energies were at least 50% weaker than in a well-used church. The pattern of energy lines was also regular.



*Pattern of main energy leys and water lines in pre-Reformation churches like Merther.*

In August, **Tamar Dowzers** had a gathering at *Siblyback Lake* on Bodmin Moor with TD member Helen Fox, which attracted a good turnout of 25 other members. The most obvious feature, as shown on Hamish Miller's (*The Sun and the Serpent*) map of the area, was the place where the St. Michael ley hits the eastern bank. The alignment was about twelve paces wide at the outset, but expanded as they worked with it. A strong energy line was also found there, coursing off towards the cairns atop Brownngelly Downs on the north western horizon. Many of the Group then went on a circumnavigation of the lake on foot, where on the far side of the reservoir, they were able to find three leys - including the one by the activity centre. A second alignment pointed straight at Tregarrick Tor and a third, much wider, line shot off in the general direction of Long Tom and Caradon Hill. Tea and cakes completed an enjoyable day's dowsing.

In September, a group of dowzers paid a visit to *King Arthur's Hall* on Bodmin Moor, co-ordinated by **Time Seekers** ahead of an excavation there next year. Water lines, mostly E-W were found, and the idea of a community honouring the waters, and of bathing in the reflected stars at night was suggested. Most people dowsed that the stones were thought of as representative of the Ancestors, and as place marks for certain community members to be positioned, probably for ritual purposes. A lovely and productive day.



*King Arthur's Hall [c] Stuart Dow*

Finally, in September **Tamar Dowzers** went to *Mount Edgcumbe House*, for a day with Nick Butcher, Head Ranger. Rooms and walls of the original house were dowsed, and a tumulus in the grounds was identified as being Bronze Age with eight original interments, and energy lines, water flows and leys were all found. They then went on to dowsed other structures including the church of Maker and the holy well of St. Julian.

*Stuart Dow runs a Facebook page, entitled 'Earth Energies, Alignments, Leys'.*

*Tamar Dowzers and Trencrom Dowzers (Penwith Press) also have Facebook pages.*



## PENWITH LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP NEWS

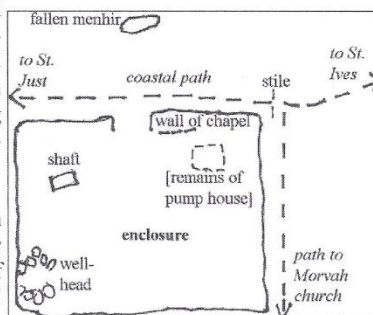


An excavation in the summer by PLP, led by archaeologist Laura Ratcliffe-Warren, investigated the area of **Tregaminion Well** [SW4012 3588] down the end of a footpath from Morvah church, and near the coastal path. Interesting discoveries were made about the well, the adjoining chapel and a newly-discovered fallen menhir.

The well itself has been something of an enigma over the years. Lane-Davies [*Holy Wells of Cornwall, 1970*] has a picture of a spring of water rising by a bank. However, J.Meyrick [*A Pilgrim's guide to the Holy Wells of Cornwall, 1982*] said that the well lay under a modern pump house. This pump house was removed by the Morvah Schoolhouse Project in 2002, but no well was obvious, and they identified a shaft nearby, covered with concrete slabs, as the well. In this, however, they were mistaken, as this year's excavation found the source of the well [*photo right*] at SW40135 35889, sadly now surrounded by large rocks from a field clearance and now dry (though dowsing revealed that the stream was still flowing 3ft or so underground). Several trenches were dug in the area surrounding the well [the enclosure] and an extensive pavement of small stones was found, though it was not clear from what period it was laid. Fragments of Neolithic flint and a rounded pebble were also found in the enclosure, but it was not possible to know where they came from.

What was definitely discovered however, was one of the walls of a nearby chapel, that was originally thought to lie the other side of the coastal path (some anomalous stones still stand there), but which was excavated just within the entrance to the enclosure itself.

Speculation was that the anomalous stones may have formed part of a processional way to the chapel, but this theory is unconfirmed. However, the excavation produced some tremendous results, including a fallen menhir the other side of the coastal path [*see p.5*].



*Tregaminion location [not to scale]*



*Well-head and excavated pavement*



*Excavating the chapel wall*



## LOST & FOUND STANDING STONES

### Fallen menhir at Tregaminion

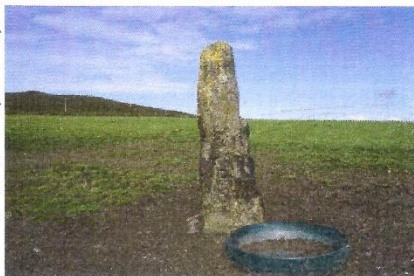
Just across the coastal path from the Tregaminion enclosure, on the seaward side of the coastal path, a fallen menhir has been discovered by dowsing [at SW40124 35931]. The stone is about 3 metres (10ft) and .56 metre (1ft 10ins) wide at its lower width, and has been shaped to come to a narrow top. It could have been seen clearly from the sea, and is presumably Neolithic. Three alignments to other sites run through the stone:-

[1] Pendeen Watch cliff castle - Chy Prazze chambered cairn - Tregaminion menhir - Trevean iron age settlement - Watch Croft cairn - Bosigran cairns 2 and 3 - Little Galva cairn A [2] Bosigran Castle cliff sanctuary - Tregaminion menhir - Morvah Barrow - Botallack Rings - Cape Cornwall cliff sanctuary. [3] Tregaminion menhir - Chûn Quoit - Botrea Barrows D, C, B and A.



### St.Agnes Beacon stone

Earlier this year a hitherto unrecorded standing stone was discovered at the base of St.Agnes Beacon in west Cornwall by Elizabeth Dale. The stone, which is about 2 metres (6½ft) tall stands at the back of Beacon Cottage Farm next to a public footpath [SW 70582 49998]. Archaeologist James Gossip recalls that it had been put up a few years ago by the local landowner, purpose unknown!



### Housel Cove stone

A couple of years ago, a rapid archaeological and historic assessment was carried out by the National Trust covering the Trust's land at Lizard Point, Landewednack, centered at approx SW70560 12070. The study area comprised the southern tip of the promontory, taking in the coast from Old Lizard Head on the west to Bass Point to the east. A possible prehistoric standing stone was identified, rising from a bank in a dramatic position above Housel Bay. The stone is about 1 metre (3¼ft) high, and earthenfast.





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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



CASP.N has continued with its clear-ups at ancient sites this year, in conjunction with the PLP. Specifically, CASP.N has been to Portheras Barrow, near Tregeseal for 2 clear-ups (in May and September); Sperris Quoit in June; Boscawen-ûn circle in July (as part of the National Archaeology Festival); and Mulfra Vean settlement in October. We have also lent our support to some PLP clear-ups, which have included Bosporthennis holy well in October, which has long been overgrown and lost to most visitors.



*Portheras Barrow [c] Roger Driscoll*

Meanwhile, we are continuing to plan our annual Pathways to the Past weekend of walks and talks for the 14th year at the end of May. As always, there will be a varied and interesting programme of events, all free to members of the organisation. Details at the moment are as follows, with the full programme on the website by the end of the year.

### **Saturday May 30th 2020**

10.00-12.00 **From fogou to fogou** A guided walk visiting Boscaswell & Pendeen fogous.  
 2.00-5.00 **Sun and Moon at Boscawen-ûn** Carolyn Kennett leads a walk around the area  
 7.30-9.00 **The Cornish fogou** Archaeologist James Gossip gives an illustrated talk.

### **Sunday May 31st 2020**

11.00-12.30 **King Arthur's 'tombstone'** An illustrated talk by Ann Preston-Jones.  
 2.00-5.00 **Writers in a liminal landscape** Adrian Rodda leads a walk around Zennor.  
 7.30-9.00 **King Arthur in Cornish folklore** A talk by folklorist Steve Patterson.

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

**Address:** Elowen, Wheal Kitty, Lelant Downs, Hayle TR27 6NS. Tel: 01736-740093

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## STONE PLATFORM FOUND AT TRETHEVY QUOIT EXCAVATION

An excavation took place at the Cornwall Heritage Trust (CHT) managed site of the portal dolmen Trethevy Quoit [SX2594 6881] in July this year. The site is owned by English Heritage, but the CHT bought the field on which it stands in 2007 [see *MM94 p.24*] and were now granted permission to excavate the area outside of the Quoit itself. There was an Open Day at the end of the dig, at which Andy Jones, the site archaeologist, gave a talk about the site and the findings. He believed that the capstone was brought to the site from a tor, originally visible from the location, and it would then have referenced the tor itself, which may have had spiritual significance for the people as the place of the ancestors or gods. The hole in the top may have been a natural basin that was subsequently hollowed out. It has been observed that at the summer solstice the midday sun shines directly through the hole.



*Trethevy Quoit*

The most exciting discovery of the week's excavation was that a platform of elvan stone extended some distance from the Quoit on its western side. The stone consisted of greenstone, that had been brought to the site from a nearby deposit, and compacted together to construct the platform, which extended approximately 20 metres x 12 metres wide, and half a metre deep. This platform would have been quite distinctive, and would have delineated the special area around the Quoit that presumably indicated the space that was separate or special in front of the Quoit itself. Interestingly, a pavement of small stones was also found at the Carwynnen Quoit excavations [see *MM80 p.5*], consisting of a strip of compacted small stones in a doughnut shape, which extended beyond the front end of the Quoit, though covering a much smaller area than that of Trethevy.



*Platform of greenstone*

The construction of the Quoit was featured in a booklet by Roy Goutté entitled *Trethevy Quoit: Cornwall's Megalithic Masterpiece* (2013) - [reviewed in *MM88 p.22*] in which he presciently observed that banking around it (shown in an 1845 engraving by Charles Knight) could have been an original 'exclusion zone' around the Quoit, although it was on a different side of the monument.



*Test pit at Excavation*

## Potential Neolithic engraved stone at Great Bosulow

By Graham Hill

On 29th March 2019, walking the track to Trehyllys Farm, an unusually flat boulder was noticed in the roadside granite hedge at SW 41564 34234, 200m beyond the entrance to Kerrow Farm. Despite the diffuse sunlight of a nearly overcast day, sharply defined lines were seen from two oblique directions, running from the top edge of the stone. Return visits with the use of car headlights and under stronger afternoon sunshine revealed most of what could be determined, without disturbing the complete covering of lichens.



The largely unstructured distribution of marks is not unlike that on some of the decorated stones excavated from Ness of Brodgar Neolithic buildings. The archaeologists at excavations associated with the rebuilding of Carwynnen Quoit in 2014 recorded scratches found on nearby rocks, hoping to find such Neolithic engravings. The broad and shallow gouges, and some sharper ones running over the surfaces, were not convincing as prehistoric artwork and were interpreted as the accidental marks of ploughing.

The example from the hedge at Great Bosulow has no modern plough marks on it, the characteristically broad scuffs being absent. Instead there may be the narrower marks of iron tines from a previous millennium; however this does not explain why the marks are strictly confined to one third of the area. The estimated 150kg boulder was part of this hedge before 1878 (Ordnance Survey maps) and the hedge boundaries are prehistoric (Cornwall Council Interactive Map). John Trewern of Trehyllys Farm looked at the stone with me. The hedge hasn't changed in the 80 years that he remembers walking past it. He had not noticed anything unusual about the stone and wondered how I had.

If this is a Neolithic engraving it could be accomplished using flint flakes. As an experiment, a sawing action made 3mm deep V-section cuts into my grinding quern of local coarse granite (for experimental stone axe making). The flint tool got blunter and was re-flaked and suffered attrition when breaking hard quartz crystals in its path. The engravings could have been made in about an hour, destroying some large flint or chert tools. On the top right of the surface are some deeper and more curved lines that are probably natural. From the bottom edge are natural slightly raised areas of triangular plan. These may have given further permission to the artist to embellish the upper part of the flat surface leaving the middle unmarked and smooth as a negative space in between in which to imagine further detail, guided by the subtle variation in surface and mixtures of coarse granite crystals. 'Permission' to work with 'natural signs' is given to the artist by nature. The 'invitation' to the viewer is to be shown the way to see nature's underlying structures. I would expect this from studying British Neolithic culture and its 'vision stones'.



## LIGHTING THE DARKNESS - CROSS BASED URNS

by **Carolyn Kennett**

*Carolyn Kennett is a leading archaeo-astronomer and original researcher about Cornwall's ancient sites. She contributed an article on Boscawen-ün stone circle alignments for MM95, and here has written this special article for this issue of MM100.*

The importance of the Sun has been recognised throughout history. This luminous body defined the lives of people it shone on and the clocklike regularity of its rise and set was well understood by humanity. Due to its significance, symbolic representation of the Sun stretches far back into prehistory. Designs including the Sun weren't uncommon and by the Bronze Age examples of solar symbolism are found across a range of medium. Drawings and designs were often abstract in nature. Representation included circles, waves and cross shapes. The cruciform shape in particular has been linked to the Sun by Mary Cahill (2015) and her work on Irish Sun discs. These are flat circular objects made of gold, designed to shine brightly when sunlight radiates onto them. The etching of a cross on the surface shows the rays of the Sun in a conceptual way, maybe representing various solar events, such as sundogs, pillars, rays and halos. Although no Sun discs have been found in Cornwall, these golden objects have also been linked to lunula. A lunula was found with a pair of Sun discs in Coggalbeg, Co Roscommon, confirming an association. Furthermore designs on lunula lend themselves to observation with sunlight. There are examples of lunula found here in Cornwall and if you get the chance it is worth visiting the Penlee House Gallery where the Penwith Lunula is on display.



*Sun discs with cross shaped design found at Tedavnet, Co. Monaghan, Ireland.*

*Image [c] The British Museum.*

Other objects discovered in Cornwall from this period incorporate a cross design. Although perhaps not as glamorous as a golden disc, local urns can include a similar design. Trevisker style urns are a design of urn which are predominantly found in the South West of the UK. Dating from the Bronze Age the style is known for its hash/dash and zig-zag lines and use of local materials such as gabbroic clay from the Lizard peninsula. On occasion the urns have a cross or cruciform design within the interior of the base. This seems to be a rare occurrence but there have been examples of cross based urns found at the Trevisker village excavation, Boleigh barrow, and Tregeseal chambered tomb.

A further example was found in Kent. This urn had been placed in a ring ditch, and the soot recovered from inside the urn was radio carbon dated to 1600-1320 cal BCE. It was found shattered into over 200 pieces but was reconstructed, with its internally crossed base being clearly observable.

The urn from Tregeseal chambered tomb was recovered by William Copeland Borlase in 1879. Found at the end of the passage, in a separate area it was recovered almost complete by Borlase during his excavation. It now resides within the British Museum. Tregeseal Chambered tomb is part of a group of Bronze Age entrance graves in Penwith which include Bosiliack, Tregiffian and Pennance. As an aside radio carbon dating results on a burial at Bosiliack gave 1690-1510 cal BCE [Jones, A and Thomas, C. 2010] a similar date to the urn found in Kent. The Tregeseal urn is a large example and is 21 inches in height. The Cross shape was meticulously drawn in plan form at the time. The plan was reproduced in the London Illustrated Times and it can also be seen on the wall of the Penlee House Gallery Museum in Penzance.



*Trevisker Urn from Tregeseal. Image [c] British Museum Collection Online*

The cross itself would not be integral to the structure of the urn. There seems to be no practical explanation to why an urn of this size would have this addition in the base. It is therefore interesting to consider if some Trevisker urns could be following the tradition of Sun discs and offer a design which is indicative of solar symbolism? One aspect which strengthens the case of this idea is that the Urn would have started as a disc shape on which the cross shape would be added. Then the sides would have been added to the urn creating the final vessel. Looking down from the mouth of the urn it would have clearly taken on representation of the Sun in a similar way to the Sun disc design. An alternative explanation has been offered by Kavanagh, R (1973) who suggested that the cross was added to demonstrate a bottom of a basket and was a nod to the basketry traditions of the period.



*The Tregeseal Urn base – drawn in plan. Image credit W.C Borlase circa 1879*



The Tregeseal example was discovered within the tomb base up containing cremated remains. So the cross would have been above the remains. This could have been intentional. Many funerary urns are found base up. A cross at the top could represent a number of ideas. A Sun in the dark? A route to the heavens? A set Sun? There was just one time of the year which the Sun would shine down the chamber to its rear. This was on the winter solstice sunrise. A recent survey of Tregeseal entrance grave, undertaken by Carolyn Kennett and Grenville Prowse and supervised by Penwith Landscape Partnership archaeologist Jeanette Radcliffe, found the passage to be orientated at 128 degrees. This orientation towards the solar extreme of winter solstice sunrise is in common with local tombs at Bosiliack and Pennance. On this day the sunlight would shine down the passageway hitting the back upright stone at the rear. The urn was positioned behind this back stone in a separate area or cist. Although currently it is difficult to understand the full design of the tomb, as this rear section has been removed and our understanding is reliant on the original plan from the Borlase excavation. It is also worth considering if the positioning of the urn in a separate section was intentional? As this position would ensure that no natural sunlight would reach the urn at any time, the symbolisms may have shown that it was providing its own light, even on this important day of renewal in the solar calendar.



*Tregeseal entrance grave [c] James Kitto*

A photograph taken by Gibson and Sons at the time of the excavation show a possible blocking stone at the start of the passageway, which would have further limited light down the passage on the solstice. There is no evidence remaining of this stone now, so it is difficult to understand the overall effect this would have had on limiting light at the solstice. It is worth remembering that the final resting place of this urn probably came after a life of servitude. The urn in Kent had traces of animal fats within it and was probably used as a transportation vessel for food before its final role as a funerary urn. Trevisker style urns are not the only vessels to include crosses on their base, although in general this cruciform addition to urns is rare and seems to be reserved for the more decorative funerary examples. Other examples of cross based urns have been found in Ireland, Scotland and Yorkshire. As a final thought I doubt we shall ever know the full truth behind this oddity in the design, but it is a nice idea to consider that the cross was an addition by our ancestors to bring light to the darkest of places.

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## GWRAH – WITCH, HAG OR ANCIENT GODDESS?

by Andy Norfolk

*Andy Norfolk has been one of MM's most creative contributors since its inception. Author of a number of original articles over the years, and illustrator of all its covers from no.19 onwards, he has written this special article for this 100th issue.*

Ithell Colquhoun wrote of “the Cailleach, that ageless ambiguous, multi-parous figure that haunts the hinterland of folklore in all Celtic countries”[1] and that “Taking from sea, stone, corn, moon, earth and the unearthly abysses, she has left memorials throughout the Celtic west.”[2] So where is she in Cornish folklore, or are we unhaunted?



*Crone or Hag at Lanyon Quoit [c] Jill Smith*

The word *cailleach* in modern Irish and Scots Gaelic means old woman, or hag. It comes from Old Irish *caillech* meaning veiled one. She is the mother of the gods and goddesses, tribes and peoples. She is known in Scotland Ireland and Man as a creator of the landscape; she creates mountains to act as her stepping stones. She is a herder of deer and mistress of the weather summoning fierce storms, known as the Old Wife of Thunder.[3] In Scotland she brings on winter by washing her plaid until it is white.[4] If she wants winter to last longer she makes sure that February 1<sup>st</sup> is bright and clear.

She controls the sea, especially at the Corryvreckan (between the islands of Jura and Scarba). “This boiling of the Sea is not above a Pistol-shot distant from the Coast of Scarba Isle, where the white waves meet and spout up; they call it the Kaillach i. e. an old Hag; and they say that when she puts on her Kjrchief i.e. the whitest waves, it is then reckon'd fatal to approach her.”[5] In Scotland she is known at the Cailleach Bhéara. In Ireland she is Cally Berry though here she is maiden not a crone. There is an Irish saying “The three great ages, the age of the yew, the age of the eagle, and the age of the Caillaghh Bera.”[6] On the Isle of Man she is the Cailleach ny Groamagh ‘the old gloomy woman’ who brings in the winter. She appears in folktales and the ballad of Berrey Dhone. She also occurs as *Cailleach ny ghuesagh*, a spell-casting witch.

She is associated with cliffs and the sea. A headland on the west coast of Mull is known as Cailleach Point. A *gruagach*, a long-haired female spirit, may be the Cailleach under another name for there is a legend that “She placed her left foot on Ben Bhidhe in Arran and her right foot on ‘Allasan’ (Ailsa Craig), making this her stepping stone to cross to the mainland of Scotland or to Ireland.”[7] Here on Mull she renewed her youth once every hundred years by bathing in Loch Bà.



In Ireland there are many tales of her making mountains and mounds and other earth-works and she is associated with mountain crags and rocky outcrops, such as *Ceann na Cailleach*, *The Hag's Head at the Cliffs of Moher* mountain; and *Sliabh na Caillí*, meaning the Cailleach's mountain where the famous Loughcrew tombs stand and where you can still find *The Hag's Chair* in which she sat. On Slieve Gullion, she was said to live in a passage grave called *Calliagh Birra's House*.



*Hag's Chair at Loughcrew*

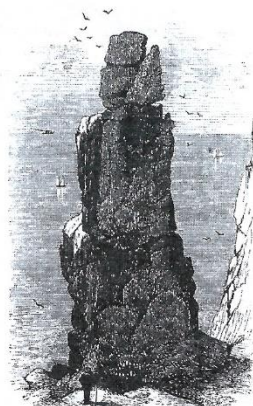
What then of Wales? It is said that the Cailleach is the same as the Hag of the Mist, *Gwrach-y-Rhibyn*, though she mostly gives warnings of imminent death. She is however a shaper of the landscape like the Cailleach. She is thought to be a water deity and perhaps an aspect of the goddess Don. The Cailleach may also be the giantess after whom *Barclodiad y Gawres* is named. In Pembrokeshire when the last sheaf was cut and everyone present was asked what the reaper had they shouted *gwrach*. This it is said is the direct equivalent of the the Scottish custom in which this last sheaf is called the cailleach or carline.[8] It has however been claimed that the Cailleach wasn't present in Wales at all and was a Gaelic goddess.[9]

Things get more interesting in Brittany. Pomponius Mela writing about 43 CE mentioned nine priestesses called *Gallicenae* living on the island of Sena off the coast of Brittany. They could raise storms and winds and shape-shift. They seem to be the same as later *Groac'h* "a name given to the Druidesses, who had colleges in an island near the coasts of Brittany." [10] *Groac'h* is the same word as the current Breton *gwrac'h*, *gwrach* in Welsh and of course *gwrach* in Cornish, meaning hag or witch. The priestesses also worshipped a *Groac'h* or hag goddess. Various monuments in Brittany are named after this hag – such as "Le Dolmen de la Groach and Le Menhir a la Pointe de la Groach, both in Finisterre and a dolmen at Locmarquer in the Morbihan known as *Daul ar Groach*" [11]. There's also *La Grande Menhir Brise* also known as *Men er Groach* or *Er Grah* – the stone of the witch/hag. The *groac'h* is associated with wells and springs and also the sea.[12] The *groac'h* is also described as an ogress or water witch.[13] The closest equivalent of the Cailleach in Brittany seems to be the *Groac'h Ahes*. However there is also a statue which may be of this Breton Cailleach. It stood at Castenec but, after it became the focus of Pagan veneration, the Bishop of Vannes had it thrown into the Blavet River twice, in 1661 and 1670. It was thrown back in 1690 but was retrieved and re-erected. It's known as the *Venus of Quinipily* [drawing right], or in Breton *Ar groareg Houarn* or *Groah Hoart* meaning the Iron Hag or the Hag of the Guardhouse. The goddess statue found at Ballachulish in 1881 may also be a representation of the Cailleach.[14]



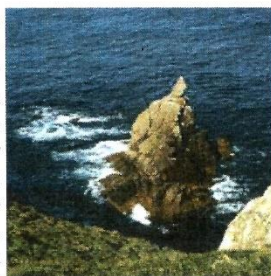
Anne Ross wrote “The basic Celtic goddess type was at once mother, warrior, hag, virgin, conveyor of fertility, of strong sexual appetite which led her to seek mates amongst mankind equally with the gods, giver of prosperity to the land, protectress of the flocks and herds. More static and more archaic than the gods, she remained tied to the land for which she was responsible and whose most striking features seemed to her worshippers to be manifestations of her power and personality.”[15] These are of course all traits of the Cailleach.

You should by now be thinking – oh, I recognise some of that from Cornish legends. We have our hags or witches too, though of course we need to rethink those labels – they aren’t hags or witches but are the same powerful and archaic goddess. Some are obvious, I think. As Bottrell tells it “On the top of Tol Pedn is a rude recess among the cubes of granite, which keeps the name of Madgy Figgy’s Chair. Madgy was one of the blackest of all the Penwith witches; and often when the winter storms were rising, and in the great stream of commerce entering the Channel all the skill of seamanship was being used to keep the great ships off the rocks, Madgy Figgy was seen swinging to and fro with exultation in her chair screaming out her incantations till the storm rose into ungovernable fury, and the ships drew near and nearer to the reefs.” Don’t believe those folk who tell you that this was really the perch of Harry the Thief. Others may not be quite so apparent. “In old times there lived in a cavern on the sea-shore, about ten miles to the east of Hayle, a giant called Wrath, who had a bad character given him by the people of St. Ives.” “The place in which Wrath lived is the fissure or gorge near Portreath, known by the name of the Giant’s Zawn, or more generally by that of Ralph’s Cupboard.”[16] Now of course Wrath is really Gwragh and our Cornish Cailleach has had her sex changed to suit a later story about a smuggler.



*Madgy Figgy’s Chair  
Drawing by J.T. Blight*

We also have the legend of the Irish Lady – who must of course be the Cailleach too. She is after all seen sitting on her rock in the midst of storms with a rose in her mouth.[17] I suspect she’s the same woman also seen with a rose in her mouth at Pendeen fogou. Not far away is the Mermaid’s Rock at Lamorna. “There exists the popular fancy of a lady showing herself here previous to a storm with, of course, the invariable comb and glass. She is said to have been heard singing most plaintively before a wreck, and that, all along the shore, the spirits have echoed her in low moaning voices.”[18] Apart from the comb and mirror this could be yet again our ancient sea goddess.



*Irish Lady, Sennen*



Margaret Courtney wrote that, “On an almost inaccessible granite peak seaward of the pile of rocks known as Castle Treryn (pronounced Treen), once the haunt and meeting-place of witches, on the summit of which is perched the far-famed Cornish logan-rock”. Was this also a hint of the Cornish version of the Cailleach – perhaps the lesser known Lady Logan here is named after her? Given the Cailleach’s reputation for taking human lovers you may also be wondering if the Mermaid of Zennor is also our sea goddess Gwragh. She did after all spirit Mathey Trewella away to sea. Perhaps the story of St Agnes and the giant Bolster should also be rethought as being about our lost, and all but forgotten, archaic goddess of the sea taking a not so human lover. The Groac’h of Brittany is associated with wells and springs. The well at Kenidjack is haunted by a witch who fits this description. “Passing by a gap in a broken-down hedge (called a gurgo) near the well, she saw an old woman sitting down, wrapped in a red shawl; she asked her what she did there at that time of night, but received no reply; she thought this rather strange, but plunged her pitch-er in the well; when she drew it up, though a perfectly sound vessel, it contained no water.”[19] Is this rather more than just a story of old Moll?



*The Mermaid of Zennor*

Further away still, what about Bedruthan Steps? The legend we now know was only recorded in Victorian times but that can be said about most of those we have. An archaic goddess using landscape features as stepping stones fits with the Cailleach perfectly. Next time you read about a witch, or even some mermaids, in a Cornish legend just bear in mind that you really may be reading about a goddess who was there before all the other deities who haunts our folklore in disguise.

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## PAGAN GLIMPSES FROM LAMORNA

by Jo OCléirigh

*Jo OCléirigh wrote an article (on Milpreves, or Adders Beads) for the very first issue of MM, thirty-three years ago. He was living in Lamorna Valley then, to which he still has a strong attachment, and writes about the special place and its people for this 100th issue.*

For me, the discovery of Lamorna was due to reading, soon after it was published, *The Living Stones* by Ithell Colquhoun [1957]. While Ithell didn't call herself a pagan, she very firmly identified herself as an animist, which is a core awareness for most Pagans. She was also into magic, which finds its place in much pagan, most particularly witchcraft, practice.

Her Lamorna period saw her living in the little wood-framed and corrugated hut, which she named 'Vow Cave' after an ancient site up on the eastern side of the valley. The hut was without electricity or mains water, and she was able to bathe naked in the river. Lamorna was quieter then, shielded by luxuriant undergrowth. Magic and Animism inspired her Surrealist Art and her Gothic novel *Goose of Hermogenes* [1961]. Ithell has been neglected, forgotten about for decades, so I was very pleased to find the biographies by Eric Ratcliffe [*Ithell Colquhoun: Pioneer Surrealist Artist, Occultist, Writer and Poet* 2007] (reviewed in MM71 p.23) and Richard Shillitoe [*Ithell Colquhoun: Magician born of nature* 2009]. Then in 2016 there was the wonderful alchemical experiment 'Ancient Scent' initiated by Steve Patterson in Lamorna Valley, in which an eclectic group of artists, writers, performers and sorcerers attempted to evoke the Genii Locus of the valley, using Ithell's surrealist techniques. All these have brought the life and work of this remarkable woman to a wider Art world, although of course, the work of Ithell Colquhoun was never a part of the mainstream Art world

In her time Ithell met Gerald Gardner, the instigator of Wicca, and briefly Aleister Crowley, and she knew Cecil Williamson, founder of the Museum of Witchcraft. Ithell's main involvement was with Magical Orders, but she did return to Ireland to Enniscorthy and at Clonegal Castle was initiated as a Priestess of the Fellowship of Isis (F.O.I). I got to know Ithell through my membership of the F.O.I and we were friends for the last nine years of her life while I lived in the old woodcutters' caravan on Janet Gibbs' land in Lamorna. At that time I was doing regular Archaeological work in Egypt and later in Crete in which she was interested, so we talked a lot about those discoveries.



*Woodcutters' caravan in Lamorna*



Since about 1977 some of us started having seasonal Pagan celebrations at Nemeton and various ancient sites in Penwith, and Ithell took part in one at Samhain 1980 at the fogou at Rosemerry on the invitation of Jo May. Judith Minogue took the part of the Maiden Goddess descending into the underworld as in the Demeter-Kore (Persephone) myth. My last visits to Ithell were with Alison while Ithell was ensconced in Menwinnion in Lamorna. Alison's partner Medland had once shared a cottage with Atatürk, Aleister Crowley's son by his last 'scarlet woman' Pat Doherty, who when young lived in 'Wheal Betsy' on Paul Hill. So, Alison had knowledge of Thelemic 'magic', so could discuss those interests with Ithell. On one of those visits Ithell gave Alison her own copy of 'The Living Stones' annotated with the real names of people in the book.

Janet Gibbs, who knew the Woodcutters, enabled me to meet Biddy, an original Woodcutter, who also once lived in the old caravan with her children. The Woodcutters were conscientious objectors during the Second World War. They were basically Buddhists but their ways were quite pagan, and they scandalised many locals by bathing naked off the rocks by Lamorna Cove. But remember that long before this, one of our major Lamorna artists, Laura Knight, painted naked young women on these same rocks. Janet, though certainly appreciative of my Paganism (I was initiated into Wicca in Clapper Mill in 1984) was herself influenced by the Indian Philosopher Krishnamurti and had a Gnostic slant on Christianity. She was a very radical woman, totally dedicated to CND and the Peace Movement and was a friend of Dora Russell who lived at Porthcurnow. She was into organic gardening and ecology and 'Friends of the Earth', all of which I had in common with her.




*(Left) rear view & (right) front view of oak carving*

At Janet's chalet I first saw the Oak Carving by Ray Perry, Biddy's original partner. This piece of oak came out of the sea at Lamorna Cove. It is of a woman with a baby up in her arms. She is shown naked with long hair, which I always imagined was red like Janet's herself when young. The figure seemed to me to embody the wild spirit of Lamorna valley and coast, as also Ithell suggested did Janet herself, when Ithell first saw her picking narcissi along the cliffs. This carving was left to Peter Perry, Biddy's son.

I met a lady in 1978 who told me she had lived for a while in the old Woodcutters caravan before my time there. Her interesting tale was that she went to live on the Isle of Man when she was four, and when she was nine she was taken to meet Gerald Gardner because she claimed to have seen the fairies. Her father became a member of Gardner's group, and when she was 18 she was initiated into Wicca by the Wilsons, to whom Gardner bequeathed the Museum after his death in 1964.

Many pagans visited me in Lamorna during the 80s from different parts of the world, but especially from America and Germany, including three lovely ladies from Bamberg with their children; another fine lady from Munich; the great Starhawk from San Francisco; and wonderful feminist artist and writer Monica Sjöö. When Cheryl Straffon moved to St. Just she had no space to rebuild her own circle of stones she had collected on the moors. So, since I was living in Lamorna she brought the stones to a circle I had already dedicated at Nemeton in 1977. We worked together a lot those days, and also Cheryl's Goddess group sometimes used the circle too. The faery circle is of nine stones plus an altar and is close by an ancient holly tree.



*Invoking at Nemeton sacred stone circle*



*Invoking at Nemeton sacred stone circle*

*More reminiscences by Jo of Lamorna will be in a future issue of MM.*

## 33 YEARS AGO

*Exploring the pages of Meyn Mamvro no.1*

The first issue of MM came out in December 1986, and was remarkably similar in some ways to this 100th issue! Although of course in black and white instead of colour, it was the same size (28pp) and the same format (A5). It started with the editorial on p.1, and its first article was on “The Gorseth of Cornwall” by **Hugh Miners**, ex Grand Bard, and now sadly deceased [*obituary in MM70 Supplement*]. This was followed by an article entitled “The riddle of the fogous” by **Craig Weatherhill**, who is still actively writing and researching, and has an original contribution in this MM on p.19. The third article was by **Jo O’Cléirigh** entitled “Milpreves or Adders Beads—a possible connection with the druids”, and Jo has an original contribution in this MM on p.16-18. The centre feature was on West Penwith Ley Lines, exploring one from Carn Gluze to Mulfra Courtyard Houses, which was later identified as a Mythic Pathway and featured in MM97 p.12-13. This was followed by an article on “Holy Water” by **Carol Slater** (who has since moved away from Cornwall) together with a list of wells in West Penwith: wells have continued to be featured over the years. The final article was on “Paganism in West Penwith” by MM editor **Cheryl Straffon**, later to write a book on the subject. Book Reviews [*see p.22-23*] and ‘The Pipers Tune’ [*see p.24*] completed this first issue.





## THE HILLA AND THE STAG

by **Craig Weatherhill**

*Craig Weatherhill is one of Cornwall's foremost scholars and researchers, and contributed an article on fogous to the first issue of MM. We are delighted to include this specially-written piece by him for this 100th issue.*

Have you ever been hilla-ridden? Have you had the stag? I'll bet you have at one time or another, but who or what are they? Revived interest in Cornish folk-lore from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has preserved knowledge of the Duchy's other-worldly denizens: the star-worshipping Small People; solitary, elemental Piskey; the malignant Spriggans; gentle Browney, the household sprite; and the industrious but vengeful Knockers. There is also the Sea-Bucca; the malevolent ghost Bucca-du, and Bucca-Gwydn, the harmless spectre, although these are less written about, and some of those on this list are unique to West Penwith, but almost forgotten are two more: the Hilla and the Stag.

The Hilla (which no one has ever seen, as it's always dark when he turns up) is described as a heavy, hairy creature that settles its shaggy deadweight bulk on your chest as you sleep, constricting your lungs and making you struggle to breathe. Local folk used to conceal an iron fork in the bed, so that they'd be able to stab the thing and drive it away, but the Hilla, like most of the faery tribes, would bolt in terror the moment the sleeper touched the cold iron. "I was hilla-ridden last night, couldn't get a wink of sleep" was often heard.

The Stag is a lighter creature of the same general sort, a shaggy, formless thing, but its effect is much less than that of the Hilla, but still ruins the flow of your sleep.

One man from Sancreed parish believed that the Hilla was concealing its true identity; this being another local entity that seemed to have it in for him. Hailing from Sellan, this man would take part in regular hurling matches held in the parish, against neighbouring parishes, after which a good time was had by all in the Bird-in-Hand Inn at Sancreed churchtown (now Glebe Farm, opposite the church).

The man set off for Sellan, but on the way, along came Piskey, concealed as he often was in a cloud of fog, and proceeded to Piskey-lead his victim, luring him in the opposite direction to his home, and leaving him somewhere up near Caer Bran hill fort, or near to Chapel Euny. There, Piskey left him, cold and tired. The long-suffering man sought out the nearest dwelling, to beg a bed for the night, or as soon settle for a pallet of straw in the barn.

But no sooner did he fall asleep than the Hilla was on him, pressing its weight down on his rib-cage before leaving him sore, exhausted, gasping for breath, and deprived of sleep. The man was in no doubt: "I'm sure as I'm speakin to thee," he said. "that the Hilla was the same cussed Piskey in another form, and the older and wiser people say the same thing."

## CORNISH FOLKLORE

*A regular column by folklorist Alex Langstone*

### Folklore of St Allen

The parish of St Allen lies within an area of green rolling hills north of Truro, with the River Allen rising at Ventoneage north of St Allen Churchtown, flowing south towards Truro, where it joins the River Kenwyn to form the Truro River. The river name in Cornish *Dowr Alen* means shining river and shares its name with another Cornish river in the Camel Valley. Nothing is known about the patron saint, but it is thought he may have arrived from Brittany in the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century. He has been linked to 6<sup>th</sup> century Breton Bishop Alain of Quimper, who was originally from Wales. Traditionally his feast was held on 22 February, but also at Rogation (25 April). There are three early medieval wayside crosses in the churchyard, two of which were discovered buried close to the church, the third was brought from Trefronick Farm, during 1911, where it was discovered being used as a doorstep.



*Trefronick wayside cross*

The hamlet of Trefronick is the site of some interesting and unusual piskie folklore, collected from a St Allen resident by Robert Hunt in 1835, and expanded upon by George Basil Barham, writing under the pen name of 'Lyonesse' in the GWR Legend Land series, which was published in 1922. It concerns the temporary loss of a child to the land of the piskies. The version below is my interpretation of the folktale.

One sunny afternoon, a small child was playing on the woodland edge, close to his family home by Trefronick Farm, St Allen. He was always interested in the natural world, and his father had taught him all about the wildflowers that grew in the vicinity, and the names of the songbirds that frequented the farm and woodland. The boy had found a particularly interesting patch of wild and herby flowers growing on the edge of the wood and was fully immersed in remembering their names. Soon after he heard a joyful tune emerging from the woodland, and at first wondered what bird could be producing such music; though he quickly realised that this was no birdsong and began to wonder who was playing such sweet melodies from the woodland. He began to lose interest in the herbs and flowers he had been studying and began to move closer to the woodland edge. As he did so, the music became louder and more pronounced and he started to walk faster toward to source of the melodious sound. Before long he found himself in a beautiful green grove, full of mature and majestic trees. The music had stopped, but he felt so comfortable and welcome in this spot, he continued his journey into the heart of the wood.



As he went deeper into the forest, the thickly laid briars and bracken seemed to be laid flat before him as to make a pathway to an unknown destination. Soon the boy came to a shimmering, sparkling lake, and he sat down and stared into the waters. As he did so, the sky darkened and the sky became filled with starry constellations, of which he did not recognise. He quickly became weary and found a soft mound of moss and ferns where he quietly drifted off to sleep.



*Lost child of St. Allen. Illustration from the GWR 'Line to legend Land' series [1920s]*

When he awoke, he found himself in a beautiful building, with glorious arches that soared up to the sky and which were encrusted with shining crystals of every colour. Standing beside him was a lady, who proceeded to guide the boy through the rooms of the ethereal palace, along with a procession of piskies who sang strange fascinating songs whilst they marched along behind the lady. The piskies were very kind to the boy and treated him to a feast of the most wonderful tasting food, and when he became tired, they made him a bed from the softest moss and foliage they could muster.

Meanwhile the boy's parents had been searching for their son, and three days had passed where he just could not be found. Then on the morning of the third day, he just reappeared sleeping on a bed of ferns at the edge of the wood by the flowers he had been studying.

As Robert Hunt states in his recollection –

“There was no reason given by the narrator why the boy was "spirited away" in the first instance, or why he was returned. Her impression was, that some sprites, pleased with the child's innocence and beauty, had entranced him. That when asleep he had been carried through the waters to the fairy abodes beneath them; and she felt assured that a child so treated would be kept under the especial guardianship of the sprites for ever afterwards. Of this, however, tradition leaves us in ignorance.”

George Basil Barham's account of the tale ends with this:

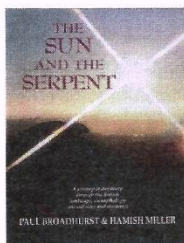
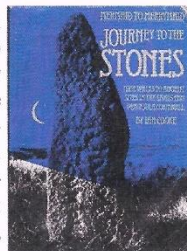
“And so it was; the boy lived to a ripe old age and prospered amazingly. He never knew illness or misfortune and died at last in his sleep; and those that were near him say that as he breathed his last a strange music filled the room.”

*For details of Lien Gwerin journal and book 'From Granite to Sea: the folklore of Bodmin Moor and East Cornwall' go to website [www.cornishfolklore.co.uk](http://www.cornishfolklore.co.uk).*

## 33 YEARS OF BOOK REVIEWS

In its 100 issues, Meyn Mamvro has carried a grand total of over 270 book reviews, all of which are focussed on, or include examples of, Cornwall's prehistory, early history, ancient sites, earth mysteries, folklore and legends. Some minor books or reprints may have only been given a line or two, but major books have been given a page or more. In this feature, we look back over some of the highlights from reviews over 33 years.

The first issue (1986) included a book on the antiquarian **William Borlase** by *P.A.S.Pool*, followed by the second issue (1986) that featured a new book on **Celtic Britain** by *Professor Charles Thomas*. MM3 (1987) had a major book, **Journey to the Stones**, the first by *Ian Cooke*, of which the review said: "A book that offers genuine new insights into our megalithic ancestors and their society". Another major local writer **Paul Broadhurst** had his first book published the following year *Secret Shrines* and MM5 (1988) said of it: "Much food for thought, an insight into the nature of the (holy) wells, and a delightful guide to their locale".



The following year (1989) saw the publication of the now world-renowned dowsing book **The Sun and the Serpent** by *Hamish Miller & Paul Broadhurst*, which was reviewed in MM9, and was "warmly recommended to lovers of the earth and her energies". From the serious to the bizarre, **Monstrum—a wizard's tale** by *Tony 'Doc' Shiels* was reviewed in MM14 (1989) and described as "a gallimaufry of a book". The prolific *Paul Broadhurst* published another book in 1992 **Tintagel and the Arthurian Mythos**, of which MM19 said: "There is much good geomantic research in this book".

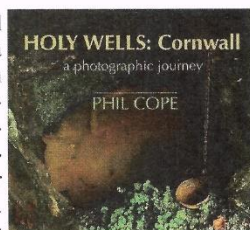
In 1993 MM editor *Cheryl Traffon* published the first of her books **Pagan Cornwall—Land of the Goddess**, which was reviewed by Jo O'Cléirigh and described in MM23 as being "destined to become a classic among Cornish books". The same year saw the publication of another classic, *Ian McNeil Cooke's* book on **Mother and Sun—the Cornish fogou**. This was described (in MM24) as "The complete book of the fogou, a beautifully produced, meticulously researched and comprehensively illustrated work". In 1994, *Professor Charles Thomas* wrote a book on inscribed stones **And shall these mute stones speak** [reviewed in MM24]; and in 1997 *Philip Peyton*, Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies, wrote a book on prehistoric and historic **Cornwall**, reviewed in MM32 which said: "A Cornishman who knows his history, and who links together the past with the Cornish revival of the present, deftly moving between the two and exploring their relationship". In MM33 a book by *Jo May* (of Boleigh fogou) on **Fogou—a journey to the underworld** was described as "a fascinating, uniquely personal account of a very magical place". In MM40 (1999) a new large-format book **The Romance of the Stones**, a comprehensive gazetteer of megaliths, by *Robin Payne* was described as "A rich mix of both the beauty and mystery of the old stones and a real interest in their possible significance".



MM44 (2001) reviewed a new book by *Paul Broadhurst & Hamish Miller* **The Dance of the Dragon** as “a kind of international follow up to *The Sun and the Serpent*”. Small books on **Dowsing in Devon & Cornwall** by *Alan Neal* and **The definitive wee book on dowsing** by *Hamish Miller* were reviewed in MM49 (2001) & MM50 (2002). They were followed by a small book by *John Michell* on **Prehistoric sites in Cornwall** reviewed in MM52 (2003). From MM31 to MM54 many pamphlet-style books by Cornish antiquarians, reprinted by Oakmagic Press, were reviewed; and another self-published book **Stone to Rock, River to Sea** about the sites of the Padstow area was published by *Howard Balmer* and reviewed in MM57 (2004).

By contrast a glossy hardback **The Archaeology of Cornwall** by archaeologist *Caradoc Peters* was reviewed in MM59 (2005) but was found to be full of “abstruse theorising”. In the same issue **Cornwall in Prehistory** by *Toni-Maree Rowe* was reviewed and its inclusion of the spiritual beliefs of the ancient peoples was noted. An archaeologist who also considers such matters is *Andy M Jones* and in MM60 (2005) his book **Cornish Bronze Age ceremonial landscapes** was favourably reviewed. MM67 (2007) saw a book on **The Prehistoric Landscape of Scilly** by *Gary Robinson* also well reviewed, and in MM70 (2009) *Craig Weatherhill*’s book **Cornovia**, a comprehensive listing of ancient sites in Cornwall and Scilly was described as “the one standard book to have”.

In MM71 (2009) a book on **The Cornish Traditional Year** by *Simon Reed* was reviewed; and in MM72 (2010) a new book **The Secret Land** by *Paul Broadhurst* on Cornish landscape zodiacs was described as having “a feast of information, facts, ideas, theories, discoveries and possible meanings”. MM73 (2011) saw a glossy book on **Holy Wells: Cornwall** by *Phil Cope* described as “a lasting testimony to their beauty, their interest and their living significance today”.



Another glossy book on **Celtic Cornwall** by *Alan Kent* was praised in MM81 (2012) as “a superb book, beautifully produced with a knowledgeable text and some stunning colour photos”. The author himself favourably reviewed a book **Between the Realms: Cornish myth and magic** by *Cheryl Traffon* in MM84 (2013); and since then MM has continued to review notable books, including: **Powerful places in Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly** by *Elyn Aviva & Gary White* in MM87 (2014) [“a real gem”]; **Isles of the Dead?** by *Katharine Sawyer*, archaeologist on the Scillies, in MM89 (2015); **Cornwall’s First Golden Age: from Arthur to the Normans** by *Bernard Deacon* in MM92 (2016) [“essential reading for anyone with an interest in Cornish history and culture”]; **Archaeology and Landscape at the Land’s End**, the West Penwith surveys from 1980-2010 in MM93 (2016 [“a tremendous resource”]; **From Granite to Sea**, the folklore of Bodmin Moor & East Cornwall by *Alex Langstone* in MM94 (2017); **The Re-enchanted Landscape** by *Rupert White* in MM95 (2017), featuring earth mysteries, paganism and art in Cornwall 1950-2000; **Celestial stone circles of West Cornwall** by *Carolyn Kennett* also in MM95; **The Festivals of Cornwall** by *Alan Kent* in MM97 (2018); and finally **The Promontory People** by *Craig Weatherhill* in MM98 (2019), an early history of the Cornish people with “a great Kernow-centric approach”. Great books!

## THE PIPER'S TUNE

The Piper's Tune column first appeared in the very first issue of MM in Dec 1986, and was a regular feature for 13 years until issue no.70 in Autumn 2009. It then took a break for a few years until it re-started in issue no.91 in the Autumn of 2016. It was always a 'last page' that was intended to be a pot-pourri of newsy items that didn't really fit in elsewhere in the magazine, and it continues to perform that function today.

The first issue gives a flavour of the kind of items that found their way into the column. Two main stories were featured, one being a 'mystery menhir' that had appeared on the side of Carn Eanes at Pendeen at approx. SW386 338. It seemed that it had been put up by contractors who were clearing the Carn as part of Geevor mine exploratory mining searches. But the burning question was why they had done this, and although many rumours abounded, there appeared to be no obvious explanation. The subject was returned to in issue no.2, and by the time of this column in issue 3 all had been solved. The impetus behind the discovery and erection of the stone lay with the Fountain Group of Lelant, an early earth healing by dowsing group, of which



the late Hamish Miller was a member. One of their healing rituals took place at Carn Eanes after the ravages of quarrying operations there, and as a result of dowsing they discovered the

existence of the stone underground, which they believed to be an original prehistoric menhir, subsequently buried. They then got in touch with the Geevor sub-contractors and asked them to bring the stone to the surface and put it up, which they subsequently did. The stone stands there to this day.

The other story in this column in issue no.1 was on the Geiger counter work at stone circles in West Penwith, and the anomalous radiation results. Although starting out as a small item (reprinted from *The Ley Hunter* magazine) this quickly grew into a major subject of interest, with full articles in subsequent issues. Interest in this subject has never really gone away, and recently CASPN member Lucas Nott has returned to these sites and others with a state-of-the-art radiation counter to check and has verified the original findings.

**Cornwall's geology and genetic history** has recently been in the news. Findings reveal a clear geological boundary running across Cornwall and South Devon that separates it from the rest of England. Around 300 million years ago a collision between three land masses formed the British mainland, and one of these (named Armorica) consisted of land that included what is now Cornwall and Brittany. Many millions of years later (12,000 years ago), the first post-Glacial settlers of western Britain came from the trans-Pyrenean Biscay coast. 79% of indigenous Cornish people carry the intact genetic code of these people (as do 81% of the Welsh and 88% of the Irish). The average Cornish genetic structure contains 60% Early Atlantic European (10,000-2500 BCE), which is the highest in Britain. The Cornish (and Welsh) are thus the oldest people on this island.



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