

*Three
Levies That
Departed
From This Island,
And Not One Of Them
Came Back:
The first went with
Elen of the Hosts*

**THE MANY FACES OF HELENA ● BOSENCE CHAPEL
ROMANS IN CORNWALL ● CASPN & LAN ●
THREE BROTHERS OF GRUGWITH ● DOWSING ●
* ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR ***

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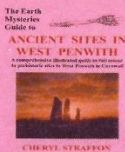
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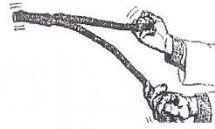
STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

EARTH ENERGIES * ANCIENT STONES * SACRED SITES * PAGANISM * LEYPATHS
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Midsummer madness came to West Cornwall in June when a group of self-styled “Graffiti Grannys” descended on the Merry Maidens stone circle with knitted flower pieces which they draped and tied all over the stones, ostensibly to celebrate the summer solstice. The Group are known for decorating other public places with their knits, but their offerings at the stone circle provoked some controversy. Within a short time, CASPN site monitor Cassandra Latham, who happened to be passing the site, saw the woolly knits and removed them. Subsequently, the Grannies complained to *The Cornishman* and attacked CASPN’s actions on their website. Some other people also thought the removal of the knits was over-the-top for something that ‘was just a bit of fun’ but others made the point that the stones were not a fun theme park for people to decorate as they wanted. Site monitor Martin Cleaver defended CASPN’s action, saying “It’s illegal to do anything to the stones and we do not approve of this. We’ve had a lot of trouble in the past with vandalism and things being buried at the sites, and a line has to be drawn”. In a letter to *The Cornishman*, in my [CS] role as CASPN Chairwoman I said: “A substantial number of volunteers do good work ‘behind the scenes’ at the ancient sites to keep them in as much of a natural state as possible and clear of any leavings or decorations, which are not appropriate and intrusive to the sites. CASPN feels that the sites should be there for everyone to enjoy, irrespective of their beliefs or ideas, and we would ask all individuals and groups to respect the sites so that they remain unspoilt and protected”. Interestingly, the Pagan Moot had been to the site that very afternoon for their Solstice ritual, and despite bringing and using quite a lot of things, they cleared up everything afterwards so anyone coming along would never know they had been there.

CASPN were also involved with another issue at the same time. A letter to the same issue of *The Cornishman* from Debbie & Kelvin Jones of Norfolk about the grazing of cattle on the moorland inferred that CASPN had done nothing to oppose the cattle, who were causing “havoc and damage to the ancient sites”. In fact, CASPN have publicly stated that they do have concern about cattle and barbed wire, but have no evidence of any damage to the sites. A case of not letting the facts get in the way of a good rant! The Jones’ have not lived in (or been to) Cornwall for some 10 years now, and what both these incidents - the Graffiti Grannys and the ‘rampaging cattle’ - perhaps show is that it is not wise for some people living outside the area, who often have no real knowledge and understanding of what goes on down here in looking after the sites, to make assumptions about them and what is appropriate for them. Support for the sites is very welcome; arrogance about thinking they know best and doing just what they please there is not!

DOWSING NEWS



The 2010 dowsing season started in March with **West Cornwall Dowisers** visit to the enigmatic *Four Lanes ceremonial complex* at Highway Farm near Penventon [SW688 393]. The Group had gone to the barrow on the hilltop in November 2008 [see *MM69 p.3*] and now they returned to the field below to investigate what may have been there. Five fields in the area had the name 'Double Rows' on an 1806 Tithe Map, and although the field boundaries have since been removed, there are a whole heap of scattered stones in the corner of the large open field below the TV mast. Some of these did indeed dowse as incomplete stone rows, and the remains of a circle was also identified. A nearby mound gave a strong signal as a prehistoric barrow, and the site of another ploughed-out barrow had a powerful energy. Although much of the site has been lost, and other more modern stones dumped there, nevertheless it lies on a strong energy line between Carnmenellis Hill and Carn Brea, both of which are intervisible from the site.

Two weeks later at the beginning of April the **West Cornwall Dowisers** met again, on a beautiful spring day at *Rosewall Hill* near St.Ives. The hill had already been identified as being on the 'Bart line' that runs from Tren crom to Trink Hills and on to this one, but few archaeological sites have been identified on the hill, except one cairn. However, the group found the hill to be buzzing with energy lines and probable sites. A strong line from Carn Brea was found to go along a ceremonial path and through a 'natural' rock portal on the hill and on to neighbouring Trendrine Hill, crowned with an entrance grave [photo right above], and the sites of hut circles on the side of the hill were also dowsed. But the main discovery of the day by Lawrence Moody was of a fallen standing stone with cupmarks on one face at SW4875 3909 [photo right below]. This stone was measured at 18¾ft long, and by dowsing 7 chakras around the stone, it was calculated that originally 13ft of the stone would have stood above ground. The stone was slightly over the top of the hill (similar to nearby Watch Croft hill and menhir), and from its position there was a beautiful view to the barrow on neighbouring Trendrine Hill. An excellent day's dowsing and some remarkable finds.



Trendrine Hill barrow from portal rock



Fallen standing stone on Rosewall Hill

An excellent day's dowsing and some remarkable finds.

At the end of April **West Cornwall Dowzers** returned to *Carmenellis Hill*, a site first visited in November 2009 [see *MM72 p.3*]. This time a clear still day allowed the Group to explore more of the hill, and go past the Altar Stone to the ridge of the hill towards Carn Marth. Here they found a power point node and the site of a pair of natural rock chambers, that they felt was the spiritual or ceremonial centre of the hill. Dowsing revealed that one of the chambers had been the ‘birth’ chamber and the other the ‘death’ chamber, and together they had been used for shamanic practices in prehistoric times. Energy lines radiated out towards Carn Brea and Carn Marth, and the site had obviously been very significant. A great find on an enjoyable day’s dowsing.

On the same day at the other end of the county **Tamar Dowzers** went to *Launceston Priory*. Here they found a natural geological fault along the east-west alignment of the remaining aisle that was echoed by a wide ley line, dowsable on the surface, an example of the theory that some leys have a symbiotic relationship with sub-structural faults, which form conduits for the release of electromagnetic radiation from deep in the earth’s crust. They also dowsed stone sarcophagi, tomb sites and a church built in the Priory graveyard.

Towards the end of May on a beautiful summer’s day, the three Groups, **Tamar Dowzers, Celtic Dowzers & West Penwith Dowzers** met up at *St.Piran’s Oratory & Church* near Perranporth. After dowsing at the site of the buried Oratory, the Group moved on to the Celtic church, which was excavated in 2005. Here they found traces of five churches on the spot, from the first simple one established in the 8th century to the final excavated one in the 14th century. The sizes and orientations of the five churches were plotted, before the group went to visit the original Iron Age site of *St.Pirans Round*, where interesting energy patterns were found and plotted. A week later **Celtic Dowzers** were due to go to Bosphorthennis Beehive Hut, but because of difficult access, went to *Towednack Church* instead, where they found the site to be buzzing with beneficent energy.

Into June, and on the first Sunday **Tamar Dowzers** went to *Pentillie Castle* near Saltash for some dowsing of historic features, while **West Cornwall Dowzers** made a return visit to *Kus-Skewes Farm* at Nancegollan [see *MM71 p.2*] to investigate some of the strong earth energy lines at this multi-period site. Finally, at the end of the month, **West Cornwall Dowzers** went to *Mulfra Courtyard House settlement* [right] where the western part of the site gave much



information about the people living there, both their numbers and their spiritual practices, which were centered around ancestor worship. The Group then went on to climb Mulfra Hill where at a rocky outcrop they found traces of a cist grave. At the Quoit itself they found that the original entrance of the mound would have been NW (midsummer sunset), and that the capstone would have been used for excarnation. A lovely day’s dowsing.

SPRING INTO SUMMER 2010

There was a busy Spring and Summer this year in Cornwall, as old traditions continue to be observed and revived ones also become established. The season started with the well clear-up and blessing at **Fenton Bibibell** on Good Friday. For the 5th year, a Group meet up to clear the well, and this year the source of the well itself was discovered. This was followed by the blessing of the well and of the dolls and figurines. Phil Cope, author of a new book on Cornish holy wells [see p.22], came down from Wales and included it in the book itself.



Beltane arrived with a busy 4 or 5 day festival for some. On the May Day Eve there was the 22nd annual **Maypole Dance** on Carn Bosavern, St.Just. It was a mizzly overcast evening but dancers still did the dancing, and were rewarded by a clearing sky and sunset for the last dance, with a beautiful rainbow arched over the place. The next day was **Padstow Obby Oss**, a personal Silver anniversary for MM editor, for whom this was the 25th consecutive year she had attended. It was as ever a wonderful day, but a salutary reminder that some of the adults now dancing and teasing the Osses had not even been born when she first started going regularly! This year, the **Three Wells Walk**, which is always on the first Sunday after Mayday, fell on the next day. Also now in its 22nd year, the walk attracted a good turn-out of regulars and first-timers, who walked the paths and green lanes from Sancreed to Chapel Euny wells and back to Sancreed, and then in the afternoon to Madron well for the blessing and return to Sancreed. As always with the Walk, the day turned out fine and sunny, and Mother Nature put on all her finery. Some people left at lunchtime to go to the **Penwith Pagan Moot**'s Beltane celebrations in the afternoon which attracted a good-turn out at the beautiful setting of Crean Mill near St.Levan [full report on p.5]. Finally, to round off a very full day, in Penzance there was the 3rd **Penzance May horns** event, marked by the raising of a maypole at lunchtime and a lively procession in the evening from Newlyn to Penzance, with strangely attired people and the Turkey Rhurbarb Band, making a wild anarchic cacophony of noise and whistles!

Midsummer brought some glorious weather to Cornwall, and the week of the 20th **Penzance Golowan** festival was warm and sunny. St.Johns Eve (June 23rd) always sees the bonfires lit on holy hilltops, with **Chapel Carn Brea** in West Penwith and **Kit Hill** in East Cornwall doing the honours. The same evening there was the unpublicised **Lighted torch procession** down Penzance's Chapel Street, with the first appearance of Penglaz, which this year was a particularly lively occasion under a beautiful nearly-full moon. A different Penglaz came out for the Friday night dance, and the whole week culminated in a very hot **Serpent Dance** through the Penzance streets on Saturday afternoon. Old traditions and new adaptations come together to keep customs alive in Cornwall today.

Penwith Pagan Moot



by **Eve Benney**

Beltane is a festival of fire, thought to be named for the god of fire, Bel - a celebration of fertility and abundance. This year the Moot met at the home of a member near St Buryan, with a beautiful garden and stream. We spent some time in meditation, a particularly uplifting experience in such beautiful surroundings. Men and women then went separately to explore the power and passion of creation within each of us, the mysteries of masculine and feminine energies, and the promise of abundance for each one of us. After some energetic power raising in the warm spring sunshine, Penglaz joined us to frolic in the best Beltane tradition.

In a spectacularly beautiful June, a large group of over forty met in bright sunshine to celebrate the midsummer solstice at the Merry Maidens stone circle. We began by saluting and honouring the ancient stones, forming our circle by weaving in and out of the stone circle. For the first part of our celebration, the Moot meditated on their own inner fires of creativity, passion and purpose, finding a word which symbolised the power of fire within their own lives. We symbolically fed this inner soul fire by feeding the cauldron fire with sticks, saying aloud our words to create a word poem of fire. But as the sun reaches its solstice - its stand-still point - its power begins to wane. The Oak King, the Lord of Summer, gives way to the Holly King, and the Wheel of the Year begins its descent into the dark half of the year. In the second half of our ritual the Moot explored the theme of the sacrifice of the king to symbolise this waning of the sun's power. Despite the more serious theme, the Moot then relaxed to enjoy a feast in the afternoon sunshine following the ritual.

Lughnasadh, on the first of August, is named in honour of Lugh, the Celtic Lord of Light. The festival is also called Lammas, after the Saxon Loaf-Mass, the celebration of the first grain harvest. In past years the Moot has usually honoured this festival among the fields, or with games decreed by Lugh in honour of his foster mother Tailtiu. For a change this year, we celebrated the harvest of the sea, meeting on Sennen beach. Although named in honour of the Lord of Light, there was a distinct lack of sunlight, with the sun hidden behind a thick veil of mist. The world closed in around us, muffling the noises of the outside world. Despite the constant drizzle that soon had us all soaked, an enthusiastic small group began by splashing into the waves for a cleansing. We spent some time in a meditative walk along the beach, looking for an object which spoke to us of harvests to come. Once found, we carried our objects into a labyrinth drawn into the sand, going inward into meditation on our own personal harvest. We gathered around a fire, warm in the cold rain, and spent some time scrying for the past that was, and the truth of what is. We concluded by giving thanks for our personal harvests, casting sea salt into the flames. Despite the damp, we still enjoyed our feast, the rain only stopping and the sky brightening as we left the beach - a pagan phenomenon well-known to many of us as Sod's Law!



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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



Pathways to the Past 2010. The 4th year of walks and talks amongst the ancient sites of West Penwith took place on the weekend of May 29th-30th. Although the weather could have been better for the walks, that did not deter the many people who came to enjoy the weekend. The different approaches by the walk leaders and talk facilitators all complemented each other, and provided a rich and nourishing menu of events.

The weekend started with a walk led by **Barry Reilly** entitled *Morning with Bran*, a guided walk to Caer Bran hilltop enclosure and on to Brane Barrow. Barry's ideas about the significance of Bran as a Celtic tribal leader added additional interest to this first walk. After lunch local archaeologist **David Giddings** led *A beeline to Bosporthenis* and took a good-sized group to the 'quoit' (entrance grave) at Bosporthenis and on to the Courtyard House settlement and Bechive Hut. This lesser-known area of West Penwith was opened up to the Group, many of whom were not familiar with the area. In the evening **Paul Bonnington** took his usual slot, this year to give a photographic account of *Digging up the Past*, recent excavations at Carn Gulva, Bosporthenis & Constantine Bay near Padstow. Each of these excavations revealed something different about the society and beliefs of the prehistoric peoples in Cornwall.

On the Sunday morning, **Steve Hartgroves** from HES gave an illustrated talk on *Cornwall from the Air* with some absolutely beautiful photographs of ancient sites and landscape in West Penwith and the Isles of Scilly, which helped to show them from a new and different perspective. In the afternoon **Paul Bonnington** led a well-supported walk to *Foage and Zennor – to meet the ancestors*, with much to discuss and learn about the area. Finally, to round off the whole weekend, in the evening **Anna Tyacke** came to talk about *Found in Cornwall- the Portable Antiquities Scheme*, with good illustrations of finds and interesting discussion about why they may have been deposited. **Pathways to the Past** has now become a well-established and much-loved event on the late May Bank Holiday weekend each year. The 2011 event will be on May 28th-29th - full details in a future MM.

CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]

CASP.N Address: Whitewaves, Boscaswell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, TR19 7EP

Web site: www.cornishancientsites.com **E-mail:** secretary@cornishancientsites.com

FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS].

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Adopt-a-Site scheme: 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

LIZARD ANCIENT SITES NETWORK [LAN] via CASPN address (above)

Adopt-a-Site scheme & Sites Clear-ups: e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com, or phone 01736-787186

Clear-ups at ancient sites. Both CASPN & LAN continued with their monthly clear-ups, which depend so much on the volunteers who willingly give their time to make such a difference to the sites. One spectacular example of this was *Portheras Barrow* which CASPN cleared of thick gorse earlier this year. This site with its surrounding large kerb surround has not been visible for decades. The barrow, which lies near Pendeen on a triangle of land at SW3914 3327, is large, being 12.2m (40ft) in diameter, with a central cist 1.2m (4ft) long & 0.6m (2ft) wide, roofed by a heavy capstone 1.8m (5¾ft) long. The clear-up revealed the kerb stones around the barrow, including a curious V shaped one [see photo right].



The monthly clearances continued with *Treen Circle* in April, where bracken and gorse was removed from this large circle; *Sperris Quoit and Roundhouses* in May, where, thanks to the path recently cleared by PAROW, the Group were able to tackle one of the roundhouses; *Nine Maidens Downs barrows* in June, where the previously cleared sites were kept under control; and *Boscawen-ûn stone circle* in July.

LAN also continued with its clear-ups on the Lizard peninsula. Earlier this year, they had uncovered *The Three Brothers of Grugwith* for the first time in many years: full details of this site can be found on p.20-21 of this MM in a new feature on Lizard sites. Other sites tackled this year have included *Croft Pascoe barrow* [SW7274 1943] in March, a large site that had become completely overgrown; *Carminoe Mill* [SW6590 2440] in April, a medieval site, where, in co-operation with the National Trust, they cleared a choked mill leat; and *Poldowrian hut circle* [SW7550 1690] in May, a return visit to this small but beautiful site.

The largest site which LAN visits, three times this year so far, is *Kynance Gate settlement* [SW687 139]. Full details of this most interesting and little-known site, located above the beautiful Kynance Cove, can be found in the Lizard feature in the next issue of MM. LAN have so far cleared several of the huts and the area around the central rock feature of the site, and hope eventually to make a start on the largely unexplored and unexcavated northern part of the site, which is at present buried under thick gorse. Meanwhile,



recent aerial photographs taken by Historic Environment, show the extent of the huts that LAN have already cleared on the southern part of the site [see photo above].

Details of future CASPN & LAN clear-ups can be found on the back page: all are welcome

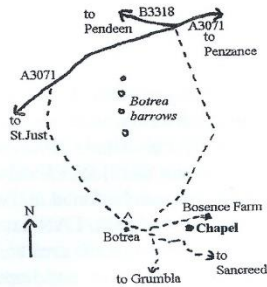
REMOTE & ANCIENT PLACES IN WEST PENWITH

by Raymond Cox

6: Bosence Chapel

Back in the mists of time, over two centuries ago, a cloud of fog from the moors surrounded Uter Bosence one night as he strayed, lost and 'piskey-led', into the field called Park-an-chapel, between Bosence and Botrea. He had been visiting midsummer eve events on nearby hills. Uter tried to find an opening in the hedge and get over a low place. But it seemed the more he climbed the higher the hedge rose! He became fearful as many strange unearthly lights and ugly spriggans and sprites had often been experienced hovering around the ruins of the old chapel, or oratory, now overgrown with brambles and of quite forlorn appearance, even in the light of day. Uter had laughed at these tales, but not any more as he felt that Something - of flesh and blood? - was following him about in the gloom. Arriving at the chapel he now knew where he was and sat down to rest and recover his breath on a stone by the doorway. He lit his pipe using his tinder-box and - behold! Immediately there were the strange noises, and the very creatures themselves were manifest. There were all kinds of unnaturally shaped bodies, some with heads like adders, some with forked tongues, hissing and spitting fire at him. They were dancing on the old walls. He was scared but not really afraid because he was a brave man. He tried to get away and then a black goat-like creature with horns attempted to grip him. He began to strike the entity with his thornstick but the cudgel was snatched away and he tripped and was laid flat on his back. Then he was sent rolling down the hill, faster and faster, and then tossed over the hedge. When he fell he was pitched up again, pushed through brambles and thrown over bogs and a stream. When he passed the road at Botrea the demons suddenly left him. He was found the next day quite insensible. His piskey encounter was a marvel to hear related.

Such is that remarkable midsummer legend related by William Bottrell (*Traditions and Hearth-side Stories of West Cornwall* - Penzance 1873). Thankfully that was not the experience on a sunny afternoon in mid-May at the old Bosence chapel. But yet there was an atmosphere of ancient mystery, that quiet, forsakenly desperate and lonely feeling, the more remarkable because within view was the nearby farmhouse just at the other end of the field, about as far from the chapel on one side as the Botrea hamlet (not visible) is on the other. The curious location was of unusual, yet natural remoteness, with - when one looks about - superb views over towards Caer Bran hill fort and the hills to the south, and in the opposite direction Botrea Hill to the north. The foundations of the chapel are cut into the hillside and form a rectangle of drystone walling. This was utilised as a field boundary. So it is in reality a part of the hedge which continues along the field on each side of the building's shorter sides.



Bosence chapel [SW4066 3049] measures 7.0m (23ft.) by 3.7m (12ft.) and the walls are 0.6m (2ft.) thick and are from 0.9m (3ft.) to 2.1m (7ft.) high. The building contains stones from the late 15th or early 16th century, but it is thought that the walls are much older. The interior floor is filled with small trees, brambles and bracken, with an elder bush at the north wall. Charles Henderson [*Ecclesiastical Antiquities of West Penwith, 1955-60*] suggests it could have been a Celtic hermitage or a medieval



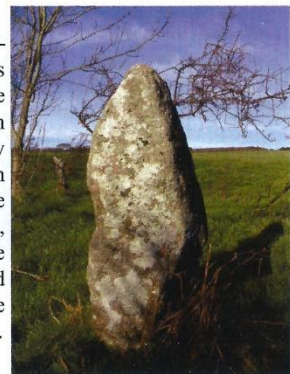
domestic chapel, as there is no well in the area. The heads of two cusped windows of 15th century date are built into the hedge at Botrea. There are other carved stones on site. The building was scheduled in 1970 and according to R.J. Mercer [*Scheduled Monuments Description - English Heritage*] stone mouldings, including door posts, sills and window casements, are in possession of the farmers at both Bosence and Botrea. One might speculate if they have ever experienced lights and creatures!

Bosence is off the beaten track and little visited and lies a couple of fields from the small hamlet of Botrea towards the Bosence farmhouse. It can be approached from a very rough lane from the main road which links Penzance and St Just or from the Grumbla. There is another way, from Botrea Hill, with its line of barrows and a courtyard house. Again, as so often in Penwith one may experience examples of ruins from different ages. Here the Bronze Age, the Iron age and the Medieval are present. Yet the experience of the past is similar with all, as the past is no less present with the old chapel than with the features on the hillside. Yet, tucked away as it is within, and held by, the field wall there is a singular and powerfully captivating enchantment.

For more information on the legend see MM32 p.14-17, and for the barrows and settlement on Botrea Hill see MM35 p.12 & MM61 p.16-17

STANDING STONE AT BOTREA?

Along the lane that leads from the A3071 St. Just-Penzance road to Botrea and thence on to Bosence, there is a solitary stone standing in a paddock just to the east of the lane behind some trees [at SW4034 3051 & marked as ^ on the map on p.6]. This stone, about 5ft tall, was evidently used as a gatepost at some point, as there are holes in one side of it, but it dowses as a genuine Bronze Age menhir, and it stands on a strong energy line. Its location, at the base of Botrea Hill may also be significant, as on the crest of the hill there is an Iron Age Courtyard House, and on the northern slopes of the hill a line of Bronze Age barrows. It may be a genuine, hitherto unrecorded, menhir.



THE ROMANISATION OF CORNWALL

Excavation has continued at Calstock cemetery, where a Roman fort was identified in 2008 [see *MM66 p.5*]. Intensive burning inside the south boundary of the fort was discovered, and a 1stC CE Roman furnace just outside. Traces of copper and arsenic were found, all of which was suggestive of Roman copper smelting. Local and imported pottery suggested occupation between 50-85 CE, meaning that it was in use for a much shorter period than Restormel Fort [see *MM65 p.6*] which seems to have been occupied between the 1st-4th centuries. However, the Calstock Fort was about four times as large as the Restormel one, which may be related to its position on the banks of the River Tamar, the main crossing point into what became Cornwall. The Calstock site may therefore have been positioned both for control and for mineral-extracting purposes, and may be earlier than the other two Roman forts discovered in the County, the one at Restormel, previously mentioned, and the original one to be discovered at Nanstallon, near Bodmin. When the other forts were found, it was at first thought that they may have been looked after by native people rather than the Romans themselves, but the discovery of the large Calstock site, with perhaps more forts to be identified in the future, now casts doubt on that theory.

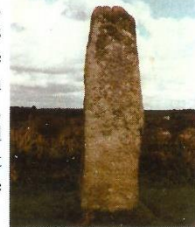
All of this raises the question - how Romanised was Cornwall? It used to be thought, not very much. Because, unlike the rest of England, Cornwall lacked Roman towns, villas or temples (except one rather un-villa like villa at Magor near Camborne, which may have been built by a local Romanised Celt), the Romans had not reached this far west. It was felt that Roman-style camps that have been found at Carvossa and Golden (near Probus) were native-built rather than Roman. But the increasing number of Forts being discovered places a question mark over this. MM reader Sue Joiner has suggested [*MM67 p.7*] that there are also remains of a Roman camp near St.Endellion, and that the coast road between Camelford and New Polzeath is a Roman road leading to Pentire Head, which was mined for silver, lead and zinc.

In addition, since the turn of this century, metal detecting has turned up more and more Roman finds, such as coins and brooches. There were some finds recorded in the past, but these have been mainly dismissed as the spoils of trading with the Romans. However, the amount of finds now being made suggests that contact was much more widespread than previously thought. For example, in 2000 a jar of 1000 bronze and silver Roman coins were found on a riverbank near Lerryn [see *MM43 p.3*]. Anna Tyacke, Antiquities Finds Officer for Cornwall, suggested that they may have been an offering made to the Gods at a temple there. In 2004 a Roman bronze brooch and rare Roman gold coin from 1stC CE were discovered near St.Austell [see *MM53 p.6*], which Anna Tyacke said almost certainly belonged to a Roman centurion. In 2006 two rare Roman burial urns were discovered at Tregony [see *MM61 p.5*]; in 2007 a Roman gold child's ring was found in north Cornwall [see *MM63 p.6*]; and in 2009 a Roman neck ring was reported from Newquay [see *MM68 p.7*]. All these finds are indicative of domestic occupation rather than just trading, and as Anna Tyacke says "increases the evidence of an early Roman presence in (Cornwall)." Cornwall may have been a lot more Romanized than everyone had previously thought.

MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

♣ The Third Piper

The two Pipers standing stones are well known, being the tallest standing stones now extant in Cornwall. The NE one at SW4354 2482 [photo above] is 4.6m (15ft) high, and the SW one in the next field at SW4350 2474 [photo below] is 4.1m (13½ft) high. However, in the 'Old Cornwall' magazine of Winter 1939 (Vol 3 no.6) there is a short piece by Ashley Rowe entitled "The Third Piper". Rowe says that "a lady living in Penzance whose grandparents at one time lived at Boleigh" had told him that there 'was a tradition in their family that there were at one time three Pipers. Rowe mentions that lying among the outbuildings of Boleigh Farm is "another stone in direct line with the Pipers away from the circle", the distance from the nearest Piper being "approximately the same as that between the two standing stones" and suggests this may be the third Piper referred to. This stone was given by Vivien Russell in her *West Penwith Survey* [1971] as being at approx SW4360 2490, but there is no trace there nowadays. Vivien Russell herself doubted the veracity of this third Piper, and when MM contacted her about it when she was alive she said that "there would surely have been some reference to it by old writers if it had existed" [see MM6 p.5].



However, stones do not usually just "disappear" - they get to be re-used as gateposts, or as hedge stones in Cornwall. Both Vivien Russell [above cit.] and John Barnett [*Prehistoric Cornwall*, 1982] list a standing stone in a field to the SE of Boleigh Farm, Russell at SW4382 2479 [St.Buryan menhir 15] and Barnett at SW4383 2478 [Menhirs 41]. This stone was given by Barnett as being 3.86m [12½ft] long and fallen. Again, MM asked Vivien Russell about it, and she said that it was lying prostrate by the hedge, possibly on recent turf. It was much weathered, one end slightly rounded, the other square. The Russell/Barnett stone was recorded on the OS 1:25,000 map as a dot and on the 1:2500 scale as "recumbent standing stone". In 1989, two MM readers independently (Tony & Sue Bayfield and I. Inwards) went to look for it and found it at SW4382 2475 in the corner of the field well hidden in bracken and completely covered with ivy. Were it not for modern-day field walls, the two Pipers would be visible from it to the right and left, the three stones forming a triangular relationship.



Was this the third Piper? We can't be sure, and as a little codicile, another large fallen menhir was reported to MM lying at the edge of another field nearby, just across the lane at SW4374 2455 [photo left]. Interestingly, this is on the site of the lost Tregurnow stone circle, recorded at this location. Probably not the third Piper, but still a fine stone.

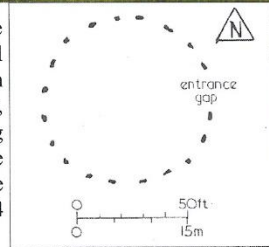
IN-
SITE

The centre-page feature that focusses on one or two particular sites each time in depth. As a background to recent controversy here [see editorial on p.1] this one looks at the **MERRY MAIDENS CIRCLE**

The most accessible and well-known of sites, lying beside the B3315 Penzance-Lamorna road. It is also one of the best-preserved in Britain, its 19 stones being still in situ with only 3 having to be re-erected in the late 19th century. The stones are equally spaced with an entrance gap on the north-eastern side, and vary in height between 0.9m & 1.4m (3-4½ ft) tall, with the tallest ones to the SW and the shortest to the NE. There are also two sets of 2 stones buried in the ground



to the south-east of the circle, one of which is still quite prominent, which may have formed part of a processional way to the site. The circle is on a sloping field with the twin hills of Chapel Carn Brea and Bartinney visible to the west, and several fields away to the north-east the **Pipers** standing stones are probable outliers to the circle [see page 5]. There was also formerly a possible second circle in the field to the west of the main circle, known as the Boleigh circle [4314 2444] [see p.15].

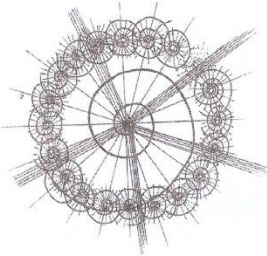


Another outlier is visible in a field hedge to the south of west of the circle. This is the **Gûn Rith** standing stone [photo left]. An **alignment** runs from this menhir through the circle and its gap (following the public footpath), on to a stone in a hedge [4343 2452], touches the site of a destroyed stone circle (Tregurnow) at 4375 2455 [see p.11], and finishes at Borah, a farmhouse whose Cornish name means “the place of the witch” (Bos-wra). There may be a memory here of a ‘via sacra’ or sacred way walked by ancient peoples as part of a ceremony in the land. This notion is strengthened by the observation of Sir Norman Lockyer, the Astronomer

Royal at the beginning of the 20th century, who said that the appearance of the Pleiades star system above the circle at the end of April in 1960 BCE would have warned of the rising sun for the festival of Beltane. The site is Bronze Age (2500-2000 BCE), a date that was presaged by the antiquarian T.C.Lethbridge who in the 1960s used a dowsing pendulum to give a date of 2540 BCE.

The circle has been checked on at least 4 separate occasions for anomalous **radiation** counts. Alan Bleakley in 1982 found higher than average reading inside the circle, but subsequent visits found the reverse. In 1985 Don Robins found that geiger readings halved when he moved inside the circle, and these lower readings were subsequently confirmed by Meyn Mamvro geiger monitoring sessions in 1987 & 1988. Other stone circles have produced similar results, and it does seem that there is an unexplained phenomenon of a radiation 'sanctuary' in the middle of some circles at some times. Whether the people who built the circle were aware of this is part of the mystery.

There is some anecdotal evidence of **electromagnetic** energy being discharged from the stones in the form of 'tingling' or low-grade electric shocks. Hamish Miller recorded this in 1988, and when he later rigorously dowsed the circle he found spiral **energy** patterns coming from each of the stones and lines of energy flowing out of the site [*diagram right*]. On another occasion CEMG (Cornish Earth Mysteries Group) dowsed the site, and by following one of the energy lines found a 'marker' stone in a nearby hedge at 4322 2483.



The **magnetic field** was also measured at all the stones, at the centre of the circle and at four points outside. Results at the stones varied between 25-28 μT to 45 μT against the normal British field strength of 47 μT , but the low figures may be the result of sampling error. No significant **ultrasound** noises have been picked up.

Some strange **light and sound** phenomena have been recorded at this site. Rodney Blunsdon and a friend were at the circle with cameras at midnight on a clear night. They had three cameras between them, but inside the circle no flashes on any of the cameras would work. However when the films were developed there were pictures of Rod illuminated with a brilliant white light. The photo also showed anomalous BOLs (balls of light) floating around in front of the stones. At the time, they also heard strange voices, speaking words in a language not understood, together with humming and singing, though there was no-one else present.

Five **leys** (straight lines linking ancient sites in the landscape) have been noted crossing the circle:

- [1] The line from Gŭn Rith hedge stone through the circle to a stone in a hedge [4343 2452], to the site of the destroyed Tregurnow circle [4375 2455], to Borah Farmhouse.
- [2] Boscawen-Ros east menhir [4281 2394] through the circle to the NE Piper [4355 2482], to the Sheffield menhir [4585 2752].
- [3] Boscawen-Ros west menhir [4277 2393] to a tumulus [4308 2428], through the circle to a destroyed tumulus [4334 2459] to the SW Piper [4348 2475].
- [4] From the circle to the destroyed Boleigh circle [4314 2444], to a destroyed tumulus [4292 2435], which may have denoted the Imbolc and Samhain sunset in Feb & Nov.
- [5] From the circle to Tregiffian Barrow [4304 2442] to Boskenna Cross [4258 2426], to Boskenna Gate Cross [4204] 2407, which may have denoted the Beltane (May) sunrise.

THE MANY FACES OF HELENA

by Alex Langstone

Goddess Helena was first brought to modern consciousness by Chesca Potter and Caroline Wise in the early 1980s. Gleaned from earlier references by Harold Bayley and Paul Screeton, and found in the Mabinogion as Elen of the Hosts, the beautiful Elen was much desired by Mascen in the medieval story *The Dream of Mascen Wledig*. In the story Emperor Mascen (Roman Emperor Maximus) dreams of a beautiful woman sitting on a red-gold throne. He awakes and demands that his men find this woman as he wants her for his bride. Eventually Mascen finds Elen, after he travels to Wales to meet her, and she becomes Empress Elen, consort to the Emperor. Over the centuries this story of the Welsh Elen has become confused and has in part merged with that of St Helena of Constantinople, finder of the true cross and the relics of the Magi, who has in turn become further confused with St Helena of Colchester, who was daughter of King Cole. Legends have built up over the centuries, which further confuse and blend the mythologies. One such legend says that Helena brought a fragment of the True Cross to Wales and hid it at Nevern.

During the latter part of the 1980s I encountered Helena or Elen for the very first time. She was seen as a glowing white lady, shining like a beacon in the night, with powerful rays of light emanating from her being, an intense visionary glimpse of an obscure, but powerful deity. Helena would have a profound effect on all of my adult life.

Elen or Elyn, Helena or Nehallenia?

So who was Helena/Elen? We have several archetypal contenders. Elen is seen as a magical road builder, the guardian protectors of Britain, Goddess of Sovereignty and, as St Helen she is patron saint of archaeology. She is the green lady of the woodland and antlered goddess of the reindeer tracks of northern Europe. In her guise as Elyn, she may be connected to cattle, farming, death, rebirth and the sea. In some Welsh traditions she becomes the wife of Merlin and one of the daughters of Arianhrod.

I think that she may also be an ancient Brythonic Cornish Goddess, with links to Cape Cornwall and in particular to North Cornwall and Lundy, via her ancestry to Wales and northern England. Many of the Dark Age saints of North Cornwall and North Devon came originally from Wales, and there are stories that Elen visited Lundy. Indeed there are two other Elen sites in view of Lundy, one at Abbotsham, where the old church was dedicated to St Elen and the other at Croyde, where the lost ancient chapel was dedicated to St. Helen. In North Cornwall Elen (possibly Elyn?) has been associated with St. Endellion (Cornish Sen Endelyn) a small parish, five miles to the north of Helland. Respected historian Dr. W.G.Hoskins researched this link between the two Welsh saints - one a daughter of Arianhrod, the other a daughter of Brychan, Welsh King and producer of many saintly offspring, all of whom seem to have settled in the North Cornwall and North Devon areas. The Hoskins Endelyn/Elyn/Elen link is an interesting one, and may ultimately lead us to the face of our West Country Goddess.

Endelyn has many legends surrounding her. She is linked to cattle and kept a cow at her hermitage. However, the cow was killed by a neighbour when it strayed onto his land. Endelyn's Godfather (said to have been King Arthur) then killed the neighbour in retaliation. Endelyn was mortified by these acts of violence and brought both the cow and the neighbour back to life. Legend also states that Endelyn asked a cow to find her final resting place by pulling her body on a wooden sledge. Where the cow stopped she would be buried. The site of the current church is thought to be the spot where Endelyn was buried. Interestingly St Endellion's church tower is built of Lundy granite, and Lundy Island can be seen from the churchyard on clear days, 40 miles to the north. The 15th C church is well worth a visit, as it contains the remains of the stone base of the medieval shrine of Endelyn, along with a very beautiful modern icon of the saint painted by John Coleman [photo right]. A truly peaceful and sacred building containing an air of mystery and sanctity that is rarely found elsewhere.



There were two ancient wells nearby where legend states that Endelyn herself used to visit, and just a mile to the north is the 6th century St Brychan stone, which is also known as the Long Cross or Ogham stone [photo left]. This is one of the oldest and rarest monuments of the Celtic church in Cornwall, and alongside the inscription to Brychan are a Chi Rho monogram and a very faint Ogham script. This cross was shamefully removed during the 19th century, and placed on the nearby Doyden Headland where it suffered very bad erosion, which removed almost all evidence of the Ogham script. Thankfully it was returned to its original site in 1932 by Bodmin Old Cornwall Society. St Endelyn's feast date is April 29th, close to Beltane.

According to James Mildren in his book *Saints of the South West*, Endelyn was identified with Lundy and a chapel was dedicated to her on the island. Maybe these two Dark Age saints really are a distant memory of an ancient localised Goddess of river, land and sea. Mildren goes on to mention Helland in his book, and he directly links Helland to the Welsh St Elen, though admits that there is massive confusion between the various Helens, Helenas and Elens through the ancient world. Antiquarian Harold Bayley connects Helena to the Cornish village of St Newlyn East, via the ancient North European Goddess Nehallenia. Bayley suggests that Nehallenia and Newlina are the same deity, and links the names to Tadcaster in Yorkshire, where the Nehallenia name has allegedly been corrupted into St Helen's Ford and nearby chapel.

Interestingly, a couple of miles to the west of St Newlyn East is the tiny hamlet of Ellenglaze, which is situated at the end of a lane from Cubert village close to miles of lonely sand dunes. Close by, within these dunes is the ancient oratory of St Piran, and to the north is Holywell Cave with its magnificent ancient holy well. Both of these sites can be directly accessed on foot from Ellenglaze, via a series of ancient footpaths and trackways – truly a secret place of our Goddess Elen! Ellenglaze is a very interesting Helena site by all accounts, and being so close to St Piran's Oratory, it surely lies at a very sacred spot in the heart of Celtic Cornwall?

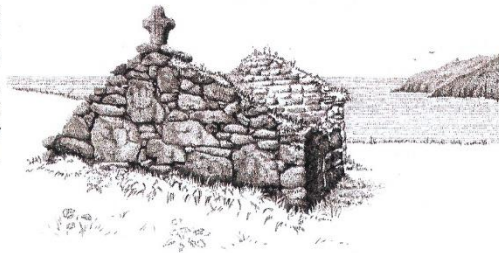
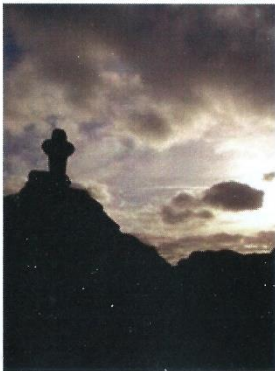
Recently I have discovered that the North Cornwall village of Helland is particularly linked to Helena. The hill-top parish church has pre-Norman foundations and is dedicated to the saint; the village name is an English corruption of the ancient Cornish *Hellann*, meaning the sacred enclosure of Helen. The parish church guide is doubtful about the dedication though, and I think that Helena has been confused over the centuries with St Elen of Caernarfon. Many Welsh holy men and women arrived in North Cornwall between the 4th and 6th centuries. So the dedication to this church is far more likely to be Elen of Caernarfon than Helena of Constantinople. So the confusion continues...?

My own personal Helena quest began in 1989, whilst I was researching the legend of St Bega in Cumbria. Though far from my mind, Elen kept cropping up in dreams and during my research I discovered a river with her name flowing through northern Cumbria. It was here on the banks of the River Ellen that I glimpsed Elen as goddess of dawn and dusk for the first time. I saw a great significance to the morning and evening star and realised that Elen was guardian of the waterways of Britain as part of her guardianship of the green lanes and secret byways of Albion. I previously wrote about this in my book *Bega and the Sacred Ring*, which was published in 1992.

Later that same year whilst on a visit to North Cornwall, I had a vision of the Goddess at Slaughter Bridge. She was different to any goddess I had previously encountered. She was 10 foot tall and was bathed in a strong red glow, like the sunset! She arose from the river Camel. She had pale skin and dark burning eyes. Upon her head she had huge deer antlers branching outwards and upwards towards the sky. She looked at me with that knowing look which leaves a hideously uncomfortable feeling within, the look that can read an entire life history in seconds. She continued to rise upwards. She was now floating above the swirling waters of the picturesque Cornish river. Was she a demon? I wasn't at all sure. She was looking down at me. All of a sudden she charged towards me across the river, pinning me to the ground with her horns. She had pierced my torso, and her horns were now embedded through me, and I was joined with the landscape in a peculiar ritualised stabbing, though I felt no pain! I looked up, and realised that she had disappeared. This visionary experience haunted me for months, and after meditating further, I realised that Elen had once again manifested in my life. Though the significance of this poetic experience wouldn't be made clear for many years, the magick seeds had been sown in this picturesque part of North Cornwall, for sure!

My attention was refocused on Elen again during the autumn and winter of 1994 when I moved to Cornwall. Along with artist friend Yuri Leitch I explored a possible alignment of ancient and sacred sites along Cornwall's south coast from Mevagissey Bay to the Lizard peninsular. This esoteric-poetic journey took us to many atmospheric and mystical places, including Swanpool, Black Head cliff fort, Carne Beacon and Halligye fogou. The poetic alignment was all held together *magically* by the image of two swans, one black and one white. One of the principle sites along our sacred route was at Veryan. This pretty village was previously known by its Cornish name of Elerkey, from the Cornish word for swan. Caroline Wise has recently connected Elen to the sacred image of the swan via the constellation of Cygnus. This has proved to be of immense importance as I had a powerful vision of the crepuscular Elen on Veryan beach. Whilst looking out to sea following a spectacular sunset I *saw* the two swans land. They reared up and flapped their wings, creating an archway. As each swan moved aside, a shining goddess revealed herself to me. I knew her as Elen; she was dressed in white with cascading flame-red hair. Around her neck she wore a silver swan surrounded by a golden serpent. She emerged from the swans and from the sea, and she rose up into the sky, where the afterglow of the December sunset bathed her in a rich red-golden light. I stood in awe, transfixed by her glowing presence before she disappeared beneath the waves. As the first stars emerged from the darkening winter firmament, two swans flew across the twinkling starry sky. For more information on this alignment, please see my website www.alexlangstone.co.uk.

My next Cornish encounter with Elen/Helena was in 1997, when I visited Cape Cornwall and discovered the remains of the 4th century St Helen's oratory, which sits in a field overlooking the wild Atlantic Ocean at the far western extremity of Cornwall.



*'Spirit Chaser' by Paul Atlas-Saunders
Drawing of St.Helen's Oratory, Cape Cornwall*

Though most of the building is relatively modern, one wall is reputed to be part of the original oratory, and the site exudes much of the ambience that I now recognise as the energies of Elen. The siting of this ancient chapel had often intrigued me. I could imagine that at this point at the western edge of Britain, the sacred energies of Elen began their journey throughout the land.

Photo of St.Helen's Oratory by Spirit of Albion

The Arc of Elen.

In 2004, Robin Heath and John Michell published a book called *The Measure of Albion*. Within its pages the authors discuss the lost science of pre-historic Britain, with the ritualistic placement of many of the country's ancient sacred sites to form vast geometric shapes. Elen forms a central part of this quest through her being the patron saint of Lundy. Another West Country link! So we have Elen sites at Cape Cornwall, at Helland on the banks of the River Camel and at St Endellion just 5 miles to the north of Helland. Moving across the Devon border into the triangle sites of Lundy, Croyde and Abbotsham, the Helena sites continue onwards through the spine of Wales following the ancient route of Sarn Elen, from the Gower peninsular to Conway and into the North of England. This *Arc of Elen*, as I have termed it, forms a strong sea faring connection between Cornwall, Wales and Cumbria, the three great *Brythonic* regions of Britain.

Elen appearing by the river Camel is significant. Elen/Helena is very much linked to the inland waterways of Britain, as well as the green lanes and secret byways of the land. The river Camel takes its name from the Cornish word for elbow or bend. In *The Measure of Albion*, Heath and Michell present Lundy as an elbow axis point of a lunar triangulation upon the landscape, with important sites as Stonehenge, Glastonbury and Caldey Island appearing on the edge of the triangle. Lundy forms the elbow of this triangle, and the Welsh name for Lundy is Ynys Elen, meaning the isle of Helena. An alternate Welsh name is Ynys Elin, which translates at the Elbow island! Another triangulation is formed by the Elen churches of Lundy, Croyde and Abbotsham.

The Sacred River.

The river Camel, has throughout recorded history, been variously called the Allen, the Cam-Ellen and the Camel. The name, as previously discussed means the elbow river or crooked river. Even today the lower parts of the river are still known locally as the Allen or Ellen. One of its principle tributaries is still called the river Allen. This is obviously very significant, as ever since my strange vision of the horned goddess at Slaughter Bridge I have always felt that it was Elen's sacred river.

The 30 mile long river today is a very significant wildlife habitat and is home to otters, salmon and trout. On its wooded banks live red deer, kingfisher, owls, peregrines and migrant osprey. The entire river and its tributaries are protected and have been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The estuary is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and plays host to basking shark, dolphin and sea bass. A truly special and unique river, and a river that may well be sacred to our ancient Cornish Goddess Elen.



The Call of Helena.

At Imbolc 2009, myself, my partner and various cats moved into a new house, close to Helland. This move was a little unusual because the house had found us, rather than the other way round! We had been living in Penzance, far away from the north Cornwall sacred Helen enclosure! We had been looking to move, and had been viewing houses in the West Penwith region of Cornwall. North Cornwall was not on our radar, and when the house at Helland presented itself to us, I was not at all interested at first. It was only when repeated requests to view the house were made by my partner and other acquaintances that I googled Helland. It was only then that I discovered the significance of the place, and agreed to view the property. We duly moved in after a near effortless move, and it did seem as though it was somehow *divinely engineered!* Then on May 22nd 2009, I had a very lucid dream. I saw Helena standing by Helland parish church. She was pointing towards the ground. The image then faded and I found myself standing by a holy well. I did not recognise the location, but a female voice told me that it was the lost well of Helena.

I subsequently made enquiries, but nothing was found. However, on looking at the local OS map, I discovered several springs and wells in the vicinity, and having dowsed over the map, I narrowed the search to two possible sites at Helland Bridge, close to the River Camel. It was also noted that the dream was experienced on the feast date of Elen, 22nd May! I subsequently found a very silted up and overgrown spring by the edge of woodland overlooking the Camel valley. No records seem to exist about a holy well in Helland parish, and the spring I found, whilst fitting in with my dream, cannot be linked to Helena in any way. However I have visited the spring on several occasions and I feel that I have discovered a very special and powerful spot in my locality, where meditation comes easily and imagery flows effortlessly.

I have no doubt that there are many guises to Helena, and the image we perceive today is made up from many historical figures, mythologies and folk-tales. We have unearthed many faces of the saint and goddess, and I hope we may glean more than a little understanding of this mythical and elusive deity.

The quest continues...

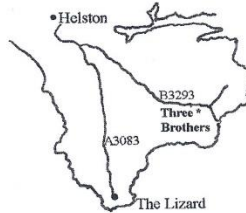
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This article is a taster for Alex's forthcoming book *Spirit Chaser - the Quest for Bega*.

UNCOVERING THE LIZARD

The Lizard peninsula in Cornwall (the most southerly point in Britain) is far less well known than its neighbour West Penwith. It does not have the spectacular stone circles, cromlechs, entrance graves & courtyard houses of West Penwith, but its megalithic charms are more subtle and elusive. In recent years, LAN (Lizard Ancient Sites Network) has been organising clear-ups at various sites on the Lizard, and has uncovered and revealed many fascinating places. This series visits some of these places and shows what has been found.



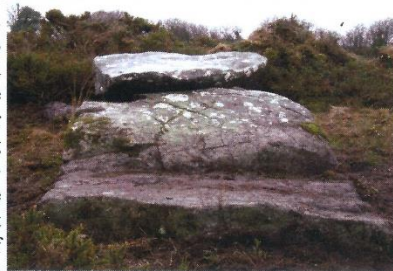
1: The Three Brothers of Grugwith [SW7616 1978]

The Three Brothers of Grugwith, Grugith or Grougath is a suitably enigmatic monument with which to begin this series. Behind Zoar Garage on the B3293 road amongst shrub and thick gorse lies the remains of what may have been a cromlech or burial cist, though some (notably the archaeologist John Barnatt) have suggested it is just a configuration of natural stones.



Monument showing capstone & side stones

It consists of a heavy capstone 2.4m (7.8ft) by 1.5m (5ft) which is balanced on two stones which form parallel sides of a chamber 2.4m (7.8ft) long, 0.9m (3ft) wide, & 0.9m (3ft) high. One of the side stones is much wider and chunkier than the other, and has a flat platform base to it, which is quite distinctive. There are no stones on the other two sides, and no trace of any surrounding cairn. On the capstone are 5 visible cup-marks, with another distinctive one on one of the side stones. There is also an upright free-standing stone on the left hand side of the approach to the monument, which has a small square 'shelf' cut out of it on the left hand side. *[photo on next page].*



Monument showing flat platform side stone

The stones from the site are made of local gabbro, and it lies on Crousa Common, where it is surrounded by many other boulders and rocks, though this is the only one with stacked stones like this.

The site was first mentioned by William Borlase in 1758, and sketched by W.C.Borlase in 1872, who described it as “a half natural, half artificial dolmen or cromlech”. He excavated at the site by digging a pit between the two uprights, but found nothing except “a small flint chip”, though he did note that a similar pit had been dug previously four feet from the surface, which he said had occurred prior to the erection of the monument.



The free-standing stone to left of monument

The name Grug(w)ith or Grougath is a curious one. Craig Weatherhill believes that it derives from ‘Crug Wedh’ meaning *trees barrow*, but there is a similar word Gruagath or Gruagach in Scotland, which denotes a female spirit, to whom the dairy-maids made frequent libations of milk by pouring them into hollows in rocks. The fact that this monument has hollows in it in the shape of cup marks (which no other rocks have in the vicinity) may be relevant here. The identity of the “three brothers” is unknown, but coincidentally until recently there *were* three brothers farming at Grugwith. There is a legend that St.Keverne (who gave his name to the village nearby and was in folklore a giant as well as a saint!) was pursuing St.Just who had stolen his drinking chalice. He picked up some boulders at Tremenhære (where there still remains a standing stone) and threw them after the departing saint. Some of these fell on to Crousa Common a few hundred yards to the east of the monument, where there are 2 further standing stones [at SW7752 2009], but Robin Payne [*Romance of the Stones*] argues that the description of these stones better fits the Three Brothers than the Crowsa Common stones.

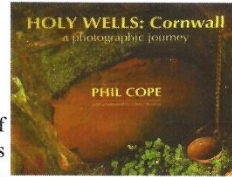


Crowsa Common standing stones

So the jury remains out as to whether this is a genuine ruined barrow, cist grave or cromlech, or a natural collection of stones that just happen to look significant. The fact that the stones are piled up on each other, whereas other nearby earth-fast boulders are not; the flat platform stone; the cupmarks on the capstone which seem to be only at this site; and the curious free-standing stone marking the entrance all seem to point to it being genuine. But the lack of the side chamber stones and any kind of cist burial seem to argue against it. LAN cleared the site of heavy gorse early in 2010, and are due to return next year (2011). During the clearance a hibernating lizard was found on one of the stones, which was gently replaced under the monument. Truly a case of the Lizard uncovered!

BOOK REVIEWS

Holy Wells: Cornwall by **Phil Cope**
[Seren Books, £20.00]



It is a truism, that nevertheless contains an element of truth, that a new book about the Holy Wells of Cornwall seems to come out every decade or so. In the 1960s it was Lane-Davis, and in the 1970s J.Meyrick. In the 1980s Paul Broadhurst published *Secret Shrines*, and in the 1990s MM Publications issued my *Fentynyow Kernow*, with a revised edition in 2005. Now comes Phil Cope with a new photographally-oriented exploration of Cornwall's magical and evocative holy wells. Here I must declare an interest in the book. Phil contacted me at an early stage of his research, and I was able to help him with some aspects of that, and ended up writing the Foreword for the book. This I was pleased to do, for it is a very fine book, and as I commented in the Foreword: "The book brings the wells alive again (for surely they only live if we love them and care for them, and cherish them) and makes me want to go back and revisit these places that have been so special to me".

Phil Cope comes with a good pedigree in the area of wells, for this Cornish book is the second in a series that started with his one on the holy wells of Wales. He has the expertise of being able to do good research about the history of the wells and their dedications to the saints, combined with beautiful and original colour photographs of them. Together with his recounting of the stories, legends and poems associated with them, it makes this much more than just a lovely book, which it undoubtedly is. Any new book on Cornwall's holy wells has to offer something different on what has gone before, and this Phil does through his approach, which is not primarily of locale or area, but of the association of groups of wells together under different Saints or themes. So for example, we have sections on individual saints e.g St.Ruan's wells (Cadgwith & Ruan Laniorne) and St.Neots's wells (Bodmin & Poundstock); and on Saints' interrelated families e.g Saints Euny & Ia (Sancreed, Carn Brea, Merther Euny), Saints Levan & Cuby (Porthchapel, Duloe, Tregony) and Saints Nectan & Piran (Trethevy, Perranaworthal). Then there are linked themes e.g The Wells of the Little People (Fenton Bebibell, Fairy Well Carbis Bay), and the wells of Our Lady. Phil has selected about 60 wells that most interest him, a personal choice that means some more obscure wells are included and other good ones missing, but this is very much not a guide book (which has been already done!) but a personal odyssey. Add in photographs of nearby sacred sites and environment and you have a rich and up-to-date mix of ancient and remote places within their contemporary context.

The book is particularly strong on what the antiquarians and old writers had to say about the wells, together with poems by contemporary writers that relate to them. This makes it a book to dip into it and return to time and again; a beautiful work of art to sit with and contemplate, and then go out and visit and see the wells for yourself. Cornwall has a cornucopia of charming, amazing and curious wells, and this book is a superb lasting testimonial to their beauty, their interest and their living significance today.

John Michell: from Atlantis to Avalon by **Paul Screeton** [HeartofAlbion Press £12.95]

Hamish Miller: a life divined by **Nigel Twinn** [Penwith Press £12.95]

Two colossuses from the 'earth mysteries' and dowsing fields both died recently within a year of each other (for the tribute to John see MM70 supplement & for Hamish see MM72 supplement). Now, tribute books to both of them have been published. Neither is a 'conventional' biography, and although both touch on their subject's lives (Nigel including a useful appendix of significant events in Hamish's life) they are both primarily about their subject's work and his effect on other people and on society. Paul, who was around in the early days of EM and knew John from 1970 has the advantage of being able to provide anecdotal stories, archival photographs and a great deal of information about John's development as a writer and the multifarious subjects that interested him. One of these was the ley research that John did in West Penwith (some of which I shared with him) and Paul manages to encapsulate some of the controversy this produced in archaeological circles [see article by John entitled *Ley Lines and Liars at Lands End* MM8 p.8-9]. Nigel on the other hand only came to know Hamish well relatively recently, but he has the advantage of extended recorded conversations with Hamish made before Hamish died. Also, being an accomplished dowser himself, he has a great deal of interest to say about dowsing in general, and Hamish's huge impact on the world of dowsing in particular. He also fills in some of Hamish's earlier life, and his life-changing near-death experience from the interviews. He is less sure-footed on the great controversy in the 1970s & 1980s between 'ley hunters' (as represented by Paul Devereux & Danny Sullivan - who later went on to renounce them) and energy dowsers, as represented by Hamish. The veneration and conflict between these two camps is glossed over, but I have vivid memories of Paul Devereux tearing into Hamish at a meeting in my house, that I had misguidedly called to try and broker a peace deal! John Michell I remember was bemused by it all! That aside, both these books have much to offer in the detail and ideas (some of them quite deep and philosophical) that both men brought, and both books do their subjects great justice. [CS]



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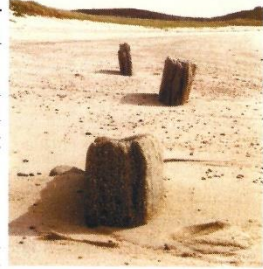
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20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

It was in the spring of 1990 that MM11 reported on the discovery of a stone row on Highertown Beach (also known as Par Beach) on the south side of St.Martins, Isles of Scilly [SV9330 1530]. It lay between the high and low water levels, and consisted of three stones, one triangular and grooved, and one with (natural?) cup markings. At the time, Bronze Age stone rows were being identified on Bodmin Moor, so the finding of this one on Scilly seemed to be an exciting addition, particularly as it seemed to be pointing towards Chapel Downs in a NE (midsummer sunrise) direction [*photo right*].



Over the intervening years, the row has come and gone, sometimes buried almost to its top by the shifting sands, and sometimes arising phoenix-like from the sands again. However, in 2007 doubt was cast on the identification of the site by Gary Robinson in his book *The Prehistoric Island Landscape of Scilly*. Robinson realised that the ‘stone row’ was the same as that discovered by B.H.O’Neil during his excavation of a prehistoric house on Par Beach in 1949 [unpublished archive transcript at National Monuments Record Office, no.1904]. Robinson takes up the story: “During this excavation, O’Neil uncovered two parallel rows of stones running along the beach, between high and low tide: these he interpreted as field boundaries. The lower wall consisted of a single row of orthostats between which sections of coursed walling occurred. The location, description and alignment of this wall matches well with that of the suggested stone row. It is likely that the lower wall identified by O’Neil and the recently identified stone row are the same feature. If this interpretation is correct the higher of O’Neil’s wall would now be located beneath sand dunes further up the beach. Based on current data, it would seem most likely that this row of stones on Par Beach represents the ruinous remains of a field boundary associated with the nearby settlement on Par beach.” So, no stone row, but nevertheless still an atmospheric and shape-shifting site, especially on a lovely evening on Scilly as the sun sets over the waves.



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