

- A FISHY TALE OF BUCCA - Andy Norfolk ●
- SUN & MOON @ BOSCAWEN-ÛN -Carolyn Kennett
- DOWSING ● FOLKLORE ● ANCIENT TRACKS ●

**CONTENTS**

**Editorial** ..... p. 1  
**Dowsing News** ..... p. 2  
**Bart O’Farrell - obituary** ..... p. 5  
**Hendraburnick stone reveals its secrets / Wells Corner** ..... p. 6  
**Ancient Tracks: 15 - Penzance - Lanyon spirit path** ..... p. 7  
**CASPEN news** ..... p. 8  
**Sun and moon at Boscawen-ûn - Carolyn Kennett** ..... p. 9  
**A fishy tale of a lost god - Andy Norfolk** ..... p.14  
**Cornish Folklore: East Cornwall May Day traditions - Alex Langstone** ..... p.18  
**Book Reviews** ..... p.20  
**20 years ago** ..... p.22  
**30 years ago** ..... p.23  
**The Pipers Tune** ..... p.24

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# Meyn Mamvro

## STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

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CORNISH PRE-HISTORY & CULTURE \* MEGALITHIC MYSTERIES \* LEGENDS & FOLKLORE**

A major announcement was made in the closing days of 2017, when the Penwith Landscape Partnership (PLP) heard officially that they had succeeded in their bid for Heritage Lottery funding for the ancient Penwith landscape. CASPN (Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network) is a major Partner and Board member in the PLP, and has been closely involved in the bid, leading the Ancient Penwith working party. This Committee has been working hard on identifying ancient sites in West Penwith in need of preservation and protection, and in drawing up maps of circular trails to encourage people to visit and appreciate the whole historic landscape. This Grant of over £2.5 million will be divided amongst all the different strands of PLP, and will enable the Ancient Penwith one to appoint and manage an Ancient Penwith Project Officer (APPO) to oversee and co-ordinate the work, and to work closely with CASPN in a five year programme of restoring targeted ancient sites into better management. The post has been advertised, and interviews are taking place as we go to print.

This is the culmination of many years planning and working by CASPN to achieve this aim, and is a wonderful one-off opportunity to put into place many of the things on CASPN's 'wish list' for the ancient sites and the historic landscape. Meyn Mamvro has supported all of these aims in its 30+ years of existence, and it is great to be able to report the success of the bid. All too often we have been forced to report threats and even destruction of the ancient sites that we all love so much. Scarcely an issue of MM goes by without some new adverse situation being highlighted, and all too often it has felt as if we are running a rearguard action against deliberate 'development' and thoughtless misuse. Looking back over 95 issues of Meyn Mamvro, a catalogue of woes, mishaps and indifference has been featured, which is why this news is so welcome, and why it gives all of us who care about our ancient heritage in Cornwall a chance to fight back, and to reclaim and restore some of that heritage. With an APPO in place, who has the resources to talk to landowners, harness volunteers and implement conservation and enhancement programmes, we can look forward to schemes and projects that will make a real and lasting difference to the heritage, people and communities of our very special landscape. The aim is to both restore ancient sites into beneficial management, record the sites to monitor their condition over time, and to create volunteering and training opportunities to build a reservoir of the skills needed for the future care of Penwith's heritage. If all goes according to plan in the next five years, we can look forward to a bright future for Penwith's ancient sites and our unique prehistoric landscape - and then your editor can happily retire!

## DOWSING NEWS

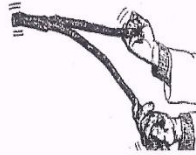


Image [c]  
Jean Hands

Summer 2017 field trips were mainly organised by **Trencrom Dowzers**, who had a very successful number of outings to hilltop sites and cliff castles. In June they visited *Bartiney Hill* and they report: “The three small circular features do not dowse as cairns or round houses. The large circular enclosure is certainly not defensive although if, as Dr Borlase wrote, it comprised ‘contiguous stones pitched on end’, it must have been most impressive. We found a blind spring and several underground water streams there. The largest ‘circle’ seemed reluctant to give up its secrets to us at first but gradually ‘opened up’ to some gentle and sympathetic requests. There is some conjecture over the well possibly being a mining pit but that did not appear to be the case. Indeed, we felt it was an old well much rebuilt over time. Seven energy leys crossed the site, a wide one linking across to Chapel Carn Brea and across up to the moor. Others were clearly aimed towards the Scillies and St Michael’s Mount. We concluded that the site was originally used as a major meeting place for various purposes”.

In July on a cloudy but warm afternoon they went to *Godolphin Hill*. They report: “After a picnic there was time to admire the view – a glorious vista which stretches from St Agnes Head to Crowan, Goonhilly Earth Station, Tregonning Hill, Mount’s Bay, Chapel Carn Brea, the high moor of Penwith, the Island at St Ives and Hayle Towans. This view emphasises the importance of the site. Our first task was to find the pillow mounds of which there are



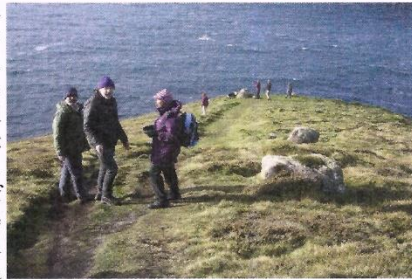
nine of these elaborate rabbit warrens dating from the 16thC. The first mound was clear of undergrowth so we could dowse the path of the central tunnel. The general consensus was that there were ten pairs of side tunnels in a herring bone pattern running from the centre to the edge. A second pillow mound was also found, built to the same pattern. We then tried to find the holed stone amongst the bracken. Its purpose is unknown and so was its location! Returning to the summit we located four of the hut circles but came to the conclusion that these were only for temporary shelter. We settled on an area which dowsed as having a concentration of energies where between 9 and 12 energy leys from the surrounding hills and significant sites all met. We felt that this had been some sort of ceremonial and meeting centre but the energies were now weak and neglected. Hopefully our brief ceremony did a little to stimulate the site”.



In September the Trencrom Dowzers went to *Bosigran cliff castle*, which has a legendary association with Igraine, consort of King Arthur, though this seems to be based on a mistaken interpretation of the Cornish name. However, as John Moss was re-telling the story of how Merlin created a supernatural mist to allow Uther Pendragon to come to Igraine, bang on cue a mist arrived from the sea to envelop the group! After this, an afternoon of dowsing followed, and the Group report: “Two large energy leys cross the site: Morvah to Gurnard's Head, and Pendeen Watch to the courtyard houses east of Bosigran. Around the stone outcrop, which includes the logan rock and a large rockbasin, 12 radial energy lines were discovered, and around the logan rock there were found to be 13. After more careful dowsing it was found that one short energy line connects the large rock basin to the smaller basin on the logan rock. A power centre was located in the centre of the gap between the two rocks, conveniently marked by a large spider's web! No residential hut remains were found but just north of the logan stone outcrop a small semicircle of rocks dowsed as having been a shelter/fire pit/warming area. There was a strong sense of ritual using the logan rock for calling and the rock basins for cleansing. More investigation was needed for another day”.



Finally, in October they rounded off the site visits by going to *Maen cliff castle*, the oldest of the cliff castles, on the coastal path between Land's End and Sennen. The Group report: “Two main features were studied. A wide and quite strong energy line flows in from the headland between the incomplete but obvious twin rows of large stones, across the single boulder at the highest point of the site and then out through its original entrance. The line then crosses the coastal path and interestingly appears to follow the path of the stream beside which Craig Weatherhill postulates that there was a trackway across to the A30. Looking at a large scale map it could be that this energy line winds its way to St Levan's church - another task for the future. Another feature of the site's interior is the pile of five large boulders. After some study the consensus was that if this feature was re-erected the square gap in the centre would make a perfect view frame across to a similarly shaped gap in the granite outcrop on the south west side of the site, looking towards Longships and beyond. John Watts found two converging lines, one running more or less along the rather obvious stone row, and the other running from the large group of stones at the top down towards the end of the land. Further dowsing suggested that these weren't earth energy lines as such, but rather the trace of what would have been the outer edges of a 'processional way'. Overall, it was felt that, like similar sites, this was never a castle in the true sense but a ritual and/or meeting or trading place”.



## DOWSING NEWS [cont.]

The Autumn 2017 series of indoor talks began in October with a presentation to **Tamar Dowers** by *Cheryl Traffon* on 'Encountering the Otherworld'. Based on her recent book 'Between the Realms' it took a look at the Cornish Celtic Otherworld through traditional tales, stories, myths, legends and folklore that are linked to the landscape. The journey featured Cornish songlines, spirit paths and mythic journeys, all of which have a dowsable element, and all of which are intimately connected to the land. The talk provoked quite a lot of interest and feedback from the large audience.

A month later, it was the turn of author and researcher *Peter Knight*, who gave a talk entitled 'Dartmoor Mindscapes: Re-visioning a sacred landscape' to both **Trencrom Dowers** and **Tamar Dowers**. Peter pointed out that landscapes are imbued with meaning, and the land is like a porous membrane. Dowers develop a two way relationship with the land, and can interact with its rocks and megaliths, which are wisdom holders and message carriers. He talked about 'enculturing the tors' on Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor, and of how people were tethered to such places of power, resonance and myth. He also showed examples of natural features in the land that had significance. The talk had resonance with the previous one by Cheryl, and the two complemented each other well.

In December, **Trencrom Dowers** invited archaeologist *Paul Bonnington* to give a talk that he had originally given to a 'Pathways to the Past' audience in May, entitled 'The Power of Place'. Again, there were many links with the previous talks, as Paul connected the ancient environment with how people saw the world on different levels, and how different places were thought of as having different significances. He looked at the prehistoric worlds of the sea, the intertidal zone, and the land - all liminal places. He then explored prehistoric people's perception of the land as a cultural landscape and through religious cosmology. Landscape formation was central to all creation myths, and the world of the ancestors was intimately associated with this. Another thought-provoking talk.

Finally in December there was another 'spirit of place' talk to **Tamar Dowers** by *Jo May-Prussak*, entitled simply 'Fogou', Jo of course was owner of CAER at Rosemerryn House for a number of years, in whose grounds lay Boleigh fogou. During this personal presentation, Jo recounted a number of unexplained and psychic events that had befallen both himself and others, alerting him that this was no ordinary homestead. The consensus, even among the professional historians, was that it was a place of spirituality, perhaps even of transformation and enlightenment. An excellent end to a lively season of talks.

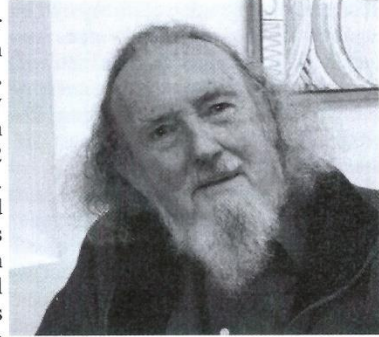
In the autumn the death was announced of **DANU FOX**, aged only 55, which came as a shock to many people. Danu had been closely involved with earth mysteries in Cornwall and elsewhere through her 'singing the land alive' work. She was a regular facilitator at Trencrom Dowers events, especially the earthsong ones each year at Carn Lês Boel and Trencrom Hill to celebrate International Dowsing Day, and she will be sadly missed by all those who knew her through her work to honour the earth and its spirits.



## BART O'FARRELL

Aug 11th 1941 - Dec 24th 2017

Bart O'Farrell was a distinguished painter and teacher long before he ever became an accomplished dowser. He was born in Wales, with Irish ancestry, and educated at Caerphilly Grammar School in Wales. He trained as an illustrator at Cardiff College of Art from 1959-62 and at the Polytechnic of Wales from 1974-8. Subsequently he became an accomplished painter, author and teacher, who had exhibitions in Wales and in Cornwall, to where he moved in 1986. His work is in collections at the National Library of Wales, and he is listed in the 'Who's Who in British Art'. His move to Cornwall came when he met and fell in love with his wife Jan, whose subsequent sudden death left him feeling 'rudderless'.



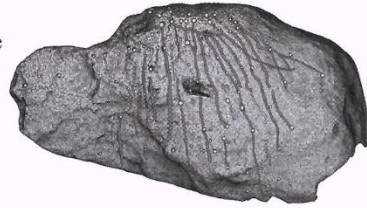
However, in the early years of this millennium, he discovered that he had a real talent for dowsing, and in 2006 he founded the West Cornwall Dowzers [WCD], who attracted other dowzers in the area, and whose meetings and outings have been regularly reported on in the 'Dowsing News' column in *Meyn Mamvro*, until the demise of the Group 10 years later in 2016. He also specialised in cleansing people's homes of geopathic stress, for which he would never accept payment. Indeed, Bart never charged for membership of WCD, but would generously give his time and expertise to others. He lived at St.Keverne at the far end of the Lizard peninsula, and his psychic abilities and general air of other-worldliness caused him to be nicknamed locally 'The Wizard of the Lizard'! After a short illness, he died in Treliske hospital in Truro just before Christmas 2017, and a memorial gathering on Crowan Beacon to celebrate his life is planned for later this spring.

*Cheryl Traffon writes:* "Bart was a great character who became a good friend. He always had time for others, and I remember with great affection our many discussions about the meaning and significance of the ancient sites. He was not only an accomplished dowser, but he also researched the archaeology of the sites, making him both informed and reliable with his dowsing abilities. Many discoveries about the sites were made during the WCD days out, and he always managed to find something unexpected that others had not considered before. He will be much missed, not only by me, but by many whom he inspired and encouraged".



## HENDRABURNICK STONE REVEALS ITS SECRETS

The Hendraburnick cupmarked stone in North Cornwall [SX1321 8818], a propped stone unique to Cornwall [see *MM90 p.19*] has now received a photogrammetry survey by Tom Goskar that has shown that the stone is even more heavily decorated than realised with 47 grooved lines and 105 cupmarks covering nearly the whole surface of the stone. This has led to it being described as “the most decorated stone in southern Britain”.



[c] Tom Goskar

Dr. Andy Jones of the C.A.U said that there are lots of decorated monuments in the UK, but for southern Britain it is very remarkable. He continued: “We know that it was moved upon a stone platform. We’ve established that this would have probably been during the late Neolithic period, but we think it may have been carved before it was moved”. Tom Goskar added: “The place itself must have been important. The largest stone weighs about 16 tonnes, and would have been dragged up from the valley below - no mean feat, which would likely have used animals as well as people. Once in place, it was propped up with smaller stones and used by the people who lived there, grinding the cup marks and grooves with quartz”. It appears that the rock art is not very visible during daylight, but really stands out under moonlight or during low sunlight from the south east, suggesting that the stone was used for ritual during prehistoric ceremonies in the night, or at first light at the winter solstice sunrise.

*Andy Jones will give a talk about this stone and other rock art on May 26th [see p.8].*

### WELLS CORNER

*A regular feature on Cornwall's holy wells*

#### **Trewoofe well** [SW 4414 2546]

On his on-line map of Cornish holy wells, Andy Norfolk shows a healing well at Trewoofe (pronounced Trove) near Lamorna that was mentioned in 1667 as having a harsh metallic taste but being good for curing "growths of the skin", kennels, gout and stone and was also a purgative. William Bottrell mentions it in "Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall" and says it was a spring called St Ann's Well "noted for the medicinal properties of its waters" but despite describing the house and gardens in great detail gives no location. This piqued the curiosity of James Kitto, whose grandmother (now aged 95) grew up there, and who, along with another former resident of the area, remembered such a well just down the road from where she grew up. So James went to look for it and found it! A stone lined well lies at the base of a tree down a track opposite Oakhill Cottages - a great rediscovery.

[www.facebook.com/HolyWellsOfCornwall](https://www.facebook.com/HolyWellsOfCornwall)

On-line map at: [https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?hl=en\\_US..](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?hl=en_US..)



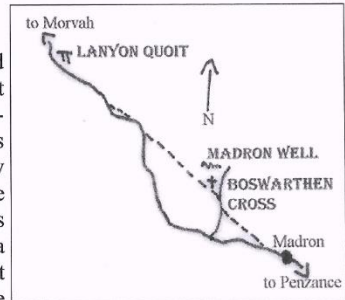


## ANCIENT TRACKS

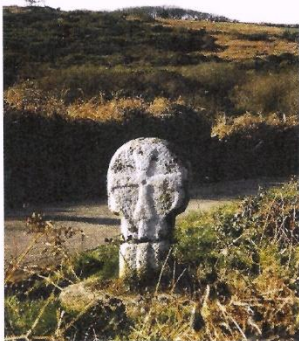
### 15: Penzance - Lanyon spirit path

*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.*

In 1994, researcher Paul Devereux suggested that a churchpath line might have a more ancient significance. The line runs for about 3.5 miles northwest from the main church in Penzance, St. Mary's [SW476 301], that stands on Pens Sans, the holy headland and the site of an earlier chapel. The line then runs up Chapel Street northwestwards towards Madron Church [SW454 318]. It then becomes a footpath going towards Madron well and Baptistry but carries straight on down a track, marked by a wayside cross at Boswarthen [SW4451 3254]. An old legend tells that if you walked three times around the cross and spat, then the devil would not get you. After this the track becomes a sunken lane, before emerging into the open and crossing several uphill fields to join the road for a short stretch before reaching Lanyon Quoit [SW4298 3369]. The line is essentially a vestige of one of the numerous churchways or coffin paths, but the fact that Lanyon Quoit, a prehistoric monument, falls on it is an indication that it goes much further back into the Neolithic, and therefore may have originally been a spirit path across the land. The line may have been a prehistoric sacred trackway long before the churches were built.



*Photos [left] Boswarthen cross.  
[right] Lanyon Quoit.*





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

*Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network*



CASP.N was founded in October 1997 by Andy Norfolk, in order to bring together representatives and individuals from a wide range of organisations and groups interested in, and responsible for, the ancient landscape in West Penwith. As it celebrated its 20th anniversary, it received the best possible birthday present with the announcement of the £2.5 million grant awarded to the PLP (Penwith Landscape Partnership) of which CASP.N is a main Partner. *[More details in the Editorial of this issue of MM on p.1]*. However, this was tinged with sadness when we heard of the death of Bart O'Farrell *[see obituary on p.5]* who was one of the original founders of LAN, our sister group on the Lizard. CASP.N also has a new Director, John Moss, with Cheryl Traffon now taking the post of Deputy.

Meanwhile, we are continuing with our annual Pathways to the Past weekend of walks and talks for the 12th year at the end of May. As always, there is a varied and interesting programme of events, all free to members of the organisation. Details are:-

### **Saturday May 26th**

10.00 - 12.30 *Just a hammer throw away.* Walk with John & Jill Moss at Trencrom Hill.

2.00 - 5.00 *The First and Last Hills.* Walk with David Giddings at Chapel Carn Brea and Bartinney hills. Meet Chapel Carn Brea car park.

7.30 -9.00 *Viewed in a new light: Hendraburnick Quoit and rock art in the SW.*

An illustrated talk by archaeologist Andy Jones at St.Just town hall.

### **Sunday May 27th**

11.00 - 12.30 *Cornwall's celestial stones: reflections of the sky in an ancient landscape.*

An illustrated talk by archaeo-astronomer Carolyn Kennett at St.Just town hall.

2.00 - 5.00 *Phantoms, Lovers, a Witch and a Saint* Walk with Adrian Rodda Meet at St.Levan car park.

8.00 - 9.00 *A miner's tale* at North Inn, Pendeen

### **CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]**

**CASP.N Address** (*note new address*): Elowen, Wheal Kitty, Lelant Downs, Hayle TR27 6NS. Tel: 01736-740093

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

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/groups](http://www.facebook.com/groups) [search for C.A.S.P.N & Lizard Ancient Sites]

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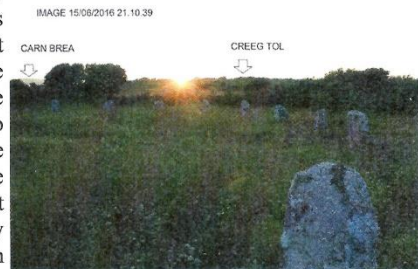
## SUN AND MOON AT BOSCAWEN-ÛN

by Carolyn Kennett

*Carolyn Kennett is an astronomer and researcher who lives in Cornwall. She enjoys spending time researching how past cultures related to the sky within the field of archaeoastronomy. Currently, she edits the Bulletin Magazine for the Society for the History of Astronomy.*

In many ways, during the past year, Boscawen-ûn circle became a second home to me. While waiting for sunrises and sunsets I have observed the change in the seasons at the circle, accompanied by the differing looks, sounds and smells. But one thing remained the same and that was the tranquillity of the site. I had kept some strange hours, as I was mainly there during sunrises or sunsets and quite often at night. More often than not I was alone in the circle sometimes for hours on end.

One of these visits, in particular, comes to the forefront of my mind. Having risen when it was still dark, I drove to the circle with the beginnings of dawn, hoping the low developing horizontal cloud would clear. I arrived in time for the sunrise of the 25th June 2016. The week had been wet and the solstice had passed behind a thick blanket of cloud. I stood atop Creeg Tol willing the low bank of cloud to blow out of the way, even though I knew I was days late to see the summer solstice sunrise. The vantage point of Creeg Tol meant that I would see the sun peer above the horizon, something that I could not replicate in person in the circle below due to the large hedge obscuring this direction. The dawn had a stillness about it which makes it one of my favourite times of the day. The clouds were starting to disperse and right on schedule, the sun started to peer above the horizon, accompanied by the mixed dawn chorus of birds, roosters and cattle. I photographed the sunrise from my vantage point at Creeg Tol and set off down the hill towards the circle. About half way down the hill I started to lose the sunrise, the sun was setting behind the hill it had just rose from. By the time I reached the circle the sun was once again well below the ridge on the horizon. I realised that without the hedgerow I could witness the sun rising twice - a double sunrise: once from atop of Creeg Tol and then again from inside the circle. I hoped this would work in reverse: with the sun setting visually from the circle and once again from Creeg Tol. It was an idea I would test out repeatedly over the summer months with great success. I think this double sunset and sunrise during the summer months is one of the most visually beautiful aspects about the circle. The local settlement Goldherring was to the north of the site with access to the circle from the direction of Creeg Tol. Double sunsets and double sunrises are something that we can all witness from the site and this is only the beginning of what makes Boscawen-ûn astronomically special.



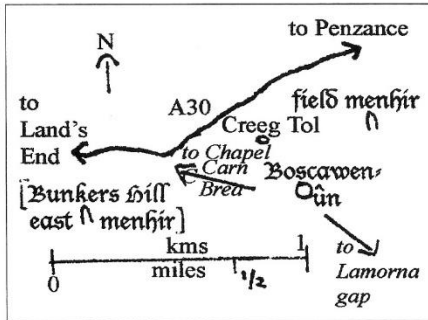
*Summer solstice sunset from the circle*

It is important to consider Boscawen-ún in the landscape as holistically as possible. During this project I wanted to consider the way the circle sat at the base of the northern hill, in what would have been a marshy area and quite possibly difficult to get access to particularly at wet times. Why had it been positioned here? What would have been seen in the sky? It was equally important to view the site as a part of a changing landscape, where humans have shaped and changed the site itself over a large period of time as well as the surrounding landscape. I am a great believer in looking what archaeoastronomy ideas have been historically suggested about a site. These historic ideas brought another list of questions such as: is there any truth in a Lunar link at Boscawen-ún? Does the carving on the back of the central stone light up at summer solstice? These were just the start of a list of burning questions which would keep me returning to the site, making measurements and calculating positions of celestial objects over the coming year, hopefully enabling me to answer if the site was built with astronomy in mind.

I first wanted to examine if there were any alignments between the circle and features on the horizon. This meant that I needed to map out all the natural and man-made features which would have been found near from the period of the stone circle. This is where I started and in itself was quite a task. The internet was a wealth of information, but local knowledge from people such as Cheryl was a great help to me. Many of the more local sites such as barrows and menhirs have disappeared and I needed to try to reconstruct where they were as accurately as possible in relation to the circle. My final list identified 48 local features or as I would name them, targets. These targets would then be considered against a number of pre-selected celestial events. If all 48 targets were considered against the chosen celestial events, statistically a match would be highly likely. For instance, if we were to consider the targets located around the site in a circle of 360 degrees. If each target considered covered 1 degree with an error of +/- 0.5 degrees a total of 96 degrees or just over a quarter of our circle would be covered in targets. (The error from this project was set as 1.04 degrees this came from a small amount of measurement error as well as error for refraction, extinction and parallax). Statistically, this would mean that it would be far more likely for a target to make a match with a considered event. Therefore to make the project more robust I needed to reduce the number of targets. I decided first of all to consider targets that were visible from the site and only targets that sat proud against the horizon. This reduction in targets could have been undertaken in a number of ways but I felt that this made the most robust format for retesting of any results. This left me with just 7 out of the original 48 targets to match with my events. These were as follows:-

- 1) The Lamorna Gap - yes it is just visible from the site through the hedgerows.
- 2) A smaller sea gap further south to the Lamorna gap.
- 3) Creeg Tol rocky outcrop
- 4) A barrow just west of Creeg Tol [destroyed]
- 5) Chapel Carn Brea
- 6) Boscawen-ún field menhir
- 7) Bunkers Hill menhir (east). [destroyed]





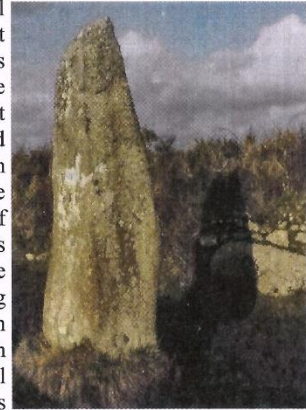
Once the targets were identified I made on-site measurements of their azimuth and altitude and this was converted into a declination. Alongside the on-site measurements I ran a computer program called HORIZON. This also gave me declinations for my 7 targets and it acted as a test of accuracy for the on-site measurement, as well as allowing for reconstruction of the horizon behind the hidden, hedgerow covered NE direction.

Next I considered which astronomical events I would examine alongside the targets. I decided to look initially at five events in total. These five events would give 14 positions along the horizon; 7 rising positions and 7 setting positions. These were the extremes of the solar calendar or the solstices, as well as the solar equinox positions. I also wanted to look at the lunar standstill positions both for lunar major and lunar minor. I then calculated the declinations of these 14 events for a date of 2500BCE. The horizon position of a solstice sun and the lunar positions in 2500BCE has moved slightly to the current position, whereas the equinox would be in virtually the same place. So a rising solstice sun would have a declination of 23.9 degrees in 2500BCE whereas it would have a declination of 23.4 degrees currently which on a flat horizon at the latitude of Boscawen-ûn equates to an azimuth difference of 1.02 degrees.

When all this was considered I could look for matches between my 14 events and 7 targets. I could see immediately that 4 of my 7 targets declinations matched with one of the fourteen identified events, within the limits of the error I had set. The first and probably most primary of these is that an observer in the circle at 2500BCE would see the winter solstice sunrise from the Lamorna Gap. The Lamorna Gap at present is obscured by hedgerows, but without this vegetation would have been a subtle sea view at best. The Lamorna gap declination was measured as  $-23.6 \pm 1.04$  degrees, matching a winter solstice sunrise of 23.9 degrees. Also consider that the sea view extends for more than 1 degree along the horizon and that this event could be observable over the coming millennia.

This first alignment extends through the circle to my second alignment. This is to a barrow which is no longer visible, it was located to the west of Creeg Tol. It would be in the position of the summer solstice sunset when observed from the circle. It had a measured declination of  $24.3 \pm 1.04$  degrees coinciding with the declination of 24.9 degrees. Equally an observer at the barrow would have been in a position to observe the winter solstice sunrise out of the Lamorna Gap. Its position just above the circle would give an observer a more advantageous height and a more pronounced view of the winter solstice sunrise from the Lamorna Gap. It is interesting to note that the winter solstice sunset at this time would just fall into the large sea gap at the Tregeseal stone circles, although at Tregeseal the sea gap is far more pronounced,

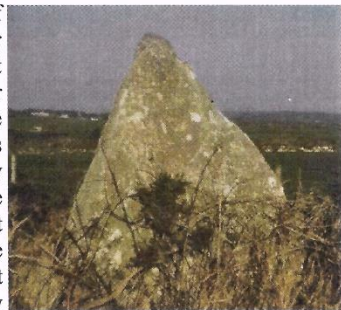
The other two matched alignments came between the circle and lunar major standstill positions. I found that the position of Creeg Tol matched the lunar major sunset northernmost position. It had a measured declination of  $28.3\pm 1.04$  degrees coinciding with a event declination of 28.9 degrees. The nearby Boscawen-ûn field menhir was the final alignment in the lunar major sunrise position. This had a measured declination of  $28.9\pm 1.04$ -degrees which coincided with the event declination of 28.15 degrees in 2500BCE. The position of the field menhir was slightly to the west of calculated declination for the lunar alignment, but it is conceivable that another stone now recumbent in the hedge made a pair and this pair once framed the rising moon at the extreme of the lunar major cycle; although we should note here that it may not have necessarily been a full moon at that time, as the moon at its standstill declination can be at a number of positions within in its phase cycle.



*Boscawen-ûn field menhir*

Lunar standstill links are not well documented in Cornwall. They are considered a feature of recumbent stone circles in East Scotland, but have also been found in Western Ireland and more recently in Western Scotland. The discovery of two lunar standstill points at Boscawen-ûn is both interesting and intriguing; raising more questions than it answers. Boscawen-ûn does have the myths and tales giving it a lunar link so this could just be a feature of this site, but future work in West Penwith will consider evidence for lunar links. For instance, the Merry Maidens which I had discounted through my reduction of data, as it did not stand proud against the horizon is in the Lunar Major Standstill Southern rising position from Boscawen-ûn with a declination of 29.9 degrees. I have decided to continue with the work looking for other possible lunar standstill positions in Cornwall. This concludes the main horizon findings but I also looked at other features within the circle.

The positioning of the quartz stone to the SW of the circle could signify the start or end of the winter season, but due to its localised vicinity to an observer, it could never pinpoint an actual date, without another position to line it up. The stone on the opposite site could have well been used to align the position but this does not line up with anything calendrically significant. The quartz stone does though align with the cist (located in the NE of the circle) and the out of sight Boscawen-ûn hedge menhir. The summer solstice sunrise would have occurred in along this alignment around 2500BCE. This alignment was first suggested by Norman Lockyer in his consideration of Boscawen-ûn.



*Boscawen-ûn hedge menhir*

It did make me consider if there was a possible missing stone positioned between the hedge menhir and the stone circle, which would bring intervisibility between the circle and the Boscawen-ûn hedge menhir. Even so, there are numerous example of standing stones being just over brows of ridges which form alignments so this could be a viable consideration when looking at this alignment.

'Rock art' carvings (of either feet or axes) have been identified on the centre stone [see *MM90 p.20*]. I was able to calculate the amount of time the art would be illuminated for, from the year 2500BCE. The art on the back of the central stone is only fully illuminated in and around summer solstice sunrise. Without any vegetation, a full illumination would occur 30 days either side of the solstice. The maximum amount of minutes that the art would be illuminated would occur on the summer solstice. This amount of time would reduce each day until a full illumination could not happen 31 days later. It must be noted that this measurement takes into account a completely flat landscape. Any vegetation would significantly reduce the length of time and amount of days the art would be fully illuminated. Partial illumination of the art also occurs and this time it happens both in the morning and the evening in and around the summer solstice. This partial illumination would occur for over a much longer period.



*Edge of foot (at bottom of central stone) illuminated by rising midsummer sun*

There are many more suggestions that could be made, particularly linking stellar events to the site. Without more accurate dating these suggestions must be taken under advisement. For instance, the Pleiades would set over Chapel Carn Brea in 1500BCE but at an earlier date of 1800BCE, it would have set to the south of the framed hill. I did consider if the central stone could have pointed at a star. The only bright star that it could have pointed at was Arcturus and this would have been at a remarkably early date of 3820BCE, and the stone could have moved over time. I concluded that astronomical features were considered by the builders of Boscawen-ûn. They certainly had an eye for the solar calendar within the design but more unusually knowledge of lunar cycles. This project, for me, has raised more questions than it answered and I will be continuing by looking for further examples of lunar alignments within Cornwall and try to draw further conclusions about the astronomical features of the Cornish circle sites.

*Carolyn is happy to answer questions, so please feel free to contact her at carolyn@hird.net. She will give an illustrated talk on this subject, entitled "Cornwall's celestial stones: reflections of the sky in an ancient landscape" as part of the 'Pathways to the Past' weekend at St. Just Old Town Hall on Sunday May 27th @ 11am. Her new book on this subject is reviewed on p.21.*



## A FISHY TALE OF A LOST GOD

by Andy Norfolk

Like stories of the one that got away, there are fishy tales that grow in the telling. In 1884 WS Lach-Szyrma, who was vicar of St Peter's Church in Newlyn, wrote of a "curious Cornish legend" in which appears, "the Bucca-boo (probably the storm-spirit or the Cornish Neptune, though in the Middle-Ages represented as the Devil)"<sup>1</sup>. If you look on-line you'll find information recycled across lots of sites that say that Lach-Szyrma's "claims were mainly conjecture". I wonder why anyone would think there could be hard proof? This suspicion about the Bucca legends seems to have come from Richard Dorson's book "The British Folklorists: A History". Since then of course we have had various studies rehabilitating the ancient roots of folklore<sup>2</sup>, so perhaps it's time to reconsider the sea god Bucca - and perhaps a Cornish sea goddess too, though that's for another time.

A bucca is first mentioned in Cornish literature in *Gwreans an Bys*, the Creation of the World, written in 1611 by William Jordan but possibly dating from about 1550. Cain says "me an synn gwethe es bucka", translated as "I hold him worse than a goblin". Later a servant says:-

blewake coynt yw ha hager  
ny won pane veast ylla boos  
yth falsa orth y favoure  
y bosa neb bucka noos  
ha henna y fyth prevys

Hairy, quaint he is and ugly;  
I know not what beast it can be:  
It should seem by his favour  
That he is some goblin of night,  
And that shall be proved.

Here a bucca is a male, hairy, quaint, and ugly, night goblin. This is the common idea of buccas, but as well as this goblin tribe in Cornish folklore there is also "The Bucca", who is quite different and distinct from the common faery jobs. There are incidentally no suggestions in the old Cornish stories that suggest that the Bucca is a goat, or goat-headed, though Christianised versions of the tales mistakenly suggesting he was the same as the devil may be the origin of this idea. Lach-Szyrma seems to have elaborated on Bottrell's comment in 1873 that "I have been told, by persons of credit, that within the last forty years it was a usual practice with Newlyn and Mousehal fishermen to leave on the sand at night a portion of their catch for Bucka."<sup>3</sup> He also wrote that at Newlyn "Those who continued to observe this remnant of an old religious rite were derided by their more "enlightened" neighbours of recent times, and by them nicknamed "Buccas."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lach-Szyrma, Rev WS., *Newlyn and its Pier* (Penzance, 1884), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> da Silva, Sara Graça; Tehrani, Jamshid J., *Comparative phylogenetic analyses uncover the ancient roots of Indo-European folktales* 2016 <http://rsos.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/3/1/150645#F4> and [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/6142964](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/6142964)

<sup>3</sup> Bottrell, William, *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, 2<sup>nd</sup> S. 1873 p246.

<sup>4</sup> Bottrell, William, *Stories and Folklore of Cornwall*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, 1880 p156



And then there's Tom Bawcock's Eve. This was first described by Robert Morton Nance in 1927, but here has never been a family with that surname living in Mousehole.<sup>1</sup> As you know, one winter had been so stormy that none of the fishing boats had been able to leave Mousehole harbour. The villagers were starving, but as Christmas approached, Tom Bawcock went fishing. Despite the raging weather and high seas, he caught enough fish to feed the entire village. This feat has been celebrated with stargazy pie, using the seven types of fish Tom caught, ever since. So, who really gives a gift of fish to save the starving villagers? Why it's the Bucca again; a benevolent sea god. The date, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, also suggests that he was a solar god because it is so close to the solstice. As Robert Morton Nance's song, written about 1930, says "And when up caame Tom Bawcock's name, We'd prais'd 'un to the sky".

In 1870 Bottrell's "Legend of Tolcarn"<sup>11</sup>, tells the story of how the devil stole some nets because he wanted to go fishing, was chased by the church choir and jumped across the valley landing on Tolcarn where his footprint can still be seen, with the fossilized nets that he dropped, while shouting, "Buckah, Buckah, Buckah". It's clear that this is not the devil, but The Bucca. Courtney also mentions that Lach-Szymrna told her the story. Tolcarn is also known as Bucca's Rock. Henry Maddern also told a story about the "Tolcarne Troll", which must surely also be the Bucca, "My old nurse, Betty Grancan, used to say that you could call up the troll at the Tolcarne if while there you held in your hand three dried leaves, one of the ash, one of the oak, and one of the thorn, and pronounced an incantation or charm."<sup>12</sup> Jenner explains that "the Troll who inhabited it could embody the person who called him up in any state in which that person had existed during a former age. You had only to name the age or period, and you could live your past life therein over again."<sup>13</sup> He added in a footnote that Tolcarn "is a natural outcropping of greenstone on a commanding hill just above the vicarage in Newlyn, and concerning it many weird legends survive. In pre-Christian times it was probably one of the Cornish sacred spots for the celebration of ancient rites--probably in honour of the Sun--and for divination." There's a solar link again, suggesting that Bucca really was a solar god.



There are some other examples of sea spirits to whom offerings were made. For example, on the island of Lewis in the Hebrides, there was an ancient custom "to sacrifice to a sea-god called Shony a cup of ale at Hallowtide."

<sup>10</sup> Jenkin, Loveday, pers. comm.

<sup>11</sup> Bottrell, William, Traditions and Hearthside Stories, 1<sup>st</sup> series 1870, p171

<sup>12</sup> Evans-Wentz W.Y, The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries, 1911 p175, p177

<sup>13</sup> Evans-Wentz W.Y, The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries, 1911 p391

<sup>14</sup> Martin, Martin, A description of the Western Islands of Scotland 1703, p 28



Closer to home at Worle in Somerset “when the fishermen go down to the sea, they each put a white stone on the cairn or 'fairy mound' on the hillside and say: "Ina pic winna / Send me a good dinner." And more times than not they come [back] with a load of fish.<sup>15</sup> The name is reported elsewhere to be Pickwinna - the rhyme "Peek weena, Send me a deesh of feesh for my deener" - and the mound is called Peak Winnard.<sup>16</sup>

In Penzance a hollow booming noise, heralding a shipwreck in a very heavy storm, was said to be Bucca calling and fishermen thought they could hear his voice on the wind.<sup>17</sup> Sir Humphry Davy investigated this. The Hooper at Sennen Cove seems to have also been related to the Bucca. “The fisherman often saw him, when the water was clear, working in and out amongst the crabs and lobsters, half-hidden with sea-weeds; and it was always counted as good luck to see Bucca at work, because he who saw was sure to have a fine catch. Sometimes he was seen, when the mists rolled up, sitting amongst the shags upon the rocks, holding court amongst them, and the noise which the birds made was taken for song, so the fishermen of the Cove called the mist “music”, and they say to one another that the “music” is coming off the land, when the mist is rising and rolling away in clouds.<sup>18</sup>

Craig Weatherhill wrote that the Bucca was a sea spirit or perhaps even the folk memory of an ancient sea-god.<sup>19</sup> He also noted that the place-name Izzacumpucca at Peninnis Head on St Mary's in the Isles of Scilly means ‘the Bucca's chasm’ and says he was the traditional Cornish sea god venerated by fishermen.<sup>20</sup> It must be very obvious that he isn't just a hobgoblin with ideas above his station and he has no similarity to the Welsh Pwca, or English Puck; who are both mischievous fairy spirits. If the Bucca is a lost sea god, then who is he? There seem to be few contenders. Shony's name is an anglicisation of the Gaelic seonaidh, or seonadh, which Edward Dwelly said came from a word meaning augury, or Druidry, so that's no help. Ina Pic Winna, seems too garbled a name to be much use, though perhaps it's related to the dialect word winnard for a redwing. The Bucca doesn't seem to be much like either the Welsh Llyr, or his Irish counterpart Lir, who were both gods of the sea, nor Mannan Mac Lir who seem to have supplanted his father, in later Irish lore. Perhaps he's closest to Barinthus, who in later Arthurian tales took the wounded king to Avalon. In Cornwall that might be a journey to the Scillies/Lyonesse, as the land of the dead. It's also suggested that Barinthus was a god of the sea and sun. In the end, perhaps the Bucca is just a local boy, though deserving respect as a benevolent sea god, who provided good catches of fish, and warnings of storms. Take him seriously, and next time you are in the Ship Inn in Mousehole on Tom Bawcock's Eve, with your pint of Tribute in hand, singing “we'd prais'd 'un to the sky”, just remember you are giving tribute to a god.

<sup>15</sup> Tongue, Ruth, Somerset Folklore, 1965

<sup>16</sup> W F Rose in Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries, v III, 1893.

<sup>17</sup> Paris, John Ayrton, The Life of Sir Humphry Davy, Vol2 1831.

<sup>18</sup> Harris, Henry, Cornish saints and Sinners, 1906.

<sup>19</sup> Weatherhill, Craig & Devereux, Paul, Myths and Legends of Cornwall, 994 p27.

<sup>20</sup> Weatherhill, Craig, Place Names in Cornwall and Scilly, 2005, p49

## CORNISH FOLKLORE

*A regular column by folklorist Alex Langstone*  
**East Cornwall May-day traditions**

Many villages, hamlets and farms around Bodmin Moor and eastern Cornwall had a peculiar May Day tradition of the Maypole Battles. At the end of April, each village would choose a stripped fir tree between thirty and fifty-foot-high and would fasten it to the highest chimney stack in their home parish at midnight on May eve. Alternatively, it would be attached to the highest tree in the vicinity. In the early hours of May Day, it was trimmed with streamers made of



*Tree trunk carried for maypole - Lanreath 1940s*

coloured scraps of material and with flowers and vegetables taken from neighbours' gardens. The moment the pole was up and decorated, each village became a fortress, with other rival villages setting off on raids to try to steal the Maypole of the next village. At some villages, such as Merrymeet, the pole was cemented in and tarred, so it could not be climbed, but the men of St Cleer simply sawed the pole at the base and carried it away. At Trekernal a pole was fastened to the highest tree and decorated in the traditional manner. However, it was quickly taken, before dawn, by a man from North Hill, who climbed the tree with a rope and lowered the pole to the ground. The May Poles were generally left in position throughout the month of May, and were guarded each night by the men of the village throughout the entire month. At the months end they were then taken down and stored safely for a year.

Around 150 years ago the biggest Maypole battle to have been recorded, took place between Altarnun and Trewen. The folk of Altarnun managed to steal the Trewen pole and this resulted in a fight where it is reported that the villagers "fought like Dragons". The descriptions of these East Cornwall maypoles sound remarkably like the May Pole seen every year at Padstow, very different to the English maypoles decked with ribbon for dancing around. The East Cornwall maypoles were instead bedecked with garlands and hoops of flowers. Other villages recorded as having these poles include, Berriow, Middlewood, Menheniot and North Hill. St Neot had its own version of the Maypole tradition, recorded by W. Arthur Pascoe in *Old Cornwall 12, winter 1930*. This was considered the most favoured of all the festivals once observed in the village. One of the last observances of this once popular custom saw one of the large farms cut a pole and raised it in the village, having much faith in their ability to defend it. However, they did not foresee such a mass attack, which they would have to repel. Amid scenes of great confusion, dire threats, the firing of shotguns into the air and discharges of hot water and pepper the St Neot pole was lost and the victors marched off with the pole on their triumphant shoulders, singing a long-lost song of maypole victory. The custom died out around 1890, but until then was firmly entrenched into the St Neot village calendar.

The greatest maypole battle celebration was centred on the village of Lanreath, and the tradition is thought to stretch back at least six hundred years, and was still going in the early 1980s, when it started to decline, due to complaints and police intervention. It was all about the virility of the young men of the village, who would steal the biggest tree from the local woods, which would be taken at the dead of night. The poles were huge, and in 1973 the maypole was recorded at 105 feet before it was stolen by the lads of Pelynt. Upon its return it was a bit shorter, and was found hidden within rows of the potato crop. Games of skittles would be played by the pole, and the skittles were actually made from the previous year's maypole. The battle of the maypole was often between Lanreath, Pelynt and Lerryn, and local rivalry was intense. Each village would never know who would raid who, and Doublebois and Duloe also often raided Lanreath. The maypole guard would hide in and keep watch from the churchyard, armed with sticks and one night the army arrived from Bodmin's barracks and tried to take the pole back to Bodmin, however they were unsuccessful.

Aside from the Maypole Battles, other more sedate form of observance are also recorded from the region. A may-pole used to be erected on West Looe Quay on the 1st May with dancing and street processions with garlands of flowers that were an art form in themselves, which processed through both East and West Looe. The May Frolics followed during the evening, where bands of young people would gather together and walk to a nearby farm. Accompanied by a fiddler, they would dance until midnight. If the weather was



*Maypole dancing at Lanreath 1950s*

foul a barn would be emptied for them, if the weather was fine a field would be used and the dances performed under a starry sky. They would dance four-handed, six-handed and eight-handed reels, riotous quick-steps followed by the more sedate Triumph and Cushion Dances, which were slow and graceful. Metheglin, Sloe and Elderberry wine would be supplied for the occasion along with junkets of cream and rich milk and 'Whipped Syllabubs' straight from the cow. Similar festivities were common at Fowey and Polperro.

The following poetic description of the late-night return home from the 'May frolics' at Looe, can be found in the Old Cornwall Journal, Summer 1930 –

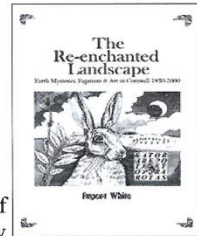
*One can picture the happy party returning from Hay Farm, each with a lantern, keeping very close together as they turned the corner of Hay Lane, and the trill that shook them as they glanced apprehensively toward Plaidy, fearing they might catch a glimpse of the Phantom Horsemen careering across the beach on his ghostly headless steed. To keep up their courage they would lustily troll a catch, and the "dug-dug" of the maidens' red-eared festal clogs would be a gentle accompaniment.*

**Excerpts taken from Alex Langstone's new book 'From Granite to Sea'. Available from [www.troybooks.co.uk](http://www.troybooks.co.uk).**



## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Re-enchanted Landscape:  
Earth Mysteries, Paganism & Art in Cornwall 1950-2000**  
by **Rupert White** [2017]  
[Published by Antenna Publications pbk £10 e-book £6.95]



Firstly, a disclaimer: Rupert White and I had a number of discussions about this book at an early stage, and he specifically acknowledges my help and encouragement in the book. I am also featured quite a bit in the text, and it is a curious feeling to be now 'written up' as part of the social history of this period! However, many others are also featured - with Ronald Hutton providing the foreword. Objectively speaking, Rupert has achieved a very difficult task: of providing an overview of half a century of the overlapping elements of social anthropology, cultural history, archaeology, mysticism and earth mysteries, and of specific individuals who uniquely came together in love of the Cornish landscape. As one reviewer of the book on Amazon has put it: "A fine, well balanced and comprehensive history of this influential period in a special place. With faultless scholarship the author treads delicately through the volatile politics of his subject without fear or favour, avoiding subjective opinion and succeeding in presenting an honest, informative history. Readable and trustworthy."

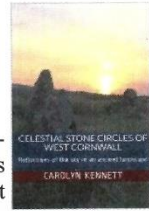
The book opens in 1950 with the surrealist painter and writer Ithell Colquhoun, whose book 'The Living Stones', about her relationship to the sacred landscape of West Penwith, was published in 1957. It then journeys through Cecil Williamson and the establishment of the Museum of Witchcraft at Boscastle; and into the 1960s 'the age of mysticism' with proponents like John Michell and Colin Wilson; and in the 1970s Tony 'Doc' Shiels and his invocation of Morgawr, the sea-monster and the Owlman of Mawnan, and Jill Bruce (now Smith) and her early ceremonial rituals at the ancient sites. The early rise of feminism and Goddess studies, that people like Monica Sjöö, Sue & Alan Bleakley, Jo O'Cleirigh and myself brought to the mix is also covered. The book then investigates in some depth the rise of interest in the ancient, sacred and mythic landscape of Cornwall by Paul Devereux, Craig Weatherhill, Ian Cooke, Paul Broadhurst, Hamish Miller and myself, with chapter 20, entitled "Meyn Mamvro", charting the beginnings of the movement that sought a deeper connection with the land and the sacred sites. The split in the 'Earth Mysteries' community is covered fairly and honestly; and in the late 1980s the formation of the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group (CEMG) with Andy Norfolk and others, the work of the Dragon Project and the 'Dream Team' in West Cornwall, and the ritual celebrations at Harmony Pottery with Geraldine McCarthy are all well featured. The book comes to its conclusion in the 1990s, with the founding of the Penwith Pagan Moot; the activities of the village witch Cassandra Latham-Jones; the Witchcraft Museum taken over by Graham King; and finally the Solar Eclipse, which symbolically marked the end of this amazing era. Whether you were part of it all or not, the book is a fascinating and lively account of a period of time in a certain place that changed the consciousness of so many people. [CS]

*An extract from the book will be reproduced in the next issue of 'Meyn Mamvro'.*

### Celestial Stone Circles of West Cornwall

by **Carolyn Kennett** [2018]

[Published by Cornish Stargazers pbk £9.99 e-book £5.99]

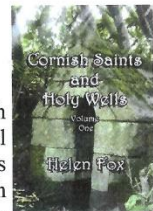


The last book to be written specifically about astronomical alignments from West Penwith's stone circles (by Lockyer) was over 100 years ago! So this new one is long overdue. Archaeo-astronomy is not a subject that has much engaged Cornwall's archaeologists over the years, though MM has often featured ideas and theories from an amateur stance. Now, a professional astronomer and researcher, Carolyn Kennett, has taken up the challenge and produced a most interesting and useful book. She begins by looking at the maths of solar, lunar and stellar alignments, which might be a little technical in places for some readers, though she makes it as understandable as possible. Then she looks at four 'case studies': Boscawen-ûn, Merry Maidens, Boskednan and Tregeseal circles, together with neighbouring sites, such as menhirs, holed stones, etc, and for each of the sites, considers the possible alignments to other megaliths and features in the landscape. There is some really original research here (as Carolyn's article on p.9-13 of this issue of MM will testify), and some intriguing possibilities for future research. There are also some good insights and theories: for example, that people may have processed from the Lamorna gap using the Trelew line of stones on to Boscawen-ûn, where they could have witnessed the winter solstice sunrise out of the gap. They could then have gone on to Tregeseal to witness the winter solstice sunset that would have occurred in another sea gap over the Isles of Scilly. An excellent book.

### Cornish Saints and Holy Wells Vols 1 & 2

by **Helen Fox** [2016 & 2017]

[Published by Sifi Publishing Co. pbks £12.50 each e-books £5.57 each]

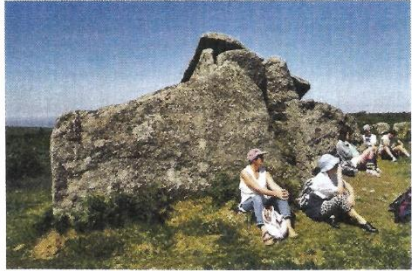


Every decade or so a new book seems to come out about Cornish holy wells. Helen Fox is the latest lover and afficiando of these magical places, and following her set of oracle cards [reviewed in MM85] she has produced this 2 volume guide to the holy wells of Cornwall, along with their saints dedications. There are 63 wells visited in each of the two volumes, all with colour photographs of each well, and excellent directions on how to find them. With such a large number visited and featured, it has obviously not been possible for Helen to double-check each entry and all the sources of information about them, so some mistakes have crept in - for example in Vol 1 St.Euny's well is not located next to the settlement (this is a utilitarian well attached to the cottages), and Fenton Luna at Padstow does not actually mean 'well of the moon' but is a corruption of a Cornish word 'lynnow' meaning a spring or pool. In Vol 2 a 'Goddess holy well' is listed, but this is a modern name given by Goddess-celebrating pagans, and not a traditional name for the well. There are other examples, but, that aside, there is much that is valuable about these books, and, although I wrote a book on Cornwall's holy wells in 1998, I learnt of many more from these books that I had not known about, such as Carbilly Tor well and Venton Raze well at Illogan. Overall, these books are a great encouragement to visit these inspiring places.

## 20 YEARS AGO

*Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

MM 35 [Winter/Spring 1998] first featured the Hummadruz, a strange humming sound, usually heard in still summer weather with no apparent source. It was heard by a small group of people the summer before on a still day during a CEMG visit to Zennor Quoit. Andy Norfolk reported: “The noise was very like a contented hive of bees, but there were no bees nearby. It was all around and was impossible to locate a source. As we walked back down off the top of the downs, the noise faded away, disappearing as we got below approximately the 200m contour, to be replaced with the more usual noise of crickets and other insects - quite different”.



The hummadruz is a well-attested, though largely unexplained, phenomenon, and as Andy pointed out, the 18th century author Gilbert White, had mentioned it as if it was a regular occurrence on Selborne downs. It had also been mentioned in the journal *The Ley Hunter 88* in 1980, when it had been heard during a visit to the Isle of Arran, and in a book by John Michell *City of Revelation* in 1984 when it had been heard during a visit to Gallt-yr-Ancr, a hill in the Berwyn range of mountains in mid Wales. Nearer home, Robert Hunt in *Popular Romances of the West of England* (1871) tells a tale of a man who, on the Gump near St. Just, had an encounter with the fairy folk and heard the hummadruz: “Whirl! whirl! as if a flight of bees were passing by, buzzed in his ears”.

Around this time, both Westcountry TV and the Western Morning News newspaper featured the phenomenon, and noted that it consisted of a low note between 15-20 Hz, together with a higher note of less than 40 Hz, and sometimes a third harmonic of just over 50 Hz. These are very low frequencies, sometimes called infrasound, and it has been suggested that such sounds may have been used to help induce altered states of consciousness. In certain mental states our brainwaves could be resonating with the rhythms of the Earth, and experiment has shown that activity in the hippocampus in our brains can be affected by electromagnetic stimulation, with the largest effect at the ‘earth frequency’ of 10-15 Hz. Alpha and theta brainwaves are encouraged by noises and sounds that resonate at low frequencies, and these brainwaves are associated with visionary and paranormal experiences. They suggest that in certain states we can directly open up to what has been called “the vast ocean of biological-frequency natural forces of the planet”. Interestingly, the area where the CEMG members walked (from Zennor Quoit to Trendrine Hill and back) is a well-attested ‘ley’ line that runs all the way across the Penwith moors to Boswens menhir. Some years later, your editor was up at Zennor Quoit and once again heard the Hummadruz, and there have been other recorded experiences of it over the years.



## 30 YEARS AGO

*Delving into the pages of MM from the past*

MM issue 5 [February 1988] began to take an interest in the field of dowsing. It included an article by Hamish Miller on ‘Dowsing the Earth Energies’ which was about how he first got into dowsing, which he described as “the beginning of a dramatic, intriguing, tantalising relationship with what I now believe is our planet Gaia’s nervous system”. He also went on to describe what happened one day when “in a moment of egotistical triumph” he put his hand “patronisingly on the top of a single stone not far from the Merry Maidens” and received “a violent electric type shock that went through my arm”. This is now known to be a piezo-electric effect caused by the quartz in the stones, and has been attested by many other people over the years. Hamish subsequently went on to co-author (with Paul Broadhurst) the famous book ‘The Sun and the Serpent’, and a number of other publications.



The issue also explored other aspects of prehistoric menhirs, including “Brittany - Penwith’s French connection”, which included discussion of cupmarked stones, stone rows and solar alignments, all topics that were to feature in future issues of MM over the years. Closer to home, Boswens menhir (near St. Just) was featured after a heavy snowfall [*photo right*] that revealed a curious phenomenon, in that the surrounding area was covered in snow, but a circle around the base of the standing stone remained snow-free. There was speculation that the stone may have been at a higher ambient temperature to the surrounding moor and may therefore have sent out energy to melt the snow. MM asked for other possible explanations, and in the next issue [MM 6], a reader suggested that there may have been a pool of water around the base of the stone that didn’t freeze (but there hadn’t been such a pool), and another reader drew attention to the warmth emitted by some stones, as evidenced by Hamish Miller (above). The phenomenon has still not been adequately explained.



Finally, the issue included an article by Jeff & Deb Saward on “The riddle of the mazes”, which looked at the history of mazes and labyrinths, with particular reference to the slate carvings at Rocky Valley near Tintagel, and Troy Town boulder labyrinth on the Isles of Scilly, which later caused some controversy when a group of dowsers, including Hamish Miller, restored it, bringing us back full circle to the beginning of this review!

**Cornwall's newest stone circle** has appeared on the Pentillie Estate, on the borders of the River Tamar at St.Mellion near Saltash.

## THE PIPER'S TUNE



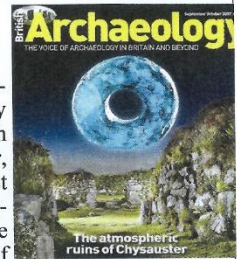
Pentillie is a 2000 acre site, whose Castle was first built in 1698, subsequently demolished and rebuilt in 1967, and restored in 2008-9, when it was opened as a wedding and events venue. The "stunning new stone circle" is the work of Pentillie's owner, Ted Coryton, who says that he has always been fascinated by the history of the many standing stones, stone circles and other monuments on Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor, and wondered at their spiritual or religious significance. He says: "They obviously must have had great significance to the people who built them because of the time and effort required to erect them at a time when survival must have been the primary concern and occupation of most people."

The circle sits atop a hill within the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and boasts commanding views across to Dartmoor and Plymouth Sound. Furthermore, it has an outlying stone that is aligned to the winter solstice, which the press release describes as "the beginning of longer days and the growing season". Ted Coryton added: "Each stone represents a person or people to me but who they are will be a source of puzzlement and conjecture for years to come".

English Heritage have recently been taking a fresh look at **Chysauster**, one of its smallest guardianship properties, and have taken advantage of an Investment Grant to help improve and safeguard this iconic Romano-British village. New interpretation panels have been created, and a new Guidebook produced ["Chysauster and Carn Euny" *English Heritage*, £3.50]. The results of the reassessment of the site were published in the magazine *British Archaeology* - Sept/Oct 2017, where it featured on the distinctive cover, along with a photo of a glass bead found there.

A detailed examination of the site was made, and the configuration of the core group of houses, often previously explained as being laid out along a 'village street', was actually influenced by the layout of an earlier (probably Iron Age) agricultural landscape of heavily lynched fields. The inhabitants may therefore have been showing respect to the landscape of their ancestors.

The fogou, which now lies a short distance from the nucleus of the site, was also examined to try and determine its extent and condition. Ground-penetrating radar was used, but was unsuccessful due to the steep slopes and uneven ground surface. The earth resistance survey identified several anomalies, but it wasn't clear how these related to the fogou structure. Finds from previous excavations however were studied by Cornish archaeologist Henrietta Quinnell, and a tentative date for occupation of the site has been established as being from the end of 1st century - end of 3rd century CE, a surprising short period of time for such an iconic site.





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Talks@ Marazion Community Centre inc. *Sat March 24th*: Grahame Gardner: "Dowsing Magic - Symbols, Shapes and Sigils" *Sat May 5th*: International Dowsing Day.  
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### TAMAR DOWSERS

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See *Facebook page Parallel Community*

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*Tue May 1st* - Obby Oss Day at Padstow. 01841-533449  
Web site: [www.padstowlive.com](http://www.padstowlive.com)  
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*Sat June 23rd* - Midsummer Bonfires on Chapel Carn Brea etc, organised by Old Cornwall Societies.  
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