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ancient stones and sacred sites in cornwall



**MEGALITHIC SITES OF S.E CORNWALL ISSUE ●
REMOTE & ANCIENT PLACES - ST.LEVAN ● NEWS
ROSKRUGE BARTON ● DOWSING ● CASPN & LAN
*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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Following on from the editorial report in MM74 about Radio 4's *Open Country* programme on the grazing of cattle and fencing on West Penwith moors, members of Save Penwith Moors Group (SPM) have been in touch with MM to elaborate on their objections to the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLSS). Steve Yandall said that: "The mythology of the West Penwith moors (and the reality of the ancient relics) will suffer collateral damage if grazing is not refined, targeted, monitored and made accountable". He adds that Natural England do not have the resources to support, educate and monitor these schemes, and that grazing cattle can destabilise archaeology and speed up the decomposition of organic archaeology. He points out that SPM are not against grazing per se, but that they feel that the HLSS should be more accountable for their actions. Craig Weatherhill added that SPM is only asking for four of the most publicly used areas of the Penwith Moors to remain cattle (and fence) free. So far, Natural England have not agreed to this and the Scheme continues in place. In addition, the HLSS is to be introduced to two new areas: one in the inland Lamorna area, and the other on Sancreed Beacon, a Bronze Age site. In the latter case, Cornwall Heritage Trust, who look after the site, plan to introduce grazing by ponies in order they say "to keep the heathland down".

Meanwhile, a bit of a rumpus blew up in another area of West Penwith, when Alsia Well (*featured in MM74 p.7*) was cleared of a lot of its vegetation, trees and some rare ivy by someone who was house-sitting for the owner of the land, Trevor Rogers, while he was away. He was understandably upset at this well-meaning clearance that went too far, which exposed what was formerly a very secretive and intimate site. Fortunately, the trees will eventually grow back, but of more concern was the area around the well, which left bare soil which washed into the well. Advised by gold medal horticulturalist Jane Bird of Dorninack, Trevor is now replacing the plants, flowers and mosses, and replanting the area with hawthorn. The incident does raise the issue of how much the clearing of any site changes people's experiences of it, and the balance between intervention and neglect. It's a difficult balance sometimes to get right, though time seems to heal most things.

Sometimes areas like West Penwith seem to get all the attention, partly because of the sheer number of ancient sites there, and the fact that it is an official Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). So this MM attempts to redress the balance a bit, by focussing on a lesser-known but fascinating area of Cornwall - the SE corner. New finds of standing stones, and explorations of its more subtle and elusive charms are all featured, together with some of the mythology, ancient customs, and new creations. Discover a new area!

DOWSING NEWS



Celtic Dowzers went to a couple of sites in West Penwith in autumn 2010, starting in late September at *Merry Maidens stone circle* near Lamorna. Dowsing of the circle focused on the entrance pathways, and it was felt that there were at least two 'processional pathways' leading into the circle, not necessarily from the same period. One was the modern pathway running up from the stile to the W, and the other from the SE, now marked by a largely overlooked set of double stones in the ground. The group then moved to the neighbouring field across the road and



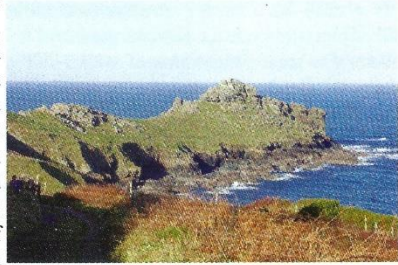
walked the powerful energy line/processional path/modern trackway to Gûn Rith menhir, which was found to be buzzing with energy. Back at the Merry Maidens, the stones were individually dowsed and the alternate clockwise & anticlockwise spiral energy patterns found in the past by the late Hamish Miller were confirmed [see *MM73 p.13*].

In late October, **Celtic Dowzers** visited the Iron Age Celtic Courtyard House settlement of *Carn Euny*. They were rewarded with a delightful sunny and wind-free day, perfect dowsing conditions. A strong serpentine energy line was found, coming from Chapel Carn Brea, going through the settlement and on to Caer Bran hilltop site. Carn Euny thus lay between two holy hilltops, and the peaceful energy there was remarked upon by everyone. It was agreed that the Beehive Hut was the ceremonial centre of the village, and that entrance into it was originally effected from the hut above, before the fogou was subsequently attached to it. The group then discussed various dowsing and energy ideas, before going to visit the holy wells at Chapel Euny. A lovely day's dowsing.

Finally the season concluded at the end of November with a **West Cornwall Dowzers** visit to *St. Levan church and well* [see p.6-8 of this MM for more details of this area]. Although some of Cornwall was blanketed with snow and ice, there was a lovely sunny day in West Penwith, so a small group met up for a day's fascinating dowsing. The split stone in the churchyard was the focus of much attention, as it dowsed as being an earth-fast boulder that predated the Christian site. One side of the stone had strong positive energies, the other side negative, and it was felt that the split between was a powerful energy field used for germinating seeds. The stone aligns NE-SW, and later a stone was found standing across the road that marked a midwinter solstice sunset alignment from the split stone. The Group also dowsed the church/spirit path to Rospletha Farm and the church before going to St. Levan's holy well & cell on the cliffs. An excellent end to the year.

Over the winter, **Tamar Dowzers** had their usual season of talks, which this time included Paul Broadhurst on 'The Secret Land' (Nov), Nigel Twinn on 'Hamish Miller: a life divined' (Dec) and David Hooley on 'The Archaeology of SE Bodmin Moor' (Feb).

West Cornwall Dowzers site visits started again in January with *Gurnards Head*. A well-attended group left the car park and walked down to the coastal path, and then along to the remains of Chapel Jane, a medieval chapel on the cliff edge. The Chapel dowsed as being originally founded in circa 750 CE, though added to and extended later. Then the group moved on to Gurnards Head itself, which was an Iron Age cliff castle, that also contained a number of round



houses. On the headland, the group dowsed the incoming Apollo line, which enters West Penwith here and goes south to Carn Gulva and then across the peninsula. The dowzers also found another strong energy line crossing the Apollo one in a W-E direction, originating on the Isles of Scilly and going to St. Agnes Bracon, which was then named the Agnes line.

Three weeks later, **West Cornwall Dowzers** met up again on a blustery day at *Carn Marth* near Redruth. First visited by them in the summer of 2008 [see *MM65 p.3*] this return visit confirmed the N-S line [see *MM71 p.2*] that runs from St. Agnes Beacon - Menagissey holed stone - Carn Marth - Carvannel menhir [see *MM68 p.6*] - Stithians cupmarked stone - Bonallack barrow (above Gweek) - Halligye fogou - Tumulus on Goonhilly Downs - St. Ruans Well - Landewednack church - (nearby markstone) - Bass Point. This time, it was found that Figgy Dowdy's well is on the direct line, and a nearby public information display board acknowledged that Figgy Dowdy may have originally been a fertility goddess, a theory first espoused by Andy Norfolk in *MM27 p.18-19*. The Group then continued to the Quarry, where they dowsed the signature of an unrecorded destroyed Bronze Age barrow, and in the afternoon they continued to the top of the hill to dowsed the site of three more barrows, originally excavated in the C18th, but now also gone.

At the end of February, the **West Cornwall Dowzers** met again at *Crowan Beacon* near Camborne. Previously visited by the Group in December 2007 [see *MM66 p.2*], this visit confirmed the two barrows on the top of the Beacon were probably originally surrounded by concentric kerbs of stones. These two barrows were visually aligned to Drytree menhir on the Lizard, and Maen Amber was also clearly visible on the horizon. The 'Bart line' (a winding energy line previously identified) made its way SW to Maen Amber and on to Godolphin Hill, and in the other direction NE to Hangmans Barrow and on to Four Lanes Barrow & Carn Brea. The Mary line also comes in here, and the spot where the two lines converged and crossed was identified. The site of a possible destroyed third barrow was identified, before the Group moved down the hill to the Crowan stone circle [see *MM74 p.16*], now mainly destroyed and covered in gorse, but still dowsable.



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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



The 5th annual **Pathways to the Past** weekend for FOCAS members and others takes place this year as usual on the May bank holiday weekend of 28th & 29th. As always there is a great programme of walks and talks amongst the ancient landscape of West Penwith. On the Saturday, the weekend commences with a walk to *Chapel Carn Brea & Bartinney - the hills of fire* with **Barry Reilly**. In the afternoon **David Giddings** leads a guided walk to *Maidens, mines and moors*, including Nine Maidens barrows, Mên Scryfa stone and Bosiliack barrow. The evening brings an illustrated talk by **Paul Bonnington** on *The Tinnars Way*. On the Sunday morning **Bart O'Farrell** will give a talk on *Dowsing West Penwith ancient sites*, and in the afternoon **Paul Bonnington** leads a walk along *The Tinnars Way - from Mulfra to Bodrifty*. Finally, the evening social at the North Inn Pendeen rounds off the weekend with *Lost & Found*, a presentation by members of the Kernow metal detectorists group. All events are free to FOCAS members - details below.

Meanwhile the **Site Clear-ups** continued with CASPN in West Penwith, and with LAN on the Lizard peninsula. CASPN did the annual tidy-up of Sancreed & Madron wells in January & February, and in March they visited a new site Lesingey Round, where some of the fallen trees and vegetation were cleared from the ditch surrounding the hill fort, making it much easier for people to walk around the perimeter of the site. LAN continued clearing Drytree NE barrow on New Year's Day, and followed this up with a new site, Traboe Cross barrow later in the month. A good turn-out ensured that the barrow was cleared of vegetation and gorse, which revealed that it had been cut into two with a deep channel, possibly in World War II. The clear-up was visited by Radio Cornwall and BBC TV South-West, and was broadcast and shown in early Feb. In February & March there was a return to Kynance Gate settlement [see *MM74 p.10*], where the hut circles in the northern part of the settlement are beginning to be uncovered, thanks to help from BTCV.

CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP]

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

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

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To join FOCAS (£8/year waged- £5 unwaged) tel: FOCAS Administrator Eve Benney 01736-793876 or e-mail focas@cornishancientsites.com, visit CASPN web site for downloadable application form, or write to: 24 Queen Street, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7JW.

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)

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Sites Clear-Ups: Graham Folkherd 01326-241450 e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com

Penwith Pagan Moot



by **Eve Benney**

Yule, or the Midwinter Solstice, is the festival that marks the longest night and the shortest day. It is the time of deepest darkness, the end of the waning, or dark, half of the year and from this point the Wheel of the Year begins to turn towards the light. Many traditions have survived from ancient times, and like the Christmas tree, mistletoe and the Yule Log, have been incorporated into our modern celebrations.

More than forty people met for our **Yule** celebration at a new venue, a beautifully converted barn at Boscawen-ûn. We began in darkness, honouring the old year, reflecting on the darkness of the space between the stars, the darkness of the ocean's depths, the darkness of the womb, sensing the life contained within the darkness. Then we journeyed out into the dark to seek out the return of the light. After spiralling through the dark, the spark of light blossomed into flame. We carried this first fire back with us, into the warmth of the barn. All were invited to light a personal candle from the new flame, to symbolise their hopes and wishes for the coming year. Our celebration continued with some very child-like merriment as we unwrapped exchanged gifts and shared libation of cake & mead.

The Moot were equally fortunate weather-wise for their **Imbolc** celebration, held this year at Sancreed House, as our usual venue, Sancreed Village Hall, had building work underway. At Imbolc, the return of the Maiden is celebrated. She is honoured by many names: Bride, Bridie, Brigit, Brighid. As the Maiden returns, so the world returns to life. The Maiden dances in joy and earth greets Her with the joy of green shoots and gentle snowdrops. This is traditionally a time of purification, a time for rejoicing at the promise of life returning, and a time for reclaiming that which has been lost. The Moot have developed a tradition of making a meditative walk to Sancreed Well as part of their ritual, to look for the first signs of the world waking up from her winter slumber. The Well looked, as always, serenely beautiful in the weak sunshine, the paths and enclosure sensitively cleared by the FOCAS volunteers the previous weekend. On returning to Sancreed House, we celebrated with a poem to Brighid celebrating the beauty of this very special land, lighting a candle with each of the nineteen couplets.

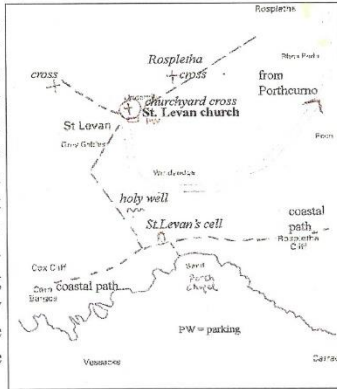
Penwith Pagan Moot meets from 7.15pm on the second Tuesday of every month, at the Stella Maris Centre, behind the Healing Star shop at the top of Causewayhead in Penzance. Moots are for local news and what's on, and every month we have a discussion topic. All are welcome. The Moot also holds open rituals for the eight seasonal festivals, and supports the monthly FOCAS clear-ups. Details of Moot topics, rituals, clear-ups and links to other sites of interests can be found on the Penwith Pagan Moot website at: www.penwithpaganmoot.co.uk or by phoning Sarah on 01736 787522 or Eve on 01736 793876.

REMOTE & ANCIENT PLACES IN WEST PENWITH

by Raymond Cox

8: St. Levan

There is a feeling of peace and solitude within the hamlet and environment of St Levan, (or Selevan, a Celtic form of Solomon). Perhaps it's the plethora of old features, or it's the old legends, or it's the quiet atmosphere which might result from being almost tucked away below the end of the no-through road from Porthcurno - or indeed from the other ways there, the churchway paths. But perhaps even the confined smallness of everything: the small path from Rospletha, the relative smallness of the churchyard with a number of interesting sites, the little valley with its stream rising not very far away, as if it too must reflect this feeling of the diminutive - and the holy well overlooking the small bay of Porth Chapel.



Selevan is connected with some places in Brittany; it was also thought that St Levan was born near St Buryan in the 6th century. Whether or not - as related by Robert Hunt* in his legendary work - a hut at nearby Bodellan where he lived was St Levan's, and whatever is thought of the story of the woman Johana at Rospletha who lectured St Levan for going fishing on Sundays, the small but mythic route via the singular Rospletha cross holds powerful essences. Its location is near the convergence of two churchway paths, both originating at Treen. (Two alignments also pass through the cross). The cross, reckoned to be *in situ*, has the cross pattern on both sides. It is notable for its pink-grained granite and pieces of feldspar. It stands in the middle of the second field east from the church and on the church path. From the cross the top of the church tower is visible, and noticeable is the way the church sympathetically sits in the natural incline of the land in a saucer-shaped depression.



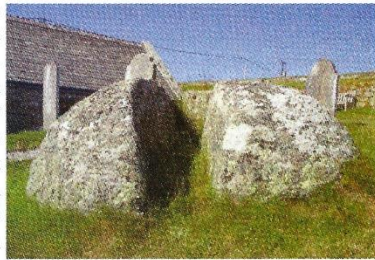
*Rospletha cross
looking towards church*

Across the valley beyond the church and up the hill in a hedge is a complementary cross, known as Ardensawah, also at the convergence of two churchway paths, from Roskestal and Ardensawah. Again this is another powerful junction.

* Hunt, Robert: *Popular Romances of the West of England* (1865)

The saint could, from Rospletha, proceed either to the church or he could carry on to the "stone headland by the sea", Pedn-men-an-mere, or do his fishing at nearby Porth Chapel. Although he was indeed told off for his sabbath day fishing, Johana in turn was admonished by the good saint to the effect that there was no more sin in fishing on Sundays than Johana's picking herbs from her garden as he passed by. He called her 'foolish Johana' and nobody was ever christened Johana again in St Levan! This bred another fish story, related by J T Blight*. St Levan only caught one fish a day. Whilst entertaining his sister and child one day he threw out a line and caught a chad. But this was not considered dainty enough, so he threw it back into the sea. Again he caught the same fish and threw it back again. He changed his position, threw the line further and yet again the same fish again was taken up. Thinking that providence directed this matter he kept the fish and cooked it. But the child choked on the fish. The holy man was very grieved and repented that he had given way to the temptation of the fish which he now reckoned to be possessed by an evil spirit. He thought it a punishment for not accepting gratefully what providence had provided. From that time local fishermen have called the chad the "chuck-cheeled" (choke-child).

There are variants of this legend, but the churchyard has a better-known legend. The St Levan Stone is the prominent 'Split Stone', known as a 'holy rock' even in pre-Christian times and was associated with female fertility rites. Perhaps the large cross nearby may have been put there to dispel the pagan element, as it is unusual to find pagan relics so near to a church. (Yet see the paragraph below on the church.) The large granite boulder is broken in two with its fissure noted by Hunt as "filled with ferns and wild flowers". After his Sunday fishing



St. Levan's split stone in the churchyard

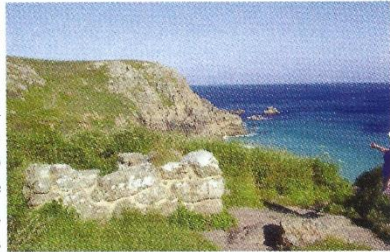
St Levan would rest awhile on the stone. But one day he was moved to leave some enduring memento of himself so he gave it a blow with his fist and the stone cracked in half! He uttered: "When, with panniers astride, a pack-horse one can ride, through St Levan's Stone, the world will be done." Hunt couldn't detect any widening of the fissure - and, thankfully, neither can we. But perhaps the imagination has run wild as there is also the suggestion that the stone is merely some unworked moorstone left behind when 16th century builders abandoned their construction of the north isle of the church.

The churchyard has one of the finest of all the old Cornish crosses, 7ft/2.14m tall and elegant on a base at the right-hand side of the south porch, the traditional place for a churchyard cross. A decorative double bead runs round the cross head and all down the cross on each side. In addition the sides have a beautiful zig-zag design. The other cross lies in a stone base on a hedge next to the so-called 'coffin stile' on the eastern side of the churchyard. The location is the end of the churchpath from Trengothal and Trebehor and also the churchpath eastwards to Rospletha and beyond.

* *Blight, J T: A Week at the Land's End (1861)*

Ian Cooke mentions two further interesting features, a block of cut stone containing a figure, perhaps the remains of a cross, in the churchyard hedge. Also there is another possible - missing - cross noted from an engraving of the church in the early 19th century. The drawing shows a cross on a tall shaft against the stone seat by the coffin stile. There is another coffin stile on the north side of the church, the end of the churchpath from Ardensawah and Bosistow. The churchyard has the grave of William Bottrell (1816-1881), doyen of recorded myths and legends. It also has graves of shipwreck victims. The 14th or 15th century granite church could even have been built on pagan ground, for there is the split stone itself close to the church - and another strange tale about the Devil battling with church builders and objecting to where the villagers wanted it to be built, so he transported the stones to his favoured site. Some parts of a 12th century building remain; the church was restored in the 18th century. The interior is of interest with a screen of carved panels which includes two jesters, and some glorious carvings of animals on pew ends. The rood screen is a treasurable feature which has carvings of wyverns and other features.

Beyond the church the narrow path to the coast drops, then rises and runs along the western flank of the valley and passes the holy well and hermitage overlooking the small cove of Porth Chapel. It's a romantic and dramatic setting. Blight, who visited here around 1870 described it thus: "A deep solitude hangs about the great cliffs; the babbling little stream over its rough bed, blended with the murmurs of the waves below, is the only sound that breaks the ear. This was the spot chosen by St Levan when he reputedly landed at Porthchapel for his chapel or hermitage, which stood on the verge of the cliff; the well was farther back, but steps communicated from one to the other. These, however, have disappeared. The site of the chapel can only be guessed at, whilst the walls of the little baptistry are wildly overgrown. Thus is the altar overthrown, the shrine deserted, and the holy place become a wilderness." Today one might add the bright sounds of people on the beach in summer to this description. The well and baptistry walls are still covered with rushes and water plants, though the well is sometimes used for baptisms and was in the past thought to cure toothache and eye diseases. Sleeping there increased the chances of a cure. But perhaps its very location did the trick! The ruins of the chapel or cell on a ledge below were revealed in an excavation in the 1930s, and the sense of beauty, and the peace of the setting there today do not belie a feeling of original holiness.



Holy well & remains of baptistry

The little valley, quiet and remote beyond the intrusions of traffic enfolds its old remains with such history and legend - and perhaps the feeling that St Levan was a recluse. But what do we make of the Latin inscription on the 18th century sundial above the south porch of the church: *Sicut Umbra transeunt Dies* (*The days pass like shadows.*)? This environment seems to reflect the shadows of history. They remain yet as an essence within.

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.



3: Roskruge Barton barrow [SW7796 2312]

On the relatively flat ground of the Lizard peninsula, Roskruge Barton Barrow stands out like a beacon - and indeed that is what it was, used as a fire beacon in Elizabethan times. The site is the highest point on the Lizard peninsula, standing 115 metres (375 ft) above sea level and is crowned with a trig point. Adjoining this is the barrow, which is 2.3m (7½ft) high, and 14m (45½ft) in diameter at the base, rising at an angle of 28° to a flat top of 5.4m (17½ft) in diameter. It has never been excavated, and when the OS



visited it in 1972 it was completely overgrown with gorse and bracken. And so it remained until last Summer when LAN visited it one misty and foggy afternoon and completely cleared it. When the conditions are clear, there are magnificent views from the site as far away as St.Austell, Carnmenellis hill to the north, and the hills of West Penwith to the west.

West Cornwall Dowsers visited the site some years ago and from the top of the mound dowsed four water courses and seven earth energy lines converging on the site (or emanating from it). One of these lines (at 40°) ran to Gull Rock, and another (at 46°) to St.Anthony light on the Roseland, with both lines crossing to the NE about 12-13 metres (39-42ft) from the surrounding fence in a very tight spiral. A very strong energy alignment was also identified, coming from Merthen (an enclosure near Constantine from the Romano-Cornish period that may have had earlier antecedents), so the two sites may have been connected in some way. The Beacon and its barrow may be seen from Merthen on a clear day, and from a number of other sites on the Lizard peninsula and further afield.

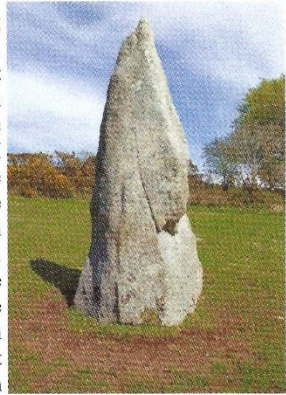
The site is well worth a visit, especially as it has now been cleared. It lies to the north of St.Keverne near the hamlet of Tregarne, down a network of winding lanes, so typical of this part of the Lizard. An undoubted hidden gem of the Lizard peninsula.

DISCOVERING THE PELYNTOR STONE

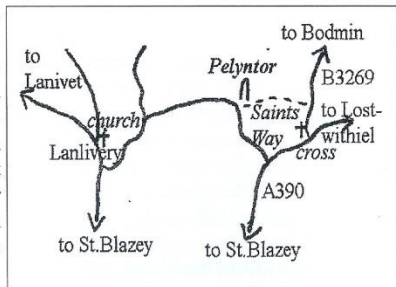
by Rodney Smith

In June 2007 my wife Doreen and I were on holiday , staying near St.Austell, and spending most of our time looking around gardens. I had one day as a dowsing day, following the Michael Line. We had looked at Menacuddle Well, Resugga Castle, Roche Rock, Luxulyan Church, Lanlivery Church, and were heading for Lostwithiel Church. At Lanlivery the line had crossed the road and marched right through the centre of the church gate. It then forgot the church altogether, slid along its side and right out through the far end of the churchyard. We marched right out through the gate and drove off, taking the lane on the left beyond the end of the churchyard and crossing the line as we did.

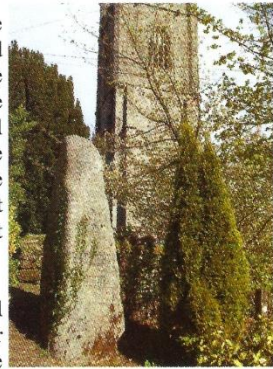
We had not gone very far when I spotted a standing stone, a big one, a quarter of a mile ahead, just to our left, right in the middle of a small steeply sloping field at SX0865 5920. I had not seen it on the map, and Hamish Miller had not mentioned it in his book. There was nowhere to stop at the time, but a couple of days later I went back and was able to stop just off the main road, one small field above the stone field. We parked at a place called 'No Man's Land' where there was a great Cornish cross, the Crewel Cross, 9ft 2in high, close to the corner. The Michael Line went straight through the cross. We walked 100 yards down the side road, turned left into the Saints Way and walked down to the standing stone, an enormous stone standing about 12ft high. I got my rods out again, and found that the Michael Line went right through it. We returned to our digs and went back home next day.



Several days later, out came all my maps and books. I could find no trace of the stone. I tried the library, the internet, everything, but there was no mention of it. Later I tried Google Earth and found the location and the cross. But when I followed the map, panning across the page, and down the Saint's Way into the field there was no stone! I tried Microsoft's mapping programme, and the result was the same - no standing stone, just an empty field! I began to think that I had dreamt the whole thing! But all was not lost: another holiday was coming up, further down in Cornwall. We could call at this mysterious site on the way home.



In July 2008 Cornwall was at its very wettest, but we did alright, and on the homeward journey it had stopped raining, so we returned to Lanlivery Church, where the Michael line was still in place. We moved on down the little lane, but slower, so we spotted the stone earlier. It was still there, so I wasn't as daft as I thought I was! We parked the car again and took the short walk to the field. There was the stone with the Michael Line still passing right through it. It had its bands and rings, all of the energy paraphernalia that a proper standing stone should have.



Lanlivery church with its modern-day Millennium stone and old Michael line

I was still puzzled by the stone's absence from all records, so I knocked on the door of the cottage (Pelyntor Cottage) next to the field. An elderly gentleman with a white beard answered the door. There followed a longish series of questions about the stone with rather vague and somewhat reluctant answers. Eventually he told me that three years ago the stone lay at the bottom of the field against the hedge. He had decided to re-erect it in the field, which belonged to him, and had brought in heavy lifting gear from Emerys, the China Clay company, to move it. I asked him how he had managed to put it right on the Michael Line, but he stated he was a scientist, and did not believe in energy lines or dowsing.

That was the end of the conversation, and any further questions were gently rebuffed and the door was soon shut. But when I returned home, I went back to Google Earth and found the same field again. It had nothing in the centre (Google Earth only update their mapping every 5-10 years), but there at the bottom of the field against the hedge, you could plainly see the great stone.

I decided to send a copy of my article to 'Mr Scientist', so he knows I have written it up. I cannot see that he could object to any passing dowsers taking a look at the stone, as he has planted it right next to a major footpath! I suggest that any visitors treat the stone and field with respect, and do not trouble him further about it. But I still wonder just how he managed to find where to put his stone, right smack-bang on to the Michael Line! Could it be that this non-believer was actually subconsciously doing a bit of dowsing on his own? I think that all of us owe our thanks to him for having the gumption to recognise the stone for what it undoubtedly was, and the drive to restore it in a proper position. It's just a pity that he does not know that he is a dowser!

Article first published in Dowsing Today, the magazine of the British Society of Dowsers. Web site: www.britishdowsers.org

Out of interest, MM had also spotted the stone in April 2008 while driving in the area, and calling in at the cottage, had a very similar conversation with the man's wife!

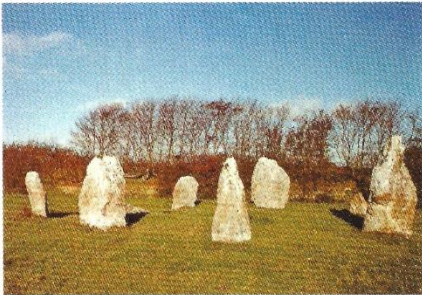
*IN-
SITE*

The feature that focusses on one or more particular sites each time in depth. This one starts the special feature on -
MEGALITHIC SITES IN SOUTH-EAST CORNWALL

South-east Cornwall (east of St.Austell & south of Liskeard) is not well known for its megalithic sites. Many sites that probably did exist have undoubtedly been destroyed by land clearance, farming and development over the millenia. However there are a few notable sites, which are featured on the following 4 pages.

DULOE STONE CIRCLE

Duloe stone circle [SX2358 5830] is signposted off the road on the south side of Duloe village, which lies between Liskeard and Looe. It was restored in 1860 when a bisecting hedge was removed from the site, and at least one prehistoric urn was found. It is a beautiful and unique circle on several counts. To begin with it stands isolated from any other circles in SE Cornwall: the nearest are Bodmin Moor some distance away to the north-west. Secondly, it is the smallest extant stone circle in Cornwall, its oval shape measuring just 10.2 - 11.7m (33 - 38ft) in diameter. Thirdly, it has fewer stones than any other circle, consisting of just eight, seven of which are still standing. These stones seem to have been deliberately placed at the cardinal points of the compass - N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W & NW, so that the whole circle is like a Wheel of the Year or gnomon. And finally, it is a very distinctive circle in that all the stones have been hewn from quartz, so originally it must have appeared gleaming white.

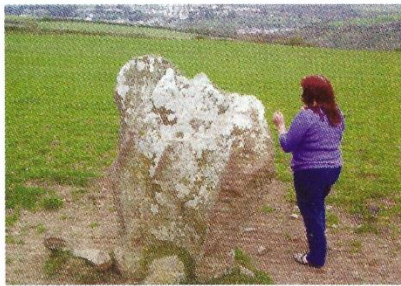


The source for this quartz was identified in 1989 by Lee & Gerry-Jenkins, who, when speaking to the farmer's wife, were told that there had been a gigantic seam of it at the bottom of the farm, which was some years ago blasted out in order for cultivation to take place. She described the blocks as being several times the size of her large gatepost stone, so this seam was doubtless the source for the stones of the circle. The other interesting observation at this circle is that the field in which it stands is usually grazed by both sheep and cows. On at least one occasion a pregnant cow has been seen to deliberately enter the circle of stones to give birth. Geiger readings taken inside the circle showed a lower than background count, so perhaps in some way the circle was deliberately constructed as a 'healing' sanctuary by the circle builders.

THE POLRUAN STONES

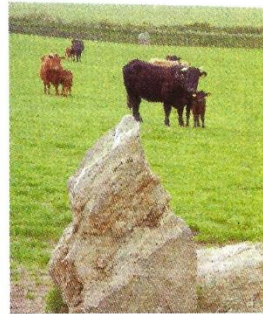
Polruan is a small unspoilt waterside village opposite Fowey, but it has the distinction of having (and having had) a number of smallish standing stones in its vicinity. On a hillside above the village there were 2 stones standing until as recently as the 1970s when they were cleared away to make room for a new Housing Estate. One of these stones was about 1.2-1.5m (4-5ft). MM dowsed for the position of these and found their location at SX1288 5090, which before the houses were built, would have afforded a dramatic view across to Gribben Head.

About a mile outside the village in a field opposite Essa are some more slate stones, which are more fortunate to have survived. There are now 2 stones standing, one at the top end of the field at SX1373 5099, and the other further down at SX1376 5109. Dowsing revealed that these were part of a stone row aligned to the horizon in a NE direction (midsummer solstice sunrise). There was also found 2 parallel energy lines, one from each stone, running in an east-west direction, that may have linked to the Housing Estate stones, which would have been west of these, though not intervisible.



Above - stone at top of field looking down.

Right - lower stone looking back to top stone



These remaining stones may have been part of a larger complex, as a further 8 stones at least have been noted in the vicinity. At SX1380 5128, at the gateway at the bottom of the field, there are 5 stones that have been moved there from elsewhere. One of these is lying on a grass verge, and was known as the Devil Stone, used for resting coffins; another two are laying on a verge outside the gate to the field; and a further two are built into the hedge inside the gate. Another two stones lie on the grass verge at the top of the field beside the coast road. These may all have been part of an original stone row, or some other megalithic structure. They are fortunate to have survived in an area cleared for farming and pasture, and together with finds of axes in the locality at Lombard Farm and Polruan Hill, and (destroyed) barrows and tumuli, are evidence that this area was occupied in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages. A Bronze Age burial urn was found at Lanlawren in the 19thC, and in the mid 20thC an empty stone-lined cist grave was found by a farmer ploughing at Carne, less than a mile from these standing stones.

THE TRISTAN STONE

This famous stone stands on a roadside verge a mile outside Fowey [SX1123 5211], though it probably originally stood at the nearby Four Turnings crossroads [SX 1098 5240] where it was shown on the 1907 OS map. Blight recorded in 1858 that when he visited it, the stone lay in a ditch north of this road junction, so it was presumably moved back to its original position some time after this. William Borlase saw it in the 1750s and recorded the lettering along the side, which is still faintly visible today. The lettering reads DRVSTANS HIC IACIT, CVNOWORI FILIVS, which translates as “Tristan lies here, the son of Cunomorus” [*drawing below by Craig Weatherhill*]. The plaque next to the stone, erected by the Fowey old Cornwall Society, attributes its date to about 550 CE, which makes it from the Early Christian period, re-inforced by the carving of an early Tau cross (a simple T shape) on its north side.



Such memorials are typical of that period, and seem to have been reserved for local post-Celtic chieftans and nobility, and were set up either in early churchyards or beside important trackways. This crossroads lies near the southern end of the Saints Way, the early medieval trackway crossing Cornwall from the north coast at Padstow to the south coast at Fowey. The Tristan stone is one of the largest and most impressive of these memorials, some 2.7m (8.8ft) tall, now standing on a modern granite plinth. The stone itself is also made of granite, which is rare in this part of SE Cornwall, the nearest source being the Luxulyan valley, 3 miles away.

The greatest interest of the stone is the inscription. It refers to Tristan, who was enshrined in the story recorded by the medieval French troubador Beroul from much earlier sources. Tristan is here recorded as the son of Cunomorus, who is cognisant with King Mark of the legendary tale [*see also p.16-17 of this MM*], though in the story he is nephew, rather than son, of the king. The dramatic story of Tristan and Iseult, set in 6thC Cornwall, is one of illicit love, pagan magic, jealousy and betrayal, and has become one of the most famous love stories of all time. The most fascinating thing about this stone is that it may originally have had a third line of inscription, now broken off the edge of the stone. The stone was seen between 1534-1543 by John Leland, the King’s Antiquary to Henry VIII, who recorded a third line of inscription CVM DOMINA OUSILLA which translates as “with the lady Ousilla”. Leland did not connect this inscription with the Tristan legend, but Ousilla would be an acceptable Latinisation of the Cornish name Iseult. It is possible that during one of its moves, the sliver of stone containing this inscription may have been broken off and lost. So this 6th century stone may indeed be a verification of the whole Tristan and Iseult legend.

THE POLPERRO STONES

A standing stone, located in an isolated area near to Polperro, has been re-discovered by MM. It was listed by Robin Payne in his book *Romance of the Stones* (1999) as “the missing Great Kellow menhir”. He obtained his information from the Historic Environment Record of HE (then CAU), which states that “an extant standing stone in a field near Great Kellow is recorded on CCRA map - source of information unknown. The date size and shape of the stone is unrecorded”. Payne adds “There is no trace of a standing stone here now” but he obviously never went to look properly, because MM found it just where it is described!

The stone lies at SX2027 5216, behind Great Kellow holiday cottages on an area of unenclosed grass, and is a beautiful piece of granite, with large areas of white quartz and studded with layers of white quartz veins. It is distinctively triangular in shape, and stands 1.68 metres (5½ft) high and 0.62 metres (2ft 8in) at its widest. It dowsed as being 4000 years old, which places it firmly in the early Bronze Age, but it does not seem to have any alignments to other stones (extant or missing) in the locality, nor does it seem to be aligned to any significant horizon features. It is however, a lovely stone, and well worth visiting.



Also in the area between Polperro and Looe, Sheila de Burlin in her book *The History of Polperro* (1977) records that there is a “huge standing stone (now fallen) at Kilminorth, just outside the Round called locally The Wedding Ring, the Camp or the Warren”. This Round is at SX2348 5420 and may be a prehistoric rounded field system. The site is very difficult to access, with thick woods and no public right of way.

THE LOOE ISLAND STONES

During Time Team’s excavation of Looe Island in 2008 [see *MM69 p.4*] they discovered a Bronze Age standing stone on the lawn behind the House there. The stone had been too heavy to re-erect, so they buried it again, which was a great shame, as perhaps volunteers could later have been found to put it back up where it belongs. The top third of the stone can still be seen protruding above the surface, and when Tamar Dowders visited the site in the autumn of 2009, they found



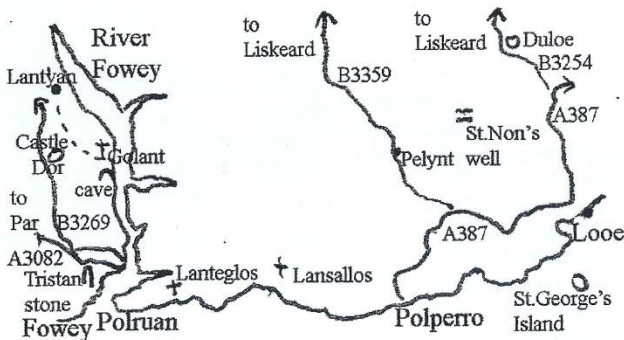
strong energy lines running from it, and leading up the hill to the remains of an early Celtic chapel above, where there is another small standing stone. Another small stone lies on the far side of the island, so there may well have been a line of them in pre-Christian times.

THE MYTHIC LANDSCAPE OF S.E CORNWALL

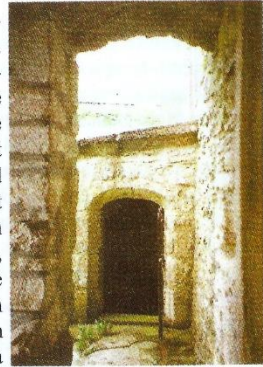
by Cheryl Straffon

SE Cornwall may not have a plethora of megalithic sites, but its landscape is redolent with stories, legends and myths. The most famous of these are the places associated with the Court of the legendary King Mark in the Arthurian tale of Tristan and Iseult. Many of these places lie around the area of St.Austell, to the west of the area we are considering, and are examined in some detail in an article by Joy Wilson entitled *Tristan and Iseult: tracing the legend in Cornwall* [MM15 p.8-11]. But in addition to the Tristan Stone [see page 14], there are a few sites that lie near the banks of the River Fowey that relate to the story. Beroul in his great poem written down in 1160 speaks of Lancien as the name of King Mark's south coast palace, and Lancien or Lantyan still exists as **Lantyan** Barton at SX1050 5725, on the Saint's Way between Lostwithiel and Golant [see MM63 p.21]. Once it was a great Cornish manor named in the Domesday Book on whose former lands Castle Dor stands. One of the fields on the farm has always been called Mark's gate and named as such on the tithe map of 1840. From this field, paths lead down through the oaks of Lantyan wood to the banks of the River Fowey and landing places have been used there since early times. Woodgate Pill on an inlet off the River could well have been the place where Tristan and Iseult departed by boat for Brittany in the story.

South of here lies **Castle Dor** [SX1030 5480], an Iron Age earthwork 90m (290ft) in diameter built in about 200 BCE, that dominates the hill overlooking both the Fowey River and the Par estuary. In the 6thC CE the fort was reoccupied and the defences again remodelled. This may have been the work of Mark Cynvawr (Marcus Cunomorus), a recorded Dumnonian king, who was the legendary King Mark, to whom Iseult was married when she fell for Tristan. A series of large post holes in the inner enclosure of the fort marked out the site of a timber-built structure, a hall 27m x 12m (88ft x 39ft), and it tempting to consider this the 'palace' of King Mark.



Also in the Tristan and Iseult story, although peripheral to the main action, is the character of Saint Samson. St. Samson is a mythical early Celtic saint, whose hagiography places him in Cornwall at the time of the story. He founded a 'lan' (early Celtic church) on the banks of the River Fowey, and a church and a holy well remains there at **Golant** to this day (SX1204 5515) dedicated to him. It would have been to this simple wattle and daub oratory that Iseult would have brought her gift of her best silken robe as an offering. Prior to this, Samson occupied a cave nearby, wherein dwelt a noisome serpent (a possible symbol of the old pagan religion). Samson vanquished the serpent, and then quenched his thirst on the pure water that dripped from the roof. The cave still exists at SX1240 5445, about half a mile south of the church. It can be reached by walking alongside the river and crossing the railway line (with care!).



St. Samson's holy well

Saints who occupy or walk a path through a mythic landscape abound in this area. By the fifth century CE early Christian pilgrims were arriving in Cornwall from Ireland and Wales, and establishing themselves in small hermitages, often in sheltered creeks. One of these was St. Willow (or Wylow or Wylloc), who arrived on the east bank of the River Fowey, and established his hermitage at Pont Pill, a creek that still exists today, and which can be walked along by a lovely early medieval path (called the Hall Walk) from Polruan. A chapel dedicated to him also stood at Lamelyon nearby (the site of which is now a modern farm), and it was here that St. Willow was slain by his kinsman Melyn ys Kynrede. However, in the manner of many of the saints, Willow took up his severed head and walked with it to a spot, which has since become the site of a remote church, now dedicated to him, at **Lanteglos** (SX1445 5150). The path that he walked is a lovely shaded track that runs from the head of Pont Pill up to the church, which has a fine medieval Lantern Cross.



Mythic pathway to Lanteglos church

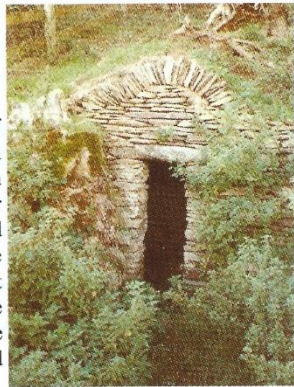
Following the trail of saints eastwards across this remote corner of SE Cornwall, we come to the church of **Lansallos** (SX1722 5160). There is documentation suggesting a monastic settlement here, and William of Worcester was told at Fowey in 1478 that the body of St Hyldren (or Ildierna) the bishop lay at Lansallos church, with the saint's relics interred in a shrine. Nothing is known about this saint, but interestingly the Latin name has a feminine ending, implying that Ildierna was a woman. Also, his/her Feast Day was on February 1st, one of the great Celtic festivals, more commonly associated with (St) Bridget.

Moving eastwards, we come to Polperro and Looe, and the iconic island lying offshore, known as **St George's Island**, or historically **St Michael's Island**. According to local legend, Joseph of Arimathea (the uncle of the Virgin Mary) took the infant Jesus with him to Cornwall on a voyage to trade tin, and left him on the island whilst conducting his business. Notwithstanding the legend, evidence survives that in 445 CE and probably very much earlier, tin was traded between Pheonacia and Cornwall. There is a 160 BCE reference by Diodorus Siculus to tin being mined in Cornwall and taken to an island called 'Ictis', which means "joined to the mainland at low tide", which has been variously identified as St. Michael's Mount or Looe Island.



The earliest recorded name used for the island is 'Lamene', which is mentioned in a document from Pope Lucius II in 1144 as a possession of Glastonbury. The name suggests the possibility of an early religious settlement, possibly Celtic, as the name appears to be derived from the Cornish word 'Lan'. In 2008, Channel 4's archaeology series *Time Team* visited the island to carry out an investigation into its early Christian history [see *MM69 p.4*]. They excavated the sites of Christian chapels built on both the island and on the mainland opposite. During their dig they found the remains of a Benedictine chapel that was built in c.1139 by monks from Glastonbury Abbey, a reliquary, graves and the remains of much earlier Romano-British chapels built of wood with dating evidence suggesting use by Christians before the reign of Constantine the Great. A site with great mythic history.

Finally, for this part of SE Cornwall, we travel inland to the holy well of St. Non at **Pelynt** [SX 2241 5640]. It is also known as **Pisky's Well**, and Quiller-Couch writing in 1894 thought this was its oldest name. He adds: "It was anciently believed to be the haunt of some beneficent elf, who here dispensed her bounties in the shape of health and good fortune when her fountain was reverently consulted, but could show enduring anger to those who desecrated it. The guardianship in later and much altered times was usurped by the saint whose name it bears". Legend also says that anyone who does not leave an offering will be followed home by piskies in the shape of small flying moths, embodying the spirits of the dead. Clearly a well to be treated with some respect, and a reminder that the land is a powerful mythic place.



THE LOOE LABYRINTH

At Windsworth at St.Martin-by-Looe Caroline Petherick has recently constructed a labyrinth on her land, overlooking the coast and Looe Island. The Opening Ceremony in 2010 attracted national press attention, and here for MM Caroline writes about the site.

I had been thinking of ways to get out and about, realising that sitting at a keyboard all day squinting at little black wiggles on a bright white background isn't the healthiest of ways to live a life. Small-hours inspiration resulted in a flurry of not just mental activity, but also manipulating the local planning department, and working with large sheets of paper with scale plans featuring cardioid (astroid) curves. Also, spread over a couple of years, a lot of physical activity, including manipulating a seven-foot slate and quartz menhir (from a nearby quarry), digging trenches in the virgin turf of the steep coastal slope, and spreading sparkly silver granite gravel.

The result? An iconic landmark, visible across the bay from the fishing village of Looe (four miles away as the chough flies) and to boats out at sea in the English Channel, that gleams in the moonlight, and cheers up the view in the daytime, too. The origins of this design, the Sevenfold Labyrinth, are lost in the mists of time, appearing as it does in 30,000-year-old palaeolithic cave paintings in Southern France and Spain, and in varying media (such as petroglyphs, pavement, turf and baskets), throughout most parts of the world, from Java to Native North and South America, Australia, India and Nepal. Coins from Knossos of the 3rd century BC bore the design; and there are many of these labyrinths – usually with names translating as Troy Town – marked out with stones on the coasts of Scandinavia and the Isles of Scilly.



Why? As I said to *The Guardian* – who were part of the media circus that, much to my surprise, resulted – “You can go and sit there and realise the earth isn't such a bad place after all. It's just a gentle pleasure for people to enjoy. I live in a phenomenally beautiful place and I wanted to share it somehow.” And I'd like to add: “In our busy lives, many of us have forgotten the wisdom of our ancestors – so here's a chance to pause a while, remember how life goes in cycles, and give our home planet the respect she deserves.”

OLD CUSTOMS OF SE CORNWALL

There are many old customs and traditions, owing their probable origin to pre-Christian beliefs, recorded by folklorists and antiquarians of the late 19th century, in West Cornwall. Much less survives from the eastern part of the county, but some interesting fragments have come through from SE Cornwall.

May Day. Tony Dean & Tony Shaw wrote in *The Folklore of Cornwall* [Batsford, 1973]:

“Maypoles were once in common evidence throughout England and no less in Cornwall, but the Cornish poles involved strange traditions and they were guarded day and night during the first week of the month. It was the custom for neighbouring villages to try and steal one another’s maypoles and fierce battles were often the result. The poles were traditionally decorated with May garlands - streamers being a comparatively recent tradition - and at Looe, May Day was sometimes known as Garland Day. Once, at Merrymeet, near Liskeard, the villagers protected their gaily decorated pole from invading neighbours by cementing it into the ground, but the resourceful men of St.Cleer brought a saw with them and carried off the trophy. Guarded maypoles also stood at Menheniot, Altarnun and Trewen, amongst other places. If they were stolen, they had to be returned to their parent villages by the following morning, or bad luck would follow.

In the little village of Lanreath, a few miles inland from Polperro, during May the maypole-guarding tradition still survives. In 1973 the authors were told, by the mother-in-law of one of the pole’s guards, of the intrigue and cunning involved. Spies from Pelynt and other nearby villages try to make the guards drink too much so they fall asleep on duty; Lanreath’s agents spend their time letting down the tyres of their enemies’ vehicles. One sees some black eyes in Lanreath during May, but no one is deterred by them. When their long vigil is over, the men chop up their maypole and make skittles for a game played in Punch Bowl Inn.”



A photograph from 1951 showing men from Lanreath carrying the maypole up to Bury Down Beacon.

This tradition was still remembered by Norman Giles, aged 91 in the year 2000, who spoke about it: “Around 20 or 30 of us would go to the woods at Boconnoc at night and get a tree (for the maypole). The year I joined in the fun was 1951. The group chopped down the tree and then loaded it onto a cart to take back to the village. We would then go back to Lanreath and put the pole up overnight. Once May Day was over, a group of about ten of us took the pole from the village and took it to Bury Down Beacon, which was the highest point, and leave it there. It would then be stolen by others from Dobwalls or another village. The pole would just disappear. I don’t know what happened to it.” Although maypole-stealing has now died out, Lanreath revived its May traditions on Bank Holiday Monday in 2000, and now has a permanent maypole standing in the village.

Midsummer. Midsummer Eve customs are widely reported in West Cornwall, collected by folklorists like William Bottrell, Robert Hunt and Margaret Courtney. In the SE we are fortunate in having a book published in 1871 by Thomas Quiller Couch from a manuscript left by Polperro doctor Jonathan Couch. He had collected a number of customs and folklore throughout the early 19th century, some of which related to the feast of Peter's Tide. St. Peter's Day was on June 29th, but Peter's Tide was celebrated in Polperro on the 10th July. Couch suggested that the date was the equivalent to the old Midsummer's Day, based on the pre-1751 calendar (similar to Helston's May Day festival, the Furry Day being celebrated on May 8th), and he wrote about the activities associated with Peter's Tide:-

“On the eve of the fair is the prefatory ceremony of a bonfire. The young fishermen go from house to house and beg money to defray the expenses. At night-fall a large pile of faggots and tar-barrels is built on the beach, and amid the cheers of a congregated crowd of men, women, and children (for it is a favour never denied to children to stay up and see the bonfire), the pile is lighted. The fire blazes up, and men and boys dance merrily around it, and keep up the sport till the fire burns low enough, and then they venturously leap through the flames. It is a most animated scene; the whole valley lit up by the bright red glow, bringing into strong relief front and gable of picturesque old houses, each window crowded with eager and delighted faces; while around the fire is a crowd of ruddy lookers-on, shutting in a circle of impish figures leaping like salamanders through the flames. This fire was, no doubt, originally intended to celebrate the great solstitial feast, but was in later times, deferred until the festival of St. Peter. The very system which places particular spots under the patronage of certain saints, is but a modification of a pagan usage. The Bacchanalia and Floralia are still observed, but the Heathen gods and goddesses are metamorphosed into saints and martyrs.

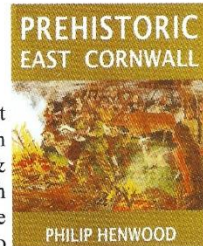
The next day the fair begins. There are strolling thespians, ballad singers, penny-peep men, and jugglers and tumblers. In the neighbouring inn the fiddler plays his liveliest tunes. The first day of the fair is merely introductory, for the excitement is rarely allayed under three. On the third day we have the mayor-choosing, never a valid ceremony, but a broad burlesque. The person who is chosen to this post of mimic dignity is generally some half-witted or drunken fellow who, tricked out in tinsel finery, elects his staff of constables, and these, armed with staves, accompany his chariot (some jowter's cart dressed with green boughs) through the town.”

Sheila de Burlet, writing in 1977 (*Portrait of Polperro*) adds that another custom which continued in Polperro until the early part of the 19thC was the making of a figure of straw and dressing it in old clothes. It was carried through the streets to the beach where it was burned to ashes.

Yule. Similar customs to those in West Cornwall were recorded by Couch. On Christmas Eve the mock or yule log was lit from a piece saved from the previous year's fire. Goosey dancers went from house to house dancing, singing and helping themselves to food! And although it had died out by his time, Couch remembered the 'guary mirkl', the mummers' enactment of George and the Dragon.

BOOK REVIEWS

Prehistoric East Cornwall by Philip Henwood
 [Published by Philip Henwood, Churchtown, Linkinhorne,
 Callington, Cornwall PL17 7LY £9.95 (£12 inc p & p)]



Books on the archaeology of west Cornwall are many, but the east has been often overlooked. This one focusses on the parish of Linkinhorne, where the author lives, but covers much of south & east Bodmin Moor, including Caradon Hill. It is well-produced with colour illustrations and site diagrams, and Philip Henwood has done his research thoroughly, so what emerges is a workmanlike guide to the prehistory of the region. Major sites, like the Hurlers stone circles, Stowe's Hill, the Rillaton Barrow and Trethevey Quoit are well covered, but there is also information on lesser-known sites, such as the Beara Long Barrow, the Draynes & Wollabarrow cairns, and settlement sites and hill forts. However, the book does unfortunately lack grid references and maps to help locate the sites and their relationship to each other.

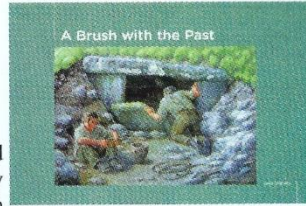
There is some speculation as to the intended use of the sites, and an exploration of "primitive" religion, which gives some interest to what otherwise would be a rather dry account. He talks about the ritual turning points of the year and the festivals that may have been enacted to celebrate them, and there is also a look at some alignments from sites - for example, from Craddock Moor stone circle where the midsummer solstice sun rises above Stowe's Hill and sets over Brown Willy. Although he doesn't go any further with these investigations (and there are many more on Bodmin Moor) nevertheless he acknowledges that the purpose of all this was to celebrate or "placate" the gods and goddesses. He also speculates that the place name Darley (near Linkinhorne) is derived from Dar-ley meaning "oak clearing", and this therefore may have been a Druidic sacred grove (it still has an ancient oak tree in a clearing there today). All in all, a book worth having for the information it has on a less well-known part of Cornwall. [CS]

Scarcewater, Penance, Cornwall: archaeological excavation of a Bronze Age and Roman landscape by Andy M. Jones & Sean R. Taylor

[BAR British Series, 516, 2010 - Distributed by Hadrian Books]

This book, published in the British Archaeological Report series, covers the excavation of a site in the St. Austell area near to St. Stephen-in-Brannel, in advance of the construction of a new China Clay tip. Roundhouses were found from the Bronze Age period, an Enclosure and Cairn (and possible Ring-ditch) from the Iron Age period, and a rectangular building, together with some burials, from the Romano-British period. The greatest interest in the Report is the section on 'Ceremony and burial in the Middle Bronze Age', which suggests that upon abandonment, the houses were afforded the same kind of ritual rites as shown to former barrows, and were perhaps then covered over so that they even 'became' barrows in a symbolic sense. There is further discussion of the area as being divided into contrasting zones of dwelling, working, ceremony and the 'ancestral' past, with interrelated and overlapping practices. Some interesting ideas, worth following up.

A Brush with the Past by **Jane Stanley**
 [Published by Jane Stanley & Cornwall Council
 Distributed by Oxbow Books
 £15 - hardback £12 - paperback]



This lovely book is chock-filled with coloured paintings that reconstruct ancient sites and their uses by prehistoric cultures in Cornwall. Each painting, which shows the sites as they are now and/or as they may have been in the past, is full of the people who built, used and occupied the monuments and the landscape, thus bringing them alive in a new and vibrant way. There is a long introduction to the book, and a brief commentary on each picture, which shows that the author and illustrator Jane Stanley has really tried to get into the mindset and belief systems of the people. For example, on the painting of the building of Zennor Quoit, she comments: "Every seemingly secular activity in prehistory would have been blessed, sanctioned and permeated by spiritual insights and practices". She talks of the shamanic practices of the prehistoric people, perhaps drawing on her experiences of living in Uganda for 6 years. In the reconstructed painting of the building of the Roughtor bank cairn on Bodmin Moor [see MM64 p.7], she depicts it as a ceremonial avenue being used for a rites-of-passage puberty ceremony, and asks: "Was a shaman involved, or a ritual cleansing rite in the stream at the bottom of the bank cairn, and did the whole event finish with a ceremonial feast?". There is also a focus on everyday activities in the society, such as gift exchange, storytelling, mate selection and marriage alliance, as well as harvesting wheat, spinning & weaving and boat making, all based on solid archaeological evidence. This is a book with much fascination that brings the past alive in Cornwall in a way that supplements the archaeological research and findings.



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20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

In the late 1980s a curious phenomenon had been appearing in the British countryside, mainly around the Wiltshire area - Crop Circles. No one knew if they were made by human hand, were the result of anomalous winds, or were some amazing manifestation from the Earth itself. 20 years later nothing much has changed! Some crop circle makers have owned up to making some of them, the shapes and patterns have become more elaborate year upon year, but no-one knows for sure how they are made or by whom (or what). At first, Cornwall seemed well out of 'Crop Circle territory', but in the autumn of 1990, the first circle appeared at a farm on the slopes of Kit Hill, near Callington, near to the historic Dupath Well. It was about 6ft from the road, precisely-formed, slightly oval in shape, and was reported as having a "strong energy field" emanating from it. As soon as it was harvested by the farmer, another one appeared the next day in a neighbouring field.

These circles were soon followed by others. In the following year (1991) one appeared in a field near the Trevelgue Hotel at Newquay. It was 60ft in diameter, and was investigated by no less a person than Professor Charles Thomas, who pronounced it as being "60% likely to be genuine". Later in the summer a great cluster of circles appeared in East Cornwall. At Eastcott near St.Dominic a dumb-bell circle appeared in a field of barley. The farmer, who had prior to its formation ploughed over some ancient tumuli nearby, said he thought it was caused by spirits coming out of the ground!



At Westcott another double-circle dumbbell appeared, being some 120ft overall. The strongest dowsing point was outside the circle, and nearby were ancient tumuli and a henge. Nearby a 40ft circle later appeared with a rippling effect, with more circles in the same area. In August a circle appeared in green wheat, well away from any field 'tramlines' so no obvious way into it. Finally, near Kit Hill, double and triple circles appeared to round off a lively season. Once again Charles Thomas investigated, and found that there were magnetic anomalies and compass deflections within the circles. Local researcher George Bishop photographed many of the sites, and a Cornish Crop Circle Group came into existence.

These circles continued for a few more seasons, and then as mysteriously as they had started, they stopped. The Crop Circle Group widened their activities, and got into dowsing and site visits, before they too wound up a few years later. Crop Circles have continued in Wiltshire and Wessex, but for Cornwall this was the end of an intense but brief phenomenon. Explanations have varied from students from Plymouth College to an interaction between people in the area and earth energies, but to this day it remains an unsolved enigma.

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Most back numbers are now sold out, but photocopies can be done as a special service to subscribers and regular readers upon request @ £2.50 (nos. 1-49) or £3.00 (nos. 50 on). Contents list & Index available on CDr (75p) or printed format (£2.50) or at the web site *www.meynmamvro.co.uk*

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NOTICEBOARD

ISSN: 0966-5897

BELTANE/SUMMER EVENTS

Sat Apr 30th - 23rd Annual Maypole Dance & feast at Carn Bosavern, St. Just 6.30pm Details: 01736-787186

Sun May 1st - Penzance's Mayhorns Festival (revived tradition). Web site: www.penzancemayhorns.co.uk

Mon May 2nd - Obby Oss Day at Padstow. Details: 01841-533449

Sat May 7th - Helston Flora Day + Hal-an-Tow. Web site:

www.helstonfloraday.org.uk

Sun May 8th - 23rd Three Wells Walk Meet Sancreed Church 10.15am Details: 01736-787186

Thurs June 23rd - Midsummer Bonfires on Chapel Carn Brea, Kit Hill & other selected hilltops

Fri June 24th & Sat June 25th Golowan - Penzance Maze Eve/Day www.golowan.org

**WEST CORNWALL DOWSERS**

Regular site visits throughout the year, inc *May 1st* Nanjulian barrows & *May 22nd* Carn Les Boel. Details from - westcornwalldowers@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01326-281139

TAMAR DOWSERS

Site visits in Summer & talks in Winter
Web site: www.tamar-dowers.co.uk
Tel: 01566-774902

CELTIC DOWSERS

E-mail: larryjen@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 01209-212864 for details of site visits

PATHWAYS TO THE PAST

May 28th-29th
Full details on p.4 and at www.cornishancientsites.com/events

ANCIENT SITES CLEAR-UPS**West Penwith**

Sun May 22nd - Mulfra Courtyard House settlement

Sun June 12th - Boscawen-ûn circle

Sun July 10th - Nine Maidens Boskednan barrows

Sun Aug 14th - Tregeseal circle

All at 2pm. For further details -

Dave Munday 01736-787230 E-mail:

dave@cornishancientsites.com

www.cornishancientsites.com/site-clearances

The Lizard [LAN]

Tue May 17th - Poldowrian hut circle

Tue June 14th - Kynance Gate settlement

Tue July 26th - Kynance Gate settlement [National Archaeology Festival]

Tue Aug 16th - St. Rumon's Church

Tue Aug 30th - Three Brothers of Grugwith monument

All at 12.00. Details: 01736-787186

E-mail info@cornishancientsites.com

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Tolven Moot at Stonemasons Arms,

Longdowns nr. Penryn - 1st Tues each month Tel: 01209-831519

Bodmin - 1st Weds Tel: Wendy

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