

**FOGOU FEATURE inc. BODEAN EXCAVATIONS
SACRED SITES NEWS ● BODMIN MOOR ●
EARTH MYSTERIES ● NEWS ● REVIEWS
plus CORNWALL'S COLOURFUL SITES**

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Meyn Mamvro

STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

The Pagan/EM Community in Cornwall has experienced some seismic shocks this Summer. Firstly, there was quite a dramatic internal sort-out at the Penwith Pagan Moot, with some well-known local Pagans leaving and/or returning, a new Earth Moot starting and a big internal debate about the way forward for the Community. At the time of writing, there is still fall-out from it all, but the Community does seem to have picked itself up, and moved forward again, vowing to learn some lessons from it all. Secondly, at CEMG, two long-serving Committee members, David & Dorothy Haynes, who have been with the Group since the beginning 15 years ago, decided it was time to retire. They will be sorely missed, but Raven Lefay has stepped into the breach to join Cheryl Traffon & Andy Norfolk on the Committee. And thirdly, the Sacred Sites Committee, which has been in existence since 1997, lost Andy as its chairman, who resigned due to 'pressure of work'. It too then took a good hard look at itself, and decided that if it didn't exist, then someone would have to re-invent it! The members talked about the aims of the Committee, and decided to drop the time-consuming and difficult ASMO funding application and re-focus on the protection of the sites themselves.

So after all that shake-down, there was nothing like an external threat to pull the Community together. This came in the form of over-the-top local Press & Media reports on the death of Carnkie parish councillor Peter Solheim, whose body was found off the Lizard. There were some "unexplained injuries" on his body, so the police launched a murder hunt. The Press then discovered that he had had some links to an "occult" group, and was a druid who had been involved with Ed Pryn's Druidic order. They put 2 + 2 together and made 666, so we had headlines screaming out about possible "Black Magic" and "Occult" murder. The Press even managed to get hold of pictures of him taking part in "Druidic sacrificial rites" (i.e he was shown holding a sword above someone in a ritual) with the inference that this was all connected to his murder. There was even the 'proof' added that his boat was called 'Izzwizz', which is a 'magic' spell used in a children's TV series! The local Pagan community challenged this lazy and sensationalist reporting, and in particular Dave Evans from the University of Bristol, who lives in Plymouth, wrote a long letter to the *Western Morning News* making a number of good points, including the fact that had Peter Solheim been a Christian, Muslim, Jew, Sikh or any other religion, it is most unlikely his beliefs would even have been mentioned. "Surely" he said, "the job of a newspaper is to inform and educate, not perpetuate old and offensive stereotypes". The editor replied, defending his journalism, but it will perhaps have given them cause to think more carefully next time.



news page

Beltane 2004 began on April 29th at the Acorn with a talk by Howard Balmer on the **Padstow Obby Oss**, accompanied by a backdrop of films and videos of the Oss itself at various Padstow May Days. One of these films was a special one from the 1950s, which provided a unique insight not only into the celebrations, but also the singing and ritualised dancing between some of the Oss lada from the evening before. Howard had researched his subject very well, and in the second half of the evening he and Andy Norfolk answered questions and led a discussion about the origins, meaning and details of the Oss, all the while accompanied by the background of the films.

The next evening, Friday April 30th saw the 16th annual May Day Eve **Maypole Dance** on Carn Bosavern at St.Just. A mizzly evening did not deter the group of people who came to listen to the musicians, dance round the maypole and jump the Beltane fire. The Beltane weekend was finished off for many with the Obby Oss itself on Saturday May 1st at Padstow, and various other local rituals on Sunday May 2nd. This meant that the 16th annual **Three Wells Walk** took place the following Sunday, May 9th, but it was a good choice of day, as it was absolutely glorious weather. A couple of dozen people turned up for the first half of the walk from Sancreed to Chapel Euny wells and back, and 14 remained for the second half to Madron Baptistry and the blessing for the Summer.

Sunday June 6th brought the first of the site visits for the Summer. Raymond Cox led a walk around Cranken, near Newmill called **Strange Lights and Courtyard Houses**. The weather was excellent and about a dozen people turned up, including one lady on crutches who was determined to do it all. The first site visited was the remains of Cranken Courtyard House settlement, with its views across to Chysauster. Then the group followed an ancient trackway back to Newmill, scene of an anomalous lights sighting, and finally to Mulfra Farm, where the recently-uncovered Courtyard House settlement there provided great interest. The day finished with a much-appreciated cream tea at Mulfra Farmhouse.

A month later on Sunday July 4th, Andy Norfolk led the third of his annual walks around **Lesser Known Sites of Kerrier**. A group of 19 turned up to visit the newly-discovered stone circle on the side of Crowan Beacon, followed by a walk up to the Beacon to see the cairn and the views to other sacred hills in the area. A short drive led to Calvadnack Tor, and a difficult walk to the remains of a Bronze Age settlement, where Andy identified a propped stone. Finally, the group went to Carn Marth to see Figgy Dowdy's well (still locked) and finished with a beautiful impromptu sacred song by Jackie in the nearby quarry amphitheatre. A lovely end to a most interesting day.

Penwith Pagan Moot



by Sarah Vivian

As usual now, here are the details of recent rituals, also some general news of the Moot. We are going through a period of change and transformation, as all organisations must to avoid stagnation, and are becoming more democratic and consensus-led. The previous organisers, myself and Andy Norfolk, have both stepped down, though I remain with the Moot as a participating member and as a contact point.

The **Beltane** ritual held by the Moot was the only ritual I have missed for over 4 years, ever since we started celebrating the eight seasonal festivals. It was held at the Merry Maidens, and I am told that people were invited to write their wishes on natural paper, and then to be burnt over a cauldron to send them into the ether. Also there was flag waving over the stones to raise some Beltane energy, and a Blessing given with gorse and hawthorn petals.

Summer Solstice was also held at the Merry Maidens, and we decided to enact the death of the Sun King, symbolised by a figure made out of barley threaded with red ribbons to signify his blood. Two Moot members took the parts of the Sun King and the Goddess, and the ritual was facilitated by Cassandra Latham. We then entered the circle with a purification, weaved around the stones and then spiralled inwards to make our circle, and Cassandra led us all in a banishing of negative influences.



Then to a beat from the Thunder drum [see photo above], an inner circle of people spun around, with the rest of the Moot chanting, to raise energy for the sacrifice. The Goddess did a dance of life with a scythe, and then sliced the Barley figure held by the Sun King into two, and then memorably dismembered it with passion, flinging barley and red ribbons around the circle. The Sun King died and was taken to the west, and the Moot all took a ribbon, as their share of the blood harvest, with which to focus on a wish, led by Cassandra with 'Knot Magic'.

The rituals are open to all, as are the monthly Moots which take place on the second Tuesday of each month at Chy Gwella, 53 Morrab Road, Penzance at 7.15pm. There are news, views, events and organising for rituals, and we have a special topic for each session, though the recent topic has been the Moot itself. For further details please contact Sarah Vivian, 24 Queen Street, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7JW Tel: 01736-787522 e-mail: vivianatfarwest@supanet.com

SACRED SITES NEWS

NINE MAIDENS STONE CIRCLE RESTORED

The Nine Maidens Stone Circle at Boskednan on the West Penwith moors was restored in early summer of this year. When first recorded by Borlase in the mid 18th century, there were 19 stones standing (the same as all other stone circles in West Penwith), but over the years many had fallen, leaving only 6 standing with 5 fallen. Cornwall Historic Environment Service, together with Defra (ESA) and English Heritage, agreed to fund extensive works at the site, including scrub clearance, drainage improvements, footpath repair, and the re-erection of 3 of the fallen stones. After an excavation to determine the original post holes, the three stones were manoeuvred back into position.



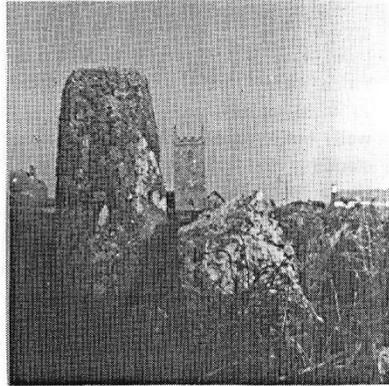
One of the three stones had been completely lost and covered over by gorse, and this was re-discovered and placed upright [see photo above]. Another fallen one was also put back into place. But the most exciting part of the restoration has been the re-erection of the large portal stone that had fallen. It now forms a pair with its existing neighbour, and, as can be seen from the photo below, the two stones perfectly frame Carn Gulva, the sacred hilltop a few miles away. This is a vindication of archaeologist John Barnett, who 20 or so years ago, suggested that the site was built in relationship to Carn Gulva, with a processional route running from the circle to the holy hill.

Before the stones were put back in place, a visiting pagan woman Annie Spencer, (together with Cheryl Straffon), placed a foundation offering into the post holes of small jade and turquoise stones wrapped in red cloth, in order to re-sanctify the site once again.



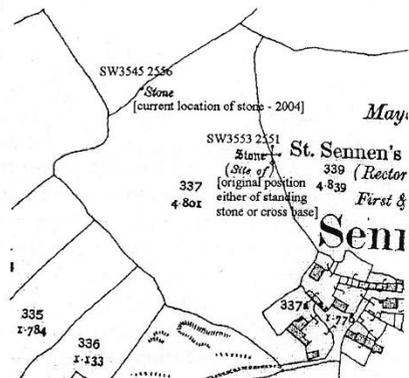
THE MYSTERY OF THE SENNEN STONE

The furthest westerly standing stone on mainland Britain, the Treve stone at Sennen (SW3545 2556) has recently become the focus of some interest. Although calculated by John Michell to have 3 ley lines running from it to other sites, it has remained largely unknown and not much visited over the years. This is partly because there is no obvious public access to it, standing as it does in a Cornish hedge several fields away on the seaward side of Sennen Churchtown. However, it was recently thrust into the limelight when SW Water applied to build a new sewerage treatment works in that very field.



SW Water consulted the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, and Ann Preston-Jones from the Unit looked into the history of the stone. An old 1870 map appeared to show the stone in a different position to where it now stands (SW3553 2551), but the 1907 map showed it as “*site of stone*” with the stone marked in its current position. An English Heritage 1885 report said that “the stone seems to taper at the base, as if it may not be well embedded”, leading Ann to conclude that the stone may well have been moved, and therefore could possibly be moved back to its original position again. However, local people took up the challenge, and suggested that the “stone” referred to in the 1880 & 1907 maps at SW3353 2551 was in fact a cross base, and that the standing stone had always been in its current position. Ann argues against this, but there is sufficient doubt for us not to know for certain if it has been moved or not.

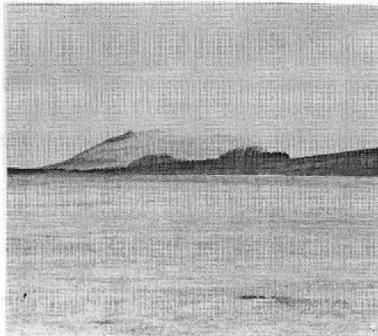
Henderson first fully described the stone in 1916, and suggested that the top had been broken off and was built into the hedge at the bottom of the stone. However, Ann believes that this broken stone is too large and too irregular in shape to have come from the standing stone. She has suggested to the CEMG that they may wish to dowse for the location of the broken piece nearby. The CEMG did in fact visit the site in 2000 and noticed distinctive nodules on nearby stones in the hedge [see MM45 p.3]. Meanwhile, it seems that as one of the owners of the hedge do not want the stone moved, SW Water may have to move their Sewerage Plant to a different field nearby.



1907 map with locations of stones

BODMIN MOOR - NEW DISCOVERIES

Some interesting new discoveries have been made on Bodmin Moor recently, in the area of the King Arthur's Downs stone circles [SX1345 7750]. Close by to the stone circles a fallen menhir has been identified at SX1367 7750. It lies buried in the ground next to a stone wall, but originally would have been a fine standing stone, measuring about 11ft 8in from tip to base. There is a ridge part way up the stone where it may originally have been buried in the ground, but even allowing for that it would still have been over 8ft high. The views from the stone are northwards to Roughtor, and eastwards to Buttern Down hill with its distinctive cairn on top. Just to the south of the standing stone (over the present day wall) there is another feature, recently identified by amateur archaeologist Michael Penhalum. This consists of at least 3 stones buried in the ground in a straight line, and may have been a stone row continuation of the fallen menhir, or circle.

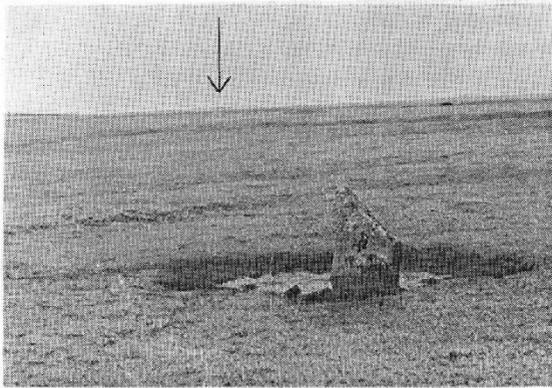


View of Roughtor from the fallen menhir

It has been observed elsewhere on Bodmin Moor that the megalithic builders placed their monuments in relationship to neighbouring hills and tors. For example, at the Trippet Stones circle [SX1312 7501] an observer would see Roughtor again as the principal skyline feature. Walking from the Trippets to the nearby Stripple Stones circle on Hawk's Tor [SX1437 7521], Roughtor disappears from view as you dip down and cross a stream, and remains invisible until the moment when you cross the bank and ditch that encloses the Stripple Stones, where it once again appears on the horizon.*

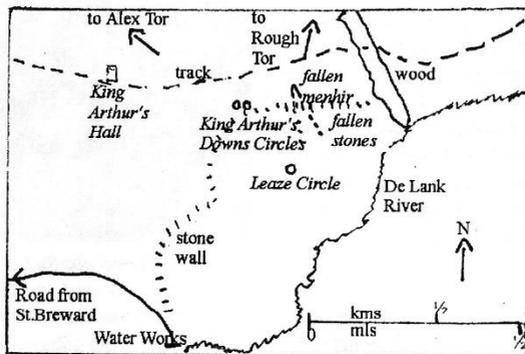
* see *Bodmin Moor's Archaeological Heritage* Peter Herring & Peter Rose [CAU, 2001]

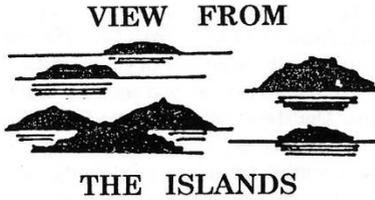
Something similar happens on King Arthur's Downs. From the fallen standing stone (above), Alex Tor is visible to the north-west. Alex Tor has a dramatic hilltop cairn, making a distinctive visual prominence on the top. As you walk from the fallen standing stone the ground begins to dip and Alex Tor disappears from view. However, as you approach the stone circles the ground begins to rise again and Alex Tor once more comes into view. At the centre of the circles the nipple-like cairn on the Tor is just visible as a skyline feature. What is more, it is in an exact north-westerly direction, marking the midsummer sunset. So, an observer at the Circles would have seen the sun set over the cairn on the longest day, its last light giving the appearance of an aereal around the nipple-like cairn, a piece of wonderful megalithic magic.



Alex Tor cairn seen from the King Arthur's Downs circles

Bodmin Moor continues to reveal some of the rich and fascinating secrets of its megalithic builders, who placed their ancient monuments so precisely in the landscape of hills and tors around them.



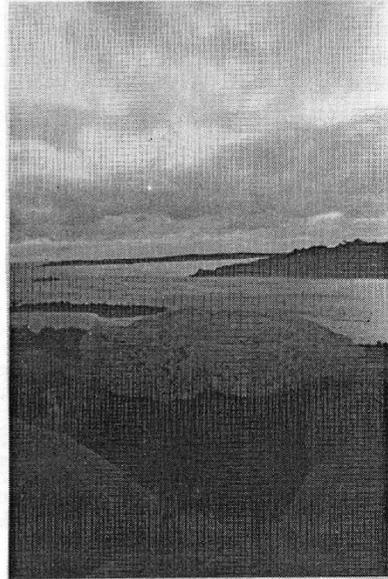


*A new regular column
by Isles of Scilly resident
Tyto Alba*

The Methodists and the Poppet of Buzza

For anyone wanting to watch goings on in the harbour at St.Mary's, there can be no better vantage point than Buzza Hill. From here, one can look out across Porthcressa towards the sunset over St.Agnes, and watch the tide come in, or look to the north-east and see the boats returning from the off islands as the lights come on in Hugh Town, and Star Castle is illuminated. Sit up here at closing time, under the brilliant stars, and it is impossible not to eavesdrop on people's conversations as they come out of the pubs far below. On these low-lying islands, Buzza Hill is the one place where a human visitor can feel like a gull: above everything, strangely removed, yet party to all that is going on.

Perhaps it was the same in the Bronze Age, when a stone tomb was constructed on the brow of Buzza Hill. It is hard to think of a place where the dead could more effectively overlook the living; nor does it seem surprising that Buzza was long regarded as the abode of faeries. Robert Heath, one of the first mainlanders to write about life on Scilly, wrote in 1750 that "Fairies are said to have frequented Buzza Hill... but their nightly pranks, aerial Gambols and cockle-shell abodes are now, by application made to the Knowing Men of Cornwall, all charm'd, cast in a Spell, or conjur'd out of the islands." I leave it for any modern Pagan visitors to decide for themselves how unsuccessful these Knowing Men were.



View from Buzza Hill

This Eostra, Buzza Hill was busy. Whatever the faeries were doing, the Methodists were there on the Sunday morning at dawn. Perhaps they chose the venue because they too appreciate that it is a unique vantage-point, or perhaps because of its empty tomb. Up and down the country, Methodists have been holding dawn services on the date of this ancient Pagan festival, in fields, on hillsides, and on the sites of megaliths. Needled by the irony of it, I had already done my own thing, late on the Sunday night, to ensure that the tomb was not quite as empty as the Methodists anticipated.

Long convinced that any faeries who inhabited Buzza Hill must have clothes made out of seaweed, I had fashioned a poppet out of natural materials, with a mantle of bladder wrack, a kelp-root hat, razor shell arms and a mermaid's purse. I left it inside the tomb at midnight as a symbol of the elemental presences within. I returned in the morning, after the Methodists had held their service, to find my poppet had been thrown out on the ground, and one of the razor shells snapped. I doubt whether the more moderate Methodists would have taken exception to it, but I suppose it was inevitable that there should have been at least one extremist amongst them.

As I write, the poppet is back inside the tomb. I shall remove it eventually, as I am not one for littering ancient sites, but for the moment it sits there and looks out at the night sky, a bright, rising planet, and the occasional shooting star. The Methodists will not return, perhaps, until next year. I sit here alone, and listen for the hollow chink of cockle shells in the dark.

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A TALE OF TWO BLIGHTS

Two people in 19thC Cornwall, bearing the same surname, have come down to us through history and folklore. And coincidentally, both have received recent attention in book and in film. Yet, they could hardly be more different from each other, or come from more different ends of the social scale. Thomasine (later known as Tammy) Williams was born about 1798, the daughter of a miner. She grew up in poverty and in 1825 married Richard Blight. He died in 1832 and she later re-married James Thomas, though she kept the name Blight, and lived on until 1856. What distinguishes her from hundreds of other unrecorded women from this period is that she became “undoubtedly the greatest of all the Cornish conjurers (cunning-folk) of the 19thC, enjoying an unrivalled reputation for keeping witchcraft at bay and for healing ill-wished persons in west Cornwall”. She was also known as a fortune teller and a pellar, and because of her predictions was regarded as an Oracle of her age. **Jason Semmens** in a new book *The Witch of the West* unravels the threads of the story of Tammy Blight’s life and sorts out the reality from the myths. It is available @ £3.99 direct from the author at 15 Holford Street, Cefn Coed, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid-Glamorgan CF48 2RN. There is also a chapter about Tammy Blight in **Kelvin Jones** book *The Wise Woman* [Oakmagick, 2004, £12.95].

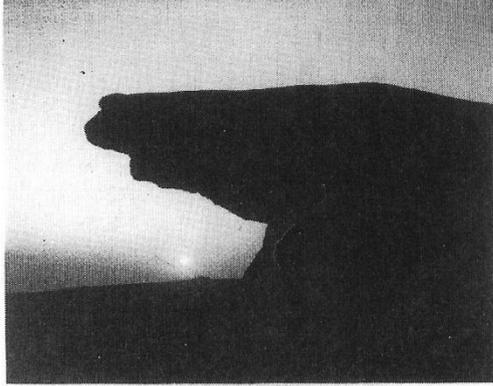
The other Blight is John Thomas Blight (1835-1911) artist and antiquarian. His life was told in **John Michell’s** book *A Short Life at Land’s End* (1977) and some of his drawings can be seen on p.19, 20 & 21 of this MM. Now **Selina Bates & Keith Spurgin** have joined forces as writer and producer for a short film called *Blight*. Although only 16 mins long, the film contains a dramatisation of the essence of his sad life, set in the context of a 19thC archaeological excavation in Cornwall that he attended. Featuring **Richard Coyle** as Blight and **Mary Woodvine** as Evelina, the woman he loved and lost, it tells the story of Blight’s subsequent descent into madness, and his search for the causes of his malady. It also features some well known local personalities, such as the actor David Shaw, the Cornish linguist Pol Hodge and Cornwall Archaeological Unit’s Peter Herring! It is available @ £7 + £1 p & p (cheques made out to Selina Bates) in VHS format from Windowbox Films, Campion Cottage, 4 Carclew Terrace, Truro TR1 2EF.

Coincidentally, along with the film has come a complete reprint of Blight’s two great works on the crosses of Cornwall *Ancient Crosses and other Antiquities in the West and East of Cornwall*, first published in 1856 and 1858. [Reprinted by Mên-an-Tol Studio, Bosullow, Newbridge, Penzance TR20 8NR]. This is the first time the two volumes have been republished in one work, and together with an excellent facsimile of the books (which also include cromlechs and holy wells in eastern Cornwall), there is an Introduction by **Ian McNeil Cooke**, describing evolution of the cross as a symbol of both pagan cult and Christianity, as well as a short biography of Blight’s tragic life. The book contains 200 illustrations, is sumptuously bound in burgundy cloth with gold blocking on the front and spine, and retails at £29.95, or £35 including p & p. This is a very fine book and a ‘must have’ addition to any collector of Cornish antiquarian books, as well as a delight to browse through and enjoy. A fitting memorial to a ‘lost soul’.

Megalithic Mysteries of Cornwall

A new book by **Cheryl Straffon**

An investigation into the strange and anomalous energies at ancient sites in Cornwall, based on research and ideas from the fields of earth mysteries, archaeology, legend and folklore, all brought together for the first time in one book, adding a new dimension to any visit to sacred sites.



The book includes topics such as Ley Lines, Energy Lines, Radiation, Magnetism, Ultrasound/Infrasound, Strange Lights, Alignments, Ghost Roads, Mythic Pathways, Piskey Paths, The Otherworld and Altered States of Consciousness.

Some recent reviews of the book:-

“The Cornish landscape is saturated in mystery - and Cheryl’s latest book underlines that fact. A well-researched publication, its pages packed with fascinating facts and theories. She has cast a truly wide net - and rightly so, because this is a many-faceted subject. All in all, a thoughtful, thought-provoking book.” *Western Morning News*

“One of Cornwall’s foremost authorities on the county’s numerous ancient sites has produced an illustrated book which is sure to become a ‘must have’ for all visitors to these ancient monuments. Her knowledge and love of the sites and their mysteries is well known and much respected and shines through in this well-produced book.”

The Cornishman

“Cheryl brings an up-to-date perspective to leys, ghost roads, earth lights, dreaming and perception at ancient sites, etc, and given the wealth of material available in [Cornwall] it’s fascinating stuff.”

Northern Earth

“Both the newcomer to the sites and the anomalies discussed, together with the more informed, should find the book absorbing, and it is especially useful for those who like the element of mystery. There is never the dryness which sometimes diffuses more dense or sluggish publications, especially when, as here, a love of the land and the ancient sites holds a persuasive aura.”

Raymond Cox, author ‘Ley Lines of West Penwith’

44 photographs

Meyn Mamvro Publications

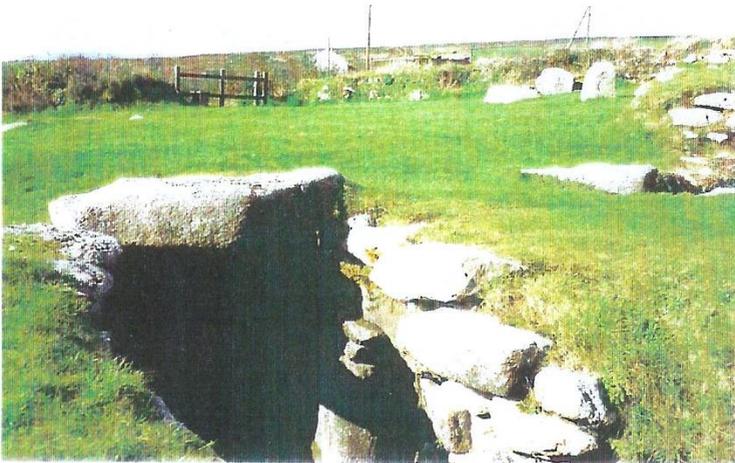
£9.95 (inc. p & p)

CORNWALL'S COLOURFUL SITES

The colour section this time features FOGOUS OF WEST CORNWALL.



Boleigh fogou (Rosemerryn) at bluebell time



Carn Euny fogou in its Courtyard House setting



Pendeen fogou with the ocean as a backdrop

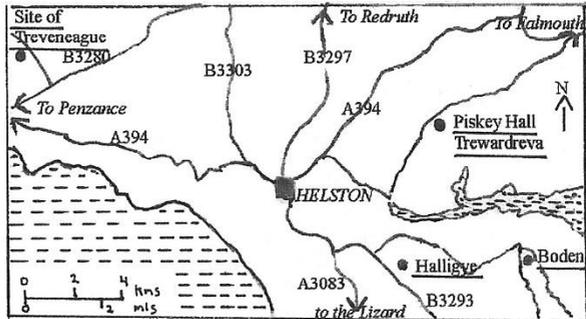


Halligye fogou on the Lizard

All photographs [c] Cheryl Traffon

fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~

FOGOUS EAST OF WEST PENWITH



The recent discovery of a 'new' fogou at Boden near Manaccan has prompted this special MM feature that takes a look at the four fogous that lie to the east of the West Penwith cluster. These easterly fogous are generally not much remarked upon, although they were originally clearly part of the same 'West Cornwall' group of fogou monuments, that exist only in this area of Cornwall, or indeed Britain. After a brief glance at **Piskey Hall**, we have a full report of the excavation at **Boden**, followed by an investigation into the lost site of **Treveneguc**, and finally the 19thC discovery of **Halligye** and how it looks and feels today. So, settle back and be prepared to enter the dark and mysterious world of the fogou.

Mother and Sun - The Cornish Fogou

At 350 pages, *Mother and Sun* by **Ian McNeil Cooke** (1993) is the first comprehensive study of Cornish fogous ever printed, and includes many previously unpublished drawings, diagrams and photographs, as well as a wealth of conventional archaeological information and 'alternative' observations.

Only about 20 copies now remain of this 352 page hardback book that had a strictly limited print run of 1000 numbered and signed copies. There will definitely be no reprint or paperback edition, so this is the last chance to obtain a new copy of what is, arguably, the definitive analysis of an Iron Age structure unique to the far west of Britain.

Order now at £28.95 inclusive of UK postage from the author at:-

Mên-an-Tol Studio, Bosullow, Newbridge, Penzance TR20 8NR

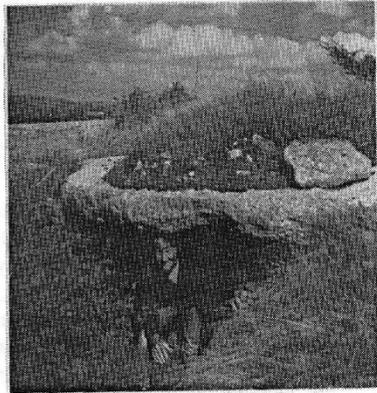
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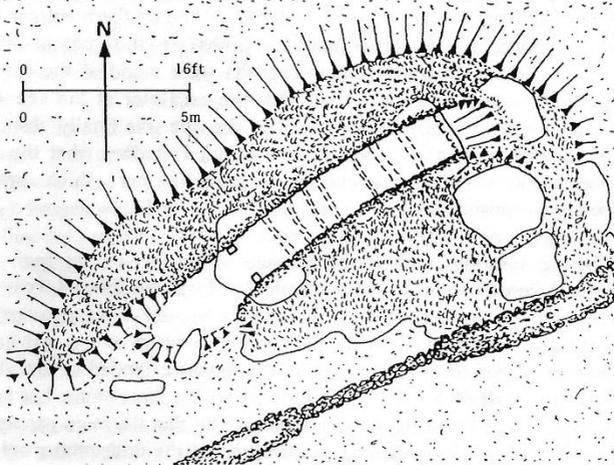
fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~fogoufeature~
PISKEY HALL - IS IT A FOGO?

Piskey Hall fogou at Trewardreva near Constantine (SW7280 3003) is the most easterly of all of the definitely-identified fogous, but it is an odd-looking fogou. It is only semi-underground, its passage is relatively short for a fogou (26ft in length), its passage walls were built with relatively small stones that rise almost verically from the floor, and it appears to have no side passages or creeps. It does not have the look or feel of a fogou, but of course what we see now is probably only a remnant of what was originally there.

It seems that originally there may have been more to the site. In 1803 Polwhele mentioned an enclosure around the site. In 1837 Henderson suggested that there may have been a smaller "gallery" branching off to the south of the main passage, which could have led to the original entrance. And in 1932 Hencken spoke of a surrounding 'fort' that was by then destroyed. Today there are no signs of any earthwork, and any possible southerly side passage or creep has now been blocked. So, because Piskey Hall was a slightly unusual fogou, and because so much of it has been lost, it is not really surprising that it does not have the look of a fogou today.

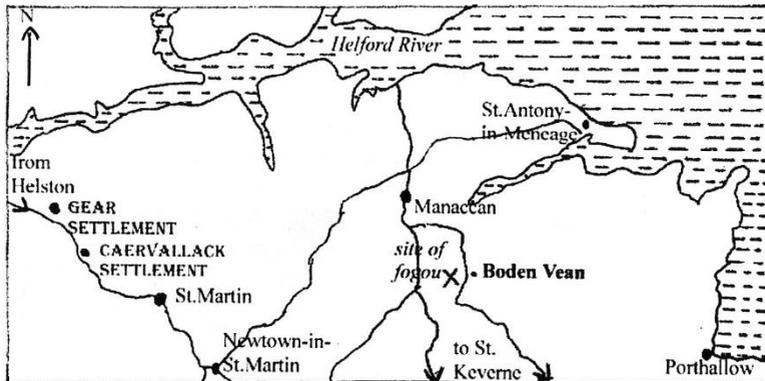


Piskey Hall fogou - with piskey?!



Plan of fogou [Ian Cooke, after Weatherhill]

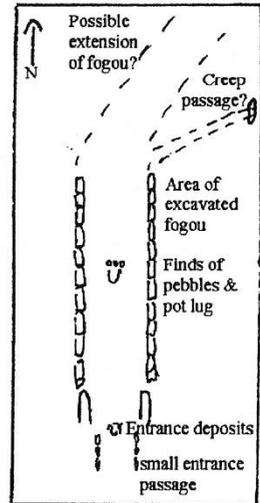
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EXCAVATION AT BODEN FOGOU



Some results from the excavation at Boden fogou on the Lizard (first reported in MM53) are now available. The site has proved to be much more complex, and yielded much more interesting results, than anyone could have guessed.

The site (SW7685 2406) lies in a field at Boden Vean on the Lizard peninsula, near Manaccan, on gently sloping ground about 223ft altitude (the average for fogous is 250ft). Part of the main passage of the fogou was excavated: it was about 2 metres in height, running in a north-south direction. The walls of the fogou were still in place, though the capstones had been robbed at some time in the past and the fogou subsequently filled with soil and organic material. At the southern entrance of the fogou there were some large upright stones (entrance jambs?), to the south of which a smaller entrance passage could be traced. Some deposits were found at the entrance - some pottery fragments and a blue glass bead, that the excavator at the site James Gossip thought may have been a closure deposit when the site was finally abandoned. About half way up the passage other deposits were found, including what, the farmer Chris Hosken described as "three white pebbles and the lug of a pot" which appeared to have been deliberately deposited.

The big question is where the passage of the fogou went from its excavated northern end. A geophysics survey that was done beforehand showed some anomalies in a direction going north-easterly. It is difficult to be sure what passage(s) lie in the unexcavated part underground, but a small hole opened up to the east-north-east that showed the main fogou (or a side passage of the fogou) extended in that direction. The end of that fogou passage was originally blocked with a large stone, but Ian Cooke has suggested that this may be a side or creep passage, and that the main passage could have continued in a north-east orientation, the direction of the midsummer solstice sunrise, which would make it the same as other fogous.

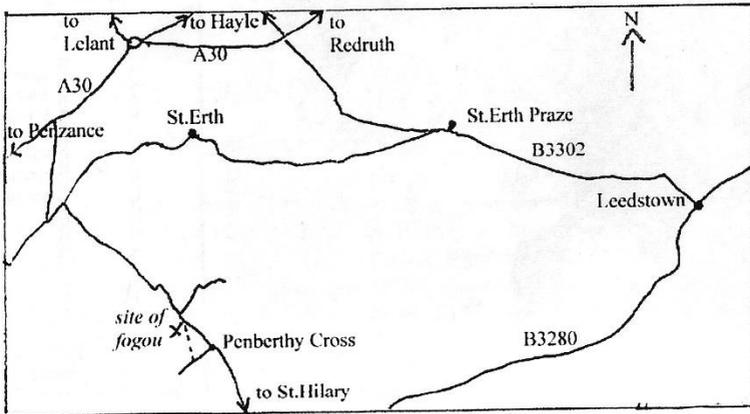


Whatever the direction and extent of the whole fogou and its passage(s), the structure was enclosed in a large rectangular-shaped enclosure (about 60 x 40 metres) which may have delineated the sacred space of the fogou. To the south of the enclosure, a curvilinear ditch was found which yielded some late Iron-Age or Romano-Celtic pottery, two ceramic beads and part of a copper alloy brooch. To the north of the enclosure a 'ritual' shaft was found by the farmer Chris Hosken, dating from the same period, which has so far produced three segments of rotary querns, a hammer stone and some pottery.

The excavation keeps open the question as to whether fogous were typically attached to courtyard house settlements, such as at Carn Euny, Chysauster and Halligye, or whether they were sometimes set apart from nearby settlements (which may have been the case here and at Pendeen). What has emerged, however, is that, while no contemporary courtyard houses have been discovered, the Excavation team did find traces of Bronze Age round houses just outside the Enclosure. The remains of these Bronze Age houses would have still been there when the Iron-Age fogou was built, and it may be that the presence of their ancestors encouraged the Iron-Age Celtic peoples to build their fogou there. At any rate, the Bronze Age huts produced some remarkable finds of their own, including sherds of Trevisker ware with incised decoration, and pieces of the largest pot discovered in Cornwall, some 10 metres in diameter.

So, although this was only a limited excavation, it has produced some rich finds, and has opened up all sorts of possibilities for further exploration. For the moment, the site has been backfilled, but the hope is that there may funding available in the future for a full scale excavation. For the moment, Boden fogou has yielded up some of its intriguing secrets, but is keeping the rest hidden until a future date.

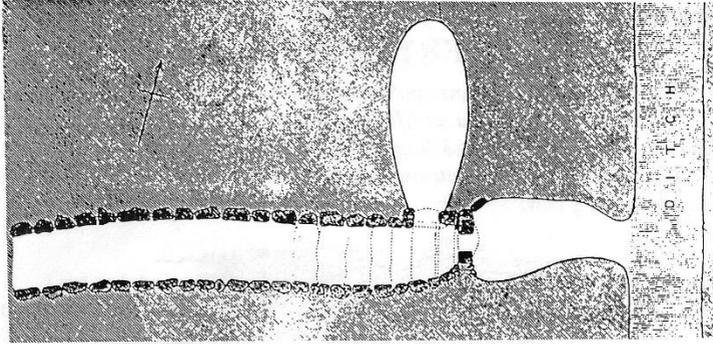
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WHERE IS TREVENEAGUE FOGOU?



Treveneague fogou is a real curiosity: it was found in 1867 by a tenant farmer and investigated by J.T. Blight, who drew detailed plans of it, but it was subsequently filled in, and now no trace remains of where it lies below ground. With the aid of Blight's sketches, Ian Cooke went to have a look for the site, and wrote it up in *Mother and Sun: the Cornish Fogou* [Mên-an-Tol Studio, 1993]. However, due to a typing error, it is listed in the book at the wrong location (SW5484 3115), just to confuse the issue! This would put it some miles further south from its actual location: in fact the NGR should be SW5484 3315, which places it south of St. Erth in St. Hilary parish. Ian suggested that it lay at the top end of a field called 'Western Beacon' near to the remains of a quarry, though he did add the rider that that did not altogether tally with Blight's description of the ground rising considerably above the fogou.

Subsequently *Time Team* came here in 1996, when they were investigating Boleigh fogou, and did a geophysics survey of the field. They concluded that the location was much lower down in the field, in its SW corner, which would relate more to Blight's description. It would also mean that the entrance (which Blight thought was about 75°) would be more likely to be oriented to the midsummer solstice sunrise, as the greater slope here would mean that the sun would not appear at the solstice sunrise until later. However, *Time Team* missed a golden opportunity to excavate here, so we shall never know for sure whether it is there or not unless there are funds for a full excavation

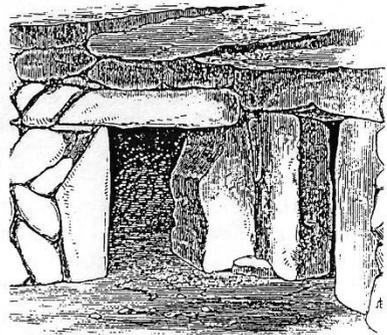
Meanwhile, all we have to go on is Blight's quite detailed description and plans. He said that the fogou consisted of a long passage constructed of dry masonry and roofed over with large flat granite slabs; over half its length had previously been robbed of roofing stones, probably for building purposes.



Blight's plan of Treveneague fogou

In the fogou passage itself was a layer of greasy black mould, which contained several fragments of pottery, burnt bones and charcoal. Other finds included remains of what may have been a stone used for crushing tin ore, some pebbles and small beach boulders. The whole site had been surrounded by a rectangular ditch with rounded corners, some 200ft (60m) square, which interestingly, is similar to what has now been found at Boden fogou. What was most noticeable about the site though was that many of the finds showed signs of intense burning, so that there had evidently been a fierce conflagration in the passage. Whether that had been for ritual purposes, or whether the fogou had been attacked, or perhaps burnt when it was 'decommissioned', we cannot tell. However, it is interesting that finds from some 300-400 yds outside the fogou (large quantities of ashes and burnt stones) indicate that fires had been lit there too. The valley below Treveneague was streamed for tin in early times, and it is possible that smelting of the tin ore had been carried out on the site.

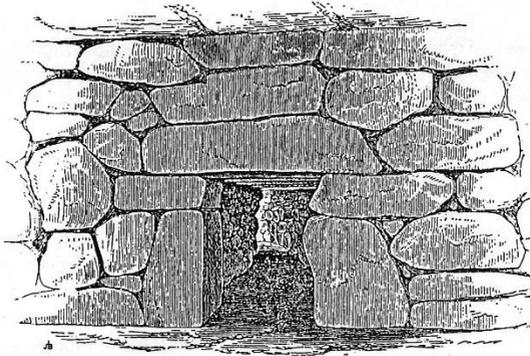
According to Blight's plan, the fogou consisted not only of an entrance or exit leading to or from the ditch, and a long passage, but also an adjoining elliptical chamber, cut out of the rock. This would make it similar to some other fogous, such as Carn Euny with its adjoining Beehive Hut chamber, and Castallack fogou, which Blight had seen a few months earlier. It does appear that there is a genuine 'lost' fogou lying below the fields of farmland today in the parish of St. Hilary. Perhaps one day it will once again see the light of day.



Blight's drawing of creep doorways

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THE DISCOVERY OF HALLIGYE FOGO

In 1885 a pamphlet was published in Truro [reprinted 2001 by Oakmagic Publications] about the fogou at Halligye, Trelowarren, by Sir R.R. Vyvan with illustrations and drawings by J.T.Blight. Appended to this was an introduction by the Rev. W.Iago, which includes an atmospheric description of his first entry into the fogou.



Within the fogou looking west [J.T.Blight]

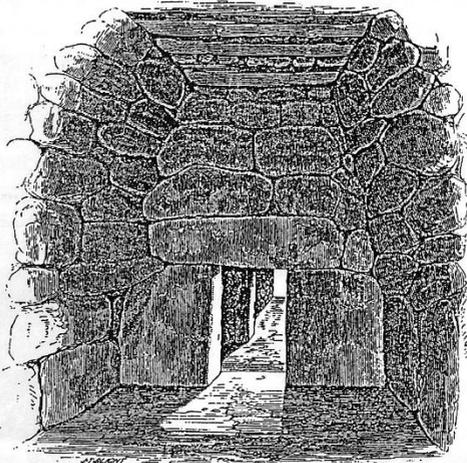
The cave seems to have been entered originally from the fosse on the north, the explorer lying down and crawling through a series of very low and narrow doorways, so small as to admit a man with difficulty even in that position. But the ditch there having long ago been filled up the old entrance is deeply buried, and a less painful way of access has been found. This is near the junction of hedges (or what appear to be such) between the two enclosures. In the corner of the lower one, by the high embankment, is now a pit, for the most part overgrown with ferns and other wild plants. It is partially faced inside with modern rough stone-work, and contains steps of similar character. These lead down to a small irregular opening - the present rugged mouth of the fogou, broken in through its side.

Having descended by the steps to this black hole, I thrust myself in - legs first, backward and downward - and was soon standing on a pile of a large loose debris in a low, narrow, stony corridor, extending in a curve to my left and right. It was pitchy-dark in each direction. The dead stillness of the place was broken only by the constant drip, drip of water soaking down from the deep earth overhead. It has been said that in consequence of the prevailing atmosphere being so heavy, and the fogou so deeply imbedded, no sound made within the dungeon-like walls can be heard by anyone outside.

I kindled a light, but before proceeding adopted a precaution. Fearing that some accident might befall the light I carried, and that being alone I might in consequence miss my way. I planted a second lighted candle in the loose earth of the cave floor to guide my return. I then began to explore. What I saw in my lonely wanderings agreed with the plans. I had come into a long curved tunnel-like vault, across the end of which I found a straight one at right angles, and a low passage connecting them, through which I passed by stooping. In conjunction with each I observed chambers or cells, entered by little portals. These miniature doorways, like the passage-ways, are uncomfortably small creeps, but there is room enough for walking erect in the chief parts of the two main corridors.

I noticed the stonework roughly but carefully piled together, each wall as it was built higher having been made gradually to approach that opposite. I also noticed the roof formed of granite slabs or posts laid across, with smaller stones - as earth stoppers - peering down as it were, from between.

It is said that rats frequent the place; one was seen at the entrance. The air is dank, and the depth of the gloom profound. Especially dark did I find the straight inner part of the fogou. Not only is it far removed from that portion of the cave into which one small ray of daylight does enter (through the only breathing hole), but it seemed to be pervaded by a dark mist. I found it apparently filled with a thick black fog, so dense as to be almost impervious to the candle light. The flame I carried burned lower as I entered, and it was only by straining my sight that I could dimly trace the position of the bare stonework, blackened as it is by the damp of ages. At one time it seemed doubtful whether or not I should be able by its aid to find again the square hole in the lower part of the wall through which I had come from the long curved gallery, and by which I was to return."



Within the fogou looking north [J.T. Blight]

MY FAVOURITE FUGGY HOLES

4: HALLIGYE FOGO

by WELLA PENWRATH

Cornwall's fogous, or as they used to be called by the local people, 'fuggy-holes' are very special to me. In the last of these features, I visit one of the best preserved sites - Halligye.

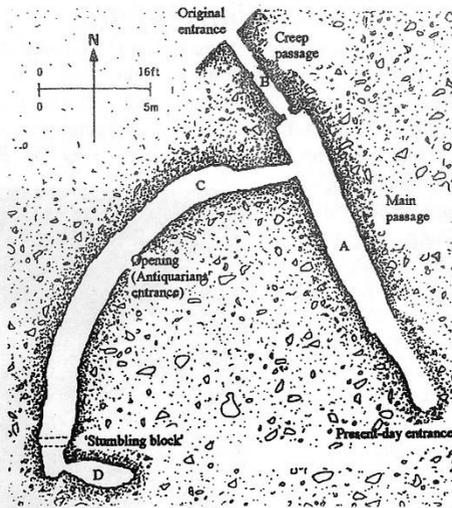
Halligye lies in the grounds of Trelowarren Estate, near Mawgan-in-Meneage, at the northern end of the Lizard peninsula. There are two ways to get to it: either drive into the Estate and turn left, and you will eventually come to a small farm where you can park with permission. The fogou then lies a short distance up a lane. But the other way is my favourite approach. If, before you reach the estate, you take a left-hand turn on the Garras-Mawgan road, after a short distance there is a back entrance into the estate by the old Estate Manager's gatehouse. A short drive up this road, which goes through a lovely wooded area, brings you to a lay-by where you can park, and then walk up and over a field - with panoramic views - to the fogou.

Whichever way you approach, when you get to the site what greets you is a nicely manicured lawn, and some modern steps going down into the fogou. It all looks a bit 'theme-park'. But appearances can be deceptive, for when you enter the darkness of the fogou you experience one of the most powerful sites in all of Cornwall. You are immediately into a straight passage [A], some 28ft long and about 6ft high. As you walk slowly down this passage, ahead of you a low entrance appears, about 3ft high and just over 2ft wide. This is the Creep passage [B], the original entrance to the fogou, so, in effect, you are now walking 'backwards' into it.

It takes a deep draught of air and courage to get down on your hands and knees and enter this small Creep passage - definitely not for the claustrophobic. As you venture along this narrow and black Creep, after about 6ft it narrows even further, and you now have to move along on your stomach. This is an incredible experience, and after another 6ft you reach the end (original entrance) of the Creep. Now there is only one way out and that is back the way you came!



View looking back up the main passage



Plan of Halligye fogou [after Cooke]

However, this is not the end of the experience there. Just before the point where this Creep passage starts, there is another small passage to the west of the main one [C]. Another small doorway, only 3ft high, leads into this, although it soon opens up into a long curved passage (about 90ft long) about 6ft high & 3ft-5ft wide. About half way along this passage, light suddenly enters the chamber from outside. This is the way that the original antiquarians [see p.20-21. Ed.] broke into the structure, and unfortunately it has never been repaired - a job perhaps for the Archaeological Unit and/or the the Sacred Sites Committee?

Once past this gap, there are however, more strange experiences in store. Because the passage is curved, the light soon disappears and you are back in pitch darkness again. But beware! Ahead of you is a 'stumbling block', placed purposely there by the builders of the fogou. I like to think that this was a way of stopping initiates before they entered the final inner sanctum, the most 'holy of holies'. For just past this 'stumbling block' the passage veers suddenly and dramatically at right angles to itself, opening out to a completely enclosed final inner chamber [D]. It is a chamber within a passage, off a passage, within a fogou. This seems to me a deeply spiritual place, perhaps used for sensory deprivation, altered states of consciousness or dream incubation. Interestingly, there is a chamber like it leading off a passage in Boleigh fogou, that I visited in MM54, so I think that it was a deliberate feature of the fogous. I have experienced amazing meditations and connections to the spirit world in this chamber, and it seems a very apt place to leave me at the end of this short series 'down my fuggy hole'!

POSTSCRIPT on Nanjulian Fogou

Finally, we take a look at a possible fogou site in the far west of the county, not far from St.Just-in-Penwith, and probably the 'first and last' fogou in Cornwall. Nanjulian lies a few miles west of St.Just, on the coast path between St.Just and Sennen. In this area there was quite a lot of prehistoric activity, especially a number of Bronze Age barrows, (which will be the subject of a future MM article by Paul Bonnington).

In addition, there are the remains of an Iron Age courtyard house settlement in a field on Nanjulian Farm. For many years this site was completely overgrown, but recently, the National Trust who have acquired the land, have been clearing the scrub away from it. A lovely Courtyard House settlement has emerged, and on the edge of the settlement the possible remains of a fogou identified [SW3614 2891]. This was discussed in Ian Cooke's standard work on fogous *Mother and Sun: The Cornish Fogou* [Mên-an-Tol Studio, 1993] and considered to be "unlikely". However, this was before the scrub clearance, and what can now be seen is the possible below-ground entrance to a 'fogou', leading off from one of the courtyard houses {photo right}.



The position of the 'fogou' is also in the place where one would expect to find it, and similar to other Courtyard House site locations, such as Carn Euny and Chysauster. The National Trust have no plans to excavate the site, but it is an exciting discovery, and certainly raises its status from 'unlikely' to 'very possible'.



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