
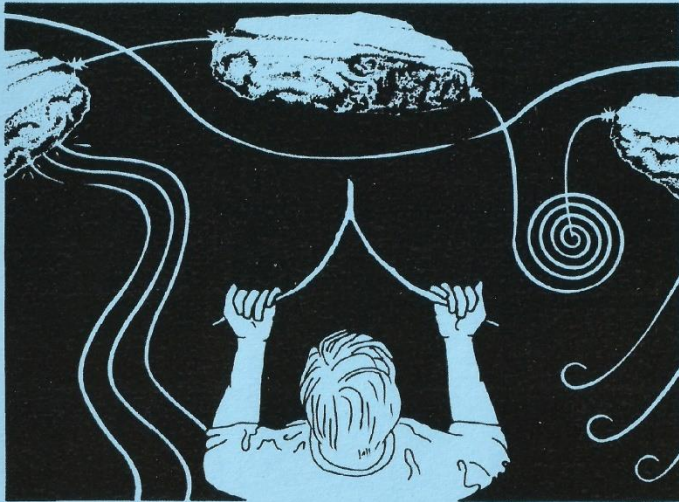


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meyn mamvro
ancient stones and sacred sites in cornuall



DOWSING SPECIAL - The Bart Line & Michael & Mary

● ALSIA'S OTHER WELL ● ANCIENT TRACKS ●

HOME SWEET ANCIENT HOME ● CASPN & LAN ●

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Conservation, preservation and desecration are all ‘buzz’ words in countryside and heritage circles nowadays. *Meyn Mamvro* has over the years been forthright about the various threats posed to ancient sites on our patch. Other groups, such as ‘Save Penwith Moors’, also fight to preserve the open landscape, and there are other concerned individuals who draw attention to threats to the sites. One of these is MM reader Alan Simkins, who (on p.22-23) writes about an unthinking and uncaring approach to the Mên-an-Tol monument that he witnessed. Another active campaigner is Roy Goutté, who helps with conservation on Bodmin Moor and frequently posts on The Heritage Trust web site [www.theheritagetrust.wordpress.com/category/Cornwall]. Recently he has drawn attention to two specific thoughtless acts affecting sites on the Moor. At Trethevey Quoit, he has written about the effect of horses and tractors churning up the ground around the Quoit, and says of an earlier visit: “The field area around the quoit was much, much worse than it had been before with huge tractor tyre tracks around it and hoof prints encroaching up to and onto the low remaining banked cairn surrounding the base of the quoit. It was in danger of becoming unstable if this was to continue as the side orthostats/slabs of the tomb rely on the banked cairn being there to keep their base in place. The consequences of this banking becoming dislodged or destroyed don’t bear thinking about!”. And at the stone circle known as the Trippets he witnessed tractor lines that had ploughed through the circle from two different directions, instead of the farmer going around the site. As a result of this, Natural England warned the Commoners about farming vehicles being driven through and too close to the circle, but just a week later he again witnessed them driving a herd of cows through the circle, and rubbing up against the stones. These kind of ill-considered actions by some farmers do their reputation as ‘guardians of the countryside’ no good, and undermine those farmers who do care about their heritage and the sites that lie on their land.

The problem is not confined to farmers. There are those among the public who think they have a right to do what they please at ancient sites without regard to anyone else. CASPN often finds that its carefully-placed stone signs, asking people to respect the sites and to leave nothing but their footprints, are just totally ignored. A case in point is Lesingey Round near Penzance (which CASPN now owns). Despite a sign at its entrance, every summer someone drives a car up the lane and puts up a tent in the middle of the Round, thus dissuading everyone else from seeking out the site for peace and tranquility. He seems to believe that he has an absolute right to do what he does, despite having no permission from the landowners (in this case CASPN) to be there, and he probably knows that it would take a court order to remove him. Such selfishness is totally at odds with sacred sites.

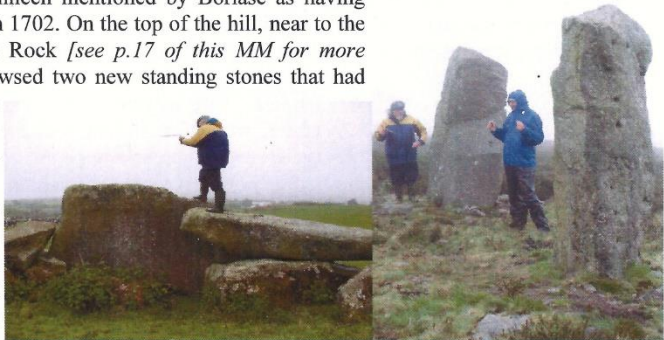
DOWSING NEWS



The Summer season of dowsing started at the end of April with the **West Cornwall Dowsers** *Dowsing down the Lizard*. The Group met at the newly-cleared *Polcoverack* settlement to dowse it for the first time. They found that the newly-uncovered round house was oriented at its four corners to the solstices and equinoxes, with its entrance facing the winter solstice sunrise. It had been used primarily for craft activity and contemplative work. They also dowsed a hut circle to the north of the settlement and found it had been used as a burial place with two internments, and they found an underground spring, now silted up. From here they went to the nearby *Tidal Rock* [see MM76 p.9], which they thought had been used for scrying and divination. Finally, they dowsed an energy line from Polcoverack settlement, through Crousa Common standing stones to Tremenhir standing stone, and ending at Roskruge Barton barrow [see MM75 p.9].

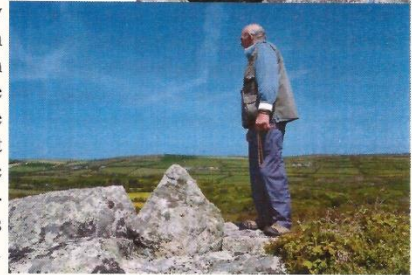
Sunday May 5th was *International Dowsing Day*, and this year over 60 people met up on *Trencrom Hill* itself on a lovely afternoon with **Trencrom Dowsers** to dowse the Athena line, which runs through this site from Skellig Michael in south-west Ireland, and continues on across West Penwith and the Lizard before going on its way to Europe. The line was dowsed as being about 15ft wide, and the dowsing of the line was followed by a ceremony led by earthsinger Danu Fox who had composed a song focusing on love and harmony for people and landscape, and incorporating the sites along the line. Afterwards the line was checked again, and found to have doubled in width.

A week later, **West Cornwall Dowsers** were on the neighbouring hill to Trencrom, *Trink Hill*, with very different weather. A few stalwart dowsers turned up on the mizzly murky day, but they were rewarded with the discovery of the capstone and upright of a possible destroyed cromlech [photo below left] on the flanks of the hill at SW5028 3691. There was speculation that perhaps this was the missing Giants Rock cromlech mentioned by Borlase as having been destroyed in 1702. On the top of the hill, near to the Twelve O'Clock Rock [see p.17 of this MM for more details], they dowsed two new standing stones that had been put up there recently [photo right] by the farmer at 5043 3710, as a tribute to a local lad, Paul Nash, killed in a car accident a while ago. An interesting day.



At the beginning of June, a day of fine weather this time found **West Cornwall Dowzers** at *Sancreed Beacon* and *Caer Bran hillfort*. On Sancreed Beacon, the find of the day was a 'constructed viewing stone' at SW4141 2952 [photos right], a diamond-shaped stone that had been deliberately wedged in to a setting of four other stones. This aligned to the SE side of Castle-an-Dinas in one direction, towards Botrea Barrows in another, and had a summer solstice sunset visual alignment through a natural saddle between Bartinney Castle and Carn Gluze towards the NW. They also found an energy line running from Bartinney Hill through the Beacon to Roger's Tower on Castle-an-Dinas.

Over on Caer Bran, first visited by the Group in April 2012 [see *MM79 p.2*], they confirmed the east-west energy line from Chapel Carn Brea through the site to Carn Brea near Redruth, and the north-south line from Carn Kenidjack through the site to the Merry Maidens. Dowsing also showed that this site was first occupied in the Neolithic period, with Bronze Age and Iron Age adaptations and modifications, a finding that has recently been confirmed by the archaeologists.



Later in the month, there was a first for dowsing in Cornwall: a get-together at *Carwynnen Quoit* by the three dowsing groups in Cornwall - **Trencrom, West Cornwall and Tamar Dowzers**. [See *MM71 p.3* and *MM80 p.2 & 4-5* for previous visits and excavations at this site]. Substantial energy, water and 'ley' lines were all very much in evidence, with former BSD Director John Moss providing the flags for marking out some of them.



There was much discussion surrounding the current position of the Michael Line, which appears to have moved away from the alignment shown in the maps accompanying *The Sun and The Serpent*, to one much closer to the quoit [see p20 of this MM for more details]. During excavation of the quoit, a 'pavement' of smaller stones below ground level around the quoit was discovered. This has been interpreted as a potential ceremonial walkway, but dowsing suggested that it was more likely to have been the remnants of the base of a cairn of smaller stones that may have been part of, or contemporary with, the main structure. During the visit, the dowzers investigated a large fallen stone close to the field boundary (at SW6510 3728), which dowsed as having formerly been upright, and was connected energetically to the quoit in some manner.

SPRING INTO SUMMER 2013

Good Friday 2013 was a very cold day in the midst of a very cold Spring for the 8th annual **Fenton Bibibell** well clear-up. But a good group of people turned up to clear up the weeds and reeds that had grown back since last year. MM Editor Cheryl Traffon managed to fall into the well, but recovered enough to do the blessing with mead and cold cross buns! The dolly dunking followed, including 7 year old Lucy, who had come last year for the first time, returning again to baptise her doll. Meanwhile on the same morning, members of the mid-Cornwall Moots led by Ann Wheeler and Liz Williams, went for the first time since the 1920s to **Figgy Dowdy's well** on Carn Marth near Redruth, where the same custom of dolly dunking used to take place on Good Friday. The gate to the well was locked, but the group came prepared with a long ladle, and reached through the bars for the water to sprinkle the dolls and figurines that had been brought to the well. A good revival.



Fenton Bibibell after clearance

By the time May Day eve came around, the weather had improved, and it was a lovely evening for the 25th **May Day Eve Maypole Dance** at Bosavern Farm in St. Just. MM editor Cheryl Traffon has organised this event now for a quarter of a century, and felt that it was now time for her to 'retire'. She was rewarded with one of the best Maypole Dances ever. War-an-Dor came to play, and two musicians, Mike the Fiddler and Alex the Hermit, who played at the first Maypole Dances, returned as well. Many people came to have a dance and welcome in the Summer (at the peak of the evening 75 were counted!), and afterwards many stayed on for the Beltane bonfire. It is hoped that Bosavern Community Farm will take over the organising and running of the Event in the future.



Dawn the next day saw the **Boekka** group welcome in the May Day morning on Chapel Carn Brea in West Penwith., where they re-awakened Jack-in-the-Green *[photo left]*. The May Day turned out to be a perfect day, with a cloudless blue sky, light winds and the warmth of the Summer sun. At **Padstow's Obby Oss**, the crowds enjoyed the dancing of the Osses through the streets all day until the evening, when the two Osses met up around the Maypole.

On the following weekend, with the weather still holding, Saturday saw the first International **Labyrinth Day**, with ceremonies on Portreath beach and at Boswedden House in St. Just. On the Sunday, it was the 25th annual **Three Wells Walk**, with the **Penzance May Horns** event in the evening. Finally, on May 8th, it was time for **Helston's Flora Day** to round off a very full and lively week of Maytime events in Cornwall.



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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



Pathways to the Past had its 7th year of walks and talks amongst the ancient sites of West Penwith on the weekend of May 25th-26th. A weekend of beautiful sunny weather ensured record turnouts to the excellent programme of events. The weekend kicked off on the Saturday morning with *Curiouser and Curiouser*, where **Cheryl Straffon & Lana Jarvis** led 50 or so men, women, children and dogs from Gurnards Head to a number of enigmatic sites. They visited Treen entrance graves, a stone facing Carn Gulva that may have been a menhir (or not), Bosporthenis quoit (or entrance grave), and finally Treen Common circle (or enclosure). In the afternoon archaeologist **David Giddings** went on a *Stank around the Gump*, visiting Chûn Quoit and Castle, and then down to Bosulow Trehyllis courtyard house settlement, not normally open to the public. In the evening **Paul Bonnington** gave a much-anticipated illustrated talk on *Art of the Ancestors*, in which he examined palaeolithic cave art and its multiple meanings and significances, together with some amazing photos.

The weekend continued on the Sunday morning with an illustrated talk by **Bart O'Farrell** on *Lines in the Landscape*, in which he talked about dowsing ancient sites and following energy lines across the land. After lunch, CAS editor **Adrian Rodda** attracted a record 60+ people to his guided walk *Sanctuaries: a lan and a circle*. Firstly he visited and talked about St.Buryan church, and then led the group along a beautiful pathway across fields, through a bluebell wood and up a green lane adorned with spring flowers to Boscawen-ûn circle. Finally in the evening, **Craig Weatherhill** came to the North Inn to talk about *Place names in West Penwith*. It was standing room only for a fascinating conversational session of information and discussion about the meaning and significance of Cornish place names. It rounded off what had been one of the most successful Pathways weekends, a lovely mix of ideas and discoveries in the heart of ancient West Penwith.

CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]

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

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

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups [search for C.A.S.P.N]

FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS]

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

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

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

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

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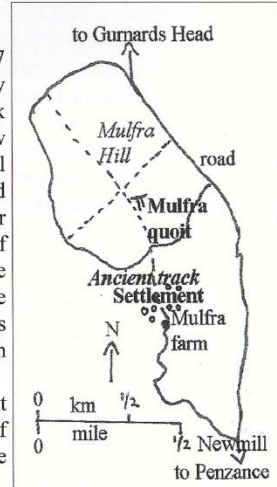
ANCIENT TRACKS

2: Mulfra farm to Quoit *by Raymond Cox*

A series that looks at some pathways to ancient sites in West Penwith that may be the tracks where our ancestors walked. Many of the old tracks exist as the old churchway paths connecting settlements to the parish churches, but parts of them, especially those with tall hedges may define old estate boundaries or are older than those. These deeply sunken tracks, especially those that pass or go to ancient sites, are the essence and heart of this time-worn land.

Mulfra has one such track [SW4545 3470 to 4537 3500], and it is a fine example. From Mulfra Farm the deeply incised rock-strewn track gently rises between tall, thick vegetation-covered hedges and seems to deepen and narrow as it becomes enclosed between the walls until, at a small wooden gate it becomes a path onto the open slope of land which is Mulfra Hill. It leads to Mulfra Quoit to join other paths over the hill. Not far along the path from the hamlet of Mulfra can be seen over the hedge on the left, one of the Mulfra courtyard houses and other associated features, the tall entrance stone clearly visible. This Iron Age settlement is on both sides of the path, but only the features on the left can be seen from the track.

An energy line runs almost parallel to this ancient track, from Mulfra Quoit to a fallen standing stone south of the Quoit at SW4518 3532, to the site of a lost standing stone at 4523 3423 in a field below at Lower Ninnes.



Photos - [above] Mulfra Hill from the air. The trackway from Mulfra farm and the settlement is in the top left corner of the photo.

[right above] Courtyard House on east of sunken path

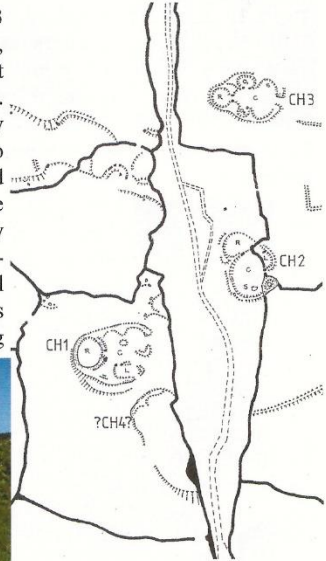
[right below] Mulfra Quoit

HOME SWEET ANCIENT HOME

WHERE OUR ANCESTORS LIVED: 3 - Mulfra

Mulfra Courtyard House settlement [SW453 349] consists of three, possibly four, courtyard houses, and lies on the southern slope of Mulfra Hill amongst the well preserved remains of a fairly large field system. The whole complex is being systematically cleared by CASPN from thick gorse that has at times threatened to choke this fine site. Only the southernmost courtyard house on the west side of the sunken path (CH 1 on the plan) at SW4533 3478 has been excavated, in 1954 by the Rev. C.B. Crofts. Pottery finds indicated an occupation period from the 1st-3rd centuries CE (AD), well within the Romano-Cornish period. This house was built on an artificial platform, with an easterly facing entrance, the

southern jamb stone of which stands 1.8m (6ft) high. The whole house is 2.7 m (9.0 ft) long and 19m (62ft) wide
[photo right].



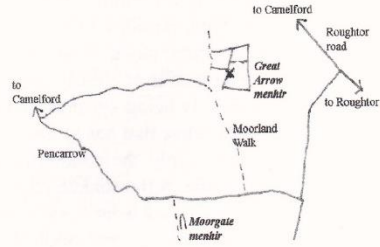
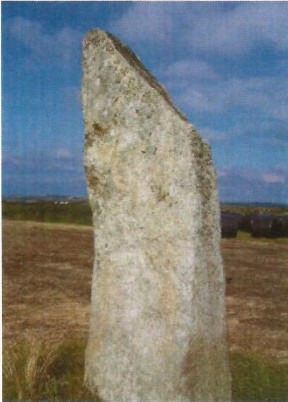
Plan [c] Craig Weatherhill

To the south of CH 1 lies an artificial platform, 39m (131ft) long, which has been partially cut by a modern field wall. Fragments of walling at the northern end of this platform suggest that a structure of some sort, possibly a Courtyard House (CH 4) formerly stood here. To the east of the sunken pathway lie the remains of two more houses. CH 2 at SW4537 3491 is intersected by a modern field wall, but appears also to have had an easterly facing entrance. The whole courtyard house measured 24m (80ft) by 19m (62ft) and there was a large courtyard, with a long room and a round room attached on the northern side, with its floor at a substantially higher level than that of the courtyard. An isolated stone 1.2m (4ft) high stands 9m (30ft) to the north of the house. Finally, there is a house structure to the north (CH 3) at SW4537 3496, measuring 25m (82ft) by 17m (56ft), again with an easterly facing entrance. From the courtyard, rooms led off to the north, west and south. Other structures have been noted in the immediate area: Henderson in the 1930s saw six huts to the west of the complex, all of which have now been destroyed, and the CASPN clearances have uncovered other stonework, which may be the remains of field lynchets. Altogether, this would have been a fine location for what was clearly a thriving and lively settlement for about 300 years, in the lee of the sacred hill of Mulfra.

MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

11: The Great Arrow menhir

To the north of Bodmin Moor, a few miles SE of Camelford, lies the Moorgate menhir, a 9ft high granite slab, standing next to a public footpath at SX1134 8197 [photo below]. Nearby to the south are the remains of a prehistoric settlement.



This stone is quite well known, but what is unknown by most people is that there was formerly a field about a mile to the NE called **Great Arrow** field on Longcarne Farm, recorded in the 1841 Tithe Awards. No standing stone has ever been recorded here, but the name of the farm and the field is very suggestive of there being one there formerly. The field is at SX1200 8290, and although it is quite difficult to access, MM visited it recently to see if we could find any trace of the missing menhir.

A GPS reading told us we were in the correct field, and then we turned to dowsing to try and determine if any part of the menhir was still extant. We hit the jackpot when the dowsing rods pointed to a spot in the Cornish hedge on the west side of the field at SX1199 8294. We cleared away the bracken and moss from the hedge, and as we did so we could see a fine unbroken standing stone, lying horizontal at the bottom of the hedge, gradually emerging. It turned out to be 8.9ft/ 2.7metres in length, tapering to a rounded top, and it was clear that it was the missing menhir and that the hedge had been built around it, presumably at some point in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. It is amazing to think that the stone has survived unknown and unseen all these years and that it still exists in the early 21st century.



LOST & FOUND - Giant's Chair on Sancreed Beacon

Andy Norfolk writes: "James Halliwell-Phillipps wrote in *Rambles in Western Cornwall* [1861]: "There was formerly a place also called the Giant's Chair near the Beacon in Sancreed, a cromlech [*sic*], the covering-stone of which had slipped down, and so formed a sort of wide seat. This was perhaps the resting-place of the ruler of Caerguidn or White Castle, which was in that locality, and of which the remains, consisting of the ruins of a circular wall, are, I am told, still visible; but this is only from hearsay". I guess his Caerguidn must be Caer Bran, or perhaps Chûn Castle. When the West Cornwall Dowsers visited Sancreed Beacon in June, we did wonder if we had found his 'Giant's Seat'. The photos [*right*] show the southern one of the two big barrows on the top. Did Halliwell mean that a cap-stone was taken off this recess in a natural rock outcrop, which had been a cist?"



WELLS CORNER

*A regular feature
on Cornwall's holy wells*



Monks Well at Place [SW855 321]

On the Roseland peninsula a road leads down the eastern promontory past Portscatho and Gerrans to St. Anthony's Head. On the way, a turning leads north to Place House, where a holy well lies near to the church, just outside the wall of Place House kitchen garden. When visited in the 1990s for *Fentyynyow Kernow*, we were unable to reach the well because of an unchecked growth of rhododendron bushes. However, for the last 2 years, wells enthusiast Baba Boom has been systematically cutting back the growth and uncovering a pathway to the well. Now the well is once again accessible and visible, with a small stone lined chamber. Baba has also cleared out the thick mud so that there is once again fresh water inside the well. This is a lovely spot and well worth a visit to find this once-neglected well.

www.facebook.com/groups/holywells_of_Cornwall

Penwith Pagan Moot



by Eve Salthouse

For our **Spring Equinox** ritual we met at lovely Sancreed, looking beautiful as always with its hedgerows filled with spring flowers. There could hardly have been a more beautiful place to celebrate the return of spring than in the green heart of Penwith. The Spring Equinox is a time of joy, a time to rejoice as the Wheel of the Year turns from the darkness of winter towards the light of summer, and light and life return to the world. All around us in the hedgerows we could see the signs of life reborn from the death of winter cold, the marvellous strength of tiny delicate blooms breaking free of the cold earth and stone. At Equinox, when day and night are of equal length, we see about us the balance that exists in all things: winter gives way to spring, death brings forth life, darkness gives way to light. With day and night of equal length, Light and Day are in perfect balance and it is the time to look within ourselves and reflect on how that harmony is reflected in our own lives. After a simple pathworking and time of quiet meditation, we ended on the theme of celebration which is also part of Spring Equinox – the joy that our ancestors must have felt that spring and life and warmth had truly returned to their world. And how better to celebrate than with the child-like joy of an Easter egg hunt, now becoming rather a tradition for the Moot, (or possibly just a love of chocolate?).

For **Beltane**, yet again the weather conspired to make fire-jumping and May pole dancing on soaking wet grass rather a risk, so we reluctantly decided to cancel our ritual. But for the **Midsummer Solstice** the sun once again joined us as we celebrated at one of our most spectacular ancient sites, Ballowal barrow, high on the cliffs looking out to sea, on a bright and breezy day. Midsummer is a time for celebrating fertility and abundance in all things. It is a solar festival, a festival of fire, when the Sun is at the zenith, the height of his/her power. We called down the power of the Sun to light our fire in the cauldron, reflecting on the meaning of fire within our own lives. We fed the flames with our personal words of fire, reflecting on what the power of fire, the passion and warmth of the Sun, meant to us in our own lives. The sun shone warmly throughout, and afterwards we enjoyed a picnic in true summer weather, the blue of the sky meeting the blue of the sea in perfect harmony.

Our Moot is very fortunate to have so many wonderful places within the landscape to meet, and remember, and honour, those who made these places. The core of the Moot is the monthly meeting at the Admiral Benbow pub in Penzance (second Tuesday @ 7.15pm). We usually have a topic to discuss or presentation by someone, and everyone is welcome to these Moots. The seasonal rituals are also open to all, and details are posted on the moot web site www.thepenwithpaganmoot.blogspot.co.uk, or by contacting: Sarah on 01736 787522 (vivianatfarwest@supanet.com) Dave on 01736 787230 (tarewaste@yahoo.co.uk) or Eve on 07927 671612 (meadowsweeteve@googlemail.com).

ALSIA'S OTHER WELL

by **Trevor Rogers**

Trevor Rogers lives at Alsia Wells (The Old Granary) and Alsia Well is on his land.

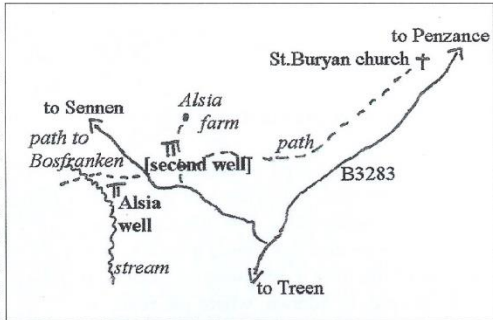
Alsia's holy well is visited each year by many who seek the peace and tranquility of this very special place. For those who may not yet have visited this iconic location, it is situated a little over a mile west of St.Buryan on the by-way to Sennen, where the road, no more than a lane, drops down into Alsia valley and the tiny hamlet of Alsia, both of which take their name from the pre-historical site of Alsia well. There is however another little known well at Alsia: indeed one might say it is a well which might almost have been lost to history. But first, to place the two wells into an historic time frame, it may be helpful to start with a few points from my history research trail.



*Alsia's holy well today
Photo [c] Andy Norfolk*

The Alsia well that has been known to so many has always been accepted as a goddess well, possibly dating from the late Bronze Age, and general evidence of that time would seem to support the theory. Goddess cultures probably sprang up in many parts of the ancient world, but our Goddess was most likely Demeter of Eleusis in eastern Greece. In a 1936 book, a French philologist Xavier Guichard [1], who spent most of a life studying prehistorical place names, determined that such places with names akin to Alsia were the Europeanized form of the Greek Eleusis. Further evidence of Cornwall's connection with the Goddess Demeter is the number of Demeter cup stones that have been found (large flat stones with cup shaped depressions cut into their surface). It is logical to think that it was the Phoenicians who, many centuries after the beginning of the Demeter following, finally brought the Goddess culture to Cornwall. The Phoenicians are known to have landed in Cornwall to exploit its tin ore. Evidence of their workings are still to be seen at places such as Penberth and Nanjizal Bay, only a short distance from Alsia. Having worked out the ore along the southern shore lines, the Phoenician prospectors began exploiting the alluvial tin from rivers such as the Penberth and its tributaries, which eventually took them to the stream at Alsia, where they discovered the mysterious upwelling of water at Alsia well as a sacred sign of Mother Earth. The well escaped Pope Gregory's edict c.590 CE, in which most ceremonial wells were Christianised. It has never been dedicated to any saint, and indeed may be one of the only wells that has preserved its pagan origins. Christianity therefore probably bypassed Alsia, until c.950 CE, when Athelstan instigated the building of the churches of St.Buryan and Sennen. In order to provide a connecting access between the two parishes, a footpath (churchway) was created.

This pathway passes through Alsia, but bypasses Alsia well, where the section of the path was known as the Bosfranken Way. At a point on the footpath between Alsia and St.Buryan there was a wayside spring with a masonry structure about it. This is the second Alsia well, thought to have a Christian association. Sadly, the structure was destroyed some years ago, and it seems that there may never have been any photographic record of it. However a carved sign on a large section of rough slate still exists, with a clearly incised inscription that shows the name of the well and a carved cross [photo right].



Until recently, that was the only information on the second well. Then by chance at the Farmers Market in Penzance I was approached by a man whom I had briefly met on an earlier occasion. He was John Rich, a retired farmer who for nearly fifty years had farmed Higher Alsia, which sits across the ancient churchway. John said that he had heard I was writing a book about Alsia and its buildings and wells [2], and he thought that he would put me right on a number of points that had riled him for years. It was a fine morning and we sat for an hour or more while I listened to a relay of information that by chance would have been lost forever, as sadly John died in the autumn of 2012.

John began with a tale of scores of dancing maidens, who were supposed to have danced at the main (lower) well on one of the first three Wednesdays in May. He was adamant that maidens never danced at this well, as there is not a level spot anywhere to dance. [3] It is far more likely that they danced at the second (upper) well where there was a meadow. He went on to say that he believed that the dancing took place not on one of the first three Wednesdays in May but one of the first three Sundays, then referred to as White Sunday (Whit Sunday). In those days the churchway path from St.Buryan was a straight line all the way to steps that start the Bosfranken Way, and on White Sunday a special morning service was held at the church to welcome the forthcoming summer. The maidens would be wearing their new white dresses and their White Sunday hand-made straw bonnets decorated with spring flowers. After the church service, they would parade down to the second (upper) well, which was the Christian well. John added that it was doubtful if indeed they did dance on the Sabbath, but probably just held hands and made a ring around the well.

For most of the time that John had farmed at Higher Alsia, the main (lower) well had been inaccessible by virtue of brambles and bracken. He had understood that an earlier age it had been kept clear by grazing animals, and that a gate had been erected in the late 1800s to prevent animals getting into the well. However, John's recollection was that in all that time he had known the well, the gate had just lain unhinged in the hedge. He remembered Thornly Thomas, who had farmed at Lower Alsia. As neighbouring farmers they had been lifelong friends, and the wells and old customs were often a topic of conversation. After Thorley's death in 1975 Alsia farm and mill was eventually sold to Jeremy LeGrice, a well known Cornish artist, who with his wife Lyn soon recognised the possibility that the very overgrown well may have had some important historic significance. They asked MM editor Cheryl Traffon to advise them, and when she visited it she remembers that it was indeed completely overgrown with brambles. She persuaded the LeGrices to have the site cleaned up, and the well once again made accessible.

John also talked about the story that the main (lower) well had been used to cool cans of cream. He thought this was unlikely, as only a few yards from his dairy there was a mill leat, a mill race and a river, all with little back waters. At Higher Alsia, on the other hand, there was no cooling water, so it may well be that on hot summers the cream cans were taken down to the second (upper) well for cooling. Finally I asked John if he knew anything about the bathing of infirm infants, and he confirmed that it was the main (lower) well where this happened, because of its mineral rich water and special healing properties.

The main source for information on Alsia well is William Bottrell's story of Nancy Trenoweth, daughter of the miller of Alsia, in which he adds the footnote about the legends of healing and divining at the well. However, this second (upper) well is nowhere mentioned (except in an 1851 census of Alsia that refers to Alsia wells in the plural), so this article is the first account of this former well, now sadly destroyed.

References & notes:

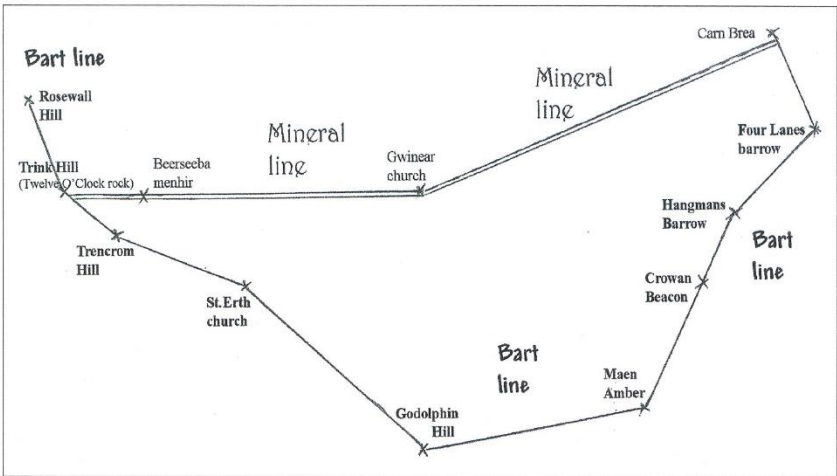
[1] Xavier Guichard: *Eleusis Alesia: Enquête sur les origines de la civilisation européenne*

[2] *There are pagans at the bottom of my garden* by Trevor Rogers [Alsia Wells, 2011]. Available from Granary Barns, Alsia, St.Buryan, Penzance TR19 6HG. £13.95 inc p&p.

[3] This tale of "dancing maidens" seems to have arisen from a confusion of sources, a good illustration of how tales become garbled over the ages through oral re-telling. There is no mention in any source of maidens dancing at Alsia. The tale of "dancing maidens" was located at the Merry Maidens stone circle at Lamorna. The stories of maidens at Alsia were first recounted by William Bottrell [*Hearthside stories of West Cornwall*] in 1870. His source was "an aged lady who was born and bred near Alsia" who told him that in her younger days on the first three Wednesdays in May mothers came to the well with their rickety children to bathe them in the waters. Also, on a summer's evening (not May) maidens would go the well to drop pebbles or bramble leaves into the water, with the subsequent rise of bubbles acting as an answer to questions about their sweethearts. [Ed.]

DOWSING SPECIAL THE BART LINE

The 'Bart Line' is an energy line that was discovered during dowsing days with the West Cornwall Dowzers (WCD) between 2006-10, led by Bart O'Farrell, and so named by Laurence Main at Trencrom Hill during a dowsing day in 2008 at the SOL Moot. It is a serpentine energy line that runs through at least 10 significant sites. Crossing it in a north-east to west direction is another line, though this one appears to define a geological fault or mineral lode. It appears that the Bart Line is a dowsable line that also marks a prehistoric track, which was laid down some 5000 years ago.

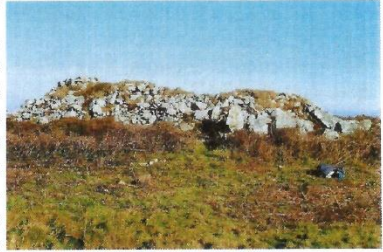


Carn Brea near Redruth [SW686 406] is a powerful site, where both lines, the Bart Line and the Geological Line, meet. Carn Brea is an original Neolithic tor enclosure, dating from about 3900 BCE. Prehistoric fortifications enclose the twin-peaked summit, where the 200 or so inhabitants lived a peaceful life for about 300 years before the site was attacked and burnt. It is on a definite fault line, and has in the past been a hot spot for UFO sightings. Greenstone axes have been found here, and when WCD visited it in May 2007 they discovered the location of the axe quarry. They also found other energy lines crossing the hill, including one from St. Agnes Beacon and St. Euny church, and an alignment to 2 standing stones on the SW side of the hill pointing towards Maen Amber [see p.2]. Solar alignments were also found, including midsummer solstice sunrise to the NE and midwinter solstice sunset to the SW.



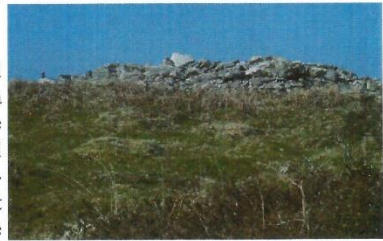
From Carn Brea the Bart line travels in a SE direction to **Four Lanes Barrow** [SW6914 3950] on a hilltop next to a television mast above Pendarves Farm. WCD visited the site in Nov 2008, and found that the barrow was buzzing with energy lines running to many of the nearby holy hilltops, including Carn Brea, which were visible in a 360° vista from this prominent site.

The Bart Line now runs on in a SW direction to **Hangmans Barrow** [SW6737 3669], a massive ruined cairn originally over 9ft high and 65ft in diameter. Traces of satellite barrows have been found on the flanks of the hill, and a settlement on the lower slopes. There is an equinox alignment running from it to the Nine Maidens stone circle at Wendron and on to Carnmenellis Hill [see *MM67 p.18*], and when WCD visited it in Jan 2008 they discovered it was intervisible with the next site on the Line, Crowan Beacon.



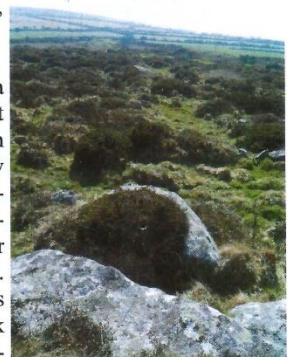
Hangmans Barrow

Crowan Beacon [SW664 348] is crowned with a large barrow that tops the rocky tor, with a second ruined one nearby. There are also the remains of what appear to be a ring of small stones around the top of the hill, perhaps indicating some sort of hilltop enclosure. WCD visited it in Dec 2007 & Feb 2011 and found where the Mary Line crosses with the Bart Line here, and also discovered an embanked avenue running directly towards Maen Amber, the next site on the Bart Line, which is also intervisible with Crowan Beacon.



Crowan Beacon barrow

Maen Amber [SW6501 3225] is a natural feature, a prominent rock (originally a logan or rocking stone) that stands high on a ridge by a Monterey pine. It can be seen from miles around and the place seems to be another holy hill. The area has been much affected by mining and quarrying and most moor stones were split up and used in buildings. This one has no sign anywhere that anyone has ever tried to break it up so it has clearly been regarded as special. William Borlase said that “the vulgar used to resort to this place at particular times of the year, and paid to the rock more respect than was thought becoming to good Christians”! However, the local Methodists met there in the 1930s, so they must have had their own ‘respect’ for the site.



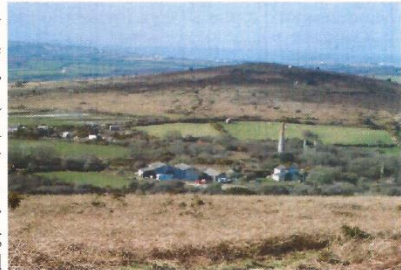
Embanked avenue running from Crowan Beacon towards Maen Amber

Maen Amber certainly has a special feel about it, and has been visited a number of times by WCD. John Michell observed that logan rocks were often at the end of alignments in Cornwall, and that they played an important part in the generation of terrestrial currents. That Maen Amber is a logan stone standing on the Bart Line is perhaps what makes it feel special and significant. In addition, from Maen Amber there is a line of 5 stones (marked on early maps) running along a boundary, with a further 4 to the SW at Carn View.



Maen Amber

The Bart Line now turns in a westerly direction to the next site on its way, this one the hub of many energy lines in the area, **Godolphin Hill** [SW593 313]. It has been visited a number of times, by the old Cornish Earth Mysteries Group (CEMG) in Aug 2006, and by WCD in Feb 2007 and a year later in Feb 2008. The hill has revealed much of interest, including a processional path to nearby Tregonning Hill; rows of stones leading to a pillow mound at the top of the hill; and rows of stones radiating out from the top. There are strong ‘push and pull’ type energy flows, and bands of energy alternate with some of the energy lines having ‘blocking’ standing stones placed across them. On the NE side of the summit there is a distinctive Look-Out shelter with a natural rock formation in the shape of a chair, at an angle of 42°, marking the midsummer solstice sunrise.



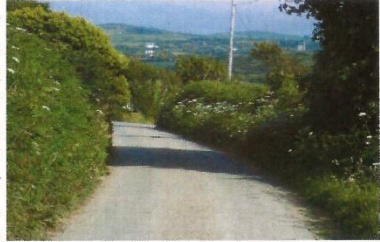
Processional path to Tregonning Hill



Fallen stone on top of Godolphin Hill marking the passage of the Bart Line

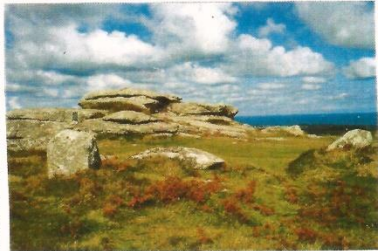
At the base of the hill there is a fallen 9ft menhir, and on top of the hill there is a fallen stone, through which the Bart Line flows. At this point, there is a hub of four energy lines: one line to the SE marks the processional path to Tregonning Hill (*mentioned above*); one branch to the SW goes through Germoe Church, a missing stone next to the A394, and finally to Pengersick Castle, reputedly the “most haunted house” in Britain; the third line arrives from Maen Amber as part of the Bart Line and then goes on straight in a westerly direction to St. Michael’s Mount; while the fourth line, the continuation of the Bart Line, turns NW and heads towards Trencrom, Trink and Rosewall Hills.

From Godolphin Hill, the Bart Line now heads NW, and as it approaches St. Erth it runs along a stretch of road with beautiful views back through Godolphin and Tregonning Hills [*photo right*]. It then goes through **St. Erth Church** [SW5497 3505], dedicated to St.Erc, who was the brother of St.Euny. His feast day is October 31st, the old pagan Celtic festival of Samhain, hinting at an earlier pre-Christian site here. The church was built in the 14th or 15th century, and extensively remodelled in the 18th & 19th centuries. However, the earliest recorded name for St.Erth was ‘Lanuthinoc’ (later ‘Lanudhynec’), first recorded in 1200, meaning ‘Guthinoc’s church’, which indicates an earlier foundation for the first church here.



The Bart Line from Godolphin to St. Erth

From St. Erth the line now heads WNW to **Trencrom Hill** [SW518 362], where it crosses with the Athena line, which is heading for St. Michael’s Mount. The Hill was visited by WCD in Jan 2009, when they identified the crossing point, which had a good-feeling spiral energy ascending upwards. Trencrom Hill is a Neolithic tor enclosure that continued in use in the Bronze Age (remains of cairns can be found), and later developed into an Iron Age hill fort, with 2 entrances facing east and west. Legend speaks of a giant Trecobben, who lived here and would sling his hammer across to another giant Cormoran at St. Michael’s Mount. This may be a memory of a geomantic ‘ley’ running across the land between the two sites, and it is interesting that the Athena energy line follows this path.



Trencrom Hill

The Bart Line now goes on NW to the neighbouring hill **Trink Hill** [SW504 371] and its distinctive rocky outcrop the **Twelve O’Clock Rock**. It is here that the Line meets the



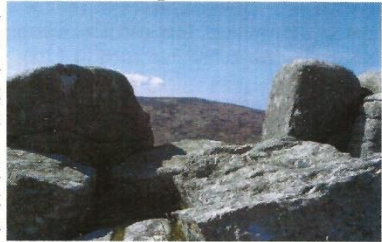
Twelve O’Clock rock on Trink Hill

western end of the mineral line, or geological fault line, whose eastern end was on the Bart Line at Carn Brea. The Twelve O’Clock Rock has some folklore attached to it. Bottrell says “Numbers of people would formerly visit this remarkable Logan stone, which had been, by supernatural power, impressed with some peculiar sense at midnight. Although it was quite impossible to move this stone during daylight, or indeed by human power at any other time, it would rock like a cradle exactly at midnight. Many a child has been cured of rickets by being placed naked at this hour on the twelve-o’clock stone.”

From Trink Hill the Line now heads NNE to **Rosewall Hill** [SW492 390], which WCD visited in Apr 2010 & Mar 2011. This hill, just to the west of St.Ives, is little known and explored, but the group found it to be buzzing with energy lines and probable sites. For the first visit they concentrated on the western summit of the hill, and found a fallen standing stone with cupmarks on one face at SW4875 3909 [photo right above] which dowsed as having originally stood at 13ft above ground. They also found that there was a strong energy and visual alignment through this fallen standing stone to a portal rock acting as a 'window frame' to a barrow on neighbouring Trendrine Hill [photo right centre], the line then ending at a vortex point.



Fallen standing stone on western hill



Trendrine Hill barrow from portal rock

On the second visit they concentrated on the eastern hill, where they found a similar strong energy and visual alignment running east. From a 'viewing platform' on the side of the hill, the alignment ran through a stone now used as a gatepost but originally standing a few feet away at SW4904 3918, on to the church of St.Ia in St.Ives, Godrevey island, and on to the holy hilltop of St.Agnes Beacon. They also identified a 'view frame' in the rocks at SW4950 3933 which looked through to a hill to the south of St.Ives, now crowned by Knills Monument. The Bart Line finishes here at Rosewall Hill as strongly as where it starts on Carn Brea.

Crossing the Bart Line at two points (Carn Brea in the east and Trink Hill in the west) is a geological or mineral lode line. From Carn Brea this line runs SW to **Gwinear Church** [SW5950 3738] which has a 6th century yew tree in the churchyard, with an elder tree growing in it. The church itself is unusual as it has its south door blocked up, while the entrance is at the north door. Apparently, in the early years of Christianity in Cornwall, many members of the congregation were still pagan, and would have used the north door and stood in the north corner of the church. The line then runs west to the **Beersheba menhir** [SW5251 3714], a fine 3m (10ft) standing stone in a field north of Trencrom Hill. It has an equinox sunset alignment over the Twelve O'Clock rock on Trink Hill [see above], and the mineral lode line runs along this alignment to Trink Hill itself on the Bart Line. All these sites on both the Bart Line and this mineral lode line are dowsable, and they provide a fascinating insight into our ancestors' paths across the land.

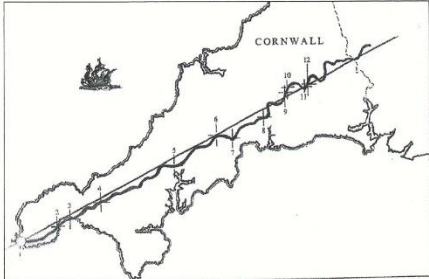


Beersheba menhir

THE WANDERING MICHAEL & MARY LINES

by Cheryl Straffon

The Michael and Mary energy lines that run through Cornwall and on to Norfolk on the east coast of England were first brought to the public's attention in the book *The Sun and the Serpent* by Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst [Pendragon Press, 1989]. The Michael line had been named by John Michell in the late 1960s as a straight line running across the landscape, linking together sites dedicated to St. Michael on high hilltops, commencing at Carn Les Boel near Lands End and finishing at Avebury stone circle in Wiltshire. Miller and Broadhurst picked up on this idea, and followed



The straight and curved Michael lines running through Cornwall [c] Sun & the Serpent

the same path, but what Hamish Miller dowsed was a more serpentine line that ran in a curved path across the land, linking those and other sites. Nevertheless Miller and Broadhurst still named it the Michael line, so there are now two Michael Lines: the Michell one that runs straight across the land and the map, and the Miller and Broadhurst one that runs in a curved and wiggly direction. Both lines can be dowsed 'in the field', and both can be located on 1:50,000 maps which are available from Penwith Press. Miller & Broadhurst also discovered a second line, which tended to go through places such as wells, old chapels and castles, etc. This they named the Mary Line, and there were significant places in the landscape where both lines crossed - in Cornwall that was at St. Michael's Mount, Resugga Castle, Lostwithiel Church, and the Hurlers stone circle.

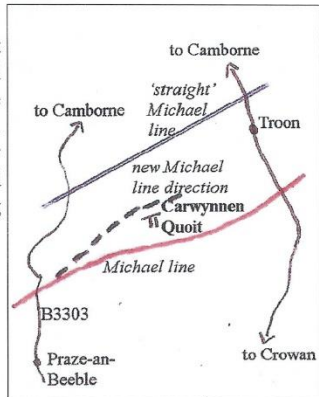
So far so good. These lines are widely known, and many people have followed in Hamish's footsteps and confirmed the location and direction of them. Hamish and Paul did their dowsing research mainly by car, only stopping at specific places to check the appearance and reappearance of the lines. Since then, others have filled in the 'missing gaps' and dowsed sections of the lines that run between the principal places named in *The Sun and the Serpent*, so we now have a thorough, detailed and verifiable route for these lines. Michael and Mary are not the only 'energy' lines that run across the land: there are dozens, if not hundreds, of others that can also be picked up. Miller & Broadhurst themselves found two other international ones that also cross Cornwall in a more NW-SE orientation, which they named the Apollo and Athena lines, and others have been identified, such as the E-line found by dowser Jimmy Goddard (coming in at Cape Cornwall), and the Bart Line, detailed in the previous article (p.14-18). All these lines have a strong signature, especially Michael and Mary, and dowsers usually have no difficulty in identifying them when they find them. However, over the last few years, during their dowsing days out in the field, West Cornwall Dowsers have noticed an interesting phenomenon - the lines that have been identified and fixed, such as Michael and Mary, have started to move!

The Dowisers first became aware of this when dowsing some places on the Lizard peninsula, in particular at the Three Brothers of Grugwith monument. The Athena line sweeps across Goonhilly Downs on its way from St.Michael’s Mount, but its direction originally took it through some tumuli and a cross, all of which lay south of the Three Brothers of Grugwith. However, when the Dowisers visited it in 2011, they found that the line had moved, and was now nearly touching the monument. Interestingly, this happened after LAN started clearing the site of vegetation and gave it some attention after years of neglect.



The Three Brothers of Grugwith to where the Athena line has moved

The same thing happened at Carwynnen Quoit near Camborne. Formerly, the site was sandwiched between the straight Michael Line to its north, and the Hamish Miller-dowsed curved Michael Line to its south. Now the latter line has moved further north and nearly touches the monument. Once again, this has occurred after a period of intense activity at the site, including excavation and planned reconstruction [see MM80 p.4].



Dowsing the Quoit [left]. The Michael Line now runs through where the horse is standing in the field behind.

This phenomenon seems to be not restricted to any one area. On Bodmin Moor, near Minions, the curved Michael line, which formerly ran just north of the cross (at SX255 704) has retreated south of the road to run by the cross itself. Finally, when WCD went to Alsia Well in November 2012 they found the Hamish Miller Mary Line, which ran from the well and up through the field above, exiting to the north of Granary Barns and across the road on its way to Boscawen-ŷn circle. However, they also found another strong energy line, with the Mary Line signature going eastwards out of the field and down the valley towards Alsia Mill. So what is going on here?

Once again, there has been activity at Alsia well, notably the complete resoration and replanting of vegetation around the well. However, this time the matter is more complicated, as the Hamish Miller Mary line has not changed position at Alsia, but another strong energy line with the Mary signature runs close by in a different direction. So what is happening to the line(s) at this and other sites, and why? MM put the question to two of WCD's principal dowzers, Bart O'Farrell and Andy Norfolk. Bart remarked that: "Hamish did the original plotting of the lines over 30-40 years ago, and in that time the lines could well have moved. This has been observed in other places, for example at Avebury Circle, where the Society of Leyhunters in Spring 2012 observed that there was a change in the Michael/Mary pattern. I think that these lines are living energies, they expand with attention, but also shift with landscape and earth, moon and sun changes". Andy supported this, saying that "The lines do move. We've found this in a few places now, so it's not safe to assume that what Hamish found, where he had checked carefully on the ground, is still correct. And doing things on the ground does affect these lines, so work at the well might have had an effect".

The matter is complicated by the fact that the identification of the curved Michael and Mary lines by Hamish, and the subsequent dowsing of them by other people, has probably laid down a trace, that can still be picked up. Therefore, when people go to dowse Hamish's lines they will still find them at the place where Hamish originally did, even though the lines themselves might since have moved. So, for example, if a dowser goes to Granary Barns (above Alsia well) and looks for the path of the Mary line, as originally identified by Hamish, he or she will find it precisely where Hamish originally did. Both Bart and Andy make this point. Bart says that "At Alsia, we were dowsing for the Mary Line, not Hamish's Mary Line", and Andy comments: "Pilgrims may be going to the wrong places, but perhaps they won't notice. Personally I doubt that they will be able to 'reinstate' the Hamish route of any line for long". However, it is more likely that the original Hamish-lines will continue to be dowseable, even where there are other strong energy lines present. For example again at Alsia, the original Hamish Mary line is still present and can be easily dowsed. But at the same time there are other energy lines spiralling around it as a kind of 'braid'. Perhaps we should think of these Mary & Michael lines as not so much fixed lines between points in the land, but rather as a constantly shifting 'rope' of energy, made of dozens of individual strands woven together.



*Dowsing the Mary Line at Alsia
with owner Trevor Rogers*

Dowsing is a fascinating way to 'tap into' some of the underground lines at or near ancient sites, whether they are energy, water or mineral, but dowzers need always to be aware that the lines are 'alive' and may change course and direction through many factors.

DAMAGE & DESECRATION AT THE MÊN-AN-TOL

by Alan Simkins

Desecration is a powerful word. The Oxford Dictionary suggests two main meanings of the verb ‘to desecrate’ – to treat (a sacred place or thing) with violent disrespect, or to spoil (something which is valued or respected). Imagine the scene: You visit a world-class, fragile, prehistoric monument after a period of continuous heavy rain. On arrival you find that the monument is standing in a sea of mud. Do you: a) experience what you can of the atmosphere of the site, but cause no damage, or b) let your family trample through the mud and climb all over the monument for a photo opportunity? A clue to help: The first is respectful of the site, the second is desecration.

On New Year’s Day, as I was on holiday in Cornwall, and had decided to walk up to Boskednan Downs to take a look at the stock-proofing measures being implemented prior to allowing cattle to graze up there. I’ve documented this walk in the past, a walk which can be quite pleasant in summer. Unfortunately, as anyone who knows the area will attest, the pathway up onto the moors is often flooded, and such was the case on this occasion. Although I could have worked my way around the waterlogged path, I decided to abandon the walk, and headed back down to Mên an Tol. As I approached the monument, I could see an extended family (2 sets of parents, and 4 pre-teen children) laughing and joking around near the stones. As I got closer, they were taking turns sitting on the holed stone for photographs, and trying to clamber through the hole. Sadly, all fairly normal activities when the weather is fair. In fact, so much so is this activity considered normal that early in 2012, CASPN felt that some remedial work was required as the ground below the holed stone was quite worn away. After the appropriate permissions were acquired (this is a Scheduled Ancient Monument after all), this work was undertaken by CASPN on behalf of the Historic Environment Service with volunteers spending significant time and effort in the Spring to fill in the worn area, which was also re-turfed and seeded. Sadly the turf did not ‘take’, but some improvement in the ground level was achieved, ensuring the stone was stabilised. (This remedial work is currently due to be monitored and continued for a period of three years.)



After remedial work to the ground level



Work destroyed by rain and wellies!

Now 7 months later, and after consistently heavy rainfall for an extended period, which has caused nationwide flooding, this family had popped out during the holidays with the kids for a walk to a national monument before lunch. Unwittingly (and I can only hope they didn't know what they were doing – the alternative truly is unthinkable!) their actions have caused further potential damage to the stones, if not immediately, then certainly by wearing away the ground level still further, in the fullness of time.

Being outnumbered 8-9/1 as I was, I decided discretion was the better part of valour on this occasion and decided not to approach them about their behaviour, but hung around looking unhappy and annoyed, thus hopefully curtailing their time at the site – which eventually happened. They made their way, noisily and happily back to the path and down to the road, seemingly oblivious to my disgruntlement.

So what can be done? CASPN have spent a large amount of money on signage at various sites throughout the area, explaining that the monuments deserve respect and that any damage should be reported immediately. This family were not the 'group of local lads' thought to be responsible for recent vandalism at the nearby Madron Well and Chapel – all the indications were that they were just your average '2.4 kids' family. They seemed totally unaware that their actions could be in any way damaging to the monument rather than not caring one way or the other whether any damage was done. It was obvious from the state of the ground that the monument was potentially at risk – indeed, the path across the moor from the stile was sodden and very spongy underfoot, suggesting very little in the way of support for any upright structures. A series of questions thus present themselves:

- Did they know of the history of the site?
- Did they read or even notice the sign by the stile?
- What additional measures are needed to make people aware?
- Would outreach sessions in local schools help the youths of the area gain some knowledge and pride in the (pre)history and heritage of the area where they live?

Of course, in this particular circumstance, one family tramping through the mud pales into insignificance given recent decisions made concerning grazing on the moor. I mentioned above the measures being taken to stock-proof the moor. If the plans to graze go ahead then there will be large cattle not only trampling around the stones, but also using them as rubbing posts! A similar scheme has been implemented on Carnyorth Common and the stones of the Tregeseal Circle there have been damaged, loosened and toppled by the cattle at least thirteen times since the scheme's implementation four years ago. For more details of the grazing scheme, and the campaign to stop it, see the Save Penwith Moors campaign website or Facebook page.

This article originally appeared on the web site www.heritageaction.wordpress.com.

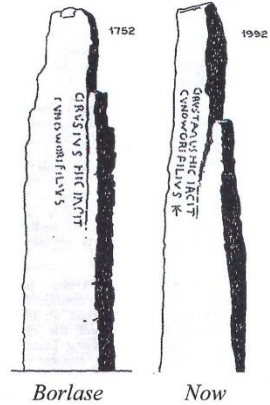
The regular Book News & Reviews feature has been held over to the next issue of MM.

20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

Twenty years ago MM22 (Autumn 1993) featured an original piece of research by Craig Weatherhill, entitled “The Tristan Stone - the mystery of the missing line”. In this article, Craig gave a background to the stone from its first drawing by William Borlase in 1754 up until its recent history of being moved several times in the 18th, 19th & 20th centuries. The main thrust of the article however was Craig’s claim that the inscription originally had a third line, now missing. Borlase gave a reading of the two lines of inscription, which were close to what is now believed were the actual letters - DRVSTANVS HIC IACIT /CVNOWORI FILIVS, which means ‘Drustan lies here, son of Cunomorus’. Drustan is Tristan, and his father’s name Cunomorus is a Celtic word meaning “hound of the sea”

Cunomorus was the 6th century ruler over Dumnonia, Marcus Cunomorus, perhaps better known as King Mark from the Tristan and Iseult legend. Craig went on to reveal that two hundred years before the stone was drawn by Borlase, it was seen and mentioned by John Leland, King’s Antiquary to Henry VIII. Around 1534-43 he recorded a now missing third line of inscription CVM DOMINA CLUSILLA, which Craig argued could translate as “with the lady Ousilla”. Ousilla would be an acceptable Latinisation of the Cornish name Eselt (meaning “to be gazed upon”), which would therefore make perfect sense, relating to the Tristan and Iseult story, with all the principal characters, King Mark, his son Tristan, and King Mark’s wife and Tristan’s adulterous lover Iseult, all mentioned. A comparison of Borlase’s 1752 drawing with the stone today [above] shows that a piece of the stone on the left hand side, containing the third line of inscription, could well have broken off during one of its many moves.



Which brings us back to today. As revealed in the previous issue of MM81 p.4, the stone will shortly be on the move again. Cornwall Council has approved a controversial planning application allowing Wainhomes to build 80 new houses in the Hill Hay area of Fowey, and in order to avoid the stone being swallowed up by the development, it is proposed to move it further down the road towards Fowey. Some Cornwall Councillors have objected strongly to this, and feelings run high among locals. Recently, a newly-erected sign promoting the development was placed close to the stone, only for it to be vandalised with a hole smashed through it. A Marie Curie Field of Hope, with thousands of daffodils, will also be destroyed by the development. Wainhomes have a number of planning conditions to meet before the development can go ahead, including the recording and laser scanning of the stone by English Heritage.

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