

**CORNISH CUNNING - Steve Patterson ● ROUGH TOR
MEGALITHIC DISCOVERIES - 4 pages of new finds ●
DOWSING ● CASPN & LAN ● ANCIENT TRACKS
*ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR***

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STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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

One of Cornwall's best-loved sites (though ironically not a prehistoric one) is St.Nectan's Glen and the Kieve. It is also one of Cornwall's most controversial sites, as previous issues of MM will testify [*see for example, MM19 p.4 ('Meanness and magic in Cornwall'), MM21 p.5 ('The price of a magic glen'), MM49 p.19 ('St. Nectan's Kieve abused'), and MM78 p.5 ('St.Nectan's Kieve finds new owner').*] This last item in Summer 2012 referred to the purchase of the site by Guy Mills, an international millionaire and owner of a business park in Yorkshire. At the time he said that he was determined that the site should remain "a place of inward reflection and self-realisation for everyone to enjoy". He installed local man Loz Barker as custodian, and instigated a three year plan to see the site cleared and tidied up. At first all seemed well, and people enthusiastically reported that the site felt better than ever before, and still retained its spiritual feel. Now however, there's trouble in that elemental place. Last year Loz Barker left as custodian, and now Guy Mills has put in a planning application for the construction of a new Visitor Centre, tea room and bunkhouse/retreat building that can house up to a dozen people. Some local people are up in arms, but, looking back, Guy Mills did say that he wanted to triple visitor numbers from 10,000 to 30,000 a year. So far, there is no threat to public access to the place, but one wonders how a spiritual retreat centre can be squared with the constant stream of visitors to the site. Only time will tell, and this site may continue to court controversy for some time.

Planning applications always arouse strong feelings. No-one wants their favourite places to change, and while most applications do not directly affect ancient sites, their nearness to them can certainly adversely affect their ambience for many people. The Merry Maidens stone circle environs at Lamorna seems particularly prone for applications concerning wind farms and phone masts, contentious developments nowadays. Fortunately there is an active local group that keeps a strong watch on these things, and which helped to get at least one wind turbine application thrown out. But it is sometimes hard to find the right grounds for opposition. 'Spiritual feel' or 'sacred atmosphere' are very personal and intangible things that are often not admissable for objections, and yet they are what draws people to these ancient sites, sometimes set as an island of peace in a sea of modernity. Two ancient sites on St.Breock Downs are currently under threat of nearby developments. Pawton Quoit (to which there is no right of way access) has an application for a large agri-building development in the field next door, and the Nine Maidens stone row has the threat of another large wind turbine complex nearby. The Downs have virtually no statutory protection, a sad omission, when we see how such an important natural and prehistoric landscape asset could so easily be lost.

DOWSING NEWS

The Bank Holiday weekend of May 4th & 5th marked International Dowsing Day, and **Trencrom Dowzers** met on the Sunday on *Trencrom Hill* (where the Athena energy current passes through on its way around the world), where they were joined by members of the Parallel Community and Earthsinger Danu Fox for a session of drumming, chanting and singing in celebration of the land. The width of the Athena current was measured before and after the event, and was found to have expanded from 5 metres to 23 metres during the afternoon. On the next day the Group met again, this time at Carn Les Boel, the first node point in the south west of the Michael and Mary energy currents. They were joined by a couple of members of Sunrise Dowzers, from the other end of the Michael alignment in Hopton, Norfolk who were staying in west Penwith for the weekend.



Trencrom Dowzers on Trencrom Hill

Meanwhile, on the same day, the **Tamar Dowzers** were at *the Hurlers* stone circles in SE Cornwall, where Alan Neal was able to show how geological fault lines underlie both the Michael and the Mary long-distance energy lines. He also demonstrated that as the Michael line runs north towards the third of the stone circles at the Hurlers, it diverts abruptly off to the west, just glancing the circle itself, while the underlying fault fissure carries straight on ahead, into and under the circle, which was a new dowsing discovery, though one confirmed by the recent geological survey of the site [see *MM85 p.20*]

Two weeks later **West Cornwall Dowzers** met up at *Treryn Dinas* cliff castle near Porthcurno [see *MM84 p.12 & p.17*] on a very windy day that nevertheless produced some interesting dowsing results. The four lines of defences with their ramparts and ditches were identified, but in addition traces of many hut circles were also found, more than the two that have been identified near the headland. Tales of giants, witches and the little people, and the headland's magical origin completed the day's dowsing in this special spot.



Two dowzers at Treryn Dinas

June was a fine month for the dowzers. A good crowd turned up for **Trencrom Dowzers** visit at the beginning of the month to *Mên-an-Tol and Boskednan Nine Maidens stone circle*. After a picnic lunch at the Mên-an-Tol, the Group worked on the questions posed by John Moss's handouts, which included: finding the missing or recumbent stones for the adjoining stone circle; identifying leys to the courtyard houses at Mulfra, Chysauster, Castle-an-Dinas, and Bosullow Trehyllis; finding possible boundary stones and finally discovering any energy leys. At Boskednan Nine Maidens, the Group had a good collaborative dowsing session, dowsing for water lines near the centre, a cist, leys and energy leys. The day finished with an excellent cream tea at Lanyon Farm.

Later in the month **West Cornwall Dowzers** made a first visit to *Castle-an-Dinas hill fort & Roger's Folly* in West Penwith. They walked along the ridgeway to the site, passing barrows and round houses along the way. At the site, with its tremendous views to other hilltop sites in West Penwith, seen from new and original perspectives, the Group dowsed for water and energy lines. A couple of weeks later, Bart O'Farrell, co-ordinator of the Group, led an introduction to dowsing for CAS members at *Helman Tor*, previously visited by Celtic, West Cornwall and Tamar Dowzers in 2008, 2009 & 2012 [see MM69, MM70 & MM77 for more details]. The discoveries on the Tor from the previous visits were confirmed, and the standing stone at the base of the Tor, first discovered in 2009, was revisited by some of the Group [photo in MM70]. The original position of the stone in the field was located (about 60 ft from its current position in the field bank), and a midsummer solstice sunrise over Rough Tor was dowsed, Rough Tor appearing at that point just above the visual horizon, a classic Neolithic/Bronze Age visual 'trick' of perspective.

Later in July, **West Cornwall Dowzers** returned to the *Gully complex* on the Lizard [see MM85 p.4] in order to 'flag out' the stone circles and processional way, and to explore the round houses and an enclosed spring. They also discovered traces of two burial chambers and more stones from this megalithic complex. Meanwhile, **Tamar Dowzers** visited *Caradon Town* as guests of local farmer Nick Rounsevell. They found traces of a former monastic settlement, as well as a lost burial ground and a stone-housed well that dowsed as having been in use for 6000 years. Finally, in August all three groups **Tamar Dowzers, Trencrom Dowzers & West Cornwall Dowzers** came together for the day at *Duloe stone circle*. The water lines going into the circle were explored, all ending suddenly with a 'sink' which turned out to be a geological fault starting in the field, just beyond the field bore hole, and ending inside the circle. Andy Norfolk did an experiment inside the circle, tuning a 'singing bowl', which caused the outside 'aura' of the circle to expand considerably with each 'ringing'. The group then moved on to the church, where the carved font from the holy well dowsed as Romano-Cornish, and finally the holy well itself to find the source of the spring. An interesting day.



Duloe stone circle



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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



CASP.N has continued its Community Outreach work, which included taking a group of Pool Brownies with their leaders up to the Mén-an-Tol for an introduction to the site. The girls enjoyed going through the holed stone, with an interested audience of ponies! Then CASP.N members John & Jill Moss and Lana Jarvis introduced them to the art of dowsing, to find the missing stones and underground water courses, at which they were very good. Following this, John contacted Cape Cornwall School in St. Just to give Class 10 a talk about sites.



Meanwhile, CASP.N continued with its regular clear-ups at sites in West Penwith, and LAN concentrated on two sites on the Lizard. In the spring Bart O'Farrell led several clear-ups at Polcoverack settlement, and in the autumn Charlie Johns organised a picnic and guided tour to Kynance Gate settlement, followed by some clear-up days. Details of clear-ups for 2015 can be found on the website, and on the back page of MM. These are not arduous and are companionable, and everyone is welcome. All tools are provided.

Finally, the programme for Pathways to Past annual weekend for May 30th & 31st 2015 has been published and can be found on the website. Highlights this year include walks around Mén-an-Tol, Nine Maidens circle & Bosiliack barrow; Nanjulian settlement; and the Merry Maidens area, and talks by Paul Bonnington on the invention of metal making, and Charlie Johns on sites on the Scillies. Book the weekend now!

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 & Lizard Ancient Sites]

FRIENDS OF CORNWALL'S ANCIENT SITES [FOCAS]

To join FOCAS (£10/year waged, £14 couples, £7 unwaged) tel: Eve Salthouse 07927 671612 or e-mail focas@cornishancientsites.com, visit CASP.N web site for downloadable application form, or write to: 11 Victoria Row, St. Just, Penzance TR19 7LG

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

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

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LIZARD ANCIENT SITES NETWORK [LAN] via CASP.N address (above)

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

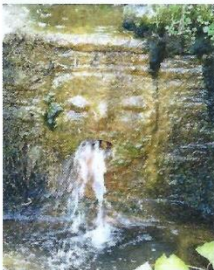
Sites Clear-Ups: Tel: 01736-787186 e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com

WORLD GODDESS DAY IN CORNWALL - Sept 2014

The World Goddess Day Project is an initiative by Claudiney Prieto, the Brazilian author of the bestselling *Wicca- Goddess Religion*, to bring the divine feminine back into the world. In Cornwall, the Priestesses of Kernow group held the day (on Sept 7th) in celebration at Pengersick Castle. It was a lovely day – the weather was just right and those who attended were open and happy to celebrate the day as Priestesses, with their family and friends. Sue



Edwards, who organised the day, commented: “As a Priestess of Kernow who follows the Goddess traditions, I feel it’s important to have one day granted to the Goddess in which we can remember her in all her forms. Women especially are looking for something which celebrates the feminine within and are turning to the way of the Goddess. She is re-entering into our modern life bringing back her vitality, power, wisdom and healing, through Pagan traditions.” During the afternoon there was storytelling, a blanket bazaar, a shrine to the Goddess was created and a Peace Tree was decorated. There was live music and great company. For many of those present, the highlight of the afternoon was a Ceremony led by the Priestesses of Kernow, during which the Priestesses bound a circle with threads, simulating the weaving of the web part of the vision which brought the Priestess of Kernow into being a decade or so ago. The Goddess tradition remains alive and well in Cornwall.



WELLS CORNER

*A regular feature on
Cornwall’s holy wells*



Little Petherick well [SW919 721]

Two miles south of Padstow lies the village of Little Petherick, which according to legend was founded by St.Petroc before he settled at Bodmin. The Saint’s Way from Padstow to Fowey also runs through the village. Baba Boom and Pixy Led have both come across a well here, not recorded in any of the books on Cornwall’s holy wells, including Quiller-Couch, Lane-Davis or Meyrick, although Noeholas Orme does mention it in *The Saints of Cornwall* (2000), where he says that its Cornish name is ‘nansfonteyn’, meaning “valley with a spring or well”. On the Cornwall’s Holy Wells Facebook page Pixy Led posted these photographs and commented: “Stopped at Little Petherick in Cornwall and saw this beautiful little Holy Well. The church next to it was amazing. Take the small lane just before the church to the right, then follow the lane as far as you can go. There is a well house too. Beautiful place”.

www.facebook.com/groups/holywells of Cornwall

ANCIENT TRACKS

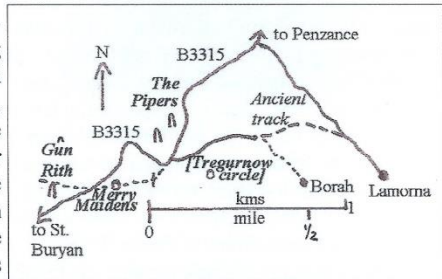
6: Merry Maidens

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.

Most people visit the Merry Maidens stone circle [SW4327 2451] by driving along the B3315 Penzance - Treen road and parking in the lay-by beside the circle, which sits on a plateau of land above the Lamorna Gap. There is however another way to go to the circle by walking up the valley from Lamorna itself by a sunken lane that may be an ancient track, and the route used by our Bronze-Age ancestors who built the circle. From Lamorna, walk

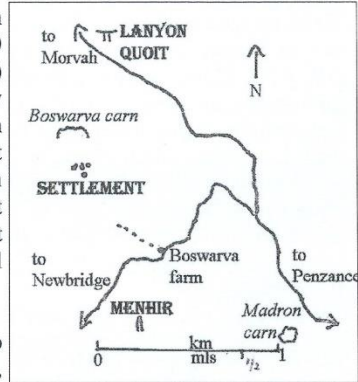
up the road that rises up through the valley until you come to the entrance to a lane on the left-hand side (west) of the road at SW4440 2470. This leads into a deep sunken lane that rises up through the valley, overhung with trees, that has a very atmospheric feel, until you reach the top at the Menwinnion Residential Home. On the left (south) is a farm lane that leads to Borah, a Cornish place name that means "The place of the witch", which has other mysterious associations. But continue along what is now a minor road until you come to the B3315. Do not join that road however, but take the path that runs straight from the stile in a direct line to the Merry Maidens stone circle. This approach, consisting of ancient sunken track, minor road and field pathway [pictured right] has much to recommend it as a more spiritual approach to the stone circle.

The field stretch of this pathway passes a stone in a hedge at an angle that the archaeologist John Barnett thought was originally a standing stone at 4343 2452, and a fallen menhir in the hedge at 4338 2452. These stones form part of an alignment that runs from Gún Rith menhir at 4294 2448 - remains of a holed stone at 4315 2450 - Merry Maidens stone circle at 4327 2451 - fallen menhir at 4338 2452 - hedge stone at 4343 2452 - site of the Tregurnow stone circle (missing) at 4375 2455 - lane to Borah farm at 4415 2460. This alignment runs just south and parallel to the footpath and road mentioned above.

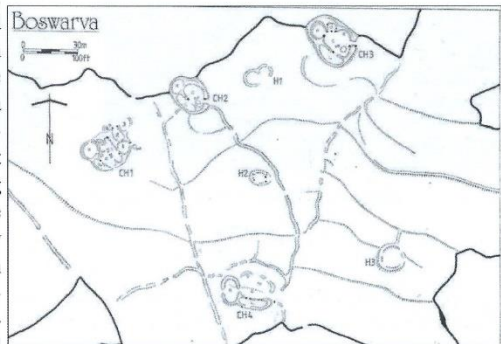


HOME SWEET ANCIENT HOME WHERE OUR ANCESTORS LIVED: 7 - Boswarva

Boswarva Courtyard House settlement lies on the southerly slopes of Boswarva Carn [SW4290 3300] to the NW of Madron (or Trengwainton) Carn, which is visible from the site and was probably a sacred hill to the people who lived there. It lies on public access land, but permission should be sought from Lower Boswarva farm for access down a farm lane and through fields to the site. It was first discovered in the late 1920s, and was cleared last year. It is especially beautiful at May time when all the bluebells are in bloom.



The site consists of three Courtyard Houses to the north, and a fourth one to the south of these, together with three round houses, amid the remains of a terraced field system. The Courtyard Houses are in various states of preservation, but are all quite extensive in size with a courtyard and several rooms. Courtyard House no.3 is probably the best preserved of the four, measuring 32m (105ft) x 24m (80ft). The stone lined east entrance leads into a very large Courtyard, leading off from which is a long room (with its entrance retaining one of its jambstones), a round room and a small oval room. The other houses are less well preserved, but no.4 does have some visible remains of a round room and a long room.



[c] Craig Weatherhill

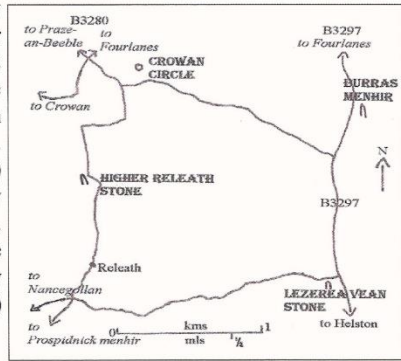
The site is remote and little visited, and, despite some stone robbing and pit digging for mining in the past, now slumbers peacefully amidst its carpet of bluebells.



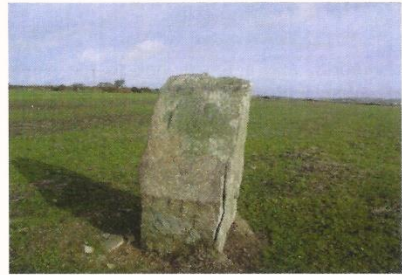
Courtyard House no.4

4 pages of MEGALITHIC DISCOVERIES

MM Reader James Kitto has recently reported the existence of a small triangular standing stone at Higher Releath [SW6612 3380], not far from Crowan. This is in the same area as another small stone at Lezerea Vean [SW- 6774 3286], described in MM67 p.16. Both stones are about 1 to 1.5m (5 to 5½ft) high, and the Higher Releath one has a nicely shaped shoulder, which seems to be natural. However the two stones do not seem to be connected to each other, nor to the nearby Burras menhir [SW6795 3445] a 3m (10ft) standing stone beside the B3297 road.



Higher Releath stone



Lezerea Vean stone

However, both stones do seem to be on alignments. Lezerea Vean is on a SW line running through Prospidnick menhir to Breage church. Higher Releath is on a line running from Crowan circle [SW6642 3480], the site of which lies about 1km (¾mile) to the north, through the stone to the ancient round of St.Elvan, just north of Porthleven [SW 6391 2746], Although this is an Iron Age site, it may have been built on an even more ancient place. In addition, Higher Releath looks in a SW direction to a possible midwinter solstice sunset between the Godolphin and Tregonning hills.

A few fields away from the Lezerea Vean stone is another, discovered by James. The Bodilly stone [SW6710 3210] does have cut marks down one side, but at 1.92m (6¼ft) it seems too big to have been simply a rubbing post. In an area not especially noted for its megalithic monuments, it is good to report the existence of these unrecorded stones.

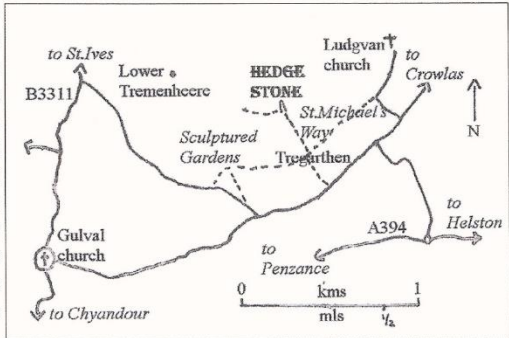


Bodilly stone

MISSING MENHIRS - CORNWALL'S LOST STONES

14: Tremenheere & Tregarthen stone (Gulval)

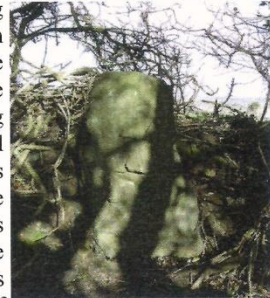
In 'Missing Menhirs' no.13 [MM84 p.5] we looked at the Tremenheere or Tremenhir stones recorded. The name means "place of the standing stone", and two such menhirs remain, one near St.Keverne on the Lizard and one at Stithians in mid-west Cornwall. We also visited a Tremenheere near Helston, and discovered that there were formerly two standing stones here, which had been removed some years ago.



There is however another Tremenheere in West Penwith, near to Gulval, that gives its name to the Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens. Perhaps in memory of the name, the Gardens have two modern standing stones at their entrance [photo right]. However, Tremenheere (which today consists of two farms, Higher and Lower Tremenheere) presumably originally had its own standing stone, after which the farms were named. This stone is not recorded anywhere, and no trace of it remains today. There is however another interesting stone in the vicinity. This is about 1.2m (4ft) high and stands in at a junction in a hedge up a lane from Tregarthen Farmhouse [at SW48963 32625]. It is obviously considerably older than the hedge, which has been built around it, and in fact it dowses as having been a Bronze Age marker stone. In addition there is a strong energy line that runs from Ludgvan church nearby, through this stone, and on through the site of the original Tremenheere menhir, a rocky outcrop in some woods next to Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens [at SW4942 3232], which dowses as having been a meeting place in the Bronze Age, and finally to Gulval Church, which is doubtless pre-Christian in origin, standing as it does in the centre of a circle of roads [see MM78 p.11]. The interesting thing about this strong energy line is that it provides a link between two other major energy lines, the Athena line that runs through Ludgvan church and the Apollo line that runs through Gulval church. A very interesting area of 'tremenheers' indeed!



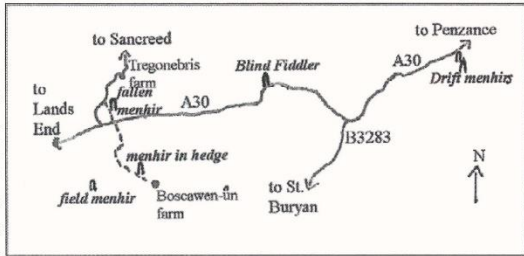
Tremenheere Gardens



Tregarthen hedge stone

LOST AND FOUND - Trengonebris menhir

A standing stone, hitherto buried and unrecorded, has been found at Trengonebris, between Boscawen-ûn and Sancreed in West Penwith. It lay in a field beside a public footpath, leading from the A30 to a minor road to Sancreed, and was dug up by the farmer because his tractor “kept catching on it”. Shortly after he had dug it up, a passing archaeologist, Yvonne Luke, who was down in Cornwall on holiday, happened to be walking that path and noticed it! [photos below].



Yvonne reported the situation to Historic Environment, who have now listed the stone. Meanwhile the farmer has since dragged the stone down into the corner of the field and dumped it there. MM went to have a look at it, and took some measurements. It is 2.6m (8½ft) high at its highest point, and 1.36m (4½ft) wide at its widest point, so it is a good sized standing stone. It formerly stood at SW 41622 28095, from where it had obviously fallen (or been felled), and subsequently covered with soil or buried. It stood close to other menhirs: to the south there are the field and hedge stones on Boscawen-ûn farm, and to the east (almost in direct alignment) there is the Blind Fiddler menhir, a 3.3m (10¾ft) stone, beyond which lie the Drift pair of standing stones. It stands beside the public path, which if extended southwards goes to Boscawen-ûn farm, and which may be an ancient trackway. It is good to find a ‘missing piece’ of the standing stone network in the area, but sad that the farmer could not be persuaded to re-erect the menhir in its original position.



Standing stone as it would have originally looked upright

THE MYSTERY OF SENNEN'S STONE SETTING

The 2012 issue of *Cornish Archaeology* 51 [published 2014] has an article on the excavations that were carried out in 2007 ahead of a new sewage pipeline that was installed between Sennen and Porthcurno in West Penwith,. A number of discoveries were made, including a field (Field 4) near the beginning of the pipeline in Sennen. An enigmatic 'stone setting' was discovered in the field, consisting of three boulder stones, together with a series of pits and postholes within and around the stone setting, as well as a number of lithics (flints). The stone setting consisted of three boulders: no.48 was 2.4m x 1.4m, no.47 was 1.5m x 1.15m, and no.49 was 0.8m x 0.5m. The post holes may have originally contained timber posts. The excavators found that the site dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (c.3000-1500 BCE), and that it had some ritual significance: "It was perhaps a place where people walked up to sit while flint was knapped and perhaps left the chert and other pebbles as offerings to the beings who were believed to dwell there. And perhaps during these visits, stories were told about the spirits or ancestors who may have inhabited the rocks or the giants who were buried beneath them".

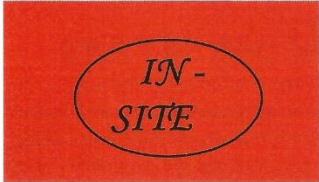


[c]Historic Environment Projects,CCC

MM went to visit the site (at SW3525 2560) earlier this year, and although there is nothing to see any longer, as it has been backfilled, dowsing produced some interesting results. It confirmed that it was indeed a late Neolithic site, but said that it wasn't as such a sacred one (in that people didn't come there for ritual purposes). After eliminating some other possibilities, the answer given was that it was a marker site that was used to direct people who were carrying their dead from further up Cornwall, down to Sennen harbour to take them across the sea to the Isles of Scilly (that are visible from the site). It has long been thought that in prehistoric times, the Scillies were the 'isles of the dead' to where bodies from the mainland were sometimes taken, and this seems to confirm that possibility.

While we were in the field we spotted something that the archaeologists had not noticed. In the top corner there was a cluster of three stones that were free standing and not part of the hedge. When we went to investigate, we discovered a Propped Stone (at SW3524 2554), an enigmatic class of monument found elsewhere in Cornwall. Dowsing revealed that it too dated from the Neolithic (about 5000 years ago), and its presence in the same field shows that this place was significant from the very beginning of prehistoric peoples.

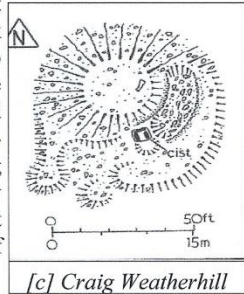




The centre-page feature that focusses on one or more particular sites each time in depth. This one looks at -

CHAPEL CARN BREA SUMMIT CAIRN

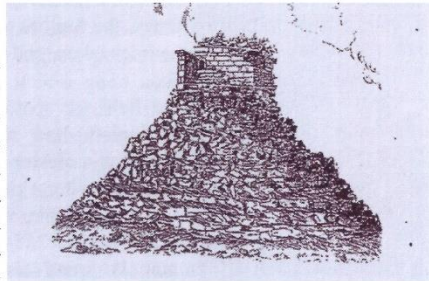
Chapel Carn Brea barrows were featured in the very first In Site feature [MM65], but this time we are taking a look specifically at the summit cairn [SW3859 2807]. It is now a heap of rocks and rubble, but was originally a late Neolithic entrance grave that went through a large number of modifications and adaptations over the years. This original entrance grave measured 9.1m (30ft) in diameter, and contained a south facing chamber, 2.7m (9ft) long and 1.2m (4ft) wide.¹ It was curiously tapered in its inner end, and carried two capstones. A trace of it can still be seen as a corner of stonework on the western side of the ruined rubble today.



Some time after its construction in the early Bronze Age, the entrance grave was built over by a large cairn, the stones of which constitute some of the rubble that lies about there today. At the time this cairn was built, a burial cist was inserted on the southern side, the remnants of which can still be seen today [photo right] (and which is sometimes wrongly assumed to be the original entrance grave).



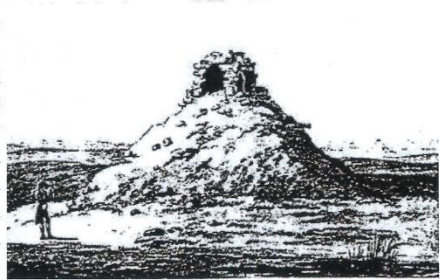
This large cairn was at a later stage enlarged yet again, the result being an immense sugar-loaf shaped pile 4.6m (15ft) high and 19m (61¾ft) across, with three concentric retaining walls.¹ This cairn was still largely intact by the 13thC CE, when a tiny hermitage chapel of St.Michael of Brea was built on the very top of the cairn [drawing right]. Here the hermits kept a beacon light for the guidance of local fishermen and travellers. This is the earliest record of a navigational light in Cornwall.



William Borlase c.1760

¹ Calculated by Craig Weatherhill from W.C. Borlase's quite detailed plan in "Prehistoric Stone Monuments - Cornwall", which he co-wrote with Rev. W.C. Lukis in 1885.

This small chapel on the cairn was rather romantically illustrated by H.P. Tremenheere around the turn of the 19th century, but by this time it had become quite ruinous, and it was subsequently demolished in 1816. Then in 1868 and 1879, the antiquarian William Copeland Borlase wreaked further havoc to the cairn when he drove a huge trench into it from the SW side, reducing its height to just 2.7m (8¾ft). Excavations revealed a complex structure of the three concentric walls within the cairn, with a retaining wall. In the centre of the barrow was a drystone walled chamber, half sunk in a pit measuring 2.3m (7½ft) long, 1.1m (3½ft) wide and 1.2m (5ft) high. This contained a stone lined cist which held cremated remains and pot sherds. This cist was destroyed, although the southern one [photo p.12] remains. Pottery, a whetstone and a spindle whorl were found during the excavations. The cairn had been originally surrounded by a free-standing stone ring, though sadly this no longer remains.



Watercolour by H.P.Tremenheere c 1800



Artificial mound built c 1880 after excavation

After the excavation, the remaining stones were built up into an artificial beehive-shaped mound [photo above].

This structure remained until World War II, when a shelter was dug into the east side of the mound, and an observation post built on the summit of the mound itself. This all but effectively destroyed what remained of the prehistoric structure. After these buildings were removed at the end of the war, all that was left was a heap or rubble and stones, which is what can be viewed today. It is the sad end of what originally must have been a fine prehistoric summit cairn, visible from most places in the vicinity, and to which most of the small coastal barrows running around this western peninsula seem to be aligned.² Paul Bonnington³ has described it as a “prestige mound”, based on its size, complexity and prominent position, and has commented: “It is highly likely that Chapel Carn Brea was already a significant foci in the landscape by the Early Bronze Age, as it contained both Britain’s most westerly known long cairn (from the Neolithic period), and probably the foundations of what was to become the region’s largest round barrow. Undoubtedly imbued with myth and legend, it contained both the oldest and largest barrows in the area, and was surrounded by many others that were ordered in deference to it”.

² see ‘The Coastal Barrows walk’ in MM65 p.8-11

³ see ‘Chapel Carn Brea: a ceremonial centre’ by Paul Bonnington in MM53 p.14-18.

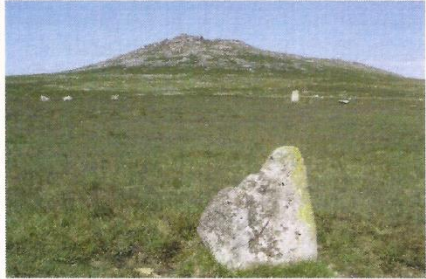
THE ROUGHTOR EFFECT

2: FRAMING MEANING

by Peter Herring

The following article is an edited transcript of the talk given by Peter Herring at Pathways to the Past in May 2014 as a tribute to the late Roger Farnworth.

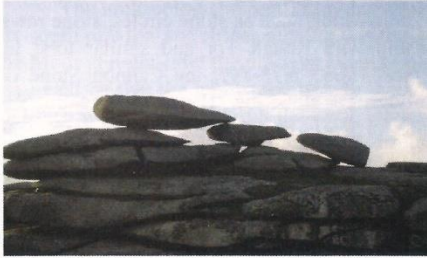
When Chris Tilley wrote his article called 'Rocks as Resources' in *Cornish Archaeology* 35 (1995), he pointed out how many stone circles on Bodmin Moor were to the south of distinctive tors, particularly Rough Tor. The most notable example is Fernacre circle that lies directly to the south of Rough Tor [photo right], but there are others as well, such as Stannon circle. Other circles point to other distinctive tors that are north of them, and even where there is nothing obvious, there may be other alignments.



Fernacre circle aligned to Roughtor

One example is the Nine Stones circle near Altarnun. There is nothing obvious to the north of it, but when I visited it on a clear day I noticed that to its north were a pair of hills that overlap, and sitting in the bottom of the overlap is the distant island of Lundy! It's pretty certain that's what the Nine Stones was responding to.

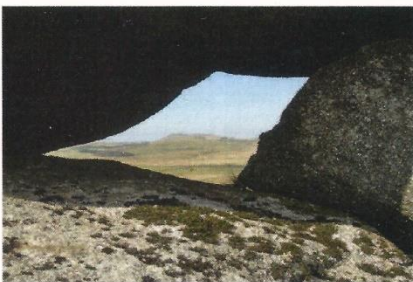
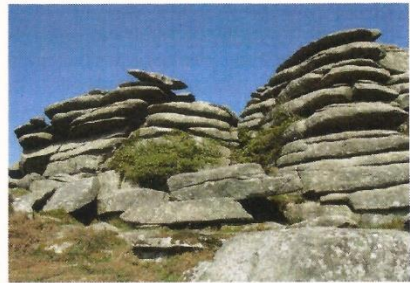
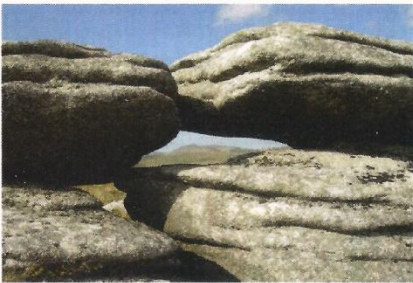
Stone rows were also involved in this 'Roughtor effect', showing off the hill which may be described as "the cathedral of the moors". Most of the stone rows consist of small stones located at the interface between less marginal land. Their builders had transformed their world from a world of trees to a world of grass, and as they walked the stone rows, they may have told stories of their world. Many of the stone rows are aligned to the hills and tors: for example as you walk the Tolborough stone row (to the north of Jamaica Inn), it is only at the end of the row that the hill of Rough Tor comes into view. The cairns on Bodmin Moor also incorporate tors in their viewframe. For example on Brown Gelly moor there is a cairn, and as you walk towards it and reach it, suddenly Rough Tor pops up on the horizon - a classic 'Rough Tor effect'. Two other barrows frame both Rough Tor and Brown Willy in the distance, and not only that, but in a mirror-like image, one of the barrows mimics the shape of Rough Tor, and the other barrow mimics the shape of Brown Willy. The builders have thus deliberately plotted the effect of the two hills in the construction of their two barrows. The late Roger Farnworth commented that this was an example of prehistoric art. Roger went around Bodmin Moor to look for examples of this kind of prehistoric art and beauty on the moor, and found many examples. One of these is the propped stones on The Cheesewring on Stowe's Hill [photo next page] which he thought could have represented a mother with two children.



Propped stones at The Cheeseewing

These kind of natural stones could have replaced dolmens, or quoits, on the moor, and have been used for excarnation, that is, the placing of dead bodies so that the flesh could be picked clean by birds, leaving just the bones. With quoits, the bones would then have been placed in the chambers beneath the quoits, acting as a kind of ossary where the ancestors' bones were kept. People would have gone there at various times for ritual and celebration.

However, it has been noticed that (with the exception of Trethevy Quoit to the south of the moor) Bodmin Moor does not have similar kinds of dolmens or quoits. Therefore it may be that the tors performed the same function, and that excarnation took place on the tops of the stones. These tor stones may have been viewed as the creation of the giants, so the people thought that they were taking their bodies to the giants' creations for excarnation. If this were true, then the next thing to look for was an equivalent to the chambers beneath the quoits for the storing of the bones, and here on Bodmin Moor Roger noticed for the first time that there were often small chambers under the rocks that could have served that purpose. Quite a number of these have now been found under the Tors, such as at Hawk's Tor [*photos below*], and taken together they help to explain how the tors could have been used for excarnation, and the bones deposited beneath.



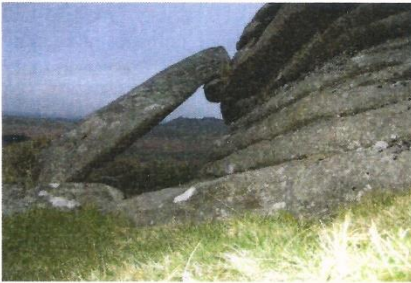
Hawk's Tor

[top left] - the excarnation rocks

[top right] - showing the chamber beneath

[bottom left] - looking out from the chamber beneath

We have seen how monuments on Bodmin Moor, such as stone circles, stone rows, cairns and propped stones, have a relationship with Rough Tor and similar tors; for example at the Leskernick propped stone [see MM85 p.18-19], the Cannon Stone on Carburrow Tor [see MM85 p.19], and Tolborough Tor stone row, Brown Gelly cairns and Hawks Tor view frame [see p.14-15 of this article]. Most of these sites have been discovered by people observing them, but Roger wondered if the same effect could be predicted at other places on the Moor, and set about trying to find sites where he thought the same effects could be observed. Two examples he found were on Garrow Tor, where he sought a viewframe and found a propped stone that had been deliberately placed to create a diamond-shaped window view to Brown Willy [photo below left], and on Alex Tor where a pyramid shaped viewframe gave a beautiful view of Rough Tor [photo below right].



Brown Willy viewed from Garrow Tor



Rough Tor from Alex Tor viewframe

Many of the places he visited are those that are infrequently visited by archaeologists, so he was able to find monuments that had not otherwise been recognised. This was particularly true of the area to the east and south of the Moor, around Dozmary Pool, Altarnun, St.Cleer, St.Neot and Warleggan. On Pinnocks Hill, west of Dozmary Pool, on a hill just south of the farm, he discovered a platform cairn that has a view of Rough Tor in the distance. If someone steps a few paces either side of the platform cairn, Rough Tor



Roger at Pinnocks Hill platform cairn

would disappear from view. Platform Cairns are low landscape features - places that were constructed so that people could enjoy or appreciate the landscape, or places that marked out a special place in the landscape from where a specific viewing experience could be had of the sacred hills, such as Rough Tor, Stowe's Hill or Kilmar Tor. These are the three most dramatic tors on Bodmin Moor to which these platform cairns respond. In addition Garrow Tor, immediately south of Rough Tor, was also important.

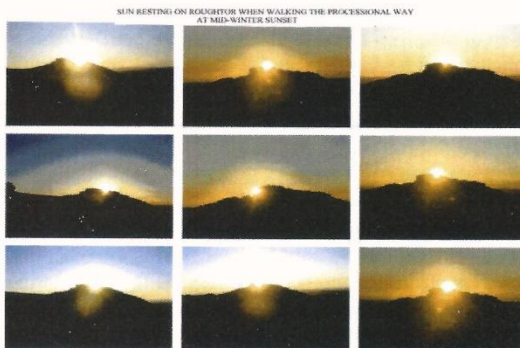
The archaeologist Chris Tilley has observed that all stone circles on Bodmin Moor are south of a tor, and Roger took up this theme and suggested that if one were to go up on the Moor at night-time the pole star would be seen to hang over the tors at a fixed point. It may well be that the prehistoric people thought that the stars were the spirits of the dead, and then when observed from the stone circles, the spirits as stars would appear to emerge from behind the tor. As the stars rotated throughout the night around the pole star, so it was thought that the spirits of the dead were moving around a fixed point in the sky. Roger also observed significant sunrises and sunsets over the tors, for example the midsummer solstice sunrise over the Cheesewring on Stowe's Hill seen from Tregarrick Tor [below left], and the midwinter solstice sunset behind the Cheesewring seen from Notter Tor [below right].



Summer solstice sunrise over Cheesewring

Winter solstice sunset behind Cheesewring

The final project that Roger was working on before he died was on observing the midwinter sunset on Rough Tor, seen from the ridge nearby, from where there was a dramatic view to the Tor Enclosure, and specifically to a spot where the prehistoric peoples created a deliberate splaying of the ramparts. Because of the lie of the land and the slope of the passage, Roger observed that by walking backwards along the ridge, the midwinter solstice sunset could be held for many minutes on the topmost tor of Roughtor, a kind of 'freeze frame' effect of the setting sun, holding it in position before it set. Roger's insights on Bodmin Moor were many, varied and original and we owe him a great debt of gratitude.



Photos p.14 [c] Cheryl Traffon p.15 (Cheesewring), p.16 (Alex Tor & Garrow Tor, p.17 (sunrise & sunset and Rough Tor sunset 'freeze frame') [c] Cathy Farnworth p.15 (Hawks Tor) & p.16 (Pinnocks Hill) [c] Peter Herring.

CORNISH CUNNING - 1

by Steve Patterson

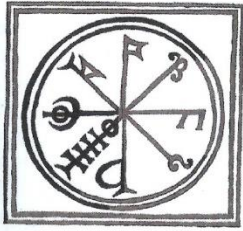
One night in the autumn of 2008 a great storm blew off the Atlantic, sweeping over the Lizard and buffeting the granite crags of the upland moors of west Cornwall. As it raged a slate was brought crashing down from the roof of an old granite barn in the Parish of Mabe. In the grey light of the morning the eagle eyed farmer spotted a series of barely discernable scratches on the surface of the fallen roofing slate. On closer inspection it transpired that the scratches were actually writing. A short verse had been incised in to the tile. The verse read –

“MAY HE WHO STEALS, MY ROUND STONES, MAKE EARLY DRY BONES.
REPENT AND RETURN, AND LIVE FOREVER.”

Maybe sometime in the not too distant past, one of the old inhabitants of that very place, was driven to distraction by the theft of their valuable “round stones”. However after all enquiries as to finding the identity of the perpetrator and all attempts to recover their possessions were of no avail, no other alternative was left open but to call upon greater powers. Perhaps on the instruction of a local cunning man or woman, or perhaps even drawing upon knowledge that was current in their family and community, they worked a charm to do their bidding. Whatever story lies behind this classic example of traditional Cornish folk magic we shall never know; only the shadowy hints that lay inherent in its form remain.

The actual verse may have been inspired by Proverbs 17.22 – “A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a down cast spirit dries up the bones.” But in terms of known magical charms it appears to be original. The composition of the charm itself however follows an old tried and tested, time honoured formula: a simple statement of intent is written down on a surface such as stone, metal, wood or parchment and is then subsequently ‘empowered’ and sent off to the spirit world to do its work. This particular formula was a mainstay of much of the magical practice of the medieval period (as it was represented in many the grimoires) and commonly used in the cunning practices of the early modern period. It goes back at least as far as the classical period, where in Greco-Roman magic it was known as “defixio”: that is to say, a written or inscribed charm that was used to ‘bind’ or constrain its recipient to a particular end, whether that be for good or for ill!

Often magical words of power or specific magical sigils were incorporated in to the text in order to lift the charm from the ‘ordinary’ and to imbue it with specific magical virtues. In this particular example no such overt magical tools were used, its power being drawn from the liturgical tone of its language, a language of which its author would have been all too familiar with from the church and the chapel pulpits. In the technology of magic, for a charm to be active its physical form it must be imprinted in the otherworld, for that is where the magic actually takes place. The method by which the Defixio charm would have been ‘activated’ would be to nail it to a god’s shrine, to drop it in to sacred waters or to post it in a grave in order for a co-operative ghost to take it over to the ‘other side’.



*A charm to 'fear no foe'
[c] Gemma Gary*

In the British medieval, early modern and indeed modern magical systems there is also a tradition of the use of such liminal spaces as a kind of 'psychic post-box' from which to send our desires off in to the magical realm, whether that be crossroads, graveyards, the branches of a holy tree or as in this particular case, the fabric of a building. Walls, floors, hearthstones and chimneys are a common and well documented repository for such charms. To the magical mind they are a hidden space neither outside nor inside, neither sacred nor profane, a place that is indeed in many ways a crossing over of the worlds.

The barn in question first appears on the 1906 OS map of the area, which suggests it was built sometime between 1880 (the date of the previous map) and 1906. The roof may have been repaired at some stage though appears to be original. From this we may surmise that it is likely that the charm was made in this period. During the late 19th century Cornwall was far from a rural backwater; it was a centre of industry and commerce, indeed it provided much of the raw materials and the knowhow that facilitated the industrial revolution. The barn in question was situated in a place that was at that time Britain's greatest producer and exporter of granite (much of which was used in the construction of the bridges, monuments and the embankment in London). For too long our understanding of magic has been labouring under the misapprehension that magical practice is a relic of an irrational past, practiced by the uneducated and the illiterate who live on the periphery of our society. The unknown author of the charm would have probably been educated, certainly literate and a member of a forward thinking outward looking community.

It is unclear what the "Round stones" to which the charm refers actually are. These may well give use a clue as to the author of the verse. I can find no such objects specifically named that were used in the industries of the area. The area was a centre for the production of monumental masonry, so they may have been a specific commission he was making. One is tempted to think that they may have been the stones of a long forgotten and unrecorded megalithic stone circle or possibly an example of the small smooth round magical stones known as "kenning stones" used by the cunning folk of the time. These are referred to by the folklorists William Paynter and William Bottrell, and there are some fine examples are in the Museum of Witchcraft in Boscastle, but without any corroborative evidence one may only speculate.

It is the paradox of magic that although its inner nature is completely and utterly 'other', it is also at the same time firmly rooted in the ordinary. From the ordinary world it is formulated and it is to the ordinary world to which it ultimately returns. As Plotinus, the father of magical philosophy once said "The starting point is universally the goal." And so even up to the 20th century we find the Cornish magical tradition firmly rooted in the ordinary lives of the people of Cornwall. What we now consider to be as exotic magical beliefs seem to have been widely held as a normal part of people's lives.

As a testament to this belief, one 19th century clergyman, The Rev. Hawker once observed “That two thirds of the total inhabitants of Tamar side implicitly believe in the power of the Mal Occhio, as the Italians name it, or the evil eye.” As we shall go on to see, he himself was a great believer in the objective presence of a magical otherworld. Implicit in the idea of a belief in magic is necessarily a system of techniques of how to interact with this magical world, so thus we have a ‘technology’ of magic- of which the fallen slate is a classic example. For the day to day dealings with the magical world many charms and fragments of knowledge were in general circulation, but for the practice of more complex and demanding magical tasks such as exorcisms, healing, cursing or acts of divination a professional class of practitioners emerged.

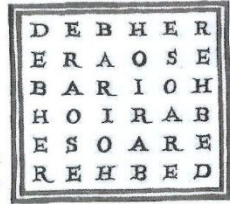
Sometimes there appears to be a crossover of roles in which a specialist practitioner would instruct a layperson in the arts. A fascinating letter dating probably from the late 18th century came to light in 2013 in the Cornwall Record Office in which the instructions for the construction of a witch bottle were given presumably to a client. It begins: “For Thamson Leverton on Saturday next being the 17th of this instant September any time that day take about a pint of your own urine and make it almost scalding hot then emptie it in to a stone jug”. (Graham King of the Museum of Witchcraft calculated that this was the full moon and the day of Saturn). The witch bottle was a commonly used atropaic charm used to reflect any malefic magic back to its sender. In the early modern and medieval period much illness and bad luck was attributed to “the evil eye” or “ill-wishing” from a malefic witch. The treatment was invariably the identification of the sender and the neutralisation or returning of the magic. Like the slate charm, the witch bottle was activated by burying or placing within the fabric of the house.



*Witch bottle
[c] Museum of
Witchcraft*

Just as it is misleading to consider magic to be only the possession of some kind of secret society or elite, it is also misleading to roll all kinds of magick and magical practitioner in together as a homogenous block. What we now tend to put under the blanket term of “witchcraft”, in its hayday they would have considered themselves to be of a quite different stock. Most common seem to have been a class of charmers or folk healers who practiced a form of hands-on healing. This was achieved with a simple laying on of hands. Sometimes this was accompanied with a spoken charm (usually muttered under the breath) or the use of a stroking or “kenning stone”. The ability to heal in this way was usually considered a divine gift and was rarely practised for money. Often it was handed down in families and the practitioners would often specialise in one or two specific applications, such as bloodstaunching or the removal of ringworm.

At the other end of the spectrum were the gentleman ghost layers. These were often members of the clergy. They generally used more ceremonial magic techniques and learned their skills from the study of magical texts. Their area of expertise was communion with, and the exorcism of, ghosts and spirits of the otherworld. Examples of this are the 17th century Rev. Thomas Flavel of Mullion and the 19th century Parson Woods of Ladock, though closer to our own times and more thoroughly documented is the late 19th century Rev. Hawker of Morwenstow who was just as at home in the windswept cliffs of north Cornwall, the spiritual rapture of the mass and in the realm of spirits, angels and demons. And some say that he had rather too much to do with the local witches than is befitting for a man of the cloth!



*A magical square used
as a charm
[c] Gemma Gary*

Somewhere in between the two were the white witches, the cunning folk, or as they were known in Cornwall, the “Pellars”. The word “Pellar” emerges in the 19th century and is of uncertain origin. The Pellars seemed to have acquired their skills by both study and by magical means, and various hints at arcane initiation rites exist within the folklore record. They have a varied repertoire of skills including divination, the making of spells and charms, the making and breaking of curses, as well as the skills of the ghost layers and the charmers. They were a professional class; one famous Pellar, Tammy Blee even had a practice on the main street of the well-to-do market town of Helston in the mid 19th century and was considered to be of great renown.

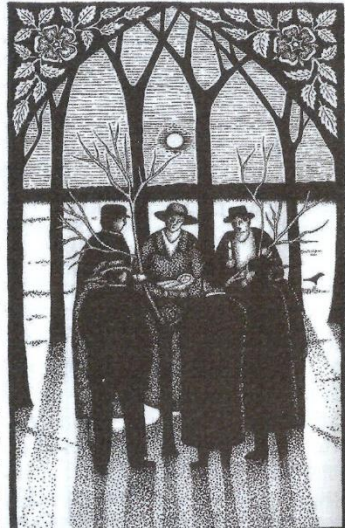
Just as the practitioners of magic were a ‘mixed bag’ so too were people’s attitude towards them. An obituary in the ‘West Briton’ (Feb 26th, 1874) entitled “Death of a Wizard” states: “On Thursday last, at Park Bottom in Illogan, John Thomas better known as ‘The Wizard’, ended his mortal career. Rich and poor families around have honoured him with a visit (in times past) and the contributions poured in upon him, if report be true, have been considerable.” It then goes on to list a glowing account of his miraculous cures. However a previous article printed in May 2nd 1856 states “It is humiliating to think say that there are such characters as gipsies, witches, conjurers, fortune tellers and charmers living now, in this nineteenth century, and artfully learning a livelihood out of the credulity of mankind.” It then goes on to name and shame several practitioners of the art, including one Mr ---Thomas of the parish of Bodmin, who apparently “Seldom goes home from the fair or market sober, and withal is an immoderate snuff taker.” !

Above and beyond these however, upon the heaths and cliff top perches, brooded the shadowy semi-mythical figure of the witch, who rode the storm on their ragwort stalks, dancing with the wind in the arms of the Bucca, the old god who presided over their Sabbatic realm. In their carnate forms they descended to haunt the ports and harbours in order to sell the wind in knotted chords to the sailors and fishermen who came their way.

One skein that bound all these disparate threads of magic together was the doctrine of “virtue”. Virtue was a kind of essence that inhabited the being of the magical practitioner. It was that which was passed on to them that allowed them to be magical, and it was that which gave their magic life and efficacy. Virtue could be handed from one practitioner to another and it could also inhabit objects such as charm or talisman. Paradoxically it has the qualities of an essence such as prana or reiki, but it is also ontological in nature. The host par excellence of ‘virtue’ to the pellar is the enigmatic “Milpreve” stone [pictured right]; the lapis exilis and holy grail of the Cornish cunning tradition, said to be formed by the secretion of serpents and to impart the gift of magic. It is the Milpreve that makes the pellar but it is the Virtue that heals the cow, that rests the ghost, that opens the sight and rocks the Logan stone that sings to the heartbeat of the land.



Let us not make the mistake of thinking of the tradition of magic in Cornwall as something locked in the dim and distant past. As our slate charm demonstrates it certainly went on in to the 20th century. The old cunning practitioners always were an eclectic and peripatetic bunch. And so accordingly, like the serpent, the Cornish magical tradition sheds its skin and as the world changes it manifests itself according to the needs and perceptions of its practitioners. The magical tradition seemed to have thrived in the industrial world of 19th century Cornwall, but it was the two world wars and the prevailing materialism of the 20th century that seemed to herald the swan song for its traditional form.



Drawing by Gemma Gary

However, it was the growth of the spiritualist movement, the Theosophical Society and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and their many offshoots that seemed to manifest the old tradition in a new incarnation. Now we see the role of the charmer replaced with the numerous New-Age therapists and the spiritualists practising the arts of healing and communing with the spirit world, whilst the art of cunning and spellcraft seems to have passed in to the hands of the ceremonial magicians and their country cousins the neo-pagans. Ironically it is through the latter that a revival of the old Pellar traditions have re-emerged - but that is another story!

Part 2 of this article, featuring the revival of traditions of the 20th century, will be in the next issue of MM.

BOOK REVIEW

Cecil Williamson's Book of Witchcraft by Steve Patterson

"A Grimoire of the Museum of Witchcraft"

[Troy Books, 2014 £27.00 + £3.80 p&p (hbk) £39.50 + £4.80 p&p (special edition) Also Fine Edition available]

Available from www.troybooks.co.uk

Cecil Williamson's
Book of
WITCHCRAFT
A Grimoire of the Museum of Witchcraft



Steve Patterson

This is an essential book for anyone interested in the history of traditional witchcraft, and of Cecil Williamson. The blurb for the book sums it up well: "In 1996, whilst helping the then new owner Graham King in refurbishments to the Museum of Witchcraft (at Boscastle), Steve Patterson happened upon a handwritten manuscript entitled simply 'Witchcraft' and containing an intriguing pot-pourri of esoterica from the hand of the Museum's founder; Cecil Williamson. It is this manuscript which provides the basis for Steve's book which includes a full annotated transcript of the 'Witchcraft' manuscript, a history of Cecil Williamson and the Museum of Witchcraft, a treatise on Cecil Williamson's vision of traditional Witchcraft - the practices and the philosophy of the wayside witches, an account of his meetings with Aleister Crowley and Gerald Gardner, and a controversial account of his witnessing of the birth of 'Wicca'. The book is both a valuable reliquary of practices for the traditional witch, and a resource for folklorists and historians alike; telling the tale of a hitherto largely ignored, but hugely influential episode in modern occult history, and one of the great unsung heroes of the twilight world of folklore and witchcraft".

This is a lovingly-produced book that is detailed and comprehensive, and at the same time compellingly readable. Steve Patterson has the ability to really get into the mind and intent of Cecil Williamson, and is therefore able to shine a spotlight on this enigmatic man in a way that few others have been able to do. He explains at one point in the book: "Cecil Williamson always believed that the primary source of the knowledge inherent in witchcraft lay within the direct experience of the 'spirit world'. It was to here that all paths led; all occult techniques, spells, charms and 'hocus-pocus' were merely means of achieving this end". This means that, while the first part of this book is fascinating for the close analysis and elucidation of Williamson's witchcraft manuscript, it is the second part of the book that really brings the man alive. This second half, entitled "Cecil Williamson: a West Country Cunning Man" tells the story of Williamson's life, and his meetings and interactions with such people as Gerald Gardner, Margaret Murray and Aleister Crowley, who were so influential in the formation of modern-day Wicca. Steve Patterson also writes of his impressions of the Witchcraft Museum in Boscastle and sums it up well: "The great irony is that even though everything about the museum seems counter to any aesthetic the field of museum studies, the tourist industry or even common sense would suggest (nevertheless) it was a deeply magical, informative and entertaining experience that has etched itself into the memory of almost all who went there". There is so much more in this book, which has an excellent index, appendices and photographs that complement the text.

20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

MM25 (Autumn 1994) was focussed around the theme of Spirit Paths and Haunted Highways, with articles by Paul Devereux and MM editor Cheryl Straffon. In the Spirit Paths article, reference was made to an article by Craig Weatherhill in *The Ley Hunter* magazine about an interesting church path that leads from near St.Ives through Zennor, Morvah and Pendeen that passes three parish churches, avoiding each one! The article went on to say that: "It is however associated with the earlier wayside crosses, suggesting that it emerges out of the Celtic twilight when the pagan traditions were dying but still extant, and the Christian ones just beginning to take over but not dominant". The article further noted that the route seemed to have a distinct association with witchcraft (also a possible indication that the route was significant to religions and beliefs older than Christianity). "Indeed" it went on, "Zennor is strongly marked in folklore as a centre of witch activity. In Trewey, next to Zennor, a witch transformed herself into a hare in order to get food from St.Ives, five miles away, for her husband's dinner; the route she took was the same as the church way".

In the Haunted Highways article, the theme continued with a look at those pathways (sometimes predating modern roads) that had had ghostly sightings, especially animal sightings that hint of the geomantic significance of the paths. Three examples were given: firstly, a ghostly white hare that is reputed to run from Talland to Looe and there vanish at the door of the Jolly Sailor Inn. She was supposed to be the spirit of a girl who killed herself, and the article comments: "The whole legend may hark back to a pre-Christian spirit path, hares being traditionally an animal sacred to the Goddess". Secondly, at the old Dog and Dragon restaurant at Porthowan, a spectral dog had been seen, mostly on May Eve (Beltane). The old legend there said that a dragon used to haunt the neighbourhood until seen off one May Eve by a dog. "Again, we have a pre-Christian legend, dragons originally representing the telluric currents of the earth". And finally, the example was given of the old ruined chapel that lay hidden near Tregerthen, once again on the old Zennor churchway. Here an eerie fox-like creature was seen on top of the walls one afternoon by author Mary Williams. Craig Weatherhill commented: "It is this stretch of path which retains a sense of otherworldliness, which is instantly felt by anyone walking its route".



Tregerthen chapel on the Zennor path

MM asked readers if they had had any such paranormal encounters, and over the years some have come our way, and made an entry into Cheryl Straffon's recent book "Between the Realms: Celtic myth and magic" [Troy Books, 2013].

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