
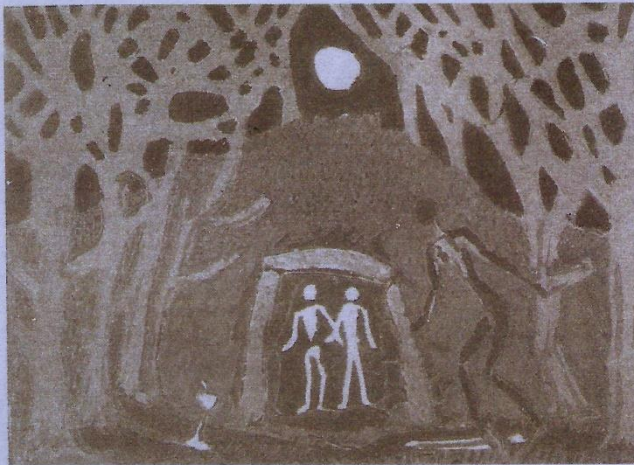


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meyn mamvro
ancient stones and sacred sites in cornuall



25 years anniversary
SPECIAL ISSUE ON FOGOUS
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Articles [c] MM & authors.

Front cover by Gabrielle Hawkes is a reproduction of the first issue (Dec 1986).

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

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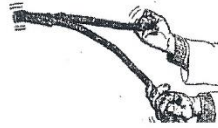
STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

With this issue, Meyn Mamvro is a quarter of a century old! It was in December 1986, that the first issue was launched at 'Visions and Journeys' art gallery in St.Just, with local artist Gabrielle Hawkes drawing the front cover (reproduced on the front of this special anniversary issue), and articles on The Gorseth, Milpreves, Holy Wells, Paganism and Fogous, an eclectic mix that MM has continued to create ever since. There have been many changes in those 25 years, reflected in the news and features of the magazine, but MM remains essentially the same as it did all those years ago: a magazine about the ancient sites and prehistory of Cornwall, seen through the lens of 'alternative archaeology' and 'sacred sites phenomenology'. Your editor (or 'editress' as originally described!) is some 25 years older, and not quite as lithe at climbing gates and stanking up hills as she was then (as is doubtless the case for some MM readers as well!), but my love for the ancient sites, and my fascination with ideas, theories and interpretations of them, remains as strong as it did 25 years ago. Sometimes it amazes me that there is still plenty of original and interesting material on Cornwall alone, to have filled 77 issues, regularly 3 times a year for 25 years, but thanks to the on-going work of archaeologists from the Historic Environment Service, the site activities of CASPN and LAN, the Earth Mysteries and dowsing groups, and the articles and submissions by MM readers and others, it shows no sign of abating. It would be nice if MM were to go on for another 25 years, but your editor would be aged 90 by then, so I think (Goddess willing!) that I'll settle for us reaching Issue 100!

The Editorial in that first issue 25 years ago spoke of the perceived threats to "our precious earth and ancient history": at that time it included the dumping of nuclear waste, the landowners who "unthinkingly clear the ancient sites", and the "despoilers and speculators". A great deal of progress has been made in those 25 years. We now have a much greater awareness of the importance of the ancient sites from all sides of the community, and the existence of groups like CASPN, LAN, BTCV and others, who actively look after the sites and help to keep them clear and accessible. But there is still a need to be ever vigilant. A development on land next to the Merry Maidens stone circle in West Penwith is currently causing some concern, and there is still much controversy about the grazing of cattle on the West Penwith moors under the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme. An English Heritage report is being issued with recommendations for managing this, and now Save Penwith Moors group are warning of the threat to the fragile archaeological environment on Chûn Downs that may be caused by a plan to introduce grazing there. The prehistoric landscape still needs all our help to look after it in the 21stC.

DOWSING NEWS



At the end of May 2011 **West Cornwall Dowisers** went to *Carn Les Boel* cliff castle near Land's End. Going through Bosistow Farm, the Michael line was strongly apparent, with a significant boulder stone on the line at SW3665 2339 that had a good visual alignment to St. Buryan church. At Carn Les Boel, the Group identified the incoming/outgoing Michael and Mary lines, and then found barrows on the grassland behind with visual alignments to the holy hilltop of Chapel Carn Brea.

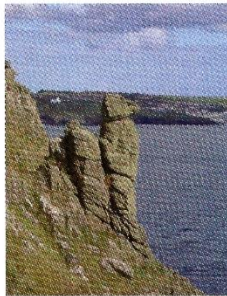


Mid June brought a visit by **Tamar Dowisers** to *Notter Tor* on the eastern edge of Bodmin Moor, with member Gordon Ratcliff. This lesser-known peak (it is on private land) is a neighbour to Stowe's Pound, and the dowisers found an energy line between the two, which they felt had been 'laid down' by prehistoric peoples to denote a boundary between the two sacred hilltops. They received a wide variety of responses to questions about religious, ritual, ceremonial and processional use, but all agreed that the route had sacred significance. The top of the tor revealed a number of crossing points of earth energy and water, which they felt may have been used for the crowning of Iron Age tribal leaders, with the energy used for healing purposes as well by the women of the community.

The first Sunday in July was a perfect summer's day for the **Celtic Dowisers** visit to Ed Pryn's neo-megalithic home at St.Eval. After lunch there, a good crowd drove over to Porthcothan Mill for a walk through the valley to find *Porthcothan Vau* cave, last visited nine years ago by CEMG with Howard Balmer in July 2002 [see *MM50 p.2 & MM51 p.22-24*]. After a great stank through the undergrowth and a missed turn, the site was eventually located by Bart O'Farrell, much to everyone's relief and satisfaction!

A week later **West Cornwall Dowisers** went to *Knill's Monument*, built in 1782 on Worvas Hill overlooking St.Ives. The Monument was designed by the architect John Wood, who was also interested in sacred geometry, so the design of the pyramidal monument is especially significant. Many of Penwith holy hilltops are visible from the site, including Rosewall Hill, Trink Hill, and Trencrom Hill, and further afield Carn Brea & St.Agnes Beacon. A very strong energy line to and from Trencrom Hill was dowsed, and the dowisers determined that there was originally a barrow and/or standing stone where the Monument now stands. After lunch, they went on to the *Fairy Well* at Lelant, where many wishes were made, and then they finished at *St.Euny's Church* at Lelant, where they dowsed the original chapel + extension that lay to the south of the church.

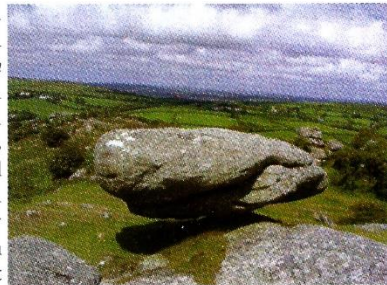
At the beginning of August **West Cornwall Dowzers** went to *Cudden Point* to the east of Mounts Bay. It is here that the Apollo line enters or leaves from St. Michael's Mount, and at a field overlooking the Mount at SW5521 2806 the line was soon located [photo right]. In addition the dowsing team found a number of other energy lines coming in here, one of which was as wide as the Apollo line, and ran nearly parallel to it. It continued along the coast to Trewavas Head (with Bronze Age barrow at SW 5989 2660) and thence on to Goonhilly Downs on the Lizard, with its wealth of barrows. In addition, the Group found that the field had once had an Iron Age settlement, dating from about 500 BCE to 500 CE, and finally, in the top corner the remains of a barrow and the stump of a standing stone were dowsed, which originally pointed to Tregonning Hill, and may have been part of a processional way.



A later visit to the barrow on Trewavas Head revealed that there had also been an Iron Age cliff castle there, and that the energy line from Cudden Point that ran through the point went straight through a zoomorphic rock next to the point, called locally 'The Dragon's Head' but looking more like an eagle. Another example perhaps of an animal or bird spirit guarding the Bronze Age barrow and the Iron Age cliff castle [photo left].

A later visit to the barrow on Trewavas Head revealed that there had also been an Iron Age cliff castle there, and that the energy line from Cudden Point that ran through the point went straight through a zoomorphic rock next to the point, called locally 'The Dragon's Head' but looking more like an eagle. Another example perhaps of an animal or bird spirit guarding the Bronze Age barrow and the Iron Age cliff castle [photo left].

Later in the month **West Cornwall Dowzers & Tamar Dowzers** came together on a lovely summer's day for dowsing at *Helman Tor*, previously visited by the Celtic Dowzers in Nov 2008 [MM69 p.3] & West Cornwall Dowzers in April 2009 [see MM70 p.3]. This time, Alan Neal led the group, who identified the Neolithic tor enclosure, and the platform where Bronze Age hut circles were built. They then looked at the possible rock carvings in relief on top of the Tor, before checking out other propped stones, view frames and energy lines. Many interesting discoveries were made,



Propped stone on Helman Tor

including: a setting of rocks identified as a place that Priestesses had used for ancestor worship; a large boulder and chamber that may have been used to resonate sound waves from a logan stone at the base of the hill; a space between constructed stones that dowsed as a place where people were passed through for healing; and an alignment of two viewing frames that pointed to Roche Rock for the equinox sunset. A full and fascinating day.

Details of dowsing days from Autumn 2011 will be in the next issue of MM.



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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



The **Mên-an-Tol** holed stone has always suffered erosion on either side of the stone, caused by people crawling through the hole. Large stones have become exposed, and the area fills with water in wet weather. Recently, CASPN received a small grant from English Heritage to maintain the stone, and this previous Autumn, a small group of people led by Dave Munday, met to repair the damage. The area of worn soil was cleaned and trimmed back, and then two buckets full of rab were recovered from a nearby ditch, placed around the stones and trampled into place. This was then covered with a thin layer of soil, and turfs were cut from an area of moorland adjacent to the path nearby, and set into the rab. The whole area was trampled and then watered, and should ensure that the surface remains firm and useable. CASPN will continue to monitor and repair the site as necessary.



Before (above) & after (below)



CASP & LAN have continued with a full programme of **Clear-ups** at various sites in West Penwith and the Lizard in 2011. These have included settlements, barrows, stone circles and holy wells. Highlights included a CASPN return to Portheras Common barrow, first cleared by them in 2010, where they have now created a path to the site, and a new LAN site of some interest Traboe barrow (to be featured in MM78).

The programme for **Pathways to the Past** May 26th-27th 2012 is now available on the CASPN website (and with this MM). And finally, CASPN now has some splendid **T-shirts & sweatshirts** for sale. Order form on the website or with this issue of MM.

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

FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS]

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)

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

Sites Clear-Ups: Tel: 01736-787186 e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com

Penwith Pagan Moot



by Eve Benney

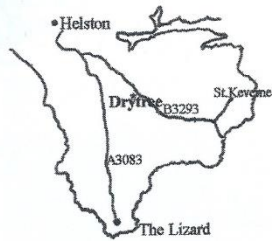
Last year for our **Lammas** ritual, we were offered the use of Tanglewood, a very beautiful place, with woods and water and firepit and even a standing stone. There was a steady drizzle under lowering clouds, but undismayed by the weather, a sizeable group squelched down from the carpark, and rain or not, the woods and ponds were still full of beauty. Instead of creating a static sacred space, we chose instead to make a journey through the land, moving through Tanglewood to re-enact the story of harvest, from sowing the seed, germination, growth, ripening and harvesting. We started in the dark of the woods, meditating on seeds we had sown and the germination of those projects and wishes, then moved out around the ponds, the firepit and the standing stone. We each consecrated a bundle of corn/barley stalks with water and fire, and then settled down to making a corn dolly. The grain stalks may have been soggy, but some very beautiful dollies took shape. We returned to the relative shelter of the woodland to enjoy Harvest loaf and barley beer.

At **Autumn Equinox**, that time of the year when day and night are of equal length, we reflected on the balance of light and dark in our own lives. From Sancreed Village Hall we set off up the hill to the Beacon in the gentle autumn sunshine and spent some time in quiet contemplation at the summit of this ancient hilltop. After tying black and white ribbons onto two tails of a kite, the black symbolising things we wish to get rid of, and white for positive intentions and wishes, we launched it from the summit of the hill. The Equinox winds were kind and took our kite for an acrobatic flight. For those of us reaching the late summer or autumn of our lives, this was a time to remember back to our spring and see the eternal cycle of Nature reflected in our lives. Then it was back down the hill to the Hall, for something new, a black and white word game, continuing the theme of balance.

The rain returned with a vengeance for **Samhain**. This was the Moot's last opportunity to visit Sancreed House, as the property has been sold. After an afternoon of preparation in torrential rain, the gardens were more mangrove swamp than rhododendron. It seemed unlikely that any would brave the heavy rain, but fifty seven brave souls splashed down the drive. After honouring our personal dead by placing a memento on the altar, the group were summoned one by one to set off into the dark. After facing the Gatekeeper, and Death with his Scythe, journeyers found the Ferryman waiting. Paying the Ferryman's toll, people passed across the water, leaving written messages for their beloved dead within his willow boat. After perhaps a more adventurous journey than usual through a pitch dark garden, everyone eventually made it to the firepit. All enjoyed a time sitting around the fire, scrying into the flames for messages from their ancestors, before the boat was burnt on the fire. We held hands on a shorter route back, to ensure all made it back to civilisation in the group room, and celebrated what in many traditions is considered the New Year with cheering and waving sparklers and chocolate and elderberry mead.

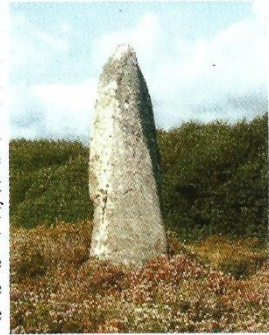
UNCOVERING THE LIZARD

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.



5: Drytree Barrows & menhir [SW725 212]

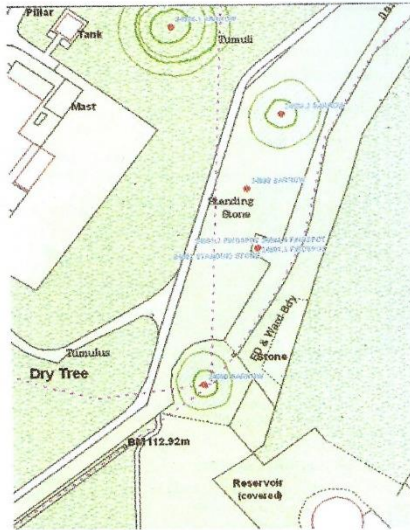
The Drytree menhir [SW7256 2116] is relatively well known, standing next to the Goonhilly Downs British Telecom communication discs. It is accessible from the Natural England car park beside the B3293 road that runs from Helston to St. Keverne. The menhir was described by R. Thomas in 1851 as lying in an inclined position, and mentioned by W.C. Borlase in 1872. By 1914-1918 the stone had fallen, when soldiers removed 3ft from the original 14ft for roadmaking. It was re-erected in 1928, when a number of stones showing signs of probable use were found in a hollow close to the heel of the menhir. The earth where the stone had lain contained traces of charcoal and a pack of stone slabs, indicating the remains of a possible cist, in which were found a flint blade, quartzite pebbles and a piece of dark rock suggestive of a prehistoric hoe. The menhir is composed of Cornish Down granite, indicating that it had been transported about 2 miles to its present position. The stone now stands 3.2 metres (10½ft) high, with a girth of 3.4m (11ft).



The stone is at the centre of a hub of alignments from all over the Lizard plateau and beyond, including energy lines from Constantine, Prospidnick and Tregonning Hill. Ley Lines (alignments of sites) run from Drytree menhir to: [1] Prospidnick menhir - Longstone Down round barrow [2] Eathorne menhir - Two Burrows round barrow & [3] Carn Brea west settlement - Nine Maidens south circle at Wendron. The Athena line also runs east-west across Goonhilly Downs through this site, although it has been deflected at this point by the building of the BT earthstation [in the background of the photo].



The Drytree menhir does not stand by itself but is in the midst of an extensive barrow field. Many of these barrows have been overgrown for many years and have not been evident to visitors to the standing stone. There are a probable ten barrows within a few hundred yards of the stone, four of which are within the perimeter of the Satellite Earth Station, but these are quite mutilated. There are a further three next to the path leading SW from the site, but the best ones are the three that lie directly either side of the standing stone, and it is two of these (NE & SE) that LAN have been concentrating on. Clearly, there must have been a relationship between the standing stone and the barrows, and dowsing indicates that the barrows were erected first, and the standing stone placed between them later. The whole area would have been specially sacred, and probably dedicated to the ancestors.



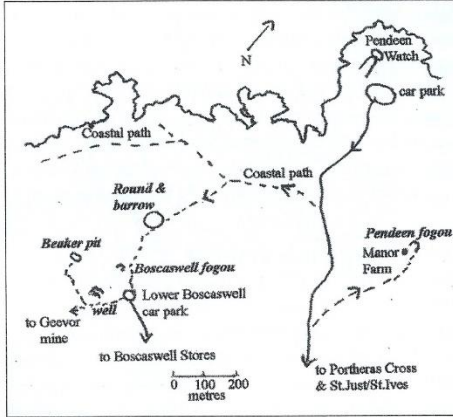
Location of menhir & nearby barrows

One of the three barrows (the NW one) lies within the perimeter of the Earth Station at SW7253 2125. This is a very large barrow 42m (136½ft) in diameter & 2.8m (9ft) high, with a mutilated top, completely overgrown and a large project for the future! But either side of the standing stone are the two other barrows (the NE & SE ones), roughly equidistant from it. These barrows would have ‘bookended’ the standing stone in prehistoric times, which would have been very visible from both of them. In 2009 LAN cleared the SE barrow (7254 2110), a bowl barrow 24m (78ft) in diameter & 1.5m (4.8ft) high, crowned with a modern triangulation pillar. Then in 2010 they began to clear the NE barrow (7254 2122), a round barrow 30m (97½ft) in diameter & 1.9m (6ft) high, and have since been back a number of times to carry on with the clearance. They finally finished it in Nov 2011, and were rewarded with the discovery of a kerb of large stones around the base of the barrow, not recorded before. One on the N side of the barrow was a substantial stone 0.78m (5ft 10in) in length, and another on the S side was 2.03m (6ft 8in) long. Both barrows are now looking good, and place the standing stone in context, making the whole site well worth a visit.



Clear-up at NE barrow, viewed from SE

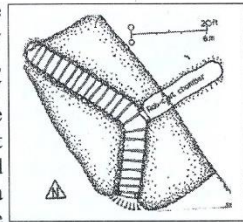
PATHWAYS TO THE PAST LOWER BOSCASWELL



This walk in the 'Pathways to the Past' series is close to MM editor Cheryl's Straffon's heart - and our house! We can walk out of our front door straight on to the route, and all the sites in this relatively little-known area are within easy walking distance. It is also archaeologically an extremely rich area, with occupation or visitation here from as far back as the Mesolithic period, through the Neolithic, the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and into the Romano-Celtic period. Our neighbour, Dave Weddle, has extensively field walked the area, and found hundreds of flints and microliths from all periods.

The walk can start and finish from two possible places, both of which have good vehicle access. Take the B3306 north coast road from St.Just to St.Ives, and at Pendeen turn down towards the coast, either at the Boscawell Stores junction and park at the bottom, or the Portheras Cross turn and park at Pendeen Watch lighthouse. For the purposes of this article, we are going to park at Pendeen Watch. From here, walk back along the road where you have driven, and after about 800 yds/740 m you come to a farm track running in a NE direction. Walk to the end of this farm track and you will arrive at Manor Farm, where the antiquarian William Borlase was born and lived in the 18thC. Ask at the farm for permission to view **Pendeen fogou** [SW3837 3553], which lies at the back of the farmyard through a muddy cow byre.

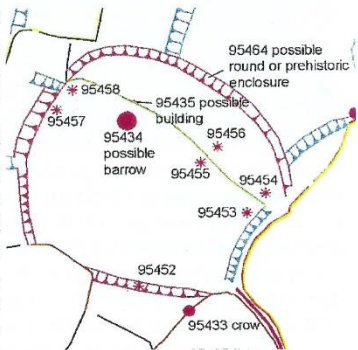
The fogou opens from the side of an ancient stone hedge and descends steeply underground, then levels and turns sharply left. The total length of this angled passage is 17.2m (56½ft), and after it bends left, the orientation of the passage is in a NW direction, which is the direction of the midsummer solstice sunset. At the angle of the passage there is a quartz stone built into the wall, perhaps placed deliberately to indicate the sacred direction. At this point, to the right in a NE direction, there is a closed chamber (which may have been the original entrance 'creep') which was cut from the main clay with no supporting stonework. The entrance to this rab-cut chamber is just 0.6m (2ft) wide and 0.5m (1½ft) high, and it leads into the chamber 7.3m (24ft) long, 1.5m (5ft) wide & 1.2m (4ft) high. Again, like the extant creeps in the other fogous, this is a belly-crawling experience, not for those with claustrophobia!



There is a legend associated with the fogou of a woman in white who appears with a red rose in her mouth at the entrance on Christmas morning. She comes from Ireland, and portends death to anyone who sees her. This may be a folk memory of winter solstice rituals performed at the fogou, in connection with the Goddess and spirits of the dead ancestors (who indeed may originally have come from Ireland to Cornwall in Celtic times).



From Pendeen fogou walk back along the farm track to the road, turn back towards Pendeen Watch lighthouse, and after 400 yds/370m or so, there is a footpath on the left (west) marked 'Coastal path'. Take this path that leads down to a stream, which it crosses and rises up the other side. Just over the stream, look out for another footpath heading steeply inland, which you should take. This path rises up above the coastal path and then heads inland across fields, all of which have good stiles. You are now walking through an ancient settlement area, where flints, microliths and other pieces have been found, covering thousands of years from the Mesolithic to the Romano-Celtic period, showing that people visited and settled here, generation upon generation.



In the final field before the lane that leads inland to Boscaswell Village, a possible site of a Bronze Age **Round Barrow** [SW37609 35063] has been identified in a field named Bethednick (meaning 'barrow') on an early Tithe Map [marked as 95434 on above map]. The site of this barrow references or reflects a distinctive mounded headland called Carn Rôs to the NW, and the barrow may have been shaped to mirror the shape of this headland.

Later this barrow may have been enclosed in a **Prehistoric Round or Enclosure** [SW37651 35077] with a diameter of approximately 150m/162 yds, or it may be contemporary with it. There were a high concentration of finds made within the enclosure [marked as 95452*-95458* on above map] dating to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British periods, so evidently this was a sacred area for a very long time, with successive generations all building on or occupying the site of their ancestors. Although there is nothing to be seen there nowadays, nevertheless it is a special experience to be able to stand on the site and feel the energy of so much ancient occupation below your feet.

From this field, take the gate on the southern (uphill) side that leads into a lane that comes out into Boscaswell Village. About half way along this lane on your right (west) is a field with a gate on an angle, beside a National Trust sign. Go through this gate and along the southern edge of the field you will see a fenced enclosure with a wooden stile. Cross over this stile and you will see in front of you the remains of **Boscaswell fogou** [SW3767 3484]. Only the entrance to the chamber still exists, with the remnants of a small creep passage, but the orientation of this chamber, like the chamber of Pendeen fogou, is to the NW, the midsummer solstice sunset [*photo right*], with the creep oriented to the midwinter sunset. The remainder of the chamber, which originally would have been at least 5.2m (17ft) long has since been destroyed, so that the site now more resembles an entrance grave than a fogou. Nevertheless it is interesting to see that both Pendeen and Boscaswell could have been ‘sunset’ fogous [*more details in MM67 p.8-9*].



Fogous are normally part of Iron Age Courtyard House settlements, and, although there are no remains of Courtyard Houses here, there are traces of an oval enclosure to the east of the main passage, which strongly suggests that the area to the east and north was originally a settlement. Two finds hot spots nearby (at SW37589 34882 & 37634 34884) which contained a high density of finds from the Iron Age and Romano-Cornish periods, reinforce the interpretation of this as a Courtyard House settlement. During the 18thC work on a bank somewhere in the vicinity of the fogou produced a Roman hoard consisting of nearly a hundred coins of Antonius Pius (Emperor from 138 to 161 CE) all of which have since been lost.

Returning to the lane to the east of the fogou, continue southwards along it past some cottages until it opens out into a parking area. This is an alternative place from which to start and finish this walk, and is accessible from a road leading off the B3306 north coast road from St.Just to St.Ives at Boscaswell Stores. (This car parking area is also a bus turning bay for busses from Penzance to St.Just & St.Just to Penzance, should you wish to arrive at this walk by public transport). From this parking area we now head west by another trackway that leads after a few yards to our final two sites - a holy well and a rare and unusual Beaker Pit.

The trackway runs past a few cottages until it opens out, and to your right (north) in front of a house lies **Lower Boscaswell Holy Well** [SW3768 3472]. This well consists of a rectangular enclosure with some steps leading down to the well, though sometimes when the well is full of water, the steps are no longer visible. The well was formerly known as Hesken (or Sedge) Well, and was famed for its leeches used in healing. There was formerly a chapel here about 400 yds/370m to the NE, of which nothing now remains.



Lower Boscaswell well location & well

From the well return to the path and straight ahead of you is a gate and a stile. Cross this stile and ahead of you is the massive scar in the land that was Geevor mine, that closed in the 1980s and is now a Heritage Centre. Do not take the path that goes ahead to the mine, but one that turns off right and runs down through a field towards the sea. About halfway down this field near the hedge is a stone surround, within which you will see the **Beaker Pit** [SW3760 3470]. Pipe laying work by SW Water in 2006 uncovered a mound and this rare pit, about 18" wide and 18" deep, lying a yard/metre or so below the field line. The mound contained fire-cracked stones mixed with charcoal and has given a radiocarbon date of Early Bronze Age 2290-2020 BCE, while the nearby stone-lined pit yielded fragments of a broken pot with small round pebbles and a pile of rocks at the bottom, and gave a date of 2220-1950 BCE.



Beaker Pit at Boscaswell

This would place it in the Beaker period, so-called from the beakers with distinctive designs found in the graves of this period. At one time it was thought that the 'Beaker people' were a separate group from the other Bronze Age peoples, but now they are seen simply as one social class of the indigenous population. The site was probably used for cooking and feasting by people who were moving through the land, and was then 'decommissioned' after use by placing burnt pebbles around it. This interesting and unusual site completes our walk and we now return to the Boscaswell parking area, and either retrace our footsteps back to Pendeen Watch, or walk up through Boscaswell Village road, which eventually joins the road leading down to Pendeen Watch. Either way, we have had a walk through a landscape occupied by people continuously for thousands of years, seen an array of lesser-known sites, and stood on a beautiful land with the sea as our backdrop.

This walk will be given as part of Pathways to the Past weekend on Sunday May 27th, with archaeologist Adrian Rodda. Meet at Pendeen Lighthouse car park at 2pm.

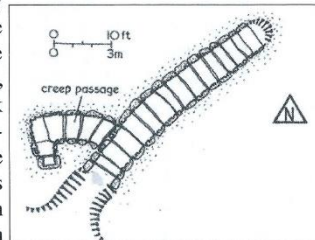
*IN -
SITE*

The centre-page feature that focusses on one or two particular sites each time in depth. As a preview to the features on fogous on p.14-21, this one looks at
BOLEIGH FOGOU

Fogous are always found as part of Courtyard House settlements, and date from the same Celtic Iron Age period (500 BCE-500CE approx). They seem to have been the sacred centres of the Courtyard House villages, and the predominant view nowadays are that they were used not for refuge or storage but for ceremony and ritual. They are (usually) curved underground passageways, with a narrow side passage known as a 'creep' sloping towards the surface, which was probably the original entrance. Both ends of the fogou may have originally been sealed, and entering them feels like going into the Underworld: "a dank, dark cave of pulsating energies where unexpected things can occur".



Boleigh fogou lies in the grounds of Rosmerryn House near Lamorna, about ¼ mile east of the Merry Maidens stone circle. Permission to visit should be obtained, preferably by phone (01736-810530). The fogou now stands alone in the grounds of the House, but was formerly contained within an earthwork (measuring 43m (140ft) x 24m (80ft)), and was undoubtedly part of a Courtyard House settlement, where Rosmerryn House now stands. The fogou itself is beautifully preserved with a main chamber 10.9m (36ft) long and 1.8m (6ft) high, which is entered from the SW but is oriented to the NE, the direction of the midsummer solstice sunrise.



Plan [c] Craig Weatherhill

Like Carn Euny fogou, Boleigh may have been blocked at both ends, with entry from above being through the small creep passage on the west side of the chamber, which is now blocked at its southern end. Alternatively, the creep passage may only have been accessible from inside the fogou itself - it is not really known for certain. If it were the only entry from outside, it would have involved dropping into the creep, and then having to turn sharp right and crawl on hands and knees into the main chamber, which would have been a powerful initiatory experience. However, others have suggested that the creep passage was designed as an inner chamber, accessible only from the fogou, with space enough only comfortably for one person, which may have served as a meditation space, or even perhaps a birthing chamber.

It has been suggested that there is an indistinct carving on the left hand upright stone of the present-day SW entrance [drawing right]. This has been seen as an upper part of a figure, carrying a staff or spear in one hand and a lozenge or possibly serpent's head in the other. This has been variously interpreted as a symbol of a fertility cult to ensure a successful harvest (Evelyn Clarke in *Cornish Fogous*); a Celtic hooded godlet - geni cucullati - found elsewhere in Gaul (Craig Weatherhill - see p16 of *this MM.*); a Celtic god of healing, Clew an Nemed, found elsewhere in Brittany (Jo May in *Living with a Fogou Meyn Mamvro* no.3); or a Cernunnos figure - the Celtic horned god with his serpent and remains of a horn. It has to be said that the 'carving' is now virtually impossible to see, so its provenance and veracity must remain a mystery.



Also mysterious at this site is the presence of anomalous light phenomena, seen by Jo May, who formerly lived in the house next to the fogou. On June 19th 1988 Jo spent the night in the underground chamber and this is what he experienced:

"Just at the point of dawn, as light was beginning to break, I saw thin spirallike filaments swirling in front of my eyes and around the main capping lintels of the passage. At first I thought it was a retinal image (much like 'floaters' or dead cells on the eyeball). But I had never experienced such spirallike phenomena before and they seemed to be moving independently of my eye movements. They most closely resembled the whorls on fingertips, but lots of them, interlaced and moving gently. Then I saw hundreds of tiny pricks of light, like stars, again moving gently, with the occasional streak as if some of them were shooting stars. I checked that this was not some kind of subjective or self-produced effect by switching my gaze back to the emerging light at the entrance of the fogou, and then redirecting my gaze several points within the passage. The stars returned unmistakably. The whole passage appeared to be filled with what can best be described as a star soup which flowed in and around the stones. Somehow I 'knew' that what I was seeing was energy, which, although subtle, was clearly 'there'. I suspect that the ability to see it depends on certain fine tuning of perception which is probably available to anyone".

This 'star soup' may be a manifestation of a little-understood 'earth lights' phenomena produced by some kind of electromagnetic energy, not understood by conventional science, but also seen at other sites, for example Chûn Quoit. It may also give rise to psychic experiences or altered states of consciousness. Jo May also commented on this: "The kind of phenomena experienced in the fogou - on several occasions by a number of people simultaneously - include inner voices giving uncannily pertinent guidance, sometimes forecasting events before they happen; subjective perceptions of powers and presences - usually of female figures, frequently described as 'woman in white' or priestesses; visions involving fire, symbolic perhaps, of inner cleansing; visions involving the laying out of the dead - usually bedecked with flowers - in preparation for the soul's journey to another realm; visions of enforced entombment for the purpose of confronting the dark side of the soul in order to re-emerge reborn; experiences of people being 'called to the fogou to symbolically 'die' or else to collectively grieve someone who actually has died; experiences of waves of peace or comfort, and stilling of inner turmoil".

25

THE RIDDLE OF THE FOGOUS

by Craig Weatherhill

25 years ago, the first issue of MM had as its feature article, a discussion of the nature and meaning of fogous, especially written for the magazine by Craig Weatherhill. Although much has since been written and debated about the subject, especially by Ian Cooke, this article remains as fresh and thought-provoking as it did 25 years ago when it was first written.

In all of Kernow's vast wealth of ancient sites, there is nothing as mysterious as a fogou. Even today, the speculation, discussion and outright argument regarding their original function rages on as they have for years. These curious, passage-like structures - their name comes from the Cornish word *fogo* meaning 'a cave' - belong to a group of monuments also found in Brittany, Ireland and Scotland, and which are collectively known as Souterrains. They are not found in Wales or the remainder of Britain. The Breton souterrains appear to be the oldest, followed by the Cornish fogous, and both belong to the later Iron Age and Roman period - roughly between the 7th century BCE and the first century CE (AD). Those of Ireland and Scotland seem to be later in date, being built during the Early Christian period.

Over the years, a number of misconceptions have emerged regarding the subject of fogous, the first of which is that they are purely underground structures. Of the twelve examples which survive in Cornwall, four can be considered as underground, four semi-underground, and four were built totally above ground. Evelyn Clark, in her book *Cornish Fogous* (1961), held that all fogous, with the exception of that at Boleigh, were through passages with an entrance at each end. In fact, this is only certainly true of one of the passages at the huge site of Halligey at Trelowarren, although it could have been the case at four other sites.

Of the twelve survivors, eleven can still be seen in their various states of preservation, but the twelfth, at North Treveneague near St.Hilary, has been lost since the turn of the century. It is presumed buried but not destroyed. In most cases, fogous consist of a long passage five or six feet wide and often six feet or more in height, their walls corbelling inward at the top, in all cases bar Piskey Hall at Constantine. This passage is usually curved, often the gentle, sweeping curve beloved of Celtic craftsmen and artists, although Pendeen Vau contains quite a sharp bend.



The curving passage at Carn Euny fogou

Subsidiary passages are common, including tiny ones aptly described as ‘creeps’. All fogous were associated with settlements: either the Courtyard House villages of West Penwith, or the palisaded settlements known as Rounds, and none occur east of the Fal Estuary. Two distinct geographical groups emerge from this map: West Penwith (with an outlier at St.Hilary), and a small area around the head of the Helford river.

The total length of fogou varies wildly: from the 23ft at the above ground example at Bosulow Trehyllys, discovered a few years ago by the writer; to the 126ft of Halligey, with passages as much as 7ft high. Best known of all is the beautiful fogou at Carn Euny, which was thoroughly excavated by Patricia Christie over the years 1964-72. Her most significant finding was that the fogou was a multi-phased construction. The oldest part is the amazing round chamber, which, as an underground structure, is quite unique, although it is echoed almost to the inch by the above-ground ‘fogou’ at Bosporthennis, known as the Beehive Hut. Carn Euny’s round chamber, built at around 500 BCE, was entered by a straight passage from the south-east, which survives in part. At a later date, maybe a couple of centuries later,



Carn Euny - round chamber looking out to later-built curved passage

the curving long passage was built, cutting across the entrance passage to the Round Chamber and running from south-west to north-east. At this stage the entire fogou was completely closed, except for the tiny creep which angles steeply to the surface near the south-western end. The north-eastern entrance was opened up when the adjoining courtyard houses were built in the first century BCE or CE (AD). The present south-west entrance has only been open in recent times, and was never a part of the fogou during its years of use.

And so we come to the question which has caused so much discussion and argument: what was the use to which fogous were put? Three ideas are currently on offer: 1) Refuges. 2) Storage chambers. 3) Religious or ritual cult centres. To this day, no-one knows for sure. Despite five excavations using modern methods, the fogous stubbornly cling to their secrets, even though some recent books unfoundedly claim that fogous were storage chambers. If this were true, what possible use was the Carn Euny fogou when, for a long time, the only way in and out was by means of a tiny, awkward passage less than 3ft square? Excavation has shown in all cases that secrecy was not essential: even the great fogou at Halligey would have been obvious to anyone standing on the surface. The idea of refuge, then, is highly doubtful, and, once inside, the occupants could have been smoked out with ease.

As an archaeologist, albeit amateur and ‘spare-time’, I have often been criticised for studying folk-lore and legend in search of clues to such mysteries, but mere narrow-mindedness fails to convince me that the study of legend is valueless.

The fogou at Higher Bodinnar, now little more than a bare, stony ditch, was said to be haunted by spriggans. Pendeen Vau and Boleigh's 'Fogie Hole' were both believed to be of incredible extent. Pendeen has its Christmas ghost, but the legend of Duffy and the Devil contains a vivid account of witchcraft and devilry in the Boleigh fogou. Could this be the folk memory of pre-Christian rites held in those far-off Iron Age days? The legend tells that the devil soundly 'kicked' the witches. Gerald Priestland in his book *West of Hayle River* (1980) suggests that this word was substituted for a coarser one, and the tail being twirled by the devil (or the man in the guise of a devil) was a bull's pizzle.

Of all the fogous, it is Boleigh which seems to be giving us hints of its former purpose. Jo May who runs [*sic*] CAER is lucky to have this very fogou within the grounds of his Centre, and, according to him, the fogou's atmosphere is especially conducive to meditation. One psychic asserts that this atmosphere is one of healing, and dowsers say that there is a strong field of energy 15ft wide along the path of the fogou.

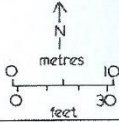


Boleigh fogou entrance, looking out

The monument itself provides a visual clue, for on one of the entrance jambs is a carving: a rough, bas-relief image of the upper half of a human figure [*drawing on p.13 of this MM*]. Both arms, held horizontally from the shoulders, are upraised at the elbow. The figure's right hand holds a staff or spear, while the other brandishes a diamond-shaped object which may be a serpent's head, or the ram horns often depicted on the heads of snakes in Celtic carvings. The body of the 'serpent' is wrapped around the wrist of the raised hand, and the tail faintly hangs down behind the shoulder. The enigmatic figure has been seen by some to have long hair, but my own interpretation of the carving is that the figure is hooded. No facial features can be discerned. The style of the carving, which is about 1½ft high, is noticeably Celtic, and, if genuinely so, would be the only known Iron Age carving in Cornwall.

The figure almost certainly represents a Celtic god, perhaps one associated with healing. The serpent is a symbol used by many mythologies to represent this art, and Celtic deities such as Dianecht, the Gaelic god of healing (the Brythonic equivalent of his name or sect hasn't survived) were always associated with serpents, as was Cernunnos, the Celtic horned god of the otherworld. However, the hooded figure seems to be one of the nameless *genii cucullati*, hooded godlets which are sometimes depicted in triplicate as well as singly. At times, they are shown to accompany a greater god of the Celtic pantheon, and are often shown in association with a horned serpent. Again, these dwarvish deities are Gaulish imports, and wear the Gaulish hooded cloaks. The fact that they are apparently dwarves may explain the origin of the spriggan legend found at Higher Bodinnar. More importantly, these godlings are linked with prosperity, healing and fertility, and in this last, we are back to the hints of the Duffy and the Devil legend.

CORNISH FOGOUS



- surviving passage, roofed.
- passage traceable
- surviving passage, roofless.
- passage destroyed
- modern walling

BOLEIGH St Buryan	BOSPORTHENNIS Zennor	BOSULLOW TREHYLLYS. Madron	CARN EUNY Sancreed
CHYSAUSTER Gulval	HALLIGEY Mawgan in Meneage	HIGHER BODINNAR Sancreed	LOWER BOSCASWELL St Just
NORTH TREVEENAGUE St Hilary 1867 <small>now buried</small>	PENDEEN VAU St Just	PISKEY HALL Constantine	PORTHMEOR Zennor

CARN EUNY FOGOOU - development

PHASE 1 CS BC	PHASE 2 C4/3 BC	PHASE 3 C1 BC/AD



The notion that the fogous of Cornwall were religious or ritual buildings, associated with healing and fertility, is not a new one, but I hope that my deliberations add to the supporting evidence for this interpretation, which is far and away the best on offer. The more hard-nosed scholars may look upon this interpretation as overly mystic, but I would answer that the Celtic religions of more than 2000 years ago are as mystic and mysterious to us, as modern Christianity and its curious rituals (such as the Holy Communion) would be to them. Like parish churches, Cornish settlements seem to have sprung up around the fogous (as the Carn Euny evidence suggests), and, like a modern church, a fogou may have witnessed many types of ritual, apart from its prime function; such as ‘christenings’, marriages, funeral services, and harvest ceremonies. The analogy, I think, is an apt one, and until future findings show otherwise (and we’re running out of fogous to excavate), I will continue to believe that the function of the Cornish fogou was a religious one, and that each fogou was to its settlement and people what a parish church is to us today.



[Above] - Craig Weatherhill & MM Editor Cheryl Straffon at Chysauster settlement fogou entrance - 25 yrs ago!
 [Below] fogou entrance as it is today



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INTO THE UNDERWORLD: 25 YEARS OF FOGOU RESEARCH

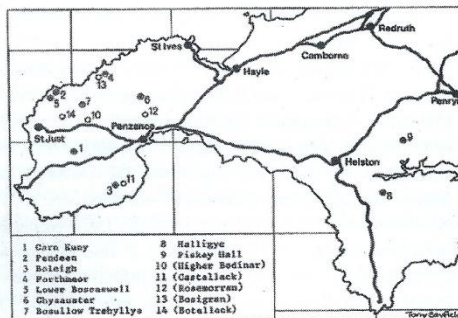
It was in MM issue 2 (Spring 1987) that Ian Cooke was to first espouse his ideas about the function of fogous. He pointed out that out of eleven fogou sites for which there are sufficient visible remains or detailed old plans, eight have their passage curved from SW to NE, bending to the right when viewed from the southern end. Thus they are oriented to the rising sun at midsummer solstice, and Ian described vividly his visit to Carn Euny in 1985 to observe the first rays of the rising midsummer sun shine in to the fogou 'entrance'. The other 3 fogous (Pendeen, Porthmeor & Lower Boscaswell) have passages curved from NE to SW, thus facing the opposite end of the day, the setting midsummer sun.



Carn Euny 'entrance' facing NE

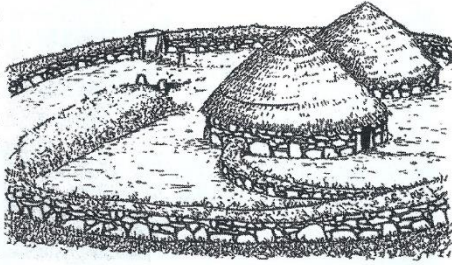
Six years later, in 1993 Ian published his 'magnum opus' "Mother and Sun: the Cornish Fogou" [*Mên-an-Tol Studio - reviewed in MM24*] which still remains the most comprehensive and detailed examination of fogous ever published. Ian listed 62 sites, which he divided into definite, possible and unlikely fogous, and he also published photographs and plans, and examined their construction, context and function. Articles by Ian in MM had previously examined 'The Cult of the Fogou' [MM9], 'Fogous as ritual centres' [MM14] and 'Folklore of the Fogou' [MM19].

Meanwhile, in 1992 in *Cornish Archaeology* 31 Rachel Maclean had published an article on the possible explanations for the function of fogous. In this, she dismissed storage (too damp) and questioned ritual, settling instead for refuge, comparing them with contemporary souterrains in Ireland and Brittany. However, an article in MM24 on 'Fogous and Souterrains' showed how different the two structures were, and how fogous could never have served as safe refuges.



Map of fogou locations [from MM9]

The next event of interest was the arrival of Channel 4's Time Team to examine the settlement and fogou at Boleigh in a programme broadcast in 1996 [see MM30]. They failed to consider any possible solar orientation for the fogou, being more interested in tin streaming, and a ditch in the gardens. However, the County Archaeologist Nick Johnson and Tony Robinson did both opt for a ritual or spiritual explanation for the function of the fogou.



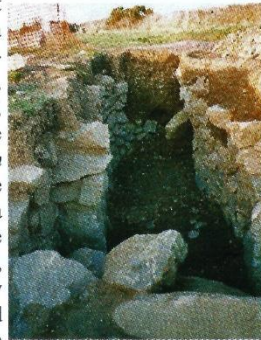
Boleigh settlement & fogou [reconstruction]

About the same time, Jo May, who at that time was the owner of the house [CAER] and fogou at Boleigh, published a book entitled "Fogou - Gateway to the Underworld" [Gothic Image, 1996], in which he wrote about his experiences, both practical and spiritual, at the site. This included accounts by people, usually women, of visions and psychic experiences in the fogou, which has been a recurring feature of fogous this past quarter century. In an early article in MM3 Jo May had spoken about some of these [see p.13 of this MM for more details], and in the book he spoke of some of the voices he had heard in the fogou, which he believed were of the ancestors who had lived at the courtyard house settlement there. He began to have visions of them and see their faces and hear them speak. He believed that the energy vibrating there manifested itself as "devas and nature spirits and other energetic forms", and that what emerged in the fogou was "a pattern involving synchronous imagery, inner voices and visions, and energy effects experienced at a bodily level". He added: "It seems that the fogou was used as a focal point for spiritual practices involving death and rebirth, vision quests, healing, inner guidance and soul-making". Powerful places, fogous!

Other experiences of similar altered states of consciousness have been reported to MM over the years. One of these was a woman in 1992 [MM21] who was sketching at Carn Euny fogou, and had a 'time lapse' vision of the community who lived originally at the site. This was not a threatening experience, but gave her a great sense of calm, a feeling that many others have reported from this site. There are also the legends attached to some of the fogous that seem to be folk memories of some sort of their possible original uses. At Boleigh in the story of 'Duffy and the Devil' Squire Lovell chases a hare down into the fogou, and there sees a coven of witches [see p.16 of this MM]; and at Pendeen fogou on Christmas morning a woman in white from Ireland sometimes appears, carrying a red rose in her mouth [see p.9 of this MM]. It was also generally believed that souls or spirits who were the ghosts of prehistoric inhabitants inhabited fogous. Intense radioactive readings in fogous have been noted: Pendeen fogou was 91% higher than the local exterior background; Carn Euny was 87% higher, and Boleigh was a full 100% higher. Some people have speculated that these high concentrations of radiation may be what gives rise to the visions frequently seen, and also the 'star soup' experienced by Jo May in Boleigh fogou [see p.13 of this MM].

After this outpouring of research into fogous in the late 20th century, one could be forgiven for thinking that there was little else that could be said. However, in 2008 MM took a fresh look at the largely-ignored creep passages in fogous. In an article in MM67, entitled 'The Sunset Fogous', MM editor Cheryl Traffon showed that the two north coast fogous, Pendeen and Lower Boscaswell, both had creep passages that were significantly orientated. At Pendeen, the main passage faces the NW, midsummer solstice sunset, while the creep passage faces NE, midsummer solstice sunrise. At Boscaswell, the main passage also faces NW, midsummer solstice sunset, while the creep faces SW, midwinter solstice sunset. The following article then went on to look at these two and other fogous - Carn Euny, Boleigh and Halligye - to suggest some ways that the orientations of the main and side passages of the fogous could have been used for ritual and ceremony in the past.

Finally, despite Craig Weatherhill's 1986 comment that "we're running out of fogous to excavate" [see p.18], a 'new' one presented itself quite recently. Boden, near Manac-an on the Lizard, was known about in the early 19th century, but it wasn't until 1991 that the farmer opened up a passage, oriented in a northerly direction. It lay within an Iron Age settlement enclosure, and an excavation in 2003 [reported in MM55] revealed that the walls of the 4m (13ft) long passage were still in place, and there were deposits of pottery and a glass blue bead found at the southern entrance. There are indications that the passage continues in a NE direction, though it is at present blocked by a large stone (possibly placed there in the early 20th century). If this is so, and excavator James Gossip thinks it is likely, then the orientation of the fogou would fit the pattern already identified by Ian Cooke, and would be further support for a ritual or ceremonial function. In association with MAG (the Meneage Archaeological Group), it is intended that the existing site will be tidied up and opened to the public.



*Excavated passage
of Boden fogou*

This discovery at Boden fogou prompted MM55 to take a closer look at other lesser-known fogous east of West Penwith, including Halligye (Trelowarren), Piskey's Hall (Trewardreva), and the possible site of the buried Treveneague fogou, nr St.Hilary (also sought for in the 1996 TimeTeam programme on Boleigh fogou, with inconclusive results). If this were ever located and excavated, it would be a major discovery and could yield a great deal of new information about fogous. Meanwhile, a curious structure, labelled as a "Romano-Cornish fogou" in the HER, was discovered during an excavation in 2007 at Penhale Round, near Fraddon (SW9076 5723). It consists of an east-west aligned stone-lined channel, associated with at least 4 smaller channels and a group of 5 postholes at its west end. This does not seem to be typical fogou: its structure is different, it is late in date (3rd-4thC CE), outside the west Cornwall area, and remains found were of Roman pottery. Nevertheless, it shows that the story of fogous in Cornwall is far from over, and these enigmatic structures may still have some surprises in store for us.

BOOK REVIEWS

Village Witch by Cassandra Latham-Jones

[Troy Books, 2011, pbk £13.99 + postage]

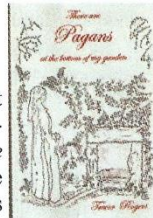
This book has been a long time a-coming. Cassandra says that it has taken her 10 years to get to the completion of the book and have it published. This shows in places, as the earlier parts were obviously written some years ago and not updated (For example she writes about Mab her 'familiar' cat in the present, but the book is joint-dedicated in loving memory of her, as she passed to spirit some years ago). This could have been overcome with some judicious editing, but nevertheless it does mean that the book reads like a journal, and consequently has a freshness about it that might otherwise have been lost. Cassandra very much wanted to include autobiographical material about her life, which is quite searing in places, but does show her journey to becoming the person she has now become. The second half of the book is about her experiences as a village Wise Woman, and in dealing with the media, who figure heavily throughout the book - and not always felicitously! She also writes about her knowledge of interacting with the spirit world, of the energies of St.Buryan where she lives, of creating spells and magic and charms, of her journeys to America and Africa, and of her work with the Witchcraft Museum, the Pagan Federation, and the Penglaz/Penkeyyll Osses. Some of these have been quite controversial over the years, and Cassandra has never shied away from controversy, but there is a feeling that she could have said much more in this book about certain events and people had she been able to do so! But all in all it is a good read, with one of Sarah Vivian's beautiful paintings on the cover, making it a fine production from Troy Books.



There are Pagans at the bottom of my garden by Trevor Rogers

[Alesia Wells Publishing, Granary Barns, Alesia, St.Buryan, Penzance
TR19 6HG, 2011, pbk £13.99 + postage]

Trevor Rogers is the owner of Granary Barns at Alesia in West Penwith, and on his property lies Alesia Holy Well. Trevor is also something of a raconteur, having already written a book *If we lived in the Highlands*, which told of his journey and adventures about moving to the Highlands of Scotland. This book picks up where the other finished, as Trevor leaves Scotland for Cornwall, and goes on to tell of his search for a suitable property here to restore and dwell. After we are introduced to some entertaining events and characters, he arrives at Alesia, and discovers he has a holy well on his land; moreover not just any old holy well, but one that is still actively used and visited by all manner of people, some of whom are quite eccentric, and others just barking mad! But there are also many who obviously care very deeply about the site, and as the book unfolds, we come to see Trevor's growing awareness of the significance of the site, and what it represents to modern-day pagans and other spiritual seekers. He becomes more interested in the origins of the well, and the book concludes with his theories of its connection to the old Goddess faith and the Eleusian mysteries. Trevor kindly asked me to write an Introduction to the book, and I can thoroughly recommend it as an interesting book written with warmth and humour about Trevor's special relationship with this magical site. [CS]



Goon, hal, cliff & croft: the archaeology and landscape history of west Cornwall's rough ground by Peter Dudley et al.

[Cornwall Council www.historic-cornwall.org.uk, 2011, £29.00]

Managing the historic environment on west Cornwall's rough ground by Graeme Kirkham et al.

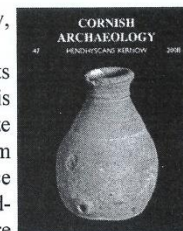
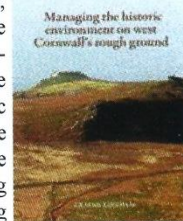
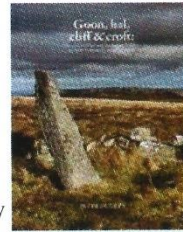
[Cornwall Council www.historic-cornwall.org.uk, 2011, £29.00]

These two books are complimentary to each other and ideally should be read together. Taken together they provide an up-to-date, detailed and comprehensive look at the prehistoric and later use of the iconic landscape of West Cornwall, written from an informed perspective by those working at the cutting edge of archaeology and landscape studies in Cornwall. Most archaeologists working at the Historic Environment service of Cornwall Council have contributed to these volumes, with their own particular expertise and specialisation, and the result is an immensely readable and useful overview of current thinking and research into key areas, such as the prehistoric and historic shaping of the land, the use and function of the monuments, and the significance of belief, ritual and folklore within the cultures of prehistorical and historic people.

The two books each have a slightly different perspective. *Goon, hal, cliff and croft* examines the sites in their environmental context, and focusses on contemporary ideas and findings about them. For ancient sites enthusiasts, the best chapter is Ch.7 by Peter Herring, that looks at the different types of monuments and their possible function and uses. But there is also much else of interest in the book, and an openness to alternative explanations about landscape and sites. Indeed in Ch 2 Graeme Kirkham talks about how earth mysteries research (and specifically *Meyn Mamvro*) has brought new perspectives on monuments and their relationship to landscape, and how these approaches have “usefully encouraged a less strictly functionalist approach to interpreting the past”. *Managing the historic environment* also has a very useful analysis (in Ch.3) of the types of monuments and their place in the landscape, but the emphasis is much more about contemporary attitudes towards sites, and the work undertaken to preserve and enhance them (including a good mention and photographs of work undertaken by CASPN & LAN). Both books are profusely illustrated with colour photos, and are a real ‘must’ for anyone interested in West Cornwall & its sites.

Cornish Archaeology 47 [2008] [Cornwall Archaeological Society, 2011 www.cornisharchaeology.org.uk]

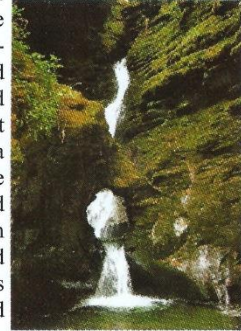
The CAS annual volume for 2008 has been published, with its usual mix of interesting articles from all periods. The prehistoric era is marked by articles on excavations at Trenowah, St.Austell; a Bronze Age roundhouse at Carnon Gate, Feock; and a piece on the Time Team excavations at Gear and Caervallack Rounds in 2001. This latter piece includes the observation that the summer solstice sunset over Prospidnick menhir can be seen from the highest part of Gear enclosure. There are also other nuggets of information within the pages of this volume.



20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

An article in MM17 (Winter/Spring 1992) on ‘Serpent Dreaming’ by Robin Ellis described St.Nectan’s Kieve (waterfall) near Tintagel as “a place of great sanctity ... unfortunately somewhat spoiled by the evils of commercialism”, and added “With its own pool and cave, looking out over the wooded glen, it would be a tremendous place for meditation - if it wasn’t for the café and all the tourists it attracts”. This provoked a reaction from Susan Laws who in the next issue argued that the café provided welcome refreshment, and that “the joy and enthusiasm radiating from most visitors does indeed replenish the sacred power inherent in such places such as St.Nectan’s and does not detract from it one iota”. Robin replied, maintaining his point that “having a café on top of such a sacred waterfall, and then charging an admission fee to see it, is a bit profane.”



This debate about the commercialisation and so-called ‘despoilation’ of this site, was to continue on and off in the pages of MM for the next 20 years - and is still quite active today! In MM19 Jo Pacsco exposulated: “How can anyone own a waterfall? It is a ludicrous idea which could only be conceived in our extremely materialistic society”. A fair point: however, many wonders of nature around the world are charged for, including the Niagra Falls in North America. Further letters followed about: charging for entrance (MM21); about the site being closed in May (MM25); about the threat to put up razor wire and electric fences to deter trespassers (MM29); about the owners putting it up for sale (MM34 - this was in 1997, so it’s been on the market now for nearly 15 years!); about the mythology and legend surrounding the place being a modern invention (MM48); and about the site being ‘choked’ with tacky and tasteless ‘offerings’, which the owners Barry & Jean Litton did not wish to have removed (MM49 & MM62). However, they did receive some help and advice from Graham King of the Witchcraft Museum in Boscastle, which resulted in them creating a small ‘meditation room’ next to the tearooms, which was decorated with Goddess statuettes and sculptures of flowing water, and still remains today.

Recently, the status of the site has been given new impetus, with the death of Jean Litton, and the consequent resolve of Barry to put the site and surrounding woodland area up for auction. Various possible purchasers, including the National Trust and the Dandelion Trust (who own the area of Rocky Valley below) have come and gone over the years, but recently a special interest group ‘Friends of St.Nectans Glen’ was set up by Tor Webster to try and collectively buy the land and tend to the site, though with an asking price of £800,000, this may be a tall order. Tor commented: “It’s vital the waterfall is preserved in pristine condition and the site kept as a sacred place of pilgrimage for all to enjoy”. Whether this happens or not, only time will tell, but we haven’t heard the last of it!

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MM78 due out May 2012 will include article on Bran + all the usual features.

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NOTICEBOARD

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WEST CORNWALL DOWSERS

Regular site visits throughout the year.
e: westcornwalldowsers@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 01326-281139

TRENCROM DOWSERS

New group formed with John Moss, director of British Society of Dowsers. Talks & site visits planned, inc *Sat Jan 14th* Sennen Churchtown Hall 2pm Megalithic Mysteries of Cornwall with Cheryl Traffon. Ph 01736-786506
e: mossinthewoods@btopenworld.com

TAMAR DOWSERS

Site visits in Summer & talks in Winter
Web site: www.tamar-dowsers.co.uk
Tel: 01822-612403

ANCIENT SITES CLEAR-UPS**West Penwith**

Sun Jan 15th - Sancreed well
Sun Feb 19th - Madron well
Sun Mar 25th - Lesingey Round
Sun Apr 15th - Treen entrance graves
All at 2pm. For further details -
Dave Munday 01736-787230 E-mail:
dave@cornishancientsites.com
www.cornishancientsites.com/site-clearances

The Lizard [LAN]

Tue Jan 17th - Traboe barrow
Sat Feb 18th - Kynance Gate houses
Tue Mar 13th - Kynance Gate houses
Tue Apr 10th - Drytree barrow
All at 12.00. Details: 01736-787186
E-mail info@cornishancientsites.com
www.cornishancientsites.com/lan

FENTON BEBIBELL WELL

Annual Good Friday clear-up & baptism of dolls. *Fri Apr 6th*
Meet Mên-an-Tol layby at 11am
All welcome (bring doll if wished)

PAGAN FEDERATION

(Devon, Cornwall & Channel Isles)
Spring Conference - *Sat Mar 10th*
Penstowe Manor, Kilkampton, Bude
Details from PO Box 314, Exeter,
Devon EX4 6YR, or web site:
www.paganfederationdevonandcornwall.co.uk

PAGAN MOOTS

Penzance - 2nd Tues each month
7.15pm Stella Maris Healing Centre
Sarah 01736-787522 or Eve 793905
Redruth/Truro/Falmouth- 3rd Mon
7.30pm Tel: Ann 01872-863970
Tolven Moot at Stonemasons Arms,
Longdowns nr. Penryn - 1st Tues
each month Tel: 01209-831519
Bodmin - 1st Weds Tel: Wendy
01208-832977

BELTANE CELEBRATIONS

Mon Apr 30th - 24th Annual Maypole
Dance at Bosavern Farm, St. Just
6.30pm Details: 01736-787186
Tue May 1st 5am - Jack in the Green
with Penkvyll Oss. Chapel Carn Brea
Tue May 1st - Obby Oss Day at
Padstow. Details: 01841-533449
Web site: www.padstow.com
Sun May 6th - 24th Three Wells
Walk Meet Sancreed Church
10.15am or Sancreed Well 1pm
Details: 01736-787186
Tue May 8th - Helston Flora Day +
Hal-an-Tow Web site:
www.helstonfloraday.org.uk