

THE HURLERS CIRCLES & ALIGNMENTS ●
CELTIC TOTEM ANIMALS ● TIME TEAM ●
CASPEN & FOCAS ● DOWSING ● NEWS ●
*** ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR ***

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STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

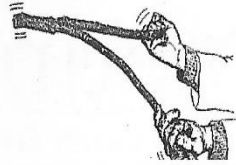
**EARTH ENERGIES * ANCIENT STONES * SACRED SITES * PAGANISM * LEYPATHS
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It always amazes me that during the 4 months between one MM and the next, how many new discoveries, new finds and new ideas about the ancient sites of Cornwall occur. In the 22 years since MM started, a huge amount of information, ideas and theories has been amassed in the pages of this magazine. This issue is no exception. The Hurlers stone circle on Bodmin Moor has suddenly given rise to some exciting new ideas and possibilities about its meaning, as the features on pages 7-13 reveal. Then, as usual, the news page throws up some fascinating developments. The hengiform monument (new word for a new definition of such sites) at Deep Tye Farm, discovered during the A30 by-pass route, is now thought to be an astronomical observatory. And closer to my heart at Calstock, yet another Roman fort has been identified next to a possible silver mine. I spent the first 19 years of my life at Calstock in the Tamar Valley, and returned most years after that while my parents were still alive and living there. As a place, it has hitherto featured little in the catalogue of ancient sites, so it is especially pleasing to me that it has now a claim to fame more interesting than the fact that the MM editor came from there! Coincidentally, a few months before the find was announced (while the dig was going on) I returned to Calstock at the start of my great 60th Birthday walk, in which I walked from one end of Cornwall to the other by means of ancient trackways, paths and green lanes, from Calstock where I started to Boscaswell near St.Just where I now live. It was an amazing experience to connect with a Cornwall far from the busyness of modern day traffic and towns, and just to be close to the rhythms of nature. Friends joined me for some stages of this walk through time, which became a deep physical and spiritual experience. Of course, the walk passed by many ancient sacred sites, and I hope to write it up in a future MM.

MM receives (or goes out to look for) many good contributions, but there are always room for more original and interesting discoveries, so if you think you have made some, then please get in touch! Some of the more fascinating findings are now coming out of the site visits being made to lesser-known sites in west Cornwall by the West Cornwall Dowsers Group. These are reported more fully on p.2-3, and it does seem as if they are continuing to find hitherto-unidentified stones, and energy lines running between the sites. This all helps to build a picture of the 'pattern of the past' in Cornwall, and shows us that there are still many interesting things to be found in our beautiful county.

With the recent sharp increase in postal rates, the annual subscription to MM rises from £7.50 to £8.00. The cover price remains at £2.50 at present. The annual subscription can now also be paid by PayPal on the website www.meynmamvro.co.uk.

DOWSING NEWS



WEST CORNWALL DOWSERS

The Group continue to have interesting and revealing site visits, and in late 2007/early 2008 they visited a number of sites in close proximity to each other in the Kerrier area. In *December 2007* on a wild and windy day they went to **Crowan Beacon** (SW664 348). On the Beacon they examined the remains of the large cairn that once covered the rocky tor. The Mary Line runs through it, but it is the highest point for miles around and dowsing using rods was impossible in the high wind. The Beacon is also on a line between Godolphin Hill and Carn Brea. Close to it to the east is another ruined cairn which has clear lengths of concentric kerbs around it. Both barrows are still approximately 10m across, about the same as Hangman's Barrow nearby. They also noticed that there appeared to have been a ring of small standing stones around the top of the hill, perhaps as some sort of hilltop enclosure. From here they went down the slope to the remains of the stone circle finding many intriguing settings of stones as they went. From the circle they went around the south-west end of the hill where they found hut circles and traces of ancient fields. As they walked back up the hill they realised that one hedge they had been following pointed directly to Men Amber.

They then went to **Crowan Church** where they found the Mary line (though not quite where it was expected) and a puzzling double line at the west end of the church. Finally, they went to **Men Amber** rocks (SW6501 3225) where it was blowing so hard it was hard to talk, but from which they could see Crowan Beacon. Men Amber is a hub from which many energy lines spread out like spokes to the high and holy hilltops of the area.

In *January 2008* the Group continued their exploration of the area at **Nine Maidens Stone Circle, Wendron**. This time they had a beautiful still sunny early spring-like day for their visit. The extant stone circle (at SW6831 3553) was dowsed, and the equinox sunrise to the barrow on Carnmenellis hill noted. Strong energy lines running to other nearby sites and down the Lizard were also dowsed. The location of the now-destroyed second circle to the NW (in an adjoining field) was discussed, but the Group found a strong indication of a circle further up the existing field at SW6830 3650, and the original position of the stones was found by the dowsers. This dowsed circle lay to the SW of the postulated position of the second circle, so it is either the original position of the second circle, or a hitherto undetected third circle. What gave it credence is that it lies directly on the equinoxial sunrise line, mentioned above, from Hangmans Barrow to Carnmenellis Hill. Strong spiral energies were also found at this site. Later a number of stones standing in and next to the hedge across the road near to the modern layby were dowsed, and it was felt that these too could have come from the site.

The Group then went on to the nearby **Hangmans Barrow** (SW6737 3669), a massive ruined cairn originally over 9ft high and 65ft in diameter. There were very clear views from here to many of the other hilltop sites, including Crowan Beacon, previously mentioned, and energy lines were dowsed running to many of these hilltop sites. It was also noted that the equinox line ran from here through the newly-dowsed circle, the 2nd missing circle, and on to the barrow on Carnmenellis hill, a superb energy and visual alignment. Traces were also found of satellite barrows on the hill, and of a settlement lower down the hill slope, the homes of the people whose dead were probably buried in Hangmans Barrow.

Finally, in *February 2008* the Group returned to **Godolphin Hill**, previously visited by CEMG in Aug 2006 [see MM62 p.2], when a fallen menhir on top of the hill was found, and a processional way to neighbouring Tregonning Hill dowsed; and by WCD in Feb 2007 [see MM63 p.3], when rows of stones radiating out from the top of the hill were found. This time the Group found a powerful energy line running from St.Michael's Mount through the fallen menhir on top of the hill and on to Men Amber rocks [see *previous page*]. The rocky outcrop to the NW of the hill top was investigated, and a natural chair structure found at an angle of 42°, marking the midsummer solstice sunrise. The energy line running SW to Germoe Church and Pengersick Castle, first found in 2006, was also confirmed, and it was felt that this had also been a processional way. A cluster of water lines running down the SE quadrant of the hill were dowsed, and it was noted that a similar clustering effect had also been found at Chapel Carn Brea when that site had been dowsed. In the afternoon, the Group concentrated on the base of the hill and discovered a well at the entrance to a nearby lane, which was felt to have been a healing well for rickets. A little further on, a hut circle was identified, with once again a NE entrance, marking the summer solstice sunrise. Nearby a fallen 9ft menhir was found which may have aligned with the rows of stones on the hillside above. A fascinating day and a site that will repay future visits *An article on sites "From Godolphin to Carnmenellis Hills" will be in the next issue of MM*

DOWSING EVENTS 2008

Sun Apr 20th: 11am - St.Breock Downs & Nine Maidens stone row SW934675 **WCD**
Sun Apr 27th: 11am - Castle-an-Dinas, W.Penwith (Meet Castle Gate SW495342) **CD**
Sun May 11th: 2pm - Ed Prynns Stone Henge, St.Merryn nr.Padstow **CD**
Sun June 1st: 11am - Dowsing down The Lizard (Goonhilly Craft Centre) **CEMG/WCD**
Thurs July 17th: 7pm - St.Pirans Round SW779545 **CD**
Sun July 20th: tba - Guided walk on Kit Hill SX375707 with Alan Neal **TD**
Sun July 27th: 1pm - Mawnan Smith church SW782293 **CD**
Sun Aug 3rd: 11am - Carn Brea (Redruth) & Carwynnen Quoit SW685407 **CEMG**
Sun Aug 24th: 11am - Chysauster Settlement SW473350 **CD**
Sun Sept 7th: 11am - Tregeseal area (meet St.Just Library SW369314) **CEMG/SOL**
Sun Sept 21st: tba - St.George's Island, Looe **TD**
Sun Oct 26th: 11am - Helman Tor & local sites SX061617 **CD**
WCD - West Cornwall Dowzers (01326-280681) **CD** - Celtic Dowzers (01726-71903)
www.discoverdowsing.com **TD** - Tamar Dowzers (01566-774902) www.tamar-dowzers.co.uk
CEMG - Cornish Earth Mysteries Group (01209-831519) www.meynmamvro.co.uk/earth.htm
SOL - Society of Ley Hunters Moot (Laurence Main 01650-531354)

C.A.S.P.N NEWS ROUND-UP

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



Following on from the successful Pathways to the Past weekend in May 2007, FOCAS (Friends of Cornwall's Ancient Sites) is organising another weekend this year on Saturday & Sunday 24th-25th May. The programme includes walks and talks and get-togethers among the ancient sites of West Penwith, with local archaeologists, writers and researchers, including Craig Weatherhill, Paul Bonnington, Cheryl Traffon, David Giddings & Steve Patterson. Craig will lead a story walk to Bartinney Hill & Carn Euny on the Sat morning, Paul will lead a walk around Chapel Carn Brea on Sat afternoon and give a talk at the Count House at Botallack Sat evening. On Sunday morning Cheryl will give a talk there, and in the afternoon David will lead a walk to Chûn Quoit & Castle. Finally, the weekend finishes with a social get-together and talk in St. Just on folklore with Steve Patterson. All are welcome, and full details are on a leaflet with this MM or on the CASPN website www.cornishancientsites.com.

Meanwhile CASPN continues to monitor damage and vandalism at the ancient sites, and to do practical work in clearing up the sites every month, which have included Sancreed Well (Jan), Madron Well (Feb), ancient houses at Newmill (Mar) & Bodrifty settlement (Apr). They have also been talking to Joe Oliver of the HEATH Project about the possible grazing by cattle on Tregeseal Common, the fencing that will be needed, and the potential danger to the stone circle and row from cattle rubbing against the stones.

CASP.N Address: Whitewaves, Boscaswell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, TR19 7EP
Web site: www.cornishancientsites.com **E-mail:** secretary@cornishancientsites.com
To join FOCAS (£8/year waged- £5 unwaged) tel: FOCAS Administrator Eve Benney 01736-793905 or e-mail focas@cornishancientsites.com, or visit CASPN web site for downloadable application form.

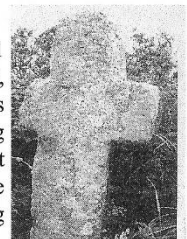
Adopt-a-Site scheme: Paul Bonnington. e-mail: focas@cornishancientsites.com

Sites Clear-Ups: Dave Munday 01736-787230 e-mail: dave@cornishancientsites.com

Report damage at sites: Tel: 01736-787186 or 01736-787522

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS **TREMETHICK CROSS HIT & BROKEN**

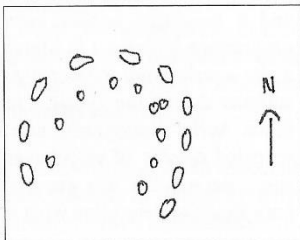
In February this year an out-of-control lorry on the A3071 Penzance-St. Just road mounted the bank and hit the Tremethick Cross, situated high on the bank there, breaking it into three pieces. The cross pieces were subsequently removed by the landowner and are being stored until repairs can be made. The cross has been in its present position on the remains of a former Bronze Age tumulus since the middle of the 19th century, when it was moved here after being discovered at Rose-an-Beagle.



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ARCHAEOLOGISTS SAY DEEP TYE FARM CIRCLE HENGE SITE WAS ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY

The Deep Tye Farm henge-form monument discovered during the excavation of the new A30 by-pass corridor on Goss Moor in 2006 [see *MM60 p.4*] has now been described by Oxford Archaeology's Project Archaeologist Stuart Foreman as a "multifunctional religious ritual site that was probably used for astronomical observations and tracking the round of the solar year". [Talk to CAS in January 2008]. The archaeological team discovered that the site consisted of ten post holes that could have held timber uprights used for observation purposes. These were



surrounded by ten larger ditches that may have denoted that this was a special ritual place kept apart from habitation. There was a gap on the southern side, that could have marked the entrance. There were no signs of human habitation or ritual deposits, but small quantities of charcoal were found in the post holes and pits. Because of the lack of evidence of human habitation, Stuart Foreman concludes that this was a special site used at particular times of the year for astronomical observations, which would have had a ceremonial or religious significance to the people. A radiocarbon date from material taken from the site places it in the early 3rd millennium BCE, the period of Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age. The site, which is about 12m in diameter, is due south of Castle-an-Dinas hill fort, which dates from the much later Iron Age period. However, there is some suggestion that there were two Bronze Age barrows originally on the hilltop before the Iron Age castle was built. This means that the 'holy hilltop' would have been visible from the Deep Tye circle henge site, and may have been incorporated into rituals and ceremonies at the site.

3rd ROMAN FORT DISCOVERED AT CALSTOCK - TOGETHER WITH POSSIBLE SILVER MINE

Following hot on the heels of the discovery of a second Roman fort in Cornwall (at Restormel, 5 miles from the original one at Nanstallon - see *MM65 p.6*), a third one has been found, much further to the east of the county at Calstock, on the borders of the River Tamar. The hilltop site, at an old castle next to the church, was discovered by a team from Exeter University, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, who undertook a geophysical survey at the site and then started digging. They discovered a Roman military ditch and the outline shape of a Roman fort, together with some artefacts including a Roman pot handle. Archaeologist Stephen Rippon said that the site was next to a medieval silver mine and there is speculation that the Romans may have mined silver here too. If so, this would be the first evidence ever of the Romans mining silver in Britain. Rippon commented that it was a very exciting discovery: "We do know elsewhere in Roman Britain that the Roman army were involved in mining minerals - there's even evidence of tin being exported to Europe before the Roman invasion." The discovery of this site raises the question again of how 'Romanised' Celtic Cornwall was, and how much of a presence the Romans had here.

TIME TEAM COME TO PADSTOW

For the second time in a year Channel 4's Team Team TV programme has come to Cornwall. In 2007 they investigated a site near Rough Tor on Bodmin Moor and found a Bronze Age settlement and a Neolithic banked cairn [see *MM64 p.7*]. This time, in a programme broadcast in March this year, they turned their attention to a site overlooking the north Atlantic at Lellizzick near Padstow. One summer during the 1980s, strange crop marks appeared in two fields there. Aerial photographs taken by Steve Hartgroves from HES and two geophysics surveys revealed dozens of circular and semicircular shapes running across the clifftop fields. The suspicion was that this was a trading centre in prehistoric times, so an excavation was set up in both fields to determine what was there and from what period it dated.



*Excavation site
near Padstow*

Investigation of some of the circular features confirmed that these were, as expected, the outlines of round houses. These contained internal pits, hearths and other features; and the fact that some of them were overlaid on top of others indicated that this site had been used over a long period with various phases of occupation, building and rebuilding - perhaps a thousand years of settlement. There was also evidence of small-scale industrial activity on parts of the site, principally slag from metal working. There were finds dating from the Iron Age and possibly earlier, and large amounts of material from the Romano-Celtic period, including pottery, food waste and coins. A bone stylus, dated to about 200 CE, was claimed as perhaps the earliest evidence of writing yet discovered in Cornwall. Two linear ditches excavated in one trench were identified by archaeologist Francis Pryor as the edges of an ancient drove way on a terrace worn down over the course of many years by the hooves of domesticated animals. Meanwhile landscape archaeologist Stewart Ainsworth pointed out a still-visible bank and ditch cutting across the headland - a typical feature of an Iron-Age promontory fort. At the time that this was in use, it was likely to have been the political centre of a powerful tribe.

The whole site was likely to have been continuously occupied from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age and on into the Romano-Celtic period, when the finds suggested that it had been a trading station importing exotic goods, such as wine oil and pottery, from the eastern Mediterranean in exchange for Cornish tin and copper. The discovery by Phil Harding of sherds of north African red slip ware in an undisturbed trench implied that trade with the Mediterranean had continued well into the 5th and 6th centuries CE. Although the sandbanks of the Camel estuary here at Padstow are considered dangerous for shipping today, it was shown that in the past the channel was at least 20ft deep, so could have easily accommodated the ships from the time with their draught of 13-15ft. Previous excavations at Tintagel, just up the coast, have shown that this site too had a direct link with the Mediterranean, and a wealth of remains of amphora jugs and pottery from that region have been found there. Now, this new excavated site shows that it too had a thriving trade over many centuries, and reveals that Cornwall, with its almost unique source of tin, was especially placed to benefit from this exchange of goods - and doubtless ideas - over a very long period of time.

STARGAZING AT THE HURLERS

The Hurlers triple stone circle on Bodmin Moor have recently been in the news with new theories about their origin and purpose. Brian Sheen, a retired research chemist and astronomer, who runs the Roseland Astronomical Observatory in St.Stephen, suspected that the circles were built to observe the position of the constellation of Orion due south at midnight at the Winter Solstice in 1500 BCE. Sheen believes that they were used to calculate the halfway point between the autumn and spring equinoxes. Furthermore, he thinks that the significance of the three circles is that they mirror the three stars in Orion's Belt. Although other megalithic sites are known to be aligned to the Midwinter Solstice, very few have been claimed as alignments to Orion, the Thornborough henges in Yorkshire and stone circles on Orkney being the only other examples in Britain.

However, there are serious objections to this idea. Andy Norfolk of Megalithic Starwatch has pointed out that the circles are only in a rough NE-SW line, not a precise alignment; that there could also have been a 4th circle [see p.12-13 of this MM]; that the circles could all have been built at different times and not as a unit; and that if the proposed date of 1500 BCE for their construction is correct, this would make them very late indeed in stone circle construction. In addition, researcher Roger Farnworth was quick to point out that he believed that the first (southerly) circle was actually constructed to point northwards to the then-pole star Thubon, and that the second and third circles were constructed subsequently as the orientation to Thubon slightly changed over time [see article in MM63 p.10-11].

With regard to the possible orientation of the circles to star systems, be they Orion's Belt or Thubon, we have been here before. In 1909 the then Astronomer Royal Sir Norman Lockyer suggested that all three circles have alignments to the star Arcturus, with the south circle aligning Arcturus over the centre of the central circle in 2170 BCE, the central circle aligning Arcturus over the centre of the north circle in 2090 BCE and the north circle aligning Arcturus over the centre of a nearby tumulus in 1900 BCE. He also felt that these alignments to Arcturus were used as a 'clock-star', with the direction giving a warning that the August (Lammas/Lughnasad) festival would have been due. So, as Roger Farnworth has suggested for the Thubon alignment, the circles would have been built sequentially.

So, who is right? Were the circles aligned to significant stars? And if so, which ones - Orion's Belt, Thubon or Arcturus? Or were they aligned to significant solar events? Christian O'Brien believed that they were aligned to a set of barrows on nearby Caradon Hill at sunrises between Samhain and Imbolc [for details of this theory see p.12-13]. On the other hand, MM reader Jo Tagney has done some recent on-site research and believes that individual stones in the central circle were aligned to significant sunrises and sunsets around the solar Wheel of the Year [see p.8-11 of this MM]. Clearly, these circles continue to intrigue and excite researchers with their many possibilities, some of which may not be mutually exclusive, and at the end of the day you pay your money and takes your choice!

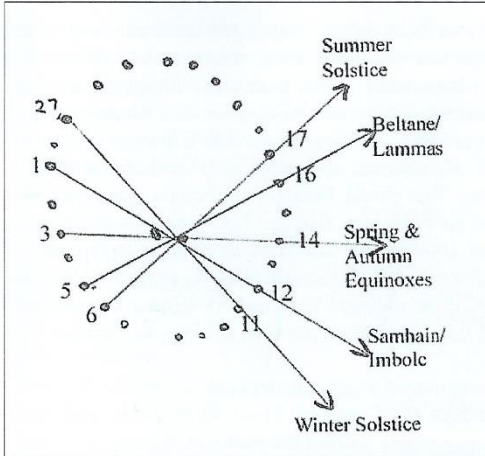
THE HURLERS - SIGHTLINES TO THE SUN

by Joanna Tagney

The Minions and Craddock Moors are well known for their ancient stone monuments, which seem to connect with each other; with the natural landscape around them; and to the heavens above them. The whole complex probably reflected and celebrated the cycles of the passing seasons. I have gathered some observations on sunrise alignments seen across the central circle of the three Hurlers circles on Minions moor. At first, I had no idea whether the circle had been built containing alignments to important sunrises, but, as it became clear that it had, then each clear dawn became more exhilarating. In the Autumn of 2003, I was asked to become involved, as a storyteller, in a primary schools project on the history of the Hurlers. This prompted a visit to the stones at dawn on 1st November (which I thought of as Samhain at the time). As the sun peeked over the horizon on Caradon Hill, I stood outside the far edge of the circle and saw that a large stone (whose top had been fashioned into a point) was directly aligned with the 'centre' upright stone of the circle; and exactly the point where the sun's disc was emerging. How wonderful!

I could not rest until I had seen whether there were equally clear alignments for other 'important' dates in the year. Christian O'Brien in *The Megalithic Odyssey* has noted that sunrises from Samhain to Imbolc appear behind cairns on top of Caradon Hill "as seen from the Hurlers circles", but exact alignments of the stones of any of the circles were not mentioned, nor any for the rest of the year. This was all waiting to be discovered! So, for the next few years, I rose before dawn on every solstice and equinox (dates data from the U.S Naval Observatory courtesy of www.archaeoastronomy.com), and every 'cross quarter' day (i.e Imbolc, Beltane, Lammass and Samhain), taken as the dates halfway between the equinoxes and solstices of each year. If it was not raining, nor totally cloud-covered, I drove the half-hour to Minions, camera beside me, to record the sunrise. It has taken over three years to see a clear sunrise for all 8 points on the wheel of the year, but it has been well worth it. It appears that all 8 points have clear alignments (3 or 4 stones in a row) pointing out the position of the sunrise, across the Central Circle of the Hurlers.

In order to be able to talk easily about the stones in the alignments, I numbered them, starting at 1 for the clearly pointed stone on the west side of the circle (which is the 'pointer' for the first alignment I saw), and numbering anti-clockwise around the circle. Part of my surprise at the accurate alignments comes from knowing that the circle was restored in the early 20th century, with small stumps of granite placed where ancient post-hole evidence was found. These must be accurately placed, as several of these 'stumps' (numbers 5, 6, 11, 14 & 17) are in the alignments. Three of the stones in the circle are lying down rather than standing. I numbered them R1-R3 (R for recumbent). There are two off-centre stones inside the circle - one upright and one recumbent. The position of the latter is still important, as it features (as a 4th point in the line) in all the alignments, except for the winter and summer solstices.



Alignments to significant sunrises across Hurlers Central circle

Alignments observed from 'central' upright, to E of recumbent stone.

Positions of stones traced from aerial photograph supplied by Steve Hartgroves of Historic Environment Service.

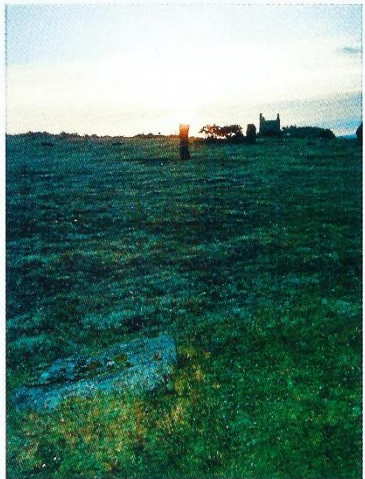
With regard to the cross-quarter days, I visited the circle on the 'halfway points' between the equinoxes and solstices. These dates obviously vary from year to year, but they are always several days after the 1st of the calendar month. Alignments seen at these points were 'stronger' than those taken on the 1st of the month. For example, on 1st November, stone 1 aligned with the centre upright and the sunrise point, whereas on the 5th November 2006 stone 1 aligned with the recumbent centre stone, stone 12 and the sunrise point, giving 4 points in a line, rather than 3. It is wonderful to be there in the circle on the moor at those dawns, and realise the skill and patience of the people who must have observed, measured and pegged out the placements of the stones to mark the turning of the year and thus times of crop and animal husbandry thousands of years ago.

A particular story for the centre circle seems to involve Beltane. Seventeen minutes after sunrise on Beltane & Lammas mornings there is a beautiful phenomenon. The sun's disc arrives precisely into the dip on top of the stone 16. This stone is the only one in the circle which has been given this shape,



carefully positioned to give the spectacle of the sun arriving perfectly in the dip. Also, at the moment it arrives there, the alignment includes the upright centre stone, whereas at the point the sun appears over the horizon, it only includes the recumbent centre stone.

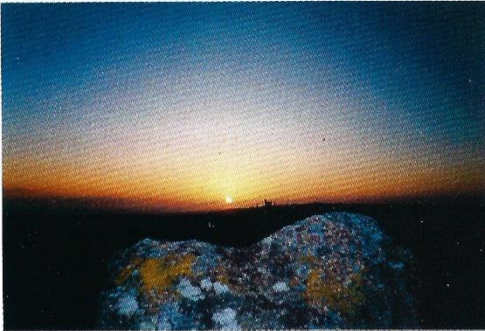
Alignment of sun's disc with dip in stone 16, centre post and stone 5, seen at 17 minutes after Beltane sunrise 2006.



Beltane sunrise 2006 over stone 16

Perhaps this change at Beltane sunrise from the sun aligning to the recumbent stone to aligning to the upright stone 17 minutes later alludes to some erection of fertile power. This could imply that Beltane is of extra importance at this monument compared to other parts of the year. Could it be that the Hurlers complex was built in the time when the May-November (flowers-berries) axis of the year was considered the most important? Norman Lockyer [*Stonehenge and other British Monuments, Astronomically considered*, 1906] gives detailed evidence showing that the first circle builders in Britain honoured the 'May-year', rather than a 'solstice-oriented year'. He says that this May-year orientation was in use about 2200 BCE, whereas in about 1600 BCE a 'solstice cult' appears to replace it. The Hurlers circles (as yet undated by radiocarbon dating) could possibly have been built in the 3rd rather than the 2nd millenium BCE (as grooved ware pottery from a Davidstowe Moor barrow dates from 2500 BCE), and thus the Hurlers could be a 'May-year' temple.

Another link to Beltane is the alignment along the embanked avenue on west Craddock Moor, which runs straight through the Craddock Moor stone circle, and then touches the southern Hurlers circle and a Caradon Hill cairn. This is reputedly the line of the Samhain/Imbolc sunrise. It agrees with the alignment I saw in the central circle. Being this, it is also the alignment for the Beltane eve sunset. My understanding of this comes from my observation that the Samhain eve sunset is in exactly the same alignment (but reversed) as the Beltane/Lammas sunrise.



Samhain eve sunset over stone 16.

Observed alignments across central Hurlers circle to sunrise points on the horizon:

[photographs of each alignment obtained by author]

Summer Solstice [June 21st 2004] Stone 6 - centre post - stone 17 - horizon point

Lammas [Aug 8th 2006] Stone 5 - recumbent centre stone - horizon point

Autumn Equinox [Sept 21st 2005] Stone 3 - centre post - stone 14 - horizon point

Samhain [Nov 5th 2006] Stone 1 - left edge of recumbent centre stone - stone 12 - horizon point

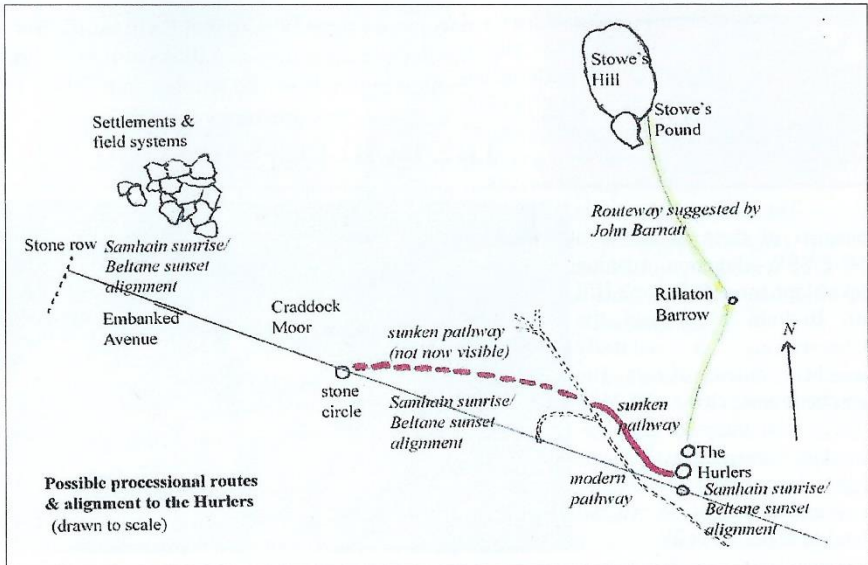
Winter Solstice [Dec 22nd 2003 & Dec 21st 2004] Stone 27 - centre post - stone 11 - horizon point

Imbolc [Feb 4th 2007] Stone 1 - left edge of recumbent centre stone - stone 12 - horizon point

Spring Equinox [Mar 21st 2007] Stone 3 - centre post - stone 14 - horizon point

Beltane [May 6th 2006] Stone 5 - recumbent centre stone - horizon point

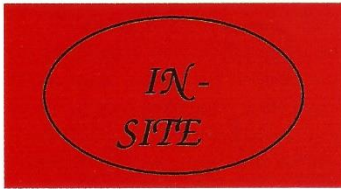
Note that 17 mins after sunrise, the disc of the sun appears in the dip of stone 16, giving an alignment of Stone 5 - centre post - stone 16



John Barnatt has argued [in *Prehistoric Cornwall*, 1982] that there is a processional routeway that follows the contours from the north of the Hurlers circles, via the Rillaton barrow, to Stowe's Hill. Also, a sunken 'green-lane' type pathway seems to follow the contours of the land, from the southern circle in the direction of Craddock Moor. This can be followed on the ground and seen on aerial photographs, but its visibility disappears where it crosses the modern trackway. Measuring on the map, the distance from Stowe's Pound to the northern Hurlers circle, and from Craddock Moor stone circle to the southern Hurlers circle, is almost identical.

Could groups of young people from the Stowe's Pound settlement community and Craddock Moor community have been signalled to start processing to the Hurlers by a fire lit on Stowe's Hill (visible from Craddock Moor), when sunrise was viewed from that high point? Could they have processed to the north and south circles, and when the sun rested in the dipped stone of the central circle, could they have come together in the central circle and made love in the May morning sun? And what about the night before? Could the elders have processed in the setting sun, along the embanked avenue across Craddock Moor to the Hurlers, and spent the night meditating there, ready for the dawn celebrations of the next day? Similar suggestions have been made about the Avebury circles complex in Wiltshire.

The Hurlers-Craddock Moor complex has many stories yet to be unravelled. We are lucky that so much still remains, despite the mining and quarrying over hundreds of years. This place has a rich history that rewards investigation. And seeing the sun rise there is as good a way as I know to celebrate any season that will give you a clear dawn!



A new centre-page feature that focusses on one particular site each time and looks at it in depth.

Following on from the articles on p.7-11
this one looks at -

THE HURLERS STONE CIRCLE

The Hurlers stone circle consists of three circles in a NNE/SSW direction, running up a slope towards Stowe's Hill on Bodmin Moor and the Cheesewring, a naturally weathered outcrop of rock. The southernmost circle (SX2580 7132, now virtually unrecognisable, consists of only 2 upright stones, with 7 fallen and overgrown, out of an original total of about 28 or 29.



The central circle (SX2582 7139) is the best preserved, with 14 upright stones and 14 markers, together with a small (2½ft) stone just south of the centre. Once again it would have originally had 29 stones. When the site was excavated by Ralleigh Radford in 1935, he found a floor of quartz crystals covering the floor of this central circle, and recently dowsers have suggested this is also true for other stone circles. Quartz was probably seen as being a sacred stone to the megalithic builders, and it also has piezo-electric qualities, of which they may have been aware. Originally, this central circle was joined to the northern circle (SX2584 7146) by a paved path. This northern circle now has 11 stones standing and 4 fallen, and again may originally have had 29 stones. These number of stones may relate to the observation (literal and symbolic) of the lunar month, as the time taken from one new or full moon to the next is precisely 29½ days.

To the west of this complex, are a pair of outlying menhirs called The Pipers. There is some doubt as to whether these are original or not, because of their squarish shape, though Terence Meaden claimed he had worked out solstitial sunrise and sunset alignments for them [see *MM35 p.17*]. Recently, it has been suggested (by archaeologist Peter Herring *MM42 p.3*) that there may originally have been a fourth circle, lying directly NE of the 3 existing ones on the same axis at approx. SX2587 7160, but much smaller than the other 3, being only about 65ft(20m) in diameter, as against 113ft(34½m) for the N circle, 136ft(42m) for the C circle & 106ft(33m) for the S circle. There are the remains of about half a dozen stones on the ground that, given their position and shape, could have originally formed a stone circle or cairn circle. The distance between the northernmost Hurlers and this circle is about a stone circle's width, giving rise to the speculation that there may even have been a 5th circle between them.



View from The Pipers to Stowe's Hill

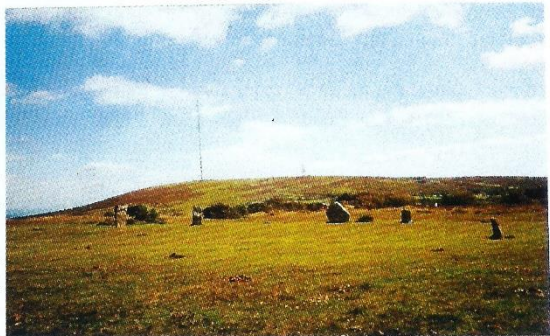
The line of circles points directly towards Rillaton Barrow (SX2603 7191), a Bronze Age barrow, where a beautiful gold cup was discovered [photo right].



The archaeologist John Barnatt has suggested that there was a processional routeway from the Circles to the barrow, and then by a path following the contours of the land to Stowe's Hill and the Cheesewring.

Some other observations have been made about this circle complex. One is that the southernmost circle is aligned directly to Craddock Moor stone circle (SX2486 7183), just over a mile away over a ridge to the NW in a direction denoting the Samhain sunrise or Beltane sunset from Hurlers S. The other is that in the opposite direction, the Circles are directly aligned to the barrows on Caradon Hill to the SE. This sacred hilltop was crowned with 13 barrows, and Christian O'Brien (*Megalithic Odyssey, 1983*) suggested that in the third millennium BCE an observer standing in one of the three circles from October to February each year could watch the sun rising behind each barrow in turn. Starting in mid-October, an observer in the most southerly circle would see the sun rise behind the cairn to the extreme NE. This great cairn, about 75ft in diameter, would have entirely covered the sun's disc, and as it rose behind the cairn, a brilliant flash of light would have appeared flooding from its summit, marking the start of the process. After a gap of two days, the sun rose behind another cairn, and by moving from one stone circle to another it was possible to monitor its progress on a daily basis as it moved from cairn to cairn.

Leading up to Samhain there was a gap of three days, before it rose over the next cairn. After another gap of three days it continued its progress up to the Midwinter Solstice, where on the shortest day, it would have risen over the last cairn, when viewed from the south circle. Then, the reborn sun would start to move back again until at Imbolc there was a dual sunrise sighting from both the south and central circles before it finally reached the original cairn again. Other theories about the circles' possible solar and stellar orientations are given on p.7 & p.8-11 of this MM. Truly, the Hurlers are an amazing complex site with many intriguing possibilities.



Caradon Hill viewed from the Hurlers

REMOTE & ANCIENT PLACES IN WEST PENWITH

by Raymond Cox

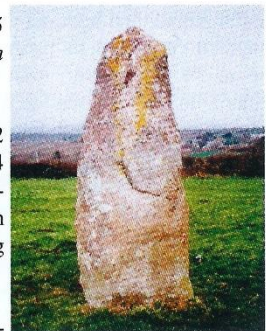
4: Chyenhall Moor

Chyenhall Moor is found to the south of the minor road east from Drift and is something of a naturalist's paradise. It borders the road and one could easily miss it if driving past as it is hidden beyond a bushy hedge, but when on the moor one could be in a wilderness or indeed a zone removed at a stroke from any feeling of human habitation or even human effect, even though farmland surrounds its borders. The moor is a wetland, an area of high rainfall and poor drainage and its name as a moor is perhaps confusing being distinct from the higher and uncultivated moorland areas of the peninsula which have a completely different habitat. (Other examples in the Land's End Peninsula of the wetland type are Clodgy Moor and Kerris Moor.) There is a profusion of flora and amongst the variety of species some uncommon wild flowers may be found e.g. the Dorset Heath *Erica sibirialis*, the only place in the Peninsula for this plant; also the Ivy-leaved bellflower *Wahlenbergia hederacea*, the Cornish Moneywort *Sibthorpea europaea* and the Marsh Speedwell *Veronica scutellata*. Willow remains one of the predominant plants on the moor. It used to be cut there to make lobster pots.

Chyenhall Moor is a haven for birds in spring and summer and a place of stillness in the winter. It is not a very large area but still retains an atmosphere of ancient remoteness, this time with the feeling of a lack of human influence perhaps because there are no ancient sites known right on the moor itself. Such a feeling of course becomes somewhat, though not entirely, lost if a farm vehicle is heard not far away, or a passing vehicle on the adjacent road.

One wonders, however, if there really is some subtle human influence which can even today be detected, for no less than three alignments coincidentally cross the moor and two others run just outside its borders:

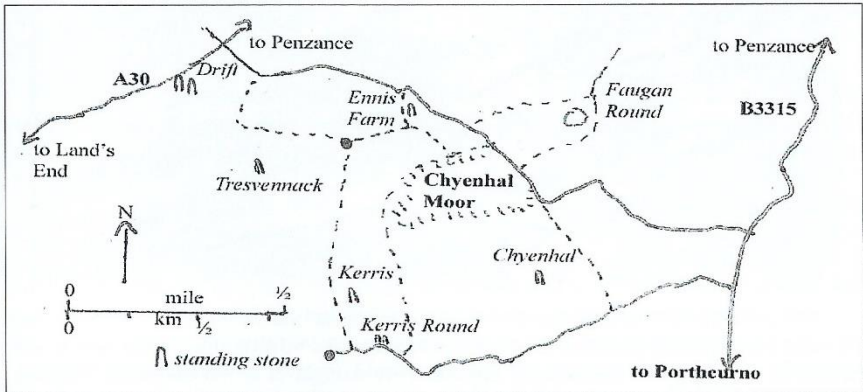
1. West Lanyon Quoit 4231 3379 - Ennis Farm menhir 4475 2821 (nearby) - Chyenhall menhir 4506 2750. (See *Meyn Mamvro* 32).
2. Missing stone 4031 2719 - Boscawen-un stone circle 4122 2735 and a stretch of ancient track - Trenuggo cross 4218 2764 - Tresvennack Pillar menhir 4418 2799 - the church at Peranuthno across Mount's Bay (This extensive line is from John Michell: *The Old Stones of Land's End*, except for Missing stone 4031 2719, an addition.)
3. Trevervan menhir 4082 2399 - Kerris menhir 4439 2743 - Stones at Faughan 4522 2822 (Also from John Michell.)




Chyenhall menhir

The two lines bordering the moor just outside of it are:

1. Chyagwens menhir 4186 2709 - Tresvennack Pillar menhir - Stones at Faughan (Also from John Michell.)
2. Cairn on west coast 357 295 - Carn Green 386 289 - The Blind Fiddler menhir 42522818 - Tresvennack Pillar menhir - Roskilly Rocks on the east coast (From John Michell except the addition of Carn Green.)





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CELTIC TOTEM ANIMALS

by Cheryl Straffon & Gloria Falconbridge



The Celtic peoples were deeply connected to the natural world and the animals they encountered there. The beasts of the fields and forests, the birds in the air, the insects and reptiles of the earth, and the fishes of the seas were thought of as not only inhabiting this mundane world, but also as being mediators between this world and the Otherworld. Animals were thought of as being older than humankind and therefore nearer to the gods, and were seen as having their counterparts in the spirit world, to where the shamans would travel to meet them as 'spirit guides'. Therefore, animals became teachers from whom humans could learn and obtain information, so that their appearance in the mundane world was thought of as presaging some insight or supernatural occurrence. This connection between the world of the gods and goddesses and the world of animals is vividly illustrated in the panel from the 1stC BCE Gundestrup Cauldron [shown above] that depicts the Celtic horned God Cernunnos holding a serpent and surrounded by an array of animals, each one of which would have represented some spiritual force or significance.

Many stories would have been told about the relationship between humans and this mythological/spiritual realm of animals, and so when these tales came to be written down by the Christian monks, they rationalised the role of these animals to a more down-to-earth function. However, the tales still convey the power of the myth that holds within itself the significance of the animals on a spiritual level, and by scratching the surface of some of these tales (such as the Welsh Mabinogi, the Irish mythic cycle and early Arthurian legend) we can get a glimpse of the Celtic world of animal forms and powers, a world that still lives on in the subconscious of all of us today. In Cornwall, a rich source of material for the significance of these animals can be found in the collections of tales by William Bottrell & Robert Hunt, written down in the late 19th century, but doubtless originally dating back to much earlier times, perhaps to the Celtic era itself.

Reverence for animals is as old as humanity itself. An altar to a bear (deity?) was discovered at Drachenloch cave in Switzerland dating back to c.40,000 BCE, and in many of the caves of central Europe, paintings dating from the Upper Paleolithic Period (30,000-18,000 BCE) depict animals such as bears, horses and bison. These paintings are thought of as having been made by shamans in contact with the spirit world, so the animals depicted may be considered to be mediators between the animal and spirit worlds. The depiction of Cernunnos on the Gundestrup Cauldron wearing antler horns finds a parallel in the discovery of antlers intended for wearing at Star Carr in Yorkshire. When dated, these antlers were found to have been used as long ago as 7500 BCE.

Many Celtic tribes were named after animals, or had animals as totems for their tribe. Examples include the Epidii ('horse-people'), the Orcoi ('bull-people'), the Taurisci ('bull-people') and the Brannovices ('raven-people'). The leaders of these Iron-Age tribes were often considered to have animal characteristics and qualities: for example King Mark of Cornwall supposedly had horse's ears, an Irish chieftan had cat's ears, and again in Cornwall the ruler Rialobranus is named after the bird the 'Royal Raven'. In many of the Irish & Welsh mythic stories, animals and birds appear at significant moments in the tales, often as messengers from the Otherworld. In the Welsh *Tale of Culhwch and Olwen* (first written down in the 11thC CE but with material dating to a much earlier period), Culhwch has to enlist the help of supernatural animals, which include the Blackbird of Kilgowry, the Eagle of Gwernabwy, the Stag of Rhedenure, and the Salmon of Llyn Llyw. There are elements of shape-shifting between human and animal forms in the tale: Culhwch takes on the mantle of a pig, and is subsequently linked with a transformed boar, and the Mabon (the divine hunter son of the Mother Goddess) appears in the form of a wren.

In the story of *Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed*, Pwyll has a close association with the supernatural right at the beginning of the tale. While out hunting he sees a pack of strange white hounds that pursue and overcome a most beautiful white stag. These animals are from the Otherworld, and are followed by Arawn himself, king of Annwn, the Welsh Otherworld. Later in the tale, Pwyll encounters a woman on a horse, whom he can never catch, despite using his swiftest steeds. She turns out to be Rhiannon, "divine Queen", a Celtic horse Goddess, related to the Gaulish horse-Goddess Epona. In all these cases, the appearance of animals - hounds, stag, horse - denote that the threshold between this world and the Otherworld is about to be crossed. And finally, there is the tale of the poet and bard Taliesin, in which the boy Gwion Bach accidentally swallows three drops from the Goddess Ceridwen's cauldron. He receives her gifts of inspiration and wisdom that she had intended for her son Afagddu, so she pursues him. In order to escape, he turns into a hare, so she becomes a greyhound. He becomes a fish, so she turns into an otter. He then becomes a bird, so she turns into a hawk. Finally he becomes a grain of wheat, so she becomes a hen and swallows him. Nine months later she gives birth to Taliesin. Later in life, Taliesin claims that he has been a buck, a wild sow, a speckled cat and a goat during his life. Clearly here we are seeing a Celtic world of shape-shifting and embodiment of animals in a kind of shamanic way, relating to the great cycles of birth, life, death and rebirth. These animals stand at the gates of both worlds - this world and the spirit Otherworld.

HORSES

Horses appear time and again in Celtic myth, and, as well as being symbols of power and possessions, very often represent the realm of the Celtic Otherworld. The Celtic horse Goddess was worshipped as the White Mare, known in Gaul as Epona (*Epo* is Gallic for 'horse'), in Wales as Rhiannon and in Ireland as Macha. As Epona, she is sometimes accompanied by a dog, symbolising her Underworld aspect. She was worshipped as a deity of fertility, war, sovereignty and happiness in the afterlife. In the story of Rhiannon, not only does she appear riding on a white mare, but later in the story, she is forced into carrying visitors to the King's palace on her back. In the story of Macha, the Goddess Macha was forced to race against the fastest horses in Ireland while she was pregnant. She died at the winning post while giving birth to twins, and cursed all Ulstermen as a result. All these stories portray the horse Goddess as coming from, and returning to, the Otherworld, and horses were revered as being able to travel between the two worlds. They opened the gates of life at Beltane, and carried the souls of the dead back to the Underworld at Samhain.

A memory of this appears in some of the Cornish tales. In the story of the Giants of Towednack [*Bottrell I, 37f*], the enchanter Pengersec rides a 'demon-steed' "which seems to tread the air and spurn the ground - no animal of flesh and blood". In the story of One-Eyed Joan [*Bottrell I, 217f*] a spirit-horse appears and takes Joan on a wild ride across Clodgley Moor. In the tale of the Fairy Dwelling on Selena Moor [*Bottrell II, 97*], a horse takes its own path and leads Mr. Noy to an enchanted Otherworld. And for shape-shifting stories, the wise woman or white witch of Treen changes into a horse [*Bottrell II, 134*], and in *A Night's Ride to Scilly* [*Bottrell II, 233f*] the devil appears in the form of a horse and takes Jackey to the Scillies. For witches and devils, read Goddesses and animal totem spirits.

COWS & BULLS

Closely following on from horses, cattle are a very important symbol of wealth and power, commemorated in the epic poem *The Cattle Raid of Cooley* and collected in the ancient Irish manuscript (c.1106 CE) *The Book of the Dun Cow*. To the Celts, the cow symbolised the sacredness of motherhood with the milk representing the life force itself. Milk from a sacred cow was an early form of communion with the Goddess. The Goddess/Saint Bridget was nourished by a cow who came from the Otherworld, with white body and red ears, and she is often depicted milking a cow (such as in the carving on the tower on Glastonbury Tor - *photo right*).



Statue of Epona from Burgundy



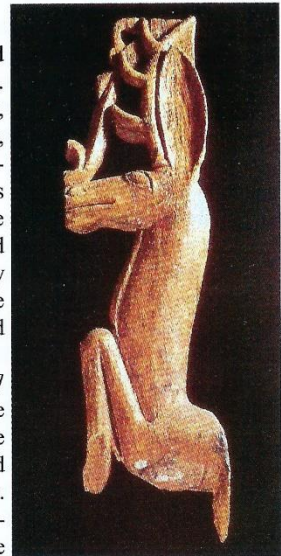
This motif of the supernatural nourishment of the cow can be found in the Cornish tale of Tom the Giant-killer [*Bottrell I, 14*], who lived with his wife Joan at Towednack. Their children were reported to be weaned by "suckling the cows and goats ... which took their sucklings as naturally as if they had been their own calves and kids". Piskies were also known to milk a cow [*Hunt, 108*]. A supernatural cow belonging to the Little People also appears in the tale 'The Small People's Cow' [*Bottrell II, 73f*]. She gives twice as much milk as an ordinary cow, and also feeds the fairies as well, who appear one Midsummer's Night to milk her. Cattle were driven between fires to purify them in all Celtic lands including Cornwall at Beltane, and it was considered very unlucky not to do so.

Closely linked to cows are **bulls**. In the Celtic world, the bull is often associated with deities of poetry, healing and the Underworld. It features strongly in Ireland's creation mythology, and in one story, St. Patrick kills a bull by trickery, which then miraculously returns to life. In a Cornish story, two tanners visit the hill-top territory of the giant Denbras [*Bottrell I, 19f*] and see a young boy and girl mounted on a young bull, riding it back to back. They may be thought of as having entered the Otherworld, and seeing some ancient rite, perhaps one that is a memory of bull-leaping contests in Minoan Crete. In an article in MM28 p.9-11, Brendan McMahon suggested that Jack the Tinkeard, who features in the same tale, takes on the role of a shamanic figure in his association with the bull and his coat which is made out of black bull's hide. In the story of the 'Devil's Money' [*Bottrell II, 227*] the devil himself appears in the form of a bull.

DEERS

Deers are frequent visitors in the Celtic stories, and very often appear to lead people in and out of the Otherworld. The Tuatha de Danaan, shapeshifting Irish otherworldly folk, appeared to people in the form of a White Doe or White Stag, and led people deeper into the woods to encounter the Otherworld. In the story of Pwyll (p.17), it is a white stag who leads Pwyll to encounter Arawn, Lord of the the Underworld. One of the Irish hero Fionn's Otherworldly wives, Sadbh, was said to have been turned into a fawn by a druid, but may originally have been the Irish Deer Goddess of the same name. And the horned God Cernunnos, the Lord of the Forest, was depicted as an anthropomorphized stag.

There is a very interesting Cornish tale [*Hunt, 373*] about Robert, Earl of Cornwall, who, while out hunting one day chases an elusive red deer deep into the forest (the Otherworld?). He then has an encounter with a black goat and sees an apparition of his friend William Rufus on its back. The goat says it is an "evil spirit" taking Rufus "to judgement". Later Robert discovers that at the very moment of the vision, Rufus had been slain in the New Forest by an arrow. This story has both deer and goat linked to the Otherworld.



Wooden stag figurine from Germany c123BCE

PIGS & BOARS

In Celtic mythology boars are token animals of strength and power: according to Anne Ross they were "without doubt the cult animal *par excellence* of the Celts", and the boar was the national symbol of the Gauls. Pigs were revered as the sacred animal of Mother Earth, and were thought of as coming from the Underworld, so were considered as guides for shamanic journeys. In Irish myth, Medb's nephews eluded her in the form of swine. In Wales, the Goddess Cerridwen was called 'the great white sow', and her Underworld cauldron was the place where all souls had to return for inspiration and regeneration. She was a shapeshifter and an Underworld initiator. In another story the *Twrch Trwyth* a magical transformed pig swims across the sea from Ireland, and is then hunted by (King) Arthur into Cornwall, the far west that probably represents the land of the dead. A legend in Sancreed in West Penwith tells how St.Creda was transformed into a swineherd after accidentally killing his father, and a carving above the entrance to the Church depicts him holding a pig [*photo right*].

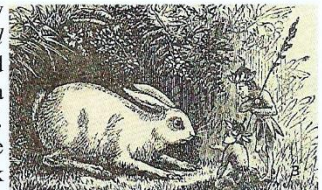


WOLVES & DOGS

A wolf appears as the companion of Cernunnos on the Gundestrup cauldron [*page 16*]. Because they hunted at night in the dark, wolves were thought of as useful spirit guides for shamanic journeys. Dogs were also connected to the Otherworld and thought of as chthonic animals. They were totem animals of roads, trackways and crossroads, and stood at threshold places as guardians and protectors. The Irish hero Finn mac Cool had as his companions two hounds of semi-human origin. Later, probably because of their association with pagan Gods and heroes, hounds came to be viewed as the companions of the Devil, who would ride out with them in his Wild Hunt. In the Cornish story 'Dando and his Dogs' [*Hunt, 220f*] the indulgent priest of St.Germans is out hunting with his dogs and taken by the Devil down to the River Lynher, where he disappears, presumably to hell, the Christian Underworld.

HARES & CATS

Hares and cats were sacred to the Celts. Just before she began her campaign against the Romans, Queen Boudica of the Iceni released a hare while invoking the Goddess Andraste. And in Ireland, there was a cult of the sacred cat, evidenced by The Cave of the Cats at Rathcroghan, an underground souterrain that was the entrance to the Otherworld; and the oracular cave shrine at Clough in Connaught whose prophetess was "a slender black cat reclining on a chair of old silver". Later, both animals came to be thought of as familiars to witches and wise women. They appear frequently in the Cornish tales. In the story of Betty Stoggs [*Bottrell II, 205*] a cat leads her to her stolen baby; a hare and a cat were familiars or spirits of the Witch of Treva and both appeared at her death [*Hunt, 335*]; there are hares that no dog can chase, and in one story [*Bottrell I, 88f*] they shape-shifted into Mag the Witch; in another story [*Bottrell II, 15f*] Squire Lovell chases a hare into Boleigh fogou and finds a coven of witches; a white hare, who is the spirit of a murdered woman, frightens off dogs and wolves [*Bottrell II, 253f*]; hares were kept as familiars by the Rev.Polkinhorne [*Bottrell III, 27*]; and a broken-hearted maiden comes back in the shape of a hare [*Hunt, 377*].



BIRDS

Birds were especially sacred to the Celts, in particular the eagle, raven, hawk, owl, crane, goose and swan. In the Cornish tale of Grace Hutchings [*Bottrell II, 100*], her dead spirit could take the form of any bird. In the Welsh tale of Blodewedd, she is turned into the form of an **Owl**, and linked to death and the Underworld. In the Cornish tale of Mr. Lenine of Tregonebris [*Hunt, 337*], it is said that Betty Foss was a witch, and, unusually, an owl was her familiar. An owl comes to listen to Jack the Tinkeard as he played his harp [*Bottrell I, 26*], and both owls and **choughs** call the Tom's name later in the same tale as a presage of death [*Bottrell I, 34f*]. It was thought that King Arthur could appear in the form of a chough or a **raven** [*Hunt, 308f*], and it is said that the croaking of a raven over a house bodes evil to some member of the family [*Hunt, 431*]. In all these cases the birds are seen as embodied spirits or emissaries from the Otherworld. In the Irish stories, the triple Goddess of death, the Morrighan, appears as a battle crow, and in one of her aspects as the Goddess Badhb, her name means 'raven' or 'crow'. The Celtic God Bran's name also means 'raven', and is remembered in Cornwall at Caer Bran hilltop site, Brane village, and St. Breward on Bodmin Moor (from 'Branwalder' = raven lord). **Magpies** also were thought of as supernatural birds bringing good or bad luck. Magpies from the Otherworld were able to converse with humans. A magpie talked to Joan the Giantess [*Bottrell I, 34*] and in the story of Margaret the white witch of Zennor [*Bottrell I, 90f*] she talks to all manner of creatures, including magpies, hares, a goat and a cat, who come to her.

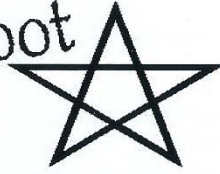
Finally, a few rather special birds should be mentioned. The **cuckoo** does not appear in the Celtic myths, but there is much folklore surrounding this strange bird. One Cornish story [*Bottrell III, 159*] tells of how the folk of Towednack have no patron saint and try to hedge in a cuckoo. Although this is told as a tale to show up the simplicity of the Towednack folk, it may in fact be a distant folk memory of the pre-Christian origin of the Celtic saints, who were close to nature and the seasons, and a deep-rooted belief that people could be transformed into bird shapes. Certainly, the **crane** (no longer native to Britain) carries this association: the son of the God Manannan had a mistress Aoife who was turned into a crane, and her skin was used to make a crane bag, a receptacle for shamanic bards to carry. And the **swan** appears in many Celtic tales, often as transformed maidens of the Goddess: they are particularly associated with Bridget. The swan represents the transition of the soul through states of being and states of enchantment.

All these birds and animals were important to the Celts, not just for what they represented in themselves, but also as visitors from the Otherworld, and as helpers, teachers and protectors, leading humankind to spiritual growth and enlightenment.

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Penwith Pagan Moot



by **Gemma
Gary**

At the darkest point of the wheel we gathered in Sancreed House to celebrate **Yule**. Into the cauldron we each placed a gift that we had brought before the lights of our ritual were extinguished as we were lead on a journey through the story of Yule, venturing out into the cold night before returning through a cave to be greeted by the Goddess who kindled flames of hope for each of us to meditate on. These we later in turn placed upon a golden disk, naming our wish as the sun was reborn to manifest our needs and desires. To the steady beat of a drum we then turned the wheel onward before partaking of the libation and drawing each a gift from the cauldron.

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BOOK REVIEW

The Tregerthen Horror by Paul Newman [Abraxas Editions, 2005]



Paul Newman is a Cornish writer of non-fiction (on dragons, hill figures and other topics) and fiction (his recent novel *Galahad* won the Peninsula prize). At times, reading this book, it was hard to know which hat he had on. It purports to be an investigation into "Aleister Crowley and a Mysterious Death in a Haunted Cottage in Cornwall" (sic), but it soon hares off into other stories: in fact, it has a cast of hundreds, and the reader has to really keep their wits about them to work out how everyone relates to everyone else. A schematic chart would have been a useful addition as a reference point. The book is subtitled "Aleister Crowley, D.H.Lawrence and Peter Warlock in Cornwall", but to these three can be added a plethora of other characters, either closely or superficially, including Newman's own brother!

At the core of the book is the story of "The Tregerthen Horror", an incident (which may or may not have occurred) one night around 1938 involving 'the Great Beast' Aleister Crowley who perhaps stayed at Zennor and was somehow involved with the death of Katherine Arnold Forster (sometime lover of Rupert Brooke) at a 'haunted' cottage at Upper Tregerthen near Zennor, a cottage on the remote moors above Eagles Nest. But this is only the start of a meandering journey through the times where we meet the occultists and magicians and alternatives who were irresistibly drawn to the complex and challenging energy of Cornwall. It's not long before we are back in time to encounter D.H.Lawrence, who lived at Zennor in 1917 with his wife Freida, the novelist Katherine Mansfield who smoked hashish with Crowley on one occasion, the musician Philip Heseltine "obsessed with sex, music, poetry and motor-biking" who joined Lawrence in Cornwall, the critic Cecil Gray, and the occultist Meredith Starr. Then we move forward to the period of pre-World War II and meet occultist Ithel Colquoun, novelist A.L.Rowse, poet and mystic Frances Gregg, writer Louis Wilkinson, Crowley's mistress Pat Doherty, novelist Mary Butts, etc, etc, etc. There is much speculation about a possible "Crowley coven", and even the possible occult 'Walton Murder' at Lower Quinton near Stratford-on-Avon in 1945 is dragged in. In fact, anything and anyone of a vaguely occult nature who was around at the time seems to have been dragooned into this book. Some of it makes fascinating reading, and some of it is rather tedious and extremely speculative.

After something like 130 pages of this, we get to the "Solution", which proves of course to be nothing of the kind. "At this point I asked", says Newman "where is this all leading?" Indeed! This "Solution" proves to be the starting point for some more speculation involving the novelist Frank Baker, Cecil Williamson of The Witchcraft Museum and even the novelist Mary Williams. Underneath this morass of speculation and red herrings, there is the sense that something of significance *had* happened involving Crowley, who was certainly here for a while at the time, and had been seen and visited at Newlyn and Mousehole and on the moors above Zennor Hill. Whatever the truth of it all, we shall perhaps never fully know, but Newman certainly does a thorough job in trying to find out.

THE PIPERS TUNE

Some more information has emerged about the mysterious swans pits at Jacqui Wood's experimental archaeology site at Saveock. Mentioned briefly in *The Pipers Tune* in MM62 p.24, it now seems that these feather-lined pits are even more enigmatic and puzzling than first thought. The pits were discovered cutting the clay platform at the site, and were approx. 42cm long x 35cm wide x 17cm deep. The first one excavated was found to have white feathers in it, so their first thought was that it was a bird plucking pit. However, this was not the case as the feathers had been carefully laid skin side out with white feathers inside. The pit had been laid on a swan pelt with a pile of tiny stones surrounded by some sort of organic material. The stones had flint within them, which came from Swan Pool, which lies 15miles down river from the site.

Eight more pits were excavated that season, but most had had their contents removed at some time in the past. However, in 2005 they excavated a line of three pits, two rectangular with a round one between. The round one had the same swan feather lining, and on either side were the bodies of two magpies, and between them over 55 eggs. The shells had dissolved, but the membranes were intact, and they could see that they were a mixture of different birds from bantam size to duck egg size. Seven of the eggs had fully formed chicks in them ready to hatch! Radiocarbon dating for one of the pits puts the site to 1640CE, the time of the Civil war in Cornwall.

Jacqui Wood believes the site to have been for some kind of pagan ritual purpose. She says that suggestions that it was some kind of obscure egg preserving pit don't hold up, because of the way it was laid out with the swan's skin and the deposition of the magpies. People in Cornwall are still very superstitious about killing magpies today, so it was clearly breaking taboos to kill and deposit them in this way. The site was extensive: 35 pits in total have now been found, with the tops of many more appearing. Jacqui's suggestion is that the pits were some sort of offering to St. Bridget or Bride, who has the swan as her symbol (although there is no evidence that this was the case in medieval times). However offerings to her were placed at the branches of three rivers, and that area was known as the Threewaters of Saveock water, Blackwater and Chacewater.

Jacqui further speculates that perhaps the pits were used to make an offering to St.Bride by young brides who were hoping to get pregnant. If this is the case, then that would be a very late example of pagan/Christian ritual practice in Cornwall, and also very dangerous if it became known about to the authorities, as this was the time of Cromwell's presence in Cornwall, when all such things would have been regarded as idolatrous and linked to witchcraft. This may explain why there has been no written record, or even oral tradition, of these pits. Until some reference can be found, they remain very strange, puzzling and enigmatic sites.

Paganism features in Radio Cornwall spirituality programme

Paganism made it to mainstream BBC Radio in January, when the Radio Cornwall faith programme on Sunday morning featured a debate on spirituality in Cornwall, with Andy Phillips on Celtic Christianity, Robert Leigh on Buddhism & Cassandra Latham on Paganism. The debate, which covered beliefs and practice, was positive and civilised.

EXCHANGE MAGAZINES

Prices are for annual subscriptions [sample copies in brackets]

Web site details are given in italics

Earth Mysteries

NORTHERN EARTH - 10 Jubilee Street, Myholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, W.Yorks
www.northernearth.co.uk £7.50 [£1.95]

T.E.M.S NEWS (Travel & EM Society in Home Counties) 115 Hollybush Lane, Hampton, TW12 2QY £5

TOUCHSTONE (Surrey) - Fostercourt Lodge, 192 Stroude Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 9UT £2
www.ahsoc.fsnet.co.uk/jimsites.htm

SOCIETY OF LEY HUNTERS - 7 Mildmay Rd, Romford, Havering, Essex RM7 7DA £10

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Paganism

THE CAULDRON (Paganism, Wicca etc) BM Cauldron, London WC1N 3XX
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THE SILVER WHEEL (Paganism, Craft, Druidry, Folklore) - PO Box 12, Earl Shilton, Leics LE9 7ZZ
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THE HEDGEWYTCH - The AHW, BM HedgeWytch, London WC1N 3XX
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PAGAN DAWN (Pagan Fed.) BM Box 5896, London WC1N 3XX £12 [£3.25]
www.paganfed.demon.co.uk

PENTACLE (Independent paganism) - 78 Hamlet Rd, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 1HH.....£14 [£3.75]
www.pentaclemagazine.org

GODDESS ALIVE! - Whitewaves, Boscawell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7EP £8 [£4]
www.goddessalive.co.uk

MEYN MAMVRO is available on annual subscription - 3 issues £8.00 (inc p & p) from:- 51 CARN BOSAVERN, ST.JUST, PENZANCE, CORNWALL TR19 7QX.

MM67 due out Sept 08 will include fogou alignments & Godolphin-Carmmenelis area.

Most back numbers are now sold out, but photocopies can be done as a special service to subscribers and regular readers upon request @ £2.00 (nos. 1-50) or £2.50 (nos. 51 on). Contents list & Index available on floppy disk or CDr (75p) or printed format (£2) or at the web site *www.meynmamvro.co.uk*

Printed by Paul Williment of Brighid Design. e-mail: *brighid.design@mac.com*

NOTICEBOARD

ISSN: 0966-5897

BELTANE/SUMMER EVENTS

Wed Apr 30th - 20th Annual Maypole Dance & feast at Carn Bosavern, St.Just 6.30pm Details:01736-787186
Thurs May 1st - Obby Oss Day at Padstow. Details: 01841-533449
Sun May 4th - 20th Three Wells Walk Meet Sancreed Church 10.15am Details: 01736-787186
Thurs May 8th - Helston Flora Day + Hal-an-Tow. Details: 01326-565431
Mon Jun 23rd - Midsummer bonfires
Fri/Sat Jun 27th/28th - PenzanceMazey Eve/Day Penglaze & Serpent Dance

PATHWAYS TO THE PAST

Weekend of walks & talks amongst ancient sites of West Penwith

Sat May 24th 11am Story walk: Bartinney Hill & Carn Euny with Craig Weatherhill (meet Ch.CarnBrea 2pm Walk - Chapel Carn Brea with Paul Bonnington (meet Ch.CarnBrea) 7.30pm Talk - Monuments & Symbols of Ancient Landscape with Paul Bonnington (Count House, Botallack)
Sun May 25th 11am Talk - Megalithic Mysteries with Cheryl Straffon (Count House, Botallack)
 2pm Walk - The way to Chûn with David Giddings (meet NorthRd car pk 8pm Talk - Folklore & landscape in w.Cornwall with Steve Patterson (Star Inn, St.Just)

MAGIC, MYSTERY & FOLK-LORE WALKS on the Lizard

with Steve Patterson (07941 078975)
Sun July 20th - Meet Church Cove NT car park (nr.Gunwalloe) 11am
Sun Aug 3rd - Meet Kynance Cove NT car park 11am

CORNISH EARTH MYSTERIES

Sun Jun 1st - More Dowsing down the Lizard with Bart O'Farrell. Meet at Goonhilly Craft Centre (beside B3293 St.Keverene road) at 11am
Sun July 6th - Nanjulian Barrows with Paul Bonnington. Meet at Nanjulian car park area at 11am
Sun Aug 3rd - Carn Brea & Carwynnen Quoit with Andy Norfolk & Pip Richards. Meet Carn Brea 11am
Sun Sept 7th (Joint meeting with Society of Leyhunters Moot) Tregeseal Common. Meet St.Just 11am
Dowsers: * westcornwalldowsers@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01326-280681
 * www.tamar-dowsers.co.uk
 * www.discoverdowsing.com

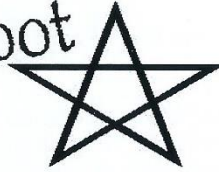
ANCIENT SITES CLEAR-UPS

Sun May 18th - Treen C'yard Houses
Sun Jun 15th - Mulfra C'yard Houses
Sun July 13th - Boscawen-ûn circle [With guided talk & shared picnic as part of National Archaeology Week]
Sun Aug 17th - Tregeseal Circle
Sun Sept 14th - Nine Maidens barrows All at 2pm. For further details contact Dave Munday on 01736-787230 dave@cornishancientsites.com

PAGAN MOOTS

Penzance - 2nd Tues each month 7.15pm Stella Maris Healing Centre Tel: Sarah 01736-787522
Earth Moot Penzance - 3rd Mon 7.30pm Healing Room, Archie Browns Tel: Rory 01736-787872
Redruth/Truro/Falmouth- 3rd Mon 7.30pm Tel: Ann 01872-863970
Bodmin - 1st Weds Tel: Wendy 01208-832977

Penwith Pagan Moot



by **Gemma
Gary**

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