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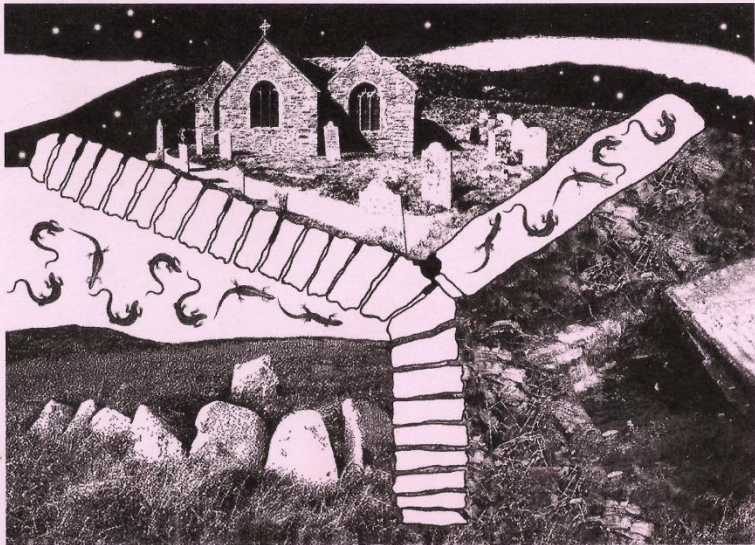
SUMMER 2015

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# MEYN MAMVRO

ancient stones and sacred sites in cornwall



DEEP INTO PENDEEN FOGOU ● MORVAH PARISH  
MYSTERIOUS LIZARD SITES ● TREMENHEER ●  
DOWSING ● CASPN & LAN ● ANCIENT TRACKS  
**\*ALL PHOTOS NOW IN FULL COLOUR\***

**CONTENTS**

**Editorial** ..... p. 1  
**Dowsing News** ..... p. 2  
**CASPEN & LAN** ..... p. 4  
**Lost and Found - Tremenheere (Gulval) / Wells Corner** ..... p. 5  
**Ancient Tracks: 7 - Carn Kenidjack to Chûn Downs** ..... p. 6  
**Home Sweet Ancient Home: 8 - Bosulow Trehyllis** ..... p. 7  
**Prehistoric Parishes - Morvah** ..... p. 8  
**Lost & missing stones of Carn Downs area** ..... p. 9  
**Pathways to the Past: Morvah to Potheras Cove** ..... p.11  
**The lost Rosemergy stone circle** ..... p.13  
**The mysterious Lizard peninsula - Michael Woolf** ..... p.14  
**Journeying deep into Pendeen fogou - Elyn Aviva** ..... p.17  
**Cornish Cunning: 2 - Steve Patterson** ..... p.20  
**Book Reviews** ..... p.22  
**West Penwith ancient sites and alignments online map** ..... p.23  
**20 years ago: the Nine Sisters** ..... p.24

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# Meyn Mamvro

## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

EARTH ENERGIES \* ANCIENT STONES \* SACRED SITES \* PAGANISM \* LEYPATHS  
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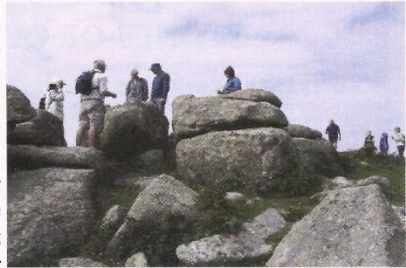
One of the main things MM has campaigned about for nearly 30 years now is the care and preservation of our ancient sites - and not only the sites but also the landscape context in which they sit. Of course we are not alone in this, as many other groups, such as CASPN, Save Penwith Moors, Heritage Journal, etc, also care passionately about our past and want to protect it from the constant attempted encroachments by developers of all shapes and sizes. Sometimes, they seem to be in collusion with the very people who should be protecting the sites. A recent application for a huge wind farm on St. Breock Downs next to the Nine Maidens stone row has just been supported by English Heritage. Unbelievably, Nick Russell from EH said that the wind farm would transform the row into "a setting that would allow better appreciation of the monument". In contrast to this, MM has received a heartfelt communication from reader Sue Joiner, who writes:

"I was part of a very strong local group who fought hard to stop the erection of wind turbines in the vicinity of Mên Gurtha (the waiting stone) and its companion on St. Breock Downs in the nineties. This was one of the earliest proposals for the machines in Cornwall, along with the ones at Delabole. These are the ones that are being "repowered" (i.e. made bigger) at present. We knew the ambience of the stones would be affected and it has been. The Downs are designated as an Area of Historic Value, an Area of Landscape Value, an Area of Special Scientific Interest, and next to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the North Cornish Coast and the Camel Valley. None of these protected them. The original application was refused several times but, ultimately, John Selwyn Gummer, the relevant Minister of the Tory Government at the time, overrode all objections and passed the project. I knew at the time that from this that there would be nowhere in Cornwall that would be safe from any rampant development in the name of capitalism, and thus it has shown to be in the ensuing years. The Downs are not safe, as you say, especially, as one of the most acquisitive of the County's agribusinesses have their base there. So, the Midsummer Bonfires I attended for 30 years have gone as has the Downs special silence. I wonder if the boxing hares I saw there have been able to stay?"

This letter sums up the poignancy of the whole situation. Once these wild spaces, these special landscapes are gone we have lost not only them but the whole atmosphere surrounding them. What developers and others do not seem to realise (or do not care) is that it is not only a site itself that is worth protecting and keeping for future generations, but the whole experience of visiting that site. To so many of us, the sites are not just of prehistoric interest, they are special because they are places of pilgrimage, of peace for the soul and to nurture the spirit. These are the irreplaceable things that developers destroy.

## DOWSING NEWS

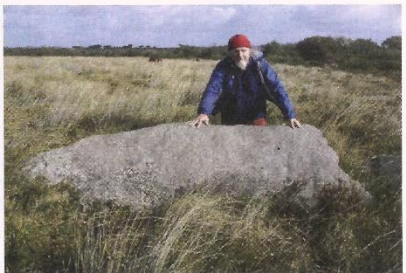
The Autumn/Winter 2014 season commenced on a warm and sunny day at the beginning of September with a visit by **Trencrom Dowsers** to *Chapel Carn Brea*, where they dowsed the Neolithic long barrow and adjoining rocky outcrop [picture right]. The group felt that the rocks had been used for excarnation, with the bones placed inside the barrow. Then they had a look at the summit cairn and an interestingly pointed stone further



down the hill, before walking along the path at the flank of Bartinney Hill to *Chapel Euny wells*, where they dowsed for the position of the original chapel. Finally, they went to *Carn Euny settlement & fogou*, where they dowsed the huts (and thought the central post holes had originally held Iron Age totem poles) and visited the fogou and talked about its orientation and significance. A day of thought-provoking ideas and general dowsing agreement.

At the end of the month, **Tamar Dowsers** had a joint event with **Devon Dowsers**, led by Terry Faull, exploring early Christian sites in the Bude area. They visited *Jacobstow church and the (restored) St. James holy well* nearby, near the pilgrimage route to St. James of Compostella. They then visited the *two holy wells of St. Gemys* at the church near Crackington Haven, one in a private garden at the church (the original well) and another ('new') well behind the church, which had some rather mixed energies. The day finished at the deserted early medieval village of Lower Tresmorn.

October started with a day researching sites around *St. Keverne* on the Lizard with **West Cornwall Dowsers**. They visited the fields, woodland and paths at Guilly, Kilter, and Main Dale on the Lanarth Estate, which have been largely archaeologically unrecorded. They investigated the field next to where they had previously discovered a stone setting [see *MM85 p.4*], which dowsed as a 'field of the dead' with many burial cairns. They also investigated the gabbro stones at Main Dale, where a possible ruined dolmen was recorded in 1925, and dowsed where its capstone now lay at SW78230 1981 [photo above]. They also found a possible propped stone nearby at SW7825 1985, which marked several strong energy lines. There was plenty found during the day that warranted a future visit to the area.





Later in the month **Trencrom Dowzers** had an afternoon visiting *Alsia Well & Boscawen-ûn circle*. At Alsia, they dowsed the path of the original Mary line, as dowsed by Hamish Miller, and also found the line where it had now shifted [see MM82 p.19-21]. They then travelled to Boscawen-ûn circle, where they plotted the Mary line, and other energy lines coming into and leaving the circle. A good day's dowsing.

In November, **West Cornwall Dowzers** spent the day with **Roy Goutté** at *King Arthur's Hall* on Bodmin Moor, an enigmatic site that Roy has been investigating. Dowsing revealed that it was not an animal pound, nor was it a 'place for the dead' (i.e Neolithic graveyard). It was never roofed, walled or enclosed, but was a sanctuary built around a spring at the north of the site. Dowsing gave a date of construction 3200-3100 BCE, which places it in the late Neolithic. The stones that define the rectangle were not energetically transmitting, but there was a clockwise energy to the site itself, which came from the outside bank that contained a number of cremations from a later period, probably the Iron Age. The dowzers thought that the area of low level water could be to do with sun and moon reflection (especially at midday). and all of them got a strong September/October usage of the site, with the Autumn equinox sunset being distinctly visible from there. Also, the north-south alignment of the site meant that the summer solstice would have been observed from saddle notches in the distant hills. A magical site in its day, and a really interesting visit. More on this in MM88.



The year's dowsing ended with a visit in December by **West Cornwall Dowzers** to Paul Church in West Penwith. The church felt very friendly and welcoming, and the group found a north-south energy line. They also discovered that the Michael line, which formerly went through a deep dip below the church, had moved uphill to the church's west gate entrance. After lunch they walked the prayer labyrinth which lies near a 'peace garden' by the Vicarage, with a sign that talks about the "thinness between the worlds". The labyrinth was very strong in aura and energy.



Finally, in December **Tamar Dowzers** presented a talk by **Alan Neal** about various aspects of dowsing. Alan's views are now widely accepted in the dowsing community: for example, that major energy lines and leys are almost always underpinned by geological faults, and that sacred sites will invariably be found to host crossing watercourses, crossing earth energy currents and major fault lines, often coinciding with leys.



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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



The CASPN management team has recently been joined by several new members, one of whom is the new Publicity Officer Sally Bell. Sally has been giving interviews about CASPN's work to magazines such as *Cornwall Life* and *Cornwall Today* and also Radio Cornwall, so she is a very welcome addition to the team. All those who are part of the team have an important role to play, and all give their time freely, even though many have other jobs and commitments. In a couple of years time CASPN will be 20 years old, and during that time has achieved a lot in looking after the sites, despite having very few grants or external funding. Perhaps because it is truly independent and does not rely on external funding, it has been able to withstand the withdrawal of funds that have left many other organisations and bodies depleted. However, for its day-to-day running costs, it very much depends on its support body FOCAS, and is always very grateful to all those members who regularly renew their membership. All income derived from that goes on caring for the sites

The big event in CASPN's yearly calendar is of course **Pathways to the Past**, which is free to all FOCAS members (others are welcome too at a small charge). This year marks the 9th year of the event, and as always there is a varied programme of walks and talks over the weekend of May 30th-31st. On the Saturday morning there is a guided walk around the Mén-an-Tol area visiting prehistoric sites that were aligned to the sun and moon; in the afternoon a walk to Nanjulian courtyard house settlement between St. Just and Sennen; and in the evening a talk by Paul Bonnington about the invention of metal working in the Bronze Age. On the Sunday morning Charlie Johns will give an illustrated talk about prehistoric sites on the beautiful Isles of Scilly; in the afternoon there is a walk around sites in the Lamorna area, telling 'stories in the stones'; and the weekend finishes with a chat at the North Inn, Pendeen with community archaeologist Richard Mikulski. See you there!

### **CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASPAN]**

**CASPAN Address:** Whitewaves, Boscaswell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, TR19 7EP

**Web site:** [www.cornishancientsites.com](http://www.cornishancientsites.com) **E-mail:** [secretary@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:secretary@cornishancientsites.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups](https://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](mailto:focas@cornishancientsites.com), visit CASPN 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](mailto:focas@cornishancientsites.com)

**Sites Clear-Ups:** Dave Munday 01736-787230 e-mail: [dave@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:dave@cornishancientsites.com)

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

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

**Adopt-a-Site scheme:** e-mail: [info@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:info@cornishancientsites.com), or phone 01736-787186

**Sites Clear-Ups:** Tel: 01736-787186 e-mail: [info@cornishancientsites.com](mailto:info@cornishancientsites.com)



## LOST AND FOUND - Tremenheere (Gulval/Ludgvan)

Following on from the Missing Menhirs - 14 feature in MM86 about the standing stone that gave its name to Higher and Lower Tremenheere farms (between Gulval and Ludgvan), two MM readers, Paul Blades and James Kitto, got in touch to say that the missing menhir had in fact been rediscovered and re-erected! It now stands at SW49012 32960 in a field next to the minor road joining the two farms. Apparently, the farmer remembered the stone standing there when he was a boy, but it was pulled down and buried.



*Photo[c] Paul Blades*

However, the plough kept hitting it, so it was dragged to the hedge where it lay for many years. The farmer said that he had always had the urge to put it back, so a few years ago when he had the equipment he did just that. It is a huge stone, about 3 metres (10ft) or so high, which makes it one of the tallest standing stones in West Penwith, only slightly shorter than the Pipers, and on a par with Gùn Rith, the Blind Fiddler and Carfury. Its location was dowsed by MM, when we were visiting the Tregarthen hedge stone, mentioned in Missing Menhirs - 14\*, and located on the map as a round dot, but it is a real pleasure to record that the stone itself is now standing again.

*\* Please note that the NGR for the Tregarthen stone given in the Missing Menhirs feature in MM86 should be 49863, not 48963 as given.*



## WELLS CORNER

*A regular feature on Cornwall's holy wells*

**St. Torney's well** [SX271 763]

This must be one of the most difficult wells in Cornwall to find, but MM reader Carol Ellis has recently managed to track it down. It lies near North Hill, on the eastern fringes of Bodmin Moor. Carol's directions are as follows: "Start at the church and take the right road down the hill until you see a public footpath sign. This leads you to the top of a very steep field. Go down to the bottom and over a stile, and the path leads you to the right until you join up with another below it. Go left here, past some fallen trees, then cross a very shallow stream that runs across the path. As soon as you have crossed over, you will see a small path that leads you down to the river's edge. Follow this right down, and turn around to face the path again and you will see the well hiding in the undergrowth". It is a small and ancient stone building in a very tranquil spot, with clear running water. The precise identification of St. Torney is something of a mystery: his name may be a variation of the Welsh Tynnog or perhaps Tighern.

*[www.facebook.com/groups/holywells of Cornwall](http://www.facebook.com/groups/holywells%20of%20Cornwall)*

## ANCIENT TRACKS

### 7: Carn Kenidjack to Chûn Downs

*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.*

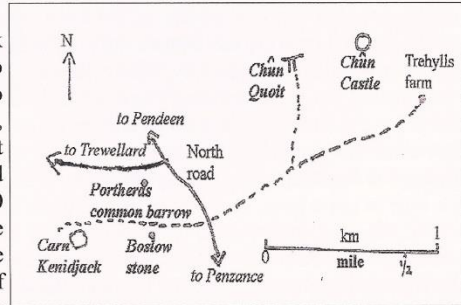
This track probably dates back into prehistory, linking as it does two Neolithic sites. Part of it at least also defines a section of 'The Tinnars Way', the track that runs across the West Penwith moors. The section featured here starts at **Carn Kenidjack** [SW3880 3299], a distinctive rocky outcrop on the top of a ridge, also known as 'The Hooting Carn' from the tendency of wind to blow through its rocks and make

an evocative noise. Recently it has been shown that the site was used in the Neolithic period as a Tor Enclosure, an area set aside as sacred, and surrounded by a low wall.

From Carn Kenidjack a clearly-defined track runs east down the slope of the hill, where at the bottom a rare example of an inscribed stone from the 7thC CE may be found still in situ. This is the **Boslow Stone** [SW3925 3305], which has a name Taetuera inscribed on one side and an equal-armed cross on the other. Professor Charles Thomas has observed

[MM30 p.10-11] that the stone was set up originally to catch the sun's light at midday, and is set in a small mound that is possibly a grave. To the north of this is a Bronze Age barrow and entrance grave at **Portheras Common** [SW3914 3327].

The track now becomes a sunken (very muddy) lane that crosses the main Penzance - Pendeen road before running along the flank of Chûn Downs, from where a path leads up to the Neolithic site of **Chûn Quoit** and the Iron Age site of **Chûn Castle**. This is truly an ancient prehistoric track.



*Carn Kenidjack from Tregeseal Common*



*Boslow stone [c] Mike Rowland*



## HOME SWEET ANCIENT HOME

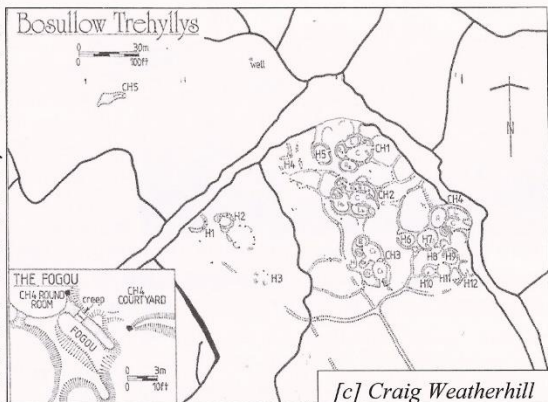
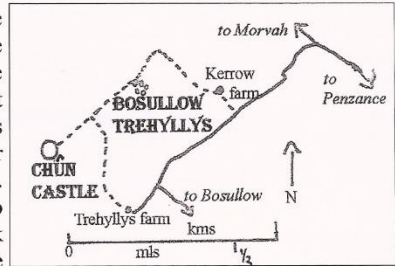
### WHERE OUR ANCESTORS LIVED: 8 - Bosulow Trehyllys

Bosulow Trehyllys [SW406 342] is one of the largest, and little visited, Courtyard House settlements in West Penwith, second only to the more well-known Chysauster and Carn Euny. It is largely unexcavated, but most of its buildings are superbly preserved, although buried under dense bracken, especially during summer. CASPN does an annual clearance at the site to keep it under control. It lies on the eastern flank of Chûn Hill, and Chûn Castle is visible from the site. Indeed, as the two sites are contemporary, it is possible that the inhabitants of Bosulow Trehyllys were also responsible for the construction of Chûn Castle.

The village consists of four courtyard houses all together, with the scant remains of a fifth one to the west. There are also a collection of a dozen or so huts, forming an interlocking complex with the four courtyard houses, creating a large settlement. The courtyard houses all have a central courtyard, leading off to round and long rooms. The southern one (CH3) is unusual in having two interlinking courtyards. The eastern one (CH4) has a small passage-like structure attached to it, which Craig Weatherhill believes are the remains of a roofless fogou, with a small roofed creep passage attached to its side.

This was clearly a favourable place to live, as is evidenced by the small fields, paddocks and corrals around the edge of the village.

*Next issue - Trevean - also in Morvah parish.*

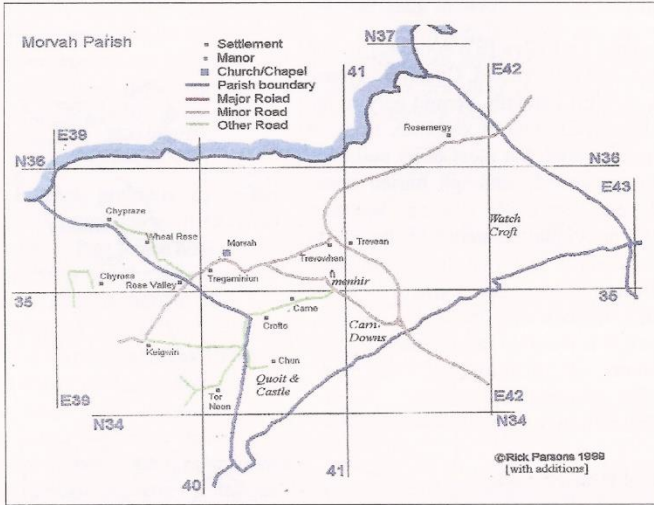


[c] Craig Weatherhill



## PREHISTORIC PARISHES - MORVAH

*A new occasional series looking at lesser-known sites of Cornwall's parishes*

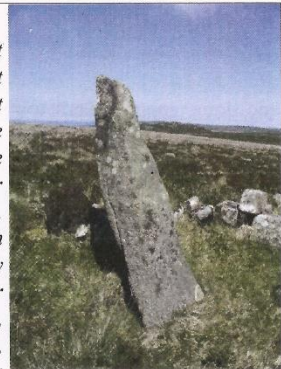


Morvah parish is one of the smallest in Cornwall, consisting of just 1,270 acres (5 km<sup>2</sup>) of land, with 14 acres (57,000 m<sup>2</sup>) of foreshore. The 2001 census gave the population at only 79, but by 2011 it had dropped to just 49. It is bounded by the parishes of St. Just to the west, Zennor to the north-east, Madron to the south and by the sea in the north.

Its most well known ancient sites are Chûn Quoit and Castle, but it has a number of interesting lesser-known sites, including a large Bronze Age cairn and standing stone on Watch Croft hill [see box right], a small settlement, round and a fallen standing stone on Trevean farm [see p.10], a petal barrow at Chypraze [see p12-13], some other stones in and around Carn Downs [see p.9-10], courtyard house settlements at Trevean, Crofto and Bosulow Trehyllys [see p.7], a lost stone circle at Rosemergy [see p.10], and a holy well at Tregaminion [see p.12]. Morvah may be small, but it has some hidden delights for the interested explorer.

### Watch Croft

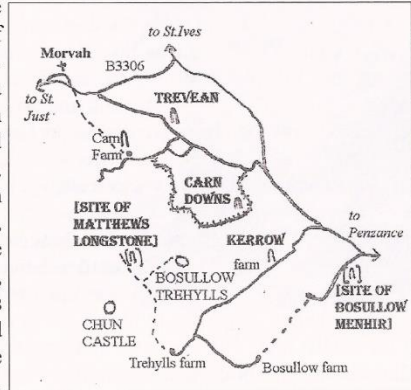
*On Watch Croft Hill (the highest hill in West Penwith) are the remains of a large barrow built over natural rocks, 15.2m (50ft) in diameter. Nearby is a menhir [SW4209 3567], 1.9m (6½ft) tall, now leaning at an angle, which may possibly be aligned eastwards to a notch in Carn Gulva at May Day dawn.*





## LOST & MISSING STONES OF CARN DOWNS AREA

Carn Downs is a small carn, part of the West Penwith moors, situated to the NE of Chûn Downs and SW of Watch Croft hill. Directly to the north of the carn, across a minor road from Morvah, is the Trevean standing stone (now fallen), which would have been visible from the Carn. However, there were formerly other standing stones in the area, known either from observation, antiquarian record or probable field name evidence. These include ones at Carn Downs, Kerrow farm, and sites of ones at Matthews field near Bosullow Trehylls settlement, and near Little Bosullow farm. Finally, a possible new one has been identified near Carne Farm.



Firstly, on the south-eastern flanks of **Carn Downs**, a possible fallen menhir was located and recorded by Sandy Gerrard while doing a 1:2500 survey in 1965 at SW4131 3460. From the south, the stone appeared as a triangle 1.2m (4ft) high, lying within a prehistoric field system, and part of a field bank. Visiting the site 50 years later, it is evident that much field clearance has taken place on this croft, and a number of similar looking modern stones have been erected as gateposts. This stone is one of them and now stands at SW41381 34606, where it serves as a gatepost, but also downs as a prehistoric menhir. It has some distinctive quartz bands in the stone, which probably made it attractive to the megalithic people.



*Carn Downs standing stone*

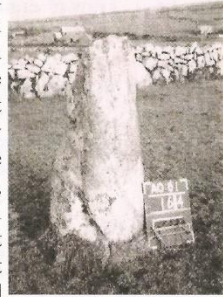
To the south of this stone in a field wall of **Kerrow Farm** [SW4146 3425] lies a distinctive stone. Henderson in 1914 recorded a menhir near Bosullow schoolhouse, leaning to the south. Vivien Russell in 1971 identified it as this stone, 2.1m (6.8ft) high, which has a crack on its east face, its base being packed with earth and stones. Clearly, the stone wall has been built around this stone, indicating that the stone is prehistoric in origin. It lies not far to the east of Bosullow Trehylls settlement.



*Kerrow farm menhir in wall*

To the west of Bosullow Trehyllis lies the site of another probable menhir. At SW4062 3428, the 1840 tithe map shows the fieldname **Matthews Longstone**. The standing stone however has long gone, and no trace now remains. Finally, to the SE of the Kerrow menhir lies the site of another standing stone, also no longer extant. In a field to the east of a minor road to **Little Bosullow** farmhouse, Henderson in 1914 recorded a standing stone, that Vivien Russell located at SW4191 3421. Dowsing revealed that the stone was approx. 2.1m (7ft) east of the road, and was 1.8m (6ft) high. It was broken up due to field clearances, and the pieces are now under heavy bracken.

Returning to Carn Downs itself, on the other side of the road that runs alongside it, lies Trevean Farm where there is a field that contains a fallen standing stone. This **Higher Trevowhan** menhir formerly stood in the field at SW40895 35135 until relatively recently. Between 1975 and 1982 it either fell or was uprooted and dumped into the northern hedge of the field. The stone was originally recorded at 1.7m (5.5ft) high, and the stone in the corner of the field is nearly 2m (6.5ft) high, showing that just a foot or so of it was buried in the ground. Since the site recently came into National Trust ownership, there has been a project to try and get it re-erected in its original position. The National Trust and the Cornwall Archaeological Unit are in favour of replacing it, but so far it has come up against English Heritage's insistence that the site be properly surveyed with money set aside for post-archaeological work if needed. It is to be hoped that these objections may be overcome.



*OS photo [1961]*

From lost and missing standing stones, we turn to one that has recently been spotted as a possible menhir, now serving as a gatepost. In a field to the north of Carne Farm stands this tall menhir at SW4061 3501, identified by MM reader James Kitto. James says that it is about 2.77m (9ft) tall, much too tall to be a simple gatepost stone, and it dowses as Bronze Age.

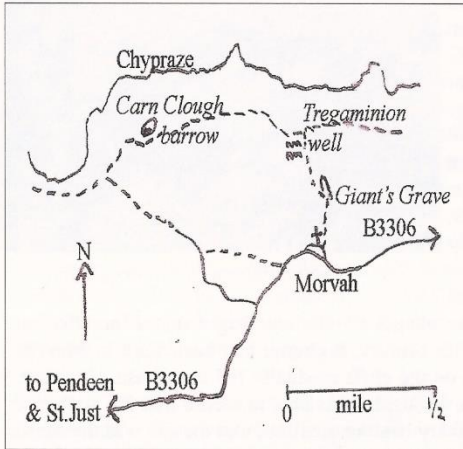


For such a small area around Carn Downs, there were a surprising number of standing stones located, which may all have had a special relationship to the Carn itself.



## PATHWAYS TO THE PAST

### MORVAH TO PORTHERAS COVE



This walk, in the 'Pathways to the Past' occasional series is a continuation eastwards of the one featured in MM77 as "Lower Boscaswell". This one takes in a stretch of coastal path and passes the remains of three lesser-known sites. To start the walk, drive (or take a bus) to the tiny hamlet of Morvah, which lies just off the B3306 north coast road from St. Just to St. Ives. Head for Morvah church. This church was dedicated in 1409 to St Morwetha, and was built by the Knights of St John as a daughter church to the church at Madron. Soon after this, however, the church was dedicated to St Bridget of Sweden, who had formed the order of Bridgintines in 1373.

Next to the church is a public footpath sign, which is where the walk begins. This track leads from the church down to the coastal path. About halfway down the path look out for a granite stone next to the path (on the east side). This is all that remains of the **Giant's Grave** [SW4021 3564], a ruined cromlech that formerly had great importance. Thurston Hoplins, writing in 1935, says: "People still living can remember the rites at the grave for gaining knowledge of the future", and adds that most of the monument had been removed for road mending. The quoit also



*Remains of Giant's Grave quoit*

played an important role in history and legend. In the story of "The Giants of Towednack" [recounted in 'Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall' by William Bottrell, 1st series, 1870], Jack the Hammer marries Geneva on the Celtic festival of Lughnasa (August 1st) at Morvah, celebrations that are continued to this day as the Morvah Feast. The people then danced around the capstone of the Giant's Stone, which marked the grave of a local giant. This stone is all that remains of that site, and dowsing shows that it was once part of the upright of the quoit, with a fragment of the capstone lying in the hedge a few yards away.

Continuing down the path, it eventually widens out as it approaches the coastal path. On the western side, just where the path meets the coastal path, there is an enclosure, delineated by low walls and a rough stile on the coastal path side. This is the location of

**Tregaminion holy well** [SW4015 3587].

This holy well has a long history. It doubtless dates back into prehistory, and an early Christian chapel was constructed nearby in about the 6th-8th century CE. This would have been a simple rectangular building made of local granite, where perhaps one hermit would have lived, and both chapel and well would have looked over the wide Atlantic ocean. There is reference to a Saint Morvede here in 1349, and Saint Morvetha in 1379, and in May 1390 the vicar of St.Maddern (now Madron) Sir Roger Melleder was given

leave to celebrate Divine Service at the chapel of “Saints Brigid and Morvetha” at Tregaminion. By the beginning of the 15th century, a church had been built in Morvah itself, and the small chapel and well here on the cliffs gradually fell out of use. However, when Quiller Couch visited the site in the 1880s, he was able to record that the waters of the well were thought to possess extraordinary healing qualities, and the site was the scene of many miraculous cures. There was also a legend associated with the place that claimed that the corner of the field where the well stood was never tilled, a memory of the sanctity of the place. In the early 1950s a pump house was built next to the well to supply water to Morvah, and that remained there, although redundant, until removed in 2000. When Lane Davies visited the site in the late 1960s the well was “now only a square recess ... in a marshy field under a bank”, and despite some renovation work in the early 2000s, Lane Davies description still holds good today.



*Site of Tregaminion well (in foreground)*

After a pause to pay respects to saints Morwetha and Brigid here, we now turn westwards on the coastal path and follow it for under a mile until it approaches Portheras Cove. On the plateau above the Cove to the north of the coastal path, the remains can be seen of **Chypraze barrow** [SW3929 3588], which was uncovered during a fire in 2010. Also known as Carn Clough petal barrow, it was first noted by Haliwell in 1847, but had been buried under thick gorse for many years.



*Chypraze (Carn Clough) barrow in 2010*



The Bronze-Age barrow has a diameter of 7.3m (24ft), and 11 tall contiguous stones, all inclined inwards at an angle of 60° towards a central cist, and has a fine view towards the sacred hill of Carn Gulva towards the east. From the barrow a low curvilinear wall of stones runs eastwards, which may be the remains of a field boundary, contemporary with the barrow. The question of who the people were who built this distinctive monument in such an isolated place was solved recently when dowsing revealed that originally there were four dwellings 366 metres (400 yds) away, to the south-east of the barrow.

From here we take the steeply descending path down towards Portheras Cove, and if wished we can continue up the other side on the coastal path to Pendeen Watch lighthouse, from where we can begin the Lower Boscaswell walk given in MM77, which visits two fogous, another holy well and a Beaker Pit. However this present walk now turns inland. Before the small bridge across the stream in the valley, take the path heading up the valley to Chypraze House. This becomes an asphalt road that leads back to the main B3306 road. However, after about ¼ mile, look out for a track on your left that leads across the fields and returns you to Morvah village from where you started. If it is open, you can get refreshments at Morvah Schoolhouse, and look back on a short but satisfying walk, that in a small area has revealed three interesting sites, not generally known by the many people who walk the coastal path hereabouts.

*A limited number of leaflets on Morvah Holy Well, with text by Cheryl Traffon, are available on a first-come-first-served basis to MM readers. Please send an A5 SAE to the MM address if you would like a copy.*

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## THE LOST ROSEMERGY STONE CIRCLE

On the main B3306 St.Just - St.Ives road at Rosemergy, east of Morvah, there was formerly a stone circle, probably to the north of the farm in a field at SW4170 3634. Evidence comes from a field name on the 1841 tithe map, and a reference by Borlase (although there was some confusion about which stone circle he was referring to). However, James Halliwell in 1847 [in *Rambles in Western Cornwall*] wrote that it stood a little to the north-east of Rosemergy. There are no traces of a stone circle there today, but dowsing revealed that there was originally a circle of 19 stones there (the classic number for Penwith circles), lying approximately 6.5m (21ft) from the road. In the same field is a standing stone, which may originally have been an outlier to the circle.



## THE MYSTERIOUS LIZARD PENINSULA

by Michael Woolf

As a vegetarian family, it was hard to find diet-friendly guest houses in the early 1960's, but, from 1961, we were to spend many summers staying at "Porthgwara", on the sunny, eastern side of Coverack bay. The overnight trek from London, to avoid queues on the A303, was rewarded by arriving to a Cornish dawn. After descending the steep, serpentine road into Coverack, we would be greeted by the glinting sea in the calm bay and welcomed into the honeysuckle-scented porch of the old house. After a day's rest, explorations would begin with an early morning visit to the local bakers. Hot Cornish 'splits' were consumed for breakfast, as we drove through the winding Lizard lanes, to become acquainted with the stones, churches and secret places that fascinated my mother and our family friend and photographer, Peter. Despite entering my teenage years, with many of my contemporaries practising the art of being bored and disgruntled, there was something about my elders' enthusiasm, coupled with the inherent magic of the place, that inspired me deeply. To this day, I am sure that this was when I fell in love with our sacred landscape – and with Mother Kernow in particular.

I was enchanted by such discoveries as the fig tree growing from Manaccan's church tower, allegedly sprouted from a stone, discarded from a medieval builder's lunch box; by ancient stone settlements that still spoke to me on the moors walk to St. Keverne; by a church on the beach at Gunwalloe and one untouched by electricity - St. Anthony at Gillan Creek. These places, and many more, were etched into my mind, to dream about on return to London. It is the link between the last two Churches, Gunwalloe and St. Anthony, that inspired me to write this piece.

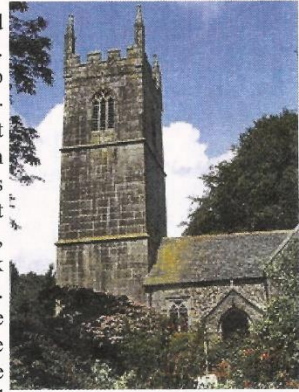
Gunwalloe was always my mother's favourite haunt, feeling a great sense of peace there. The tale of the shipwrecked fishermen who vowed to build a place of worship, should they be spared, comes to life as one emerges from the calm of the church porch to view the tamarisk-framed crashing waves beyond the wall. The ancient tower, separate from the church and hewn from a hermit's cave in the cliff, gives off a remarkably powerful energy. I was not surprised to read (MM83 p.3) that dowzers picked up strong readings there. As a boy, I knew nothing of ley lines but my inner being could feel invisible rivers of energy flowing through me there. Interestingly, the church at St. Anthony, is also said to have been established by grateful Norman sailors, saved from a storm at sea and washed to safety at Gillan creek.



*Gunwalloe church*



When I was fourteen, we first visited the Helford area and entered the church of St. Anthony in Meneage. Against a backdrop of sailing boats, we climbed a stile into the churchyard. I remember that stile had a rather sinister-looking stone post on it, to hold as one climbed over - but there was a head with an anguished expression carved on it. A rather gruesome greeting! Inside, the church, with its brass candelabra, gave off an eerie feeling and it wasn't long before our little dog, carried in my mother's arms, became uncharacteristically restless. I was given the task of taking him outside, as he was becoming quite panicky. As we wandered alone in the churchyard, I became aware of a monk coming down stone steps, from behind the church. As an awkward and shy teenager, I wasn't quite sure how to greet a monk, but, as he approached, I realised that there was no face within the cowl. It took me several hours to process this experience but, when I did share it with my mother, we determined to revisit the church and do some research.



*St. Anthony's church*

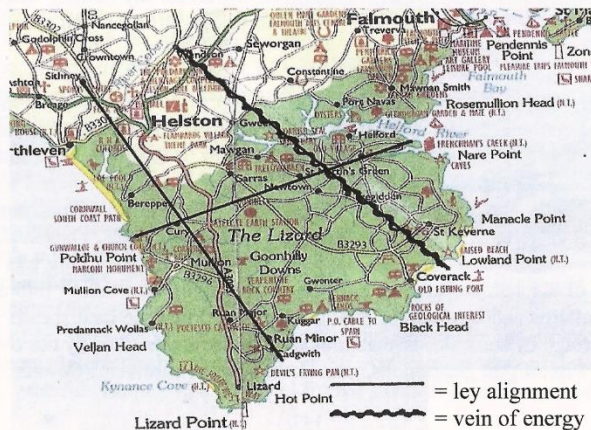
On our return, the first experience was a very cold feeling in one corner of the church. The second was that, when my holiday photographs came back, they were all perfect – except the St. Anthony ones. The churchyard pictures had curious flares at the spot where the monk walked! My booklet of Cornish place names later informed me that Meneage meant “monks land” and, some years after, I learnt that this site was indeed inhabited by Cistercian monks. The Cistercians inherited much old magic and sited their monasteries very carefully between water courses, for practical reasons, no doubt, but also on energy paths of which they were well aware and which, to this day, may “replay” those ancient days imprinted in stone and ether. Visiting St. Anthony recently, I had my photo taken on the steps where I met the monk. No need to wait for my holiday snaps this time, my digital camera revealed a bright “orb” just behind my shoulder – in exactly the same location as 40 years before!

So here were two highly charged places that impressed themselves on me deeply as a young boy on holiday. Later, as my knowledge matured and I thirsted to learn more, I began to link sites I considered to hold special energies. It was only later that I became aware of Alfred Watkins “Old Straight Track”, and ley lines. It all began to fit and of course, more recently, the fine works of Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst confirmed my instincts about the “earthveins” I had sensed as a boy. In about 1973, I began to use a long steel ruler on Ordnance Survey Maps, checking for alignments. Not only was I surprised by how many of my beloved ancient sites lined up but, by also taking into account the ancient road patterns and contours of the land, I realised that the land speaks in sculpted songshapes, created by some massive natural intelligence and marked by our own edifices, erected by the wise of past generations, who knew how the earthveins flowed.

When I took the ruler to the Lizard map, I discovered that a straight line links St. Anthony to Gunwalloe. Its path passes Manaccan Church, Tregonwell, springs either side of St. Martins Church before passing through the magical Trelowarren Estate, south of Halligye Fogou. It then crosses the B3293 at Chygarkye Wood, close to an old crossroad, goes through a tumulus at Burnoon, and White Cross crossroad, through the centre of Cury Cross and its church; through a well and spring south of Chymder and out through Gunwalloe Church, to the sea again. Taking Cury Cross as its crossing point, there may also be a North-South line to explore. From North to south, this would include Sithney Church, an ancient settlement, Trevergy hamlet, Sowanna Farm, Cury Cross, Paradise Farm, three Tumuli, Eglos Farm, St. Rumon’s ruined church, St. Ruan’s Well and through a cave, south of Cadgwith to the sea.

There is also an interesting ‘vein’ of energy running SE/NW that crosses my Church Line at the spring, east of St Martins church. It has an unusual number of springs on it and goes NW from The Grove, a remarkably magical place on the moors above and East of Coverack, through Trevalsoe, the Long Stone at Tremenhere, beside several springs and on, up to Wendron Church. Whether anyone has dowsed or proved this line, I don’t know but I can vouch for the remarkably powerful and peaceful energy at the southern end. This can be picked up first as the moors drop below The Grove, to where streams trickle seaward on the Coastal Path walk from Coverack to Lowland Point.

I am no dowser nor expert in archaeology, so these findings are only from my own experiences. But, having read and enjoyed related articles in Meyn Mamvro since its launch, I felt encouraged to share the findings that began from the experiences of a boy on holiday, enchanted by Cornish discoveries I made long ago and which were perhaps recognised with more reverence and understanding by Cornish lives from a more distant past. May there be a day when the earthveins flow harmoniously through the land once again.





## JOURNEYING DEEP WITHIN PENDEEN FOGO

by Elyn Aviva

Pendeen Fogou wasn't a very prepossessing site. To reach it, the three of us—my husband, Gary, our guide, Cheryl Traffon, and I—had to unfasten three rusty metal gates to venture ever deeper into a farmer's cattle yard. The broken concrete beneath our feet was covered with several layers of dried (or drying) cow manure. Cattle were lowing and resting in their own muck in the nearby pens. Our goal was Pendeen Fogou, a low stone structure with tall grasses and weeds growing out of the top and a yawning hole in one side. Before we could enter, we had one more obstruction to move: a detached farm gate blocked the entrance. Together, we hauled it over to one side.

Bending low, nearly squatting, we followed Cheryl down a steep, stone-lined passage deep into the earth. I was grateful I had my hiking staffs to help keep me from slipping. At the bottom the rocky passage levelled out. My flashlight illuminated moss-covered granite stones, carefully stacked to form the underground construction called a fogou. The word "fogou" (pronounced fo-goo) is Cornish and means "cave." A fogou is a human-made underground cave. It usually has a long, slightly curving central passage;



another, even smaller passage called a "creep" that was originally the only entrance into the fogou; and often another passage or chamber off to one side. Although now we enter most fogous through the open end of one of the larger passages, originally the "creep" was the only way in and out—and it always descends steeply. The passageway we descended into Pendeen Fogou was opened by Dr. William Borlase, an important 18<sup>th</sup>-century antiquarian and naturalist who grew up at Pendeen House—next door to the fogou. Fogous seem to be unique to Cornwall and were constructed some 2500 years ago, during the Cornish Iron Age, and are always found near Iron Age settlements. Some authorities suggest they were used for food storage, but they are usually too damp for that; some suggest refuge, but with only one entrance they would have been death traps. No bones have been found in them, so they were not burial places. It is probable that they were used for ceremony and ritual.

Cheryl sat on a large flat rock conveniently placed at the "T" crossing between the passage we had come down, another passage to the left, and the tiny creep passage to the right. The large speckled stone behind her glittered when she shone her flashlight on it—a useful orienting waymarker if you came down here in the dark with only a tiny flickering tallow lamp for light. Gary sat down on another stone, next to the creep, his back to the entry passage. I followed very slowly, careful with each step I took down the dirt and rock-covered floor so that I wouldn't slip.

Partway down, a wave of emotion swept through me. “Where’d *that* come from?” I thought to myself. “What am I crying about?” I knew this was a signal for me to stop, wait, and ask permission to proceed. Listening in stillness, to stillness, I “heard” an affirmative response. Legs shaking, I continued into the fogou and sat down on a rock in the passage to the left of Cheryl. I was trembling. Cheryl looked at me. “You feel it, do you?” “I want to cry.” She nodded. “But it’s not from sadness.” “No—it’s from overwhelming emotion. I don’t know what or why.” “I know. I’ve felt it too.”



Gary descending into the fogou

I sat on my rock, trying not to burst into tears, while Cheryl explained the archeology of the site. The rocky passage I was sitting in points northwest, in the direction of the ocean and the setting summer solstice sun. Most fogous point northeast, in the direction of the rising summer solstice sun. Because the original blocking stone had been removed, light was now shining into this passage. It’s possible that originally the passage was closed with a moveable stone, and ceremonies could have taken place that culminated with someone inside the fogou watching the sun set into the ocean on the longest day and shortest night of the year.

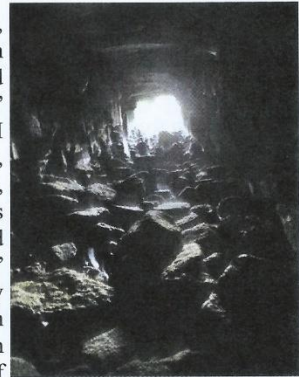
Cheryl shone her flashlight over the creep passage on the right. This would have been the original entry but was now blocked off. She explained that the walls were constructed with alternating organic and inorganic materials (stone and filler), perhaps creating some kind of special energy in the place—like Wilhelm Reich’s “orgone generator” box. I wondered if that contributed to what I was experiencing. The entrance to the creep was very low. A wooden plank had been placed on the rock-strewn floor just inside. You could slide into the creep on your belly under the low lintel. The passage opened up beyond, becoming a bit more spacious. Imagine sliding down from light into darkness on your belly, squeezing through the tiny, constricted entrance into the main passageways—like entering into a womb—and then later exiting through what had become a birth canal. Perhaps you came to take part in an initiation ritual or a shamanic journey. Perhaps you came to spend an extended period in darkness, fasting, or taking psychotropic drugs to bring on visions. Perhaps you came to honor the shortest night and longest day of the annual cycle of the sun. Perhaps you came....



Looking into the creep passage



As we talked about rituals and transformation, childbirth and initiation, I felt a chill breeze blow through the passageway and I started to shiver. “Do you feel a cold wind?” I asked. Gary nodded. “I feel it on my back.” Maybe the wind was blowing down from the entrance, I thought. But apparently not. Cheryl said she didn’t feel it, and she was facing the entry, and I was in the side passage, out of direct line. My teeth started to chatter. Maybe this wasn’t the chill of wind but the movement of Spirit. I asked for us to sit in silence for a few minutes while we “listened” to the fogou. A strange, high-pitched buzzing filled my ears, like the faint hum of a swarm of bees. This was soon followed by a distant rhythmic sound that I can only liken to the beat of dewclaw rattles tied around the ankles of dancers. “Do you hear that high-pitched hum?” I asked. Gary nodded. Cheryl said, “Perhaps you are hearing something called the humadruz.”



Looking at the northwest end of the passage

While we sat in semi-darkness, Cheryl told us the legend of the spectral Lady in White who sometimes appears at this fogou on Christmas Day. The story goes that if you see her, you’ll die before the following Christmas. Cheryl suggested perhaps she is a garbled memory of priestesses who were associated with this sacred place. Perhaps Christian priests wanted people to stay away from the fogou—particularly at Christmas, which is, after all, a date very close to the winter solstice. How better to break the Old Ways than with the fear of imminent death?

We sat in stillness again. Then Cheryl and Gary made their way back up the passage to the light while I stayed behind in darkness, listening to the faint humming of bees, the distant rhythmic sound of a rattle. I was still shaky; I still wanted to cry; but I no longer felt chilled to the bone. I know we bring our culturally constructed expectations to our experiences. It’s unavoidable. I wondered whether someone who knew the legend of the Lady in White would associate the humming, the cold wind, the strong emotions I was feeling with her (or it). It seemed to me, however, that they emanated from the stones themselves, from the Spirit of the Place that was still so palpably present, even several millennia after the fogou had been abandoned. Of course, that was also a culturally constructed explanation, even if one I made up myself. I had known that Pendeen Fogou had probably been a sacred site, but I had no expectations about what I would find. A cow-manure-filled farmyard, a neglected, weed-covered roof did little to suggest the fogou was still a powerful place. I had been gifted with a completely unexpected experience, for which I was filled with gratitude. I sat in stillness for a while longer, being present to what I chose to call “the Spirit of the Place”—however it manifested itself. Then it was time to go, though time had no meaning in this ancient fogou.

*Elyn Aviva is a transformational traveller and writer. Her blog is at [www.powerfulplaces.com/blog](http://www.powerfulplaces.com/blog). She is co-author with her husband, Gary White, of *Powerful Places Guidebooks*. [see Book Review on p.22].*

## CORNISH CUNNING - 2

by Steve Patterson

*Following on from Part 1 of this article in MM86, Steve Patterson now looks at the revival of traditions in the 20th century.*

No account of Cornish magical traditions in the C20th would be complete without reference to Cecil Hugh Williams (1909-1999), the founder of the Museum of Witchcraft, now in Boscastle, Cornwall. He was a colourful character who had worked for M16 and the film industry, who devoted his life to the study of the old "West country Wayside Witches", of whom he spent a great deal of time amongst. Much of his researches have been sadly lost but much still remains in his museum- which is still going strong today. For a brief period whilst the museum was in its original incarnation on the Isle of Man, he was visited by the charismatic fantasist Gerald Gardner who was experimenting with using witchcraft as a base for fusing his interests in ceremonial magic, tribal religious practices, classical paganism and his own personal sexual peccadilloes in to the his new religion of "Wicca". By a strange quirk of history Wicca spread like wildfire and within the world of paganism and witchcraft it became the prevailing paradigm, whilst Cecil Williamson and the old traditional witches were all but forgotten. I strongly believe however one should not underestimate the influence Mr Williamson has had in preserving and breathing life in to the old ways and neither should we underestimate the extent to which we now regard our magical heritage through Gardener's eyes and the assumptions of Wicca have become 'fact'.

In the latter part of the C20 an unexpected interest in the traditional magic of Cornwall as an operative system came from the surrealist art camp. Ithell Colquhoun began linking the concepts of magic, paganism, earth energies and the sacred landscape of Cornwall. Peter Redgrove, the Tantric-Bardic-Pellar delved in to his subconscious and pulled the serpent goddess of the Lizard peninsula, whilst Tony 'doc' Sheils conjured up Morgawr, the owl man and all manner of beasties from the 'Vasty deeps'. At the turn of the new millennia once again the wheel turned and the old traditions took on a more overtly magical turn. Andrew Chumbley magister of the Essex Based Cultus Sabbati was on a mission in the south-west to "reify and en flesh the Pellar tradition", Cheryl Straffon was promoting a vision of goddess centred paganism and the megalithic landscape, Cassandra Latham, the idiosyncratic gothic witch of Buryan, was promoting her own brand of village witchcraft and Gemma Gary, magistra of another traditional clan (Ros-An-Bucca) published "A Cornish book of ways" in which she synthesised a cohesive system of pellar praxis under the auspices of the Bucca.



*Boscawen-ûn circle by Ithell Colquhoun  
from "The Living Stones - Cornwall"*



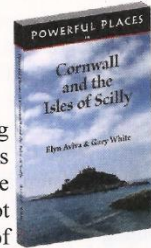
The old tradition of magic in Cornwall is a twisted skein of many threads. I have heard tell of some of the old witches still working their ways on Bodmin Moor and the Glyn Valley, in the orchards of St Austell and the old granite quarries of west Cornwall. I was once given the phone number of a charmer who “sorted out all the fishermen” in Mevagissey and was even treated by one in Portreath. The old slate charm is still in the possession of the farm where it was found and is considered to have a talismanic protective value. Beyond the farm looms a hill once known as Pella stone cairn. The old cairns that once graced its crown have long since been quarried away, but something of their virtue I feel still remains. In its shadow on the far side stands an old megalith. Recent excavations showed that surprisingly it dated not from the Bronze Age as one would expect but from the C6th CE, and at its foot lay buried a badge from a Bellarmine witch bottle from the C17th. Nothing in the world of magic is ever as straightforward as one initially imagines it to be! It takes its own twisted serpentine course down through history and often its mysteries lie closer to home than one thinks. Let us not be like Schliemann who in his enthusiasm to dig down ever deeper in his quest for Troy, dug straight through the mythical Troy of King Priam reducing it to rubble and spoil heaps. To focus our gaze on only its remote history and far away places we risk the loss of probably the most interesting material on our very doorsteps.

In this otherwise seemingly unremarkable parish the fields surrounding the standing stone from the age of Arthur yield another treasure. Around the same time as the slate charm was fabricated local farmers walled off the corner of a number of fields. These are known locally as “Devils Corners” and are considered to contain the malefic forces in the land and keep them out of the fields. A little further along the road however resides its strangest treasure. Some years ago the new owners of a house in the vicinity commissioned a new house sign. Whilst delivering the sign I commented that due to its name it must have been connected to the quarries. They said that when they had moved in to the house it had previously been occupied by an old lady who had lived only in one room. The rest of the house had been sealed up and left like a time capsule from the 1950s. They said that there had indeed been a barn full of old tools. Having an interest in such things I enquired as to whether they still had them, but to my disappointment they informed me that they had been put on the skip. The new owner then leaned over and said in a low voice that that was only the half of it! There was also a room filled with “Wands and robes and weird stuff.” That too, they informed me, had gone on the skip. Sometimes one is presented with an open portal to a mystery, and sometimes instinct tells you it is a blind alley. In the quest for magic one learns that sometimes one has to just put on a poker face and walk away.

*Steve Patterson is a Folklorist, woodcarver and agricultural labourer. He is steeped in the old cunning traditions and lives with his dog in an old granite quarry in West Cornwall. His book about the magical writings of Cecil Williamson entitled “Cecil Williamson’s Book of Witchcraft - a Grimoire of The Museum of Witchcraft” (Troy Books, 2014) was reviewed in MM86.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Powerful Places in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly by Elyn Aviva & Gary White [Pilgrims Process, Inc, 2014. £12.50]

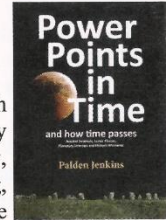


Powerful Places is a series of books by these authors, covering mainly Celtic lands, such as Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany. This latest volume adds Cornwall and Scilly into that mix. As the blurb on the book cover says: "Powerful Places is not your usual guidebook. It is not about visiting places - it's about experiencing them. This tiny corner of Britain contains an amazingly dense concentration of sacred sites and powerful places". A book like this can only hope to cover a selection of that 'dense concentration', but even so there are a good variety of sites chosen, from north & east, central and west Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly. In the Introduction they say: "For a number of years, we have been drawn to Cornwall again and again. There is something about this most south-western part of the Island of Great Britain that calls to us and calls us to it. When we are there, we feel strangely at home", and this love of Kernow shines through the book in their description of the 'powerful places' they have encountered. They add: "Cornwall is a fascinating, ancient land, filled with a dense concentration of powerful places and sacred sites, both human-made and natural", and that really sums up the appeal of Cornwall and Scilly for so many people.

The book, like others in the series, manages to be both practical and useful, and also atmospheric and spiritual. The practical includes a history of Cornwall, stories of the land, and information on visiting the places chosen, including OS references, QR codes and maps, together with details about the sites and photographs of most of them. The atmospheric and spiritual can be found in Elyn's description of her feelings at each of the sites, a description that is personal, yet universal, and one that is very open and honest, and sometimes quite unexpected. A flavour of this can be found in this example from the Fairy Well at Lelant: "*You can only get to this enchanting holy well if you have already been there. Really. Well, almost really. Getting there is a puzzle to be solved not with the mind but with the heart. We had the feeling that only those whom the Little People welcomed could find the Fairy Well, and that was as it should be*". And again, this from The Hurlers stone circle on Bodmin Moor: "*I sat behind a triangle-shaped stone in the central Hurlers stone circle. Belted Galloway cattle ambled around, rubbing their necks against the menhirs. I sank into the slow breath of stone and began to become very, very still. I realised that we - me, the cattle, other visitors - were like time-lapse images to the stones, flitting by so quickly we were almost beyond the stones' perception*". Descriptions and insights like this really bring the sites alive, and give a new and vibrant perspective on them. This is a book that fits easily into pocket or rucksack, and is a real gem to have with you if you are visiting these special places and wish to connect deeply with them. Even for those who know the sites well, it gives a new and insightful meaning to them.



**Power Points in Time by Palden Jenkins**  
 [Penwith Press, 2014. £14.95]



A book by a local author and a local publisher in the field of Earth Mysteries is always something to be welcomed. Palden Jenkins, formerly of Glastonbury, has a long track record of involvement in astrology, ancient mysteries, Buddhism, alternative education, book publishing, politics, esoterics, peacemaking and humanitarian work in the Middle East. In the 1980s he organised camps for people interested in earth mysteries, astrology and other metaphysical subjects, including one in Cornwall in 1987 [see *MM3 p.2*]. He has written several books and articles, one of which was 'Living in Time' (1987). It is this earlier book that he has extensively revised and rewritten for this new work 'Power Points in Time - and how time passes'. The book is a thorough and detailed look at ancient festivals, lunar phases, planetary line-ups and historic moments. There is plenty of detail for all readers interested in understanding solar, lunar and planetary cycles, but there is also an emphasis on personal experience of 'living in time', and how to connect with the deep cycles that affect us all. For example, 'The cycle of the signs' shows how each of the astrological signs that we are born under affects not only the kind of people we are, but also the seasons of the earth and how we relate to them. Palden has a down-to-earth approach to esoteric matters, and in the chapter 'Identifying power points' he shows how planetary configurations have influenced events on our planet. There is much wisdom and sensible advice in this book, and its theme is summed up in these sentences: "Don't miss a miracle by busily projecting an experience of something else. Better still, don't project *anything*. Just watch and experience".

**West Penwith: Ancient Sites and Alignments online map**

Palden Jenkins has also been busy creating an online map of most of the prehistoric sites in West Penwith, and the alignments between them. This is a really exciting venture, giving us all a chance to see whether 'ley lines' and map-based lines do actually align. Since John Michell did his work on 'The Old Stones of Land's End' in the early 1970s, by using maps and 'in the field' research, there have been various attempts to check on their accuracy, most notably by some of the computer program work that Andy Norfolk did the early days of MM. However, this is the first time that all the information has been brought together in one place and checked out by



using Google Earth maps. This work has necessitated a complete revision of the Alignments list, produced for MM by Raymond Cox, which should shortly be completed. To have a look at the map, please go to [www.meynmamvro.co.uk/alignmentsmap](http://www.meynmamvro.co.uk/alignmentsmap), or to [www.palden.co.uk/penwith-map.html](http://www.palden.co.uk/penwith-map.html). Any comments or observations will be welcome.

## 20 YEARS AGO

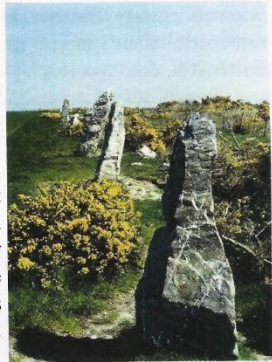
*Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

MM26 (Winter/Spring 1995) featured a news item about the curiosity of “The Nine Sisters”, a megalithic structure recorded in c.1603-7 (published 1728) by John Norden in his pamphlet *Topographical and Historical Description of Cornwall*. Norden illustrates the monument, which he placed between Castle-an-Dinas, St.Wenn, Trewallack, St. Breock and Withiel and says: “The Sisters, nine greate Stones set upright in the wylde and vaste downes, importinge, as may be collected by the manner of their standinge, and by the hugenes of them, some notable monument of antiquitye”. Their location would appear to be in the area of St.Breock Downs, and Aubrey Burl, who wrote to MM about them, thought that they were a lost stone circle there. However, MM had a different idea and believed that the sketch represented not a stone circle but in fact two parallel stone rows, one with 5 stones standing and the other with 4 stones standing.



*John Norden's sketch, 1603-7*

There is of course the well-known stone row there, the Nine Maidens [SW9363 6745 to 9369 6763], whose name is not dissimilar to the Nine Sisters. This consists of nine stones in a line, stretching SSW to NNE for 100 yards or so. Five stones still stand, there are two broken stumps, one is leaning and a ninth has fallen. The only problem with this is that Norden's sketch shows nine stones in *two* rows, not one. However, when the site was dowsed by CEMG in August 1995 (and then by West Cornwall Dowzers in Nov 2006, and again in 2008), the existence of a second parallel stone row was confirmed, and although no stones now remain on the ground, there are large stones in the hedge and ditch that runs alongside the extant row that could have come from the lost row.



As already mentioned, there are only 5 stones standing in the extant row, the same number as illustrated in one of the rows in Norden's sketch. It seems unlikely, but not impossible, that Norden also saw 5 stones standing, and that none have been removed or re-erected in the intervening 400 years. However, if this is the case, Norden may also have seen 4 stones standing in the parallel row, and this is what is illustrated in the sketch. We may never know for sure, but it is certainly an interesting possibility.



*Dowsing the site in 1995*



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*Fri May 1st* - Obby Oss Day at Padstow. Details: 01841-533449

Web site: [www.padstow.com](http://www.padstow.com)

*Sat May 2nd* - World Labyrinth Day

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Trencrom Dowsers contact (below)

*Fri May 8th* - Helston Flora Day + Hal-an-Tow Web site:

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<http://westcornwalldowsers.co.uk>

e: [westcornwalldowsers@outlook.com](mailto:westcornwalldowsers@outlook.com)

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**Betwixt Moot** [Redruth, Camborne,

Truro, Falmouth]- 1st & 3rd Mon

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**Bodmin @ Hole in the Wall pub** -

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e-mail: [paganpaths05@aol.com](mailto:paganpaths05@aol.com)

**Bude\*** Conference Room of the

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