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ancient stones and sacred sites in cornwall



- MYTHIC PATHWAYS ● PROPPED STONES ●
 - RE-VISITING THE LAND OF THE GODDESS ●
 - DOWSING ● FOLKLORE ● WELLS CORNER ●
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 Meyn Mamvro address: **Whitewaves, Boscaswell Village, Pendeen, Penzance, Cornwall TR19 7EP** Telephone: **01736-787186** Website: **www.meynmamvro.co.uk**
 E-mail: **editor@meynmamvro.co.uk**

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Meyn Mamvro

STONES OF OUR MOTHERLAND

EARTH ENERGIES * ANCIENT STONES * SACRED SITES * PAGANISM * LEYPATHS
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I (editor) was recently very honoured to receive the Sir Richard Trant Memorial Award for Heritage Champion 2018 from the Cornwall Heritage Trust (CHT), [Royal Patron, the Duke of Cornwall, a.k.a Prince Charles], who work to protect and promote Cornwall's unique heritage. They own a number of ancient sites in Cornwall (including Castle-an-Dinas near St.Columb, Dupath Well near Callington and Sancreed Beacon) and manage others (including Trethevey Quoit [see *MM94 p.24*] and The Hurlers on Bodmin Moor, Mên Gurtha standing stone on St.Breock Downs, and Carn Euny settlement & fogou and Tregiffian burial chamber in West Penwith). The Sir Richard Trant award (which comprises a beautiful glass bowl and a cheque for £500) has been given since 2009 to a number of different individuals, including the late Pip Richards in 2014 for her work on Carwynnen Quoit [see *MM91 p.3*]. The award was given primarily for my work with CASPN over the last 15 years (though *Meyn Mamvro* was also cited in the presentation), and it is a measure of how well CASPN is thought of by others. Unfortunately I could not be present at the CHT AGM to receive the award in person, but John Moss (now Chair of CASPN) accepted it on my behalf. I would like to thank all those who nominated me, and my colleagues on CASPN, as the award reflects all the good work that so many do (often unseen and unheralded) for and with our voluntary Group.

As many readers know, CASPN has this year become a major player in the protection of ancient sites in West Penwith, as a partner with the Penwith Landscape Partnership (PLP) [details in the Editorial of *MM95*]. An Ancient Penwith Project Officer (APPO) was appointed, Laura Ratcliffe-Warren (who is currently on maternity leave and has been temporarily replaced by Jeanette Ratcliffe), and other staff have also now been appointed, including an Access Officer (Matt Watts) and a Practical Tasks Officer (Richie Smith). Matt has been working with landowners to get a series of Trails to the ancient sites firmly established, and Richie has been overseeing some major clearance work in and around specific sites (including Mulfra Vean courtyard house settlement, and Chûn Downs and Bosullow Trehyllys pathways), together with his team of enthusiastic volunteers [see *p.5 of this MM for more details*]. All of this is bringing the PLP's project work into being, and is making a real difference to the Penwith landscape and the accessibility of the ancient sites. It culminated recently in a Walking Weekend, utilising some of the paths that had recently been cleared to the ancient sites, and was a real success and a measure of the difference that the PLP is now beginning to make. *Meyn Mamvro*, which for over 30 years has been monitoring and campaigning for better protection and access to the ancient sites, can only applaud the work that is now being done to bring all of this to fruition.

DOWSING NEWS

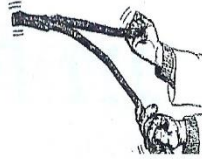


Image [c]
Jean Hands

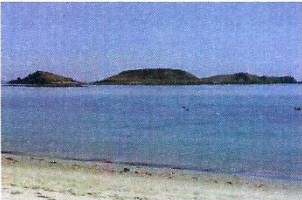
In June, **Tamar Dowzers** held a talk, postponed from February because of the snow, by *Carolyn Kennett & Brian Sheen* on their archaico-astronomical research at Britain's prehistoric sites. Brian (from the Roseland Observatory) and Carolyn (independent researcher) ran through a whole series of demonstrable astronomical alignments at sites across the country, including many from the south-west and Cornwall in particular. They had both taken an active part in the recent archaeological project at The Hurlers circles [see *MM85 p.20 & MM92 p.4*], and Brian talked about the Pipers standing stones there as a potential gateway or portal to other megaliths, and the possible significance of the 'crystal pathway' between the centre and north circles as a representation of the Milky Way. Carolyn was able to add the sky-watchers input to other Cornish locations, such as fogous [see *MM92 p.24*] and stone circle alignments [see *MM95 p.9-13*]. An exciting dovetailing of emerging outlooks in astronomy, archaeology and dowsing.

In July the planned trip by **Trencrom Dowzers** to *Halligye Fogou* was unfortunately cancelled, as the Trelowarren Estate refused permission for them to dowse there. As there was no dowsing trip planned for August, the final outing of the summer was in September. The **Group** met at *Zennor* on a lovely, bright and warm autumn afternoon, and followed the well-worn path out to the headland, picking up the Athena current as they neared the rocky outcrop. In the '*Dance of the Dragon*', Paul Broadhurst writes: "At the edge of the cliff overlooking Pendour Cove, a protruding rock looked as if it had been at some remote time sheared in two. Wedged on top was another chunk of stone, creating a gap through which we could see the distant horizon. It formed a fitting doorway or entrance for Athena". The Group were keen to find out if the current actually squeezed through the gap, but dowsing revealed that the line, about 12 paces wide, passed right through the rock, with the gap in the centre on a precise west/east track.

Unfortunately the next feature on Athena's trail, the Giant's Rock, was not accessible, so the next logical place to visit was Zennor's Chapel Caf  for tea and cake! Once refreshed, they drove a couple of miles to Towednack Church, where they picked up Athena passing through the church at an angle, before sweeping along the side of Trink Hill on its way to Trencrom Hill. The flower festival was just coming to an end, and had been visited by many people that week so the church had a very happy, welcoming atmosphere. They had an enjoyable chat with the vicar who was interested in their research and dowsing in general so they were able to dowse in the church. They picked up the usual energy pattern present in such ancient places, including a strong blind spring in front of the altar. They were also able to find the energy sink streaming out of the site of the north door, which was a new concept to some of the group. An enjoyable end to the Summer season.

DOWSING EXTRA**MYSTERIOUS STONE STRUCTURE
DOWSED AT CARN LÊS BOEL**

Carn Lês Boel is a 'cliff castle' in West Penwith [see MM84 p.12] famous not only for its spectacular setting but also known as the place where the Michael and Mary energy lines arrive and leave mainland UK [see MM94 p.16]. Now, a curious stone setting within the ramparts of the site has been identified by archaeologist David Giddings. It consists of four different sized stones, forming a kind of enclosure, but with no sign of a capstone nearby. A group of Trencrom Dowsers dowsed the site, each person dowsing separately without conferring until the end. The general conclusions were that it was a feature constructed in the Bronze Age, but with some sort of later (Iron Age) input. It was not a burial site, and a bit small for a look-out post or dwelling of any sort. It did however have a dowsable spiral of energy around it, so there was probably a deliberate, though unknown, use. An interesting, albeit enigmatic, find.

**GO SCILLY WITH THE LEY HUNTERS!**

Come and join The Ley Hunters Moot on the Isles of Scilly, from Saturday June 8th to Friday June 14th 2019.

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A week of visits to ancient sites on all the islands with a friendly group of dowsers and ley-hunters.

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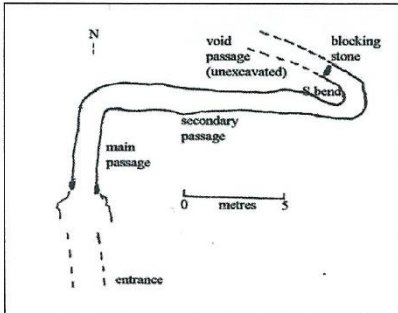
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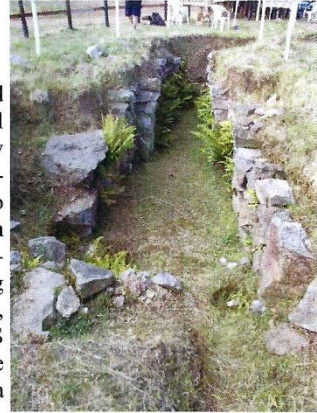
NEWS FROM THE LIZARD

BODEN FOGOU SITE REVEALS MORE SECRETS

An Open Day at Boden Fogou site on the Lizard in August (organised by the Meneage Archaeological Group) revealed more of the on-going excavation story there. The main fogou has now been uncovered, consisting



of two passages, with the main passage turning sharply right, and a sharp S bend at the end with a blocking stone. This is similar to Halligye fogou, a few miles away. Beyond the S bend is a 'void passage' which remains to be excavated.



View of the main passage

The site is a complex one, with a Bronze Age Roundhouse originally built there around 1400 BCE, and then abandoned about 50-100 years later and deliberately filled in. The infill was found to contain over 2000 pieces, including pottery, clay loom-weights and stones for grinding grain. Then around 400 BCE (Middle Iron Age) the fogou was constructed and used for perhaps a few hundred years, before being deliberately back-filled. By the 6th century CE, two domestic houses had been constructed nearby (currently undergoing excavation) together with a pit with burnt stones, that may have been used for cooking and communal feasting. A fascinating site that continues to reveal its secrets

THE FOUR FACES OF DRYTREE MENHIR

On a visit to Drytree menhir on the Lizard peninsula [SW7256 2119], MM reader Muriel Passmore noticed that there were 4 distinct sides to the stone. Having previously visited the Long Meg standing stone in Cumbria, she was aware that its four sides each faced a different direction of the compass. Checking on the orientation of Drytree, she found that the same applied here, the directions being SE, SW, NW and NE, the summer and winter solstice sunrises and sunsets. At each of these the face of the stone pointing to the sun would be bathed in either the rising or setting sunlight. This is possible on the Lizard as it is so flat, and the directions that the sun rose or set would be unobscured and would virtually be at horizon level. Drytree menhir had fallen, but was re-erected in 1928 into its original socket, so we can be pretty sure that it now stands as it originally did, with the same orientation.





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

Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network



CASP.N was honoured this Autumn when the Cornwall Heritage Trust gave its Sir Richard Trant Heritage Champion 2018 award to Cheryl Traffon, Chair of our Charitable Trust from 2004-2018, and now Vice-Chair of the Management Committee [see p.1]. The Group is also working hard with the PLP (Penwith Landscape Partnership) to clear some of the paths at and to some ancient sites, and a great start has been made at Mulfra Veon Courtyard House settlement (where for the first time in decades most of the settlement is now visible and accessible) and the pathways over Chûn Downs and the old lane to Bosulow Trehyllys settlement [see MM93 p.6 for more details]. CASP.N has also continued with its own clear-ups, with Roger Driscoll now taking over publicity for these. Recently, the Boskednan Barrows and Boscawen-ûn stone circle were given a clearance.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to plan our annual Pathways to the Past weekend of walks and talks for the 13th year at the end of May. As always, there will be a varied and interesting programme of events, all free to members of the organisation. Details at the moment are as follows, with the full programme on the website by the end of the year.

Saturday May 25th 2019

10.00-12.30 Guided Walk with John & Jill Moss on paths recently cleared by PLP

2.00-5.00 Guided Walk with David Giddings through the industrial heritage of Botallack and Kenidjack valleys.

7.30- 9.00 An illustrated talk on Tintagel by Jackie Nowakowski, Site Director.

Sunday May 26th 2019

11.00-12.30 Introduction to Cornish Crosses—an illustrated talk by Andrew Langdon

2.00-5.00 Guided Walk to Maen Castle, with legendary storytelling by Adrian Rodda

7.30-9.00 Talk on folklore of Bodmin Moor & East Cornwall by Alex Langstone

CORNISH ANCIENT SITES PROTECTION NETWORK [CASP.N]

Address: Elowen, Wheal Kitty, Lelant Downs, Hayle TR27 6NS. Tel: 01736-740093

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

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

To support CASP.N please join: (£10/year waged, £14 couples, £7 unwaged)

E-mail info@cornishancientsites.com, visit CASP.N web site (PayPal/downloadable application form/standing order), or write to address above

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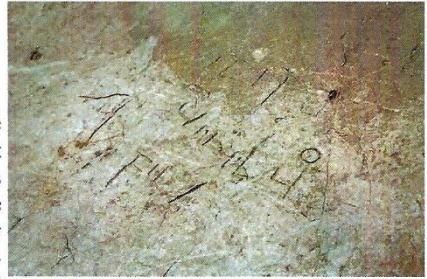
LIZARD ANCIENT SITES NETWORK [LAN] via CASP.N address (above)

Adopt-a-Site scheme: e-mail: info@cornishancientsites.com, or telephone above

NEWS FROM TINTAGEL

ANOTHER INSCRIBED SLATE FOUND AT THE CASTLE SITE

Almost exactly 20 years since the 'Artognou' inscribed slate was discovered at Tintagel [see p.22 of this MM], another has been found. The 60cm (2ft) long slate appears to have been used as a window ledge, and is etched with an eclectic combination of Latin writing, Greek letters and Christian symbols. The writing is believed to have been the work of someone practising their handwriting, and includes both an informal style of writing used in documents and a more formal script, typically used in illuminated manuscripts. It includes the Roman and Celtic names 'Tito' and 'Budic', the Latin words 'fili' (son) and 'viri duo' (two men), and the Greek letter delta. The slate was found during current excavations of the 6th-7thC CE site, which has been described as a "high-status, possibly royal, site, with a literate Christian culture and international connections".



[c] Christopher Ison/English Heritage

The slate has been analysed by medieval expert Professor Michelle Brown from the University of London, who lives in West Cornwall (and is part of the CASPN Management team). She said: "The survival of writing from this period is rare and this is a very important find. It suggests a high level of literacy and an awareness of contemporary writing styles associated with the early illuminated manuscripts of Britain and Ireland. Other examples of writing in Cornwall and western Britain at this period take the form of monumental inscriptions on stones, but this example is quite different, with a writing style and layout suggestive of a competent scribe from a Christian background, who was familiar with writing documents and books, and who was practising a series of words and phrases rather than carving a finished inscription".

Three seasons of excavation by the Tintagel Castle Archaeological Research Project, led by Win Scutt from English Heritage and Jackie Nowakowski from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, have revealed early medieval buildings on the south side of Tintagel headland. This year's excavations, and the find of the inscribed slate, were featured in a BBC2 documentary in September, entitled "King Arthur's Britain: the truth unearthed". Presenter Alice Roberts looked at the state of Britain after 410 CE when the Romans left, and concluded there was a NE-SW dividing line, with those in the SE of the country receiving settlement and influences from the Anglo-Saxon invasions, while those in the west retained older separate genes. Tintagel was unique, with a high-status settlement of hundreds of buildings, with an extraordinarily large population.. It was also well connected with the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, France and Spain, and traded Cornish tin for high quality imports. The inscribed slate was seen as an example of its status.

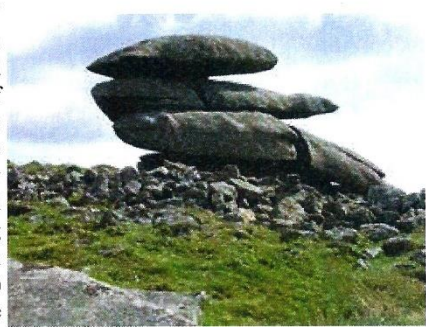
Jackie Nowakowski will give a talk on Tintagel as Part of the 2019 Pathways weekend.

CURIOUS AND ENIGMATIC MONUMENTS

An occasional series that takes a look at some megalithic sites that do not easily fit into existing categories

SHOWERY TOR RING CAIRN

Showery Tor lies about 400m (437 yds) along the ridge running north-east from Rough Tor on Bodmin Moor. The slopes and summit of this ridge are the focus of one of the most spectacular expanses of prehistoric settlements, fields and funerary sites in the country. The prominent summit of Showery Tor is a natural formation of weathered granite that is surrounded by an artificial ring cairn, a low bank of piled stones about 30m (98ft) in diameter and about 1.2m (3.9ft) high. The height of the cairn on which the outcrop stands is about 3m (9.8ft) high. This is a rare form of monument and only about 40



Showery Tor (ring cairn in foreground)

-50 are known to exist, concentrated on the moors of Devon and Cornwall. These sites occupy prominent locations and are a highly visible element of the moorland landscape. They date to the Early and Middle Bronze Age and excavated examples have revealed traces of internal post-holes and pits, some of which contain evidence of burial remains and ceremonial activities. Often occurring as isolated hilltop monuments, they are also sometimes found in proximity to cairn cemeteries and settlements. The evidence from the few modern excavations which have taken place on the SW moorlands suggest that these different kinds of sites are not contemporary, however, and represent several phases of occupation over many centuries.

The Early and Middle Bronze Age is significant as a time of monument building, with later sites often incorporating or visibly acknowledging structures from the preceding phases. The Neolithic tor enclosure on Rough Tor dominates the surrounding moorland and has been embraced and colonised by later communities, signifying its continuing importance within the rich prehistoric landscape. Many of the monuments from these periods are thought to have ritual and ceremonial functions or associations, and are thought to be the physical manifestation of the beliefs and practices of the people who created them. They survive as the only evidence or visible indication of how Bronze Age people viewed their world, structured their lives, built their homes and treated their dead. Although we may never completely understand what these impressive monuments meant to their builders, their powerful presence in the landscape persists and they continue to inspire even today.

Showery Tor lies in open access moorland and is most easily reached from the car park at Roughtor (hike for approx.1 mile). Information and photograph [c] Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record. See p.11 for Showery Tor Propped Stone.

A VIEW OF SOME PROPPED STONES

by David Shepherd

A little while ago I was in contact with the late Tony Blackman regarding propped stones we had noted in Cornwall, the South Pennines and the Yorkshire Dales [Blackman 2011, Shepherd 2013]. Sadly our projected collaborative paper could not appear, but a recent visit was a belated attempt to follow on from our discussions, and these notes are, in a sense, an outsider's view of Cornish propped stones. My time was limited and each site was visited once.

I was only able to gather sparse details before my trip, but I did succeed in locating at least ten features – without getting into the ‘possible/probable/definite’ debate. Some of the following are well-known already but others less so. I have supplied GPS-derived grid references, photos and (inevitably incomplete) commentaries.

West Penwith

Carn Galva 1 (Dot's Stone). SW42692 36165. One prop and two points-of-contact. [*See MM96 p.8*]

There are linear grooves in the bedrock surface immediately south of the propped stone (1m long, 25mm wide and 10m deep). Their aetiology is unclear. The lower edge of the west face of the propped stone appeared to show some decking – crescent-shaped absences possibly indicative of percussive shaping or of initial extraction using wood wedges. The prop showed a broad (25mm) horizontal band of quartz, there was no similar banding evident within a 100m search area. The long axis of the feature aligned with the general area of the Carn Galva tin mine; this, and the quartz-veined prop, might just be a reference to prehistoric surface extraction.



An end view of the propped stone, showing the prospect along the long axis and the grooves in the bedrock.

Carn Galva 2. SW42792 35973. One prop and two points-of-contact. [*See MM96 p.11*].

At the immediate foot of the clutter from the tor, this feature ‘faced’ west, perhaps toward the White Downs settlement area. Points-of-contact were not directly with bedrock but with rocks on the bedrock, or possibly a degraded surface layer.



Zennor. SW46396 38146. One prop (on the left) and one point-of-contact (on the right) [See MM88 p.2 for further details].

More or less at the highest point of the tor is an apparently propped stone, but the scale is way beyond other anthropogenic features and it could, arguably, be an outcome of natural tumble despite its apparent form. I think this is what the Ordnance Survey has called Logan Stone. Close by (25m) is a propped stone on a much more likely scale [right]—which raises the possibility of mimicry.



‘Likely scale’: most propped stones I have seen in Cornwall and in northern England tend to be of a size that four to six people could have created, with some levers, ropes and a shaman. I offer this simply as an unsubstantiated, working assumption.

Bodmin Moor

Leskernick Propped Stone SX18279 80202. Two props and one point-of-contact. [This is the well-known site that started the identification of Propped Stones in Cornwall. It has a midsummer solstice sunset alignment. See article by Peter Herring in MM85 p.18-19].



One of the rocks underneath the slab is not propping and is not original. Crack-seal veins indicate the slab originated as part of the outcrop itself. Removals beneath the outcrop have produced a ‘propped’ promontory. Details of these observations will hopefully appear as a more formal paper in *Cornish Archaeology*.

Leskernick 2. SX18298 80125. One prop and one arc of contact.

Leskernick Propped Stone is on the skyline. The slab is crossed by a crack-seal vein (ridge) running in that direction, and also bears uncommon, water-formed runnels. The curving line of five, edge-set stones appears to pass under the slab.



Kilmar Tor (Tony's Stone). SX25213

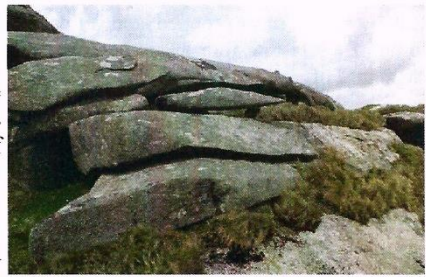
74856. One prop and two points-of-contact.

A delicate placement. Of note is the ridge in the bedrock surface, associated with a crack-seal vein, used as a point of contact for the long slab. There is sufficient decking on the lower edge of the slab to suggest deliberate removals emphasising the minimal contact. Although I never met Tony it was good to meet his stone and to spend some quiet time there. *[For more details of Tony Blackman's original identifications see MM49 p.8-11].*

**High Rock (Kilmar Tor).** SX25090 74809.

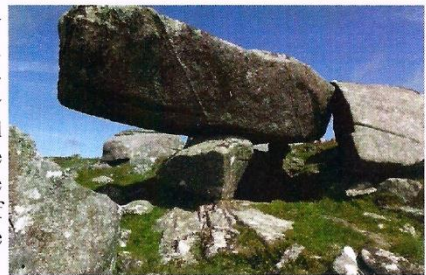
One prop and two points-of-contact *[right]*.

Awkward to reach, midway up the south side of the tor. Perhaps deliberately hard to access and easier to see from distance. The shape of the raised slab is very similar to Tony's Stone

**Carburrow (Cannon Stone).** SX15491

70849. Two props, one point-of-contact, and sideways contact. *[photo below right]*.

A huge stone (c.3m x 1.5m x 1m) definitely propped by a boulder and a smaller stone. There is sideways contact with a large adjacent stone that is itself propped. The cavity seems to be the result of manipulation and removals. A stony bank runs straight up the hillside to the feature and then on to the burial cairn beyond. It is hard to conceive of a natural sequence of events that could have produced this arrangement.



Peter Herring adds: "Carburrow is indeed known as Cannon Stone, and most importantly was known as such by the local people before archaeologists became involved; I first heard the name in 1979 when surveying round houses on the hill; the farmer (Tor Keast) showed me those, but was most insistent that I saw and admired the Cannon Stone; he walked me to it. I didn't become aware of its full archaeological significance until the mid 90s. The bank may be a bank cairn and appears to pre-date the propping of the stone. John Pearce was the first to realise that it is a propped stone that can be entered and when sat on a bench beneath the propped stone a person is almost physically obliged to look between the propping stones that then form a roughly square opening framing a fine view of the two great hills of Roughtor and Brown Willy. It seems difficult to believe that this was not a deliberate part of the design."

Showery Tor. SX14942 81311. One prop and one arc of contact. *[Photo above right]* Within 10m of the well-known, encircling bank *[see p.7]*. Rubble from the bank on left.



Little Rough Tor. SX14725 80887. One prop and one point-of-contact. *[Photo below right]*. A substantial slab detached from a larger one, perhaps artificially as there are two possible decks. An obvious erosion shadow under the prop.



I would welcome any comments, corrections or additions that readers might feel appropriate and, of course, sources will be credited in a planned subsequent paper.

References. Blackman, T., 2011. Pseudo-quoits to propped stones. *Recent Archaeological Work in South- Western Britain*, BAR British Series 548, 41-48. Shepherd, D., 2013. Propped stones: The modification of natural features and the construction of place. *Time And Mind* 6 (3) 263-285.

WELLS CORNER

A regular feature on Cornwall's holy wells

Maudlin well [SX2620 6412]

The tenement of Maudlin in SE Cornwall straddled the parish boundaries of Liskeard and Menheniot, and there was once a hospital of Mary Magdalene there. The well was thought to have been mentioned only in a handful of 18th century leases, but John Litton has studied the Churchwardens Accounts which include the parish bounds from 1613, and discovered that it names not only Maudlyn Well, but also a Chapel of Mary Magdalene. He went to look for it, expecting to find only a spring, but was delighted to discover the well and intact well-surround there. It lies close to the A390, just before the road reaches the roundabout near Morrisons. Next to the bus shelter is a little wooden gate that leads down a steep and slippery slope to a watery area where the well still stands. This is a great rediscovery of what was undoubtedly a holy well (evidenced by the Mary Magdalene chapel), dating from at least the 17th century, and still remaining today.

*Photo [c] John Litton. www.facebook.com/HolyWellsOfCornwall
On-line map by Andy Norfolk at: <https://tinyurl.com/yd6rez9k>*



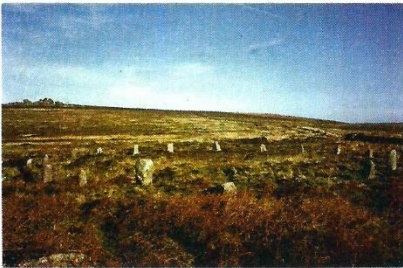
MYTHIC PATHWAYS

1: 'The Fairy Master' [Tregeseal to Chypons]

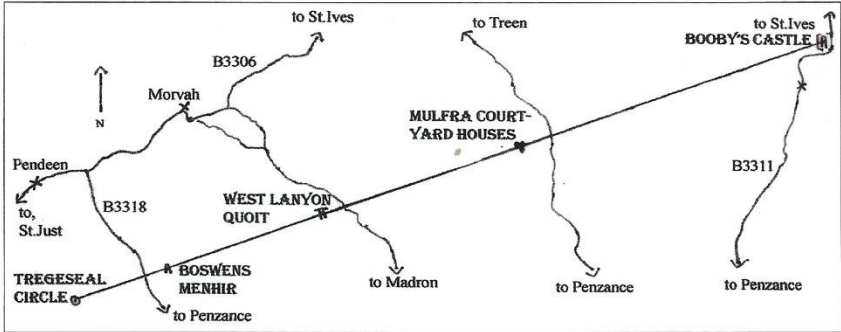
A new series of features that looks at ancient pathways in West Penwith, that may be on classic 'ley' lines, which in addition have myths and legends associated with them, recorded by the folklore collectors William Bottrell and Robert Hunt in the 19th Century. These Mythic Pathways combine elements of landscape tracks, alignments and myths and legends, and may therefore have ancient origins.

In 'The Fairy Master' story, collected by William Bottrell, Grace, a young girl, is fed up with being at home near Carn Kenidjack (St.Just), with only her grandma's old gowns to wear, so she decides she will go into service. She goes to the Carn and there meets a 'fairy Master' who asks her to come and look after his son. His name is Bob O' the Carn, or Bobby Carn, of which more later. He leads her to his home at Chypons along what is obviously a fairy path. Although she is walking a real track across the land, nevertheless she is following a track into Fairyland at the same time.

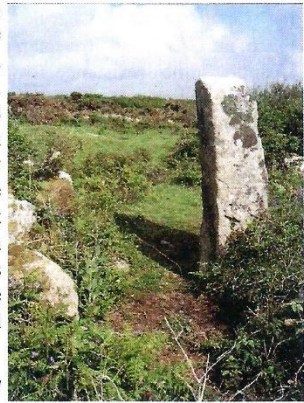
The path that Grace follows turns out to be one of the 'ley lines', or alignments between sacred sites, first identified by John Michell in his book "The Old stones of Lands End" in the 1970s. This runs from Tregeseal stone circle (below Carn Kenidjack) [SW3805 3213], across the Gump, and through Boswens menhir [SW4401 3290], which is on a May Day sunrise alignment, first identified by Norman Lockyer in 1911. This azimuth of 66.2° then continues to West Lanyon Quoit [SW4231 3395] and on to Mulfra Vean Courtyard House settlement [SW454 349].



*Path of the Ley and Mythic Pathway.
[Top left] Tregeseal circle with Carn
Kenidjack on horizon.
[Above] Boswens menhir
[Below left] West Lanyon Quoit
and then on to Mulfra ancient settlement.*



The story describes the path, which follows a cross-country route and is obviously set in a time before the present-day road system. It goes past a “grand house”, which could be a prehistoric Mulfra Courtyard House, and then a place where four roads meet, and there is indeed a crossing of tracks at a place called Woonsmith [SW4800 3595]. Finally it ends at the house of Bobby Carn, and an examination of the OS map, shows that the alignment can indeed be extended to a real place at Chypons, called Booby’s Castle (which in the 19th century was a row of cottages). Andy Norfolk has suggested that this place could have been named after the ‘Bobby Carn’ of the story, and if this is the case, it would make it a very old story indeed.



Mulfra settlement [right]

As it so happens, the Historic Environment Record shows that there may have been an original standing stone at this site. At Chyllasson, there is a field to the north of Booby’s Castle [SW4986 3653], which was named on a Tithe map in 1840 as ‘Park Menheere’, which of course means “the field of the standing stone”. Although there is nothing to be seen there today, its probable former existence here at the end of the ‘mythic ley line’ is a strong confirmation of the importance and power of this mythic pathway, enshrined in the legend of ‘the Fairy Master’ and the ley alignment that can still be identified, running across the land today.

The original research for this mythic pathway was first published in an article by Andy Norfolk on Songlines in MM63 p.15.

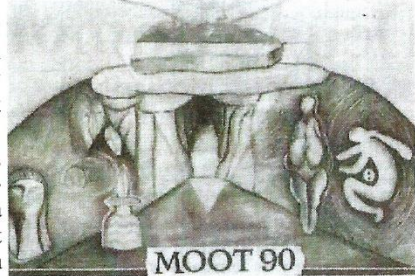
For more information about fairy paths, songlines, mythic pathways and legends in the landscape see “Between the Realms: Cornish Myth and Magic” by Cheryl Straffon [Troy Books www.troybooks.co.uk]. First published 2013.

RE-VISITING THE LAND OF THE GODDESS

by Rupert White

Rupert White's new book 'The Re-enchanted Landscape' [reviewed in MM95] explores the history of the mythopoeic creative responses to the neo-pagan and earth mysteries aspects of the area of West Penwith in the late 20th century. This extract looks at the role played by Goddess women in that process.

Following Paul Devereux's move to Cornwall, on 15th/16th September 1990 an historic Ley Hunter Moot, co-organised by the Devereuxs and Cheryl Straffon, took place at CAER at Rosemerryn, Lamorna. Despite some resistance from Devereux, Straffon invited Monica Sjöö. Cheryl Straffon: "We became good friends. There was a big overlap in our beliefs and interests, but she was not an easy woman. Anybody you talk to about her will say the same! But she was a Goddess-celebrating woman, with good political beliefs. She got a lot of flak for her art, especially *God Giving Birth*."



Leyhunter Moot as reported in Meyn Mamvro, illustrated by Monica Sjöö's 'West Kennet Long Barrow—Abode of the Light/Dark Mother' (1989).

At the time Sjöö had started delivering workshops on 'New Age Patriarchy' alongside Jill Smith and Maggie Parks. Parks had joined protests at Greenham Common in the early 80s, where she remembers Wiccan ceremonies led by American Dianic witch Jean Freer. Then in the early 90s, Parks moved to Cornwall and, with Vron McIntyre, became joint editor of the women's spirituality magazine *From the Flames*. Sjöö herself was a regular contributor, despite the fact that she was still coming to terms with a tragic double bereavement. Maggie Parks explains: "There'd been an amazing American magazine called *Womanspirit* which ran from 1974 to 1984, run by two women who lived in the wilds of Oregon. It had been very influential for our movement and we thought 'well, we could do that!'. The first issue of *From the Flames* came out in 1991 and we produced it for a decade. I first got to know Monica in 1985, but shortly after this her young son Leif was killed in a car accident in France. Then she discovered that Sean, her eldest, had lymphatic cancer. It was really these two sad losses that got her writing about the New Age, and then the book *New Age and Armageddon*. I was really quite close to her through that process". The book's full title was *New Age and Armageddon: The Goddess or the gurus?* (1992), and excerpts were pre-published in *From the Flames*. In the book, for once, Sjöö was united with the ley hunters against a common enemy. Whilst Paul Devereux, as an empiricist, was concerned about their lack of accountability, Sjöö, as a feminist, railed against the way many 'New Agers', for all their talk of love and light, seemed to support patriarchy and the military-industrial complex.



WRASAC (Womens Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre) stall at the New Age Festival in Perranporth (1998). Cheryl Straffon (centre—white sweat-shirt) with Maggie Parks and Geraldine Andrew (left), and Monica Sjöö (right of her). Maggie Parks was founder of WRASAC and co-editor of the women's spirituality journal 'From the Flames'. Straffon was later to go on to found and edit 'Goddess Alive' magazine, which ran from 2001—2016.

Monica Sjöö: “The most frightening aspect of the New Age is its adoption and perpetration of a mishmash of reactionary patriarchal occult traditions and thinking of both East and West, all of which have in common a hatred of the Earth, (and an) authoritarianism, racism and misogyny”. In accepting the teachings of gurus or Secret Masters they thereby perpetuate established Christian Dualities (spirit v matter, light v dark, white v black, God v Goddess): “Earth was the sewer of the devil to the Christians, and woman’s body a latrine, because she gives life and by doing so binds the male spirit into the bondage and snares of the flesh ... The sun god is the warrior who battles eternally with the ‘serpent of darkness’ and overcomes Her with his phallic metal sword”,,”.

Although also castigating rebirthing, channelling, New Age shamans, and the Findhorn community, Sjöö considers Sir George Trevelyan, and his advocacy of St. Michael, particularly reprehensible. Interestingly, Trevelyan, who as a friend of Margaret Thornley had in 1972 unveiled the plaque to her on Chapel Carn Brea, was the main speaker at the Harmonic Convergence event in Glastonbury in 1987: “To Trevelyan the object of the exercise (Harmonic Convergence) was to attune ourselves and to raise our consciousness so that the spiritual light could flood into the darkened Earth and drive away the ‘beings of darkness’.” For similar reasons Sjöö joins the ley-hunters chorus of disapproval for Colin Bloy’s Fountain International: “The Fountain group tries to diffuse violence and petty crime through the use of meditation... They broadcast thoughts of love using the ley system of geomagnetic energies ...”. However, having been earlier inspired by *The Wise Wound*, in *New Age and Armageddon* Sjöö is approving of Peter Redgrove’s work, and cites (his book) *The Black Goddess and the Sixth Sense* in claiming, poetically, that “our non-visual dark senses are organs of womb-knowledge”.

In 1993 Straffon and Sjöö were involved in the first ‘Goddess Tour’ of Britain. Cheryl Straffon: “Jamie George (of *Gothic Image*) did regular spiritual tours and one of his tours was of Cornwall. He’d have a ‘resident minstrel’ on the tour: Julie Felix, folk singer from the 60s. Julie was getting ‘into Goddess’ and she had a contact in America, Lydia Ruyle, and together the two of them decided to launch a tour similar to Jamie’s but for women only. I led the Cornish leg, and Monica Sjöö the Welsh leg of the tour”.

Cheryl Traffon: “Monica embraced the dark side of the Goddess, but Julie was the polar opposite: all light and joy and celebration. So they were driving around those little lanes in Wales and though Monica lived there then, she got hopelessly lost. So to lighten the mood Julie put on some music and videos about loving the Goddess. But Monica was getting more and more uptight, and eventually she stood up and faced everyone and said ‘there’s too much fucking love and light on this bus!!!’”.



Julie Felix and Cheryl Traffon at the latter’s home in 1993.

Sjöð had become worried that, as Goddess spirituality was becoming more popular, so its message, too, was becoming diluted. Cheryl Traffon: “There was a great ferment of discussion at the time. People cared a great deal about where this new movement was going to end up”. Fittingly, in 1993 Sjöð and some other activists interrupted a service at Bristol Cathedral to protest against patriarchal attitudes to the church. Cheryl Traffon: “Monica picketed the Cathedral and was roundly condemned by most pagans. But she put her money where her mouth was. To me, politics and spirituality should go together. The British and US Goddess movements had different paths. A lot of the British women were involved with Greenham Common. There was a great schism really because a lot of the political women’s movement was sceptical about the Goddess movement. We were a minority. There were not that many that were both spiritual *and* political and those that were came together through the ‘Matriarchy Research and Reclaiming Network [MRRM]’. This was very much a newsletter that was used as a way of networking”.

Cheryl Traffon had come relatively late to the Goddess movement, but as editress of *Meyn Mamvro*, and later a second journal *Goddess Alive!* (launched 2001-2) she more than made up for lost time: “Jo O’Cleirigh actually first got me into Goddess spirituality. He’d got hold of the book *Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe* by Maria Gimbutus (1974) who wasn’t known over here at that time. When I read it, it blew me away. I had no idea that worship of a Goddess went back 30,000 years and that there was so much evidence for it that had been suppressed or minimised until then. Gimbutus influenced so many others, particularly American women researchers who did a lot of reclaiming of these Goddess cultures. Miriam Dexter and others brought out books that were right in the line of what I was interested in. This was the whole rise of the Neo-Goddess movement, both in America and in this country”.

Monica Sjöð provided the introduction for Cheryl Traffon’s book *Pagan Cornwall: Land of the Goddess* (1993). In it Sjöð expresses misgivings about the Ley Moot: “I had been nervous to come since my relationship with the male-dominated Earth Mysteries movement had been fraught, to say the least, over a number of years. I have always had a kind of love/hate relationship to this movement, but at the same time I see myself as an integral part of it. I have been inspired and angered by it from the very start”.

She continued: “I wrote the first draft of what was over the years to become *The Great Cosmic Mother* book already in 1975, and one of the impulses for writing it at the time was my frustrations with what I saw as the denial of the Goddess and women’s ancient wisdom in the Earth Mysteries movement... All of this is the background as to why I personally welcome this book about the Goddess in Cornwall, especially since it is written by someone so central to the Earth Mysteries movement...”.



Tauxien Goddess (1994) oil painting by Monica Sjöö in Cheryl's house.

Speaking to me in 2016, Straffon described the context of *Pagan Cornwall: Land of the Goddess*. As she explains, it is a book which drew extensively from her researches for *Meyn Mamvro*: “I was motivated by the fact that all the histories of Cornwall that I’d read were based on hierarchy, battles and killing, and I didn’t see Cornwall that way. But archaeologists were not looking at spiritual practices and beliefs then. They are now, and they’re discovering things that we were talking about 20 or 30 years ago. In fact down here the Cornwall Archaeological Unit was always more open. Charles Thomas was very open to alternative ideas. He always subscribed to MM. Peter Herring was another one who was very open.” Gemma Gary of *Troy Books* commented: “Cheryl’s *Pagan Cornwall: Land of the Goddess* was a book that was very influential for me, especially with regard to seasonal rituals. My first copy was a gift from my mother (a student of Alan Bleakley), and so it has always been very dear to me”.

After the first ‘Goddess Tour’ of Cornwall in Summer 1993, Cheryl Straffon led another in 1994, this time describing it in MM25 (Autumn 1994): “The tour started at Rocky Valley near Tintagel, and here we walked down the valley to the ancient mazes carved in the rock walls. The maze was a symbol of the journey into the inner self, an appropriate motif for the start of the inner spiritual journey of the tour. From here we drove on down to the magical land of West Penwith. Here we visited places potent with women’s energy: Sancreed Well, the entrance into the womb of Mother Earth, where we did a blessing and welcoming ritual; Carn Euny Courtyard House settlement, where we quietly meditated and chanted in the Beehive Hut, the women’s voices powerfully filling the circular space; the Merry Maidens stone circle, where priestesses of the moon goddess may have danced, and where the present-day women also danced a spiral dance; Madron Well, where we hung pieces of cloth on the trees, honouring the Goddess and her powers; and the Mén-an-Toi where we crawled through the holed stone, chanting ‘She changes everything She touches, and everything She touches, changes’, helped through the symbolic birth canal first time by Katherine, a midwife from Oregon”.

The Re-enchanted Landscape: Earth Mysteries, Paganism & Art in Cornwall 1950-2000 was published in 2017 and is available from www.amazon.co.uk and other retailers.

CORNISH FOLKLORE

A regular column by folklorist Alex Langstone

Mid-Winter Traditions of Eastern Cornwall

The period between the Winter Solstice and Twelfth Night is an interesting one: a shared time of ‘misrule’ and celebration, where most of the western world join in to some degree or other. For others, Christmas is a nostalgic liminal experience from whence folk-memory looms and ghosts re-emerge, sometimes from a past remembered differently. There is a rich cultural vein of Cornish folk tradition from this time of year, some of which is still observed. In this article I will attempt to look at some of these traditions from across Cornwall, but with an emphasis on the eastern half of the peninsula. The main themes around the Cornish folk traditions of Christmas-time are Guizing and Wassailing, and, as we shall discover, they share a common folkloric thread.

Guizing

Guizing is a tradition where people dress in disguise to perform and entertain in their communities. The modern revival is best seen in Penzance on December 21st each year, where the Montol festival takes place. However, there were once many other places across Cornwall where this type of custom once prevailed. Revellers would dress in various styles. Cross-dressing, animal disguise and dressing up in gentleman’s hand-me-downs was common, with the key element being the disguising of the face by either blacking up with soot or burnt cork, wearing animal masks and horns or lace veils and venetian style masks. Music was a common feature and local carols were often sung.

There is an interesting record from Bodmin, concerning a group of Guizers from Grogley, who used to visit Bodmin town between Christmas and the New Year. The account, from a letter to the Western Morning News, possibly Dec 1998 or Jan 1999, suggests that this tradition was active in the 1920s, and was a regular custom performed every year. The writer of the letter, Bridget Graham, from Par, suggest that the singers blackened their faces, so they would appear to be ‘almost invisible’, which added to the mystery, tension and excitement as they sung traditional carols in the streets around Bodmin town.¹ Launceston also had guizers, and they used to visit the town’s Giglet fair in the week after Christmas, where they would cause confusion and general mayhem.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the community in Calstock would go guizing, or “darkeying”, as it became known. They would dress up in funny costumes, blacken their faces with burnt cork and walk around the village playing any instrument they could muster to provide some fun in the village. They were sometimes given hot chestnuts, a drink, or maybe a potato cooked in its jacket, as a response to their activities.² Padstow continues this type of tradition today, both on Boxing Day and New Year’s Day, where guizers can be seen around the town with their faces blackened, parading to an accordion and drum frenzy.

For details of footnotes please see p.24

Alongside the guize dance traditions were the twelfth night customs, and many people at the beginning of the nineteenth century still kept the old calendar and held their Christmas day on twelfth night. On the eve of twelfth night it was believed that the cattle in the fields and stalls would never lay down, and at midnight turned their faces to the east and fell on their knees. January 6th was a time of general feasting and merriment. Twelfth day cake was made and into it was placed a wedding-ring, a sixpence and a thimble. It was cut into as many portions as there were guests and the person who found the wedding ring in his (or her) portion would be married before the year was out. The holder of the thimble would never be married, and the one that got the sixpence would die rich. Tradition stated that twelfth day cake was a lighter style of fruit cake to that of Christmas cake.³

Curls or Folk Carols

A strong tradition linking communities across Cornwall is the folk Carol tradition. Several towns still have their own particular carols, which are sung every year. Stratton, Bude and Bodmin once had their own Carols sung each Christmas, and Padstow still has a thriving tradition. On Bodmin Moor, the Christmas season was celebrated between neighbouring farms. On each of the twelve nights, groups of farmers and their families would walk from farm to farm, playing music and singing local folk carols. Barns would be cleared for nightly feasts and dancing.⁴

Wassailing

The most famous wassail in Cornwall is that of the Bodmin wassail, a traditional twelfth night visit wassail, and one of the oldest recorded wassails in Britain. The first known record of the Bodmin Wassail was in the will of Nicholas Sprey, mayor of Bodmin who died in 1624. As well as providing for his family, he also bequeathed the sum of 13s 4d for an “annual wassail cup” to promote “the continuance of love and neighbourly meetings” and to “remember all others to carry a more charitable conscience”. Sprey – who was also Town Clerk and the MP for Bodmin during his career – directed that the wassail cup be taken to the mayor's house each year on the 12th day of Christmas, raising funds as it passed through the town. The custom has continued to this day.⁵ The apple wassail was a common feature in the winter celebrations in East Cornwall and this is still celebrated in various places including St Mabyn, Cotehele, and most recently in Boscastle, where a community event has recently been revived to celebrate guizing and wassailing in true Cornish style.⁶ Another midwinter tradition possibly linked to the wassailing and guizing traditions was that of the Cornish Bunch. A common custom was once performed in the farmhouses across Cornwall where two withy hoops were fastened together at right angles. These were covered with holly and ivy, with a red candle placed at the base and an apple secured to hang down above it. These were hung from the ceiling on Winter Solstice eve, where just before midnight, the red candle was very carefully lit. Then those assembled would form a ring underneath the bunch and perform a dance to welcome the rebirth of the sun.⁷

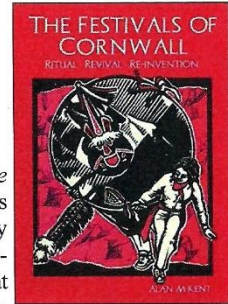
For further details of the Boscastle Old Christmas event, please see cornishfolklore.co.uk Alex Langstone is editor of 'Lien Gwerin – A Journal of Cornish Folklore' and author of 'From Granite to Sea' a book about the folklore of Bodmin Moor and eastern Cornwall.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Festivals Of Cornwall: Ritual, Revival, Re-Invention

by Alan M. Kent

[Published by Redcliffe Press Ltd, 2018 pbk - £25]



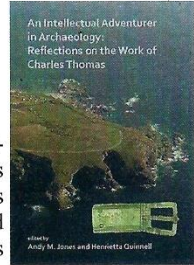
Following Alan Kent's acclaimed academic studies *The Literature of Cornwall* and *The Theatre of Cornwall* comes this new volume on *The Festivals of Cornwall*. This is an extremely important book, as it explores the continuum of history and development of reverie, revelry and customs in Cornwall, a place that has perhaps more 'traditional' festivals than most. Initially, the book traces ancient traditions through the lens of Ritual, noting that some of the earliest festive practice comes from this aspect of human experience. This first chapter is subtitled "Turnips, Tinkeards and Time Immemorial", and shows how festivals are always related to the ritual year, be it pagan or Christian, or a combination of the two "Such an ideology suggests that there is hardly a place in Cornwall that does not have a legendary story or saint's life associated with it. Given its relatively small geographical area, there is an intensity of mythology and festival, which is not found elsewhere in equivalent sized territories". He goes on to show the difficulty of teasing out 'ancient and untraceable origins' from historical re-invention and revival, and concludes that "in reality very few constructs of a Pagan age have survived". As a correlative of this, the so-called Pagan Wheel of the Year is shown to have been derived for the most part from an Irish-Celtic model, though he does point out that there have been some attempts to find a specific Cornish version, and gives as an example the contribution by Craig Weatherhill and Neil Kennedy 'Ritual Invocations in Cornish' in MM no.43 (p.22-23).

The book then goes on to show how some festivals have been revived and adapted, with an examination of Padstow's Obby Oss and Helston's Hal-an-Tow, and how some have been re-invented, such as Penzance's Golowan and Montol events. What emerges over a book of nearly 450 pages is a well-researched and intelligently-reasoned argument that there still remains a Cornish ritual year that is indigenous to the Duchy and not imported from elsewhere. It is one based on the festivals actually celebrated, rather than one that tries to fit a preconstructed model on to the reality of what has been preserved, sometimes rather uncomfortably. However, as he says: "Remarkably, sometimes the base rock pokes through other layers right to the top and it is there that we see the most profound Pagan influence still operating and at work within the festive culture of Cornwall". This is an immensely rich and nourishing book, and should be read by all who are interested in the folklore of Cornwall, and who want to learn about the reality of the festivals that are so persuasive in our Duchy. Along the way, some preconceptions will be overturned, some presumed meanings will be held up to the light of research, and some surprising facts, hitherto unrevealed, will be shown. This is a rare kind of book: one that challenges, reveals and gives much food for thought, while at the same time honouring and respecting the festival landscape that makes Cornwall so proud of its difference, its individuality and its eccentricities. An important, and thought-provoking, book.

**An Intellectual Adventurer in Archaeology:
Reflections on the Work of Charles Thomas**

Edited by Andy.M.Jones & Henrietta Quinnell

[Published by Archaeopress, 2018. pbk - £44, e-book - £16]



Professor Charles Thomas needs no introduction to MM readers [for an obituary and publications see MM91 p.20-21], and it was inevitable that a *festschrift* would soon be produced. Its 23 chapters show a wide variety of subjects and approaches, all of them infused with a great respect and affection for the life and influence of Charles Thomas, which was immense. The collection begins with a note from the editors: "This collection of papers has been assembled in celebration and memory of Anthony Charles Thomas, far and away the most important figure in twentieth century Cornish archaeology, a campaigner of national standing on heritage matters and a major, internationally recognised, academic". What follows is a delightful miscellany of papers on various topics, most of which will be of interest to MM readers. From a look at the early Neolithic (Carn Brea & Helman Tor), to archaeological fieldwork at Tintagel and on the Isles of Scilly, it includes work on inscribed stones and the early Christian period in Cornwall, and is a very enjoyable pot-pourri of insights, new information and reminiscences. Jacky Nowakowski perhaps sums it up best: "Working with Charles was a discovery every day, infinitely mind stretching with his inexhaustible intellectual energy".



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NEW! Craig Weatherhill: The Place-Names of the Land's End Peninsula

Craig is a Cornish archaeologist, historian, author, toponymist and Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh. His new book is a detailed analysis of the origins and translations of the place names of West Penwith, the last stronghold of the Cornish language as a traditional community tongue.

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For those on their own inspiring journeys

20 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

It was exactly 20 years ago, in the Autumn of 1998, that MM37 reported on the discovery of the so-called ‘Arthur Stone’ at Tintagel, which in fact turned out to be a slate inscribed with the letters ARTOGNOU, which was not, as English Heritage claimed at the time, Latin for ‘Arthur’. Geoffrey Wainwright, chief archaeologist of EH, claimed that it was “the find of a lifetime” and went on to say: “It is remarkable that a stone has been discovered with the name Arthnou inscribed on it at Tintagel, a place with which the mythical King Arthur has long been associated”.



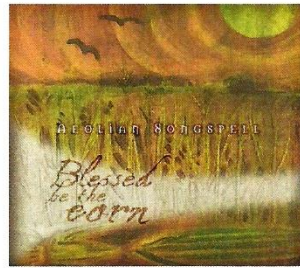
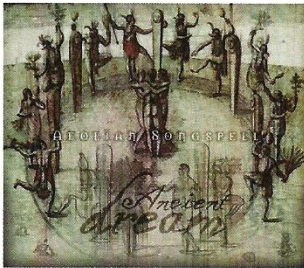
This provoked much ire from Cornwall’s own archaeologist Professor Charles Thomas, who subsequently wrote a piece for Meyn Mamvro [MM38] in which he refuted all of EH’s interpretations. “We did not need the gift of prophecy to foresee the sort of shameless hype by English Heritage, the commercial agency that administers this Duchy-owned ancient monument, that happened soon afterwards”, he fulminated in the article. He went on to add some facts: “Artognou is not ‘the Latin for Arthur’: it is not even Latin but (Late) British, ancestor of Cornish. This Tintagel slate is not ‘the find of a lifetime’; we have known for decades that the place was occupied during the 6th century, by people wholly familiar with Latin and with writing. The first introduction of the legendary figure of medieval literature, ‘King Arthur’, was only in the 12th century when Geoffrey of Monmouth—an Arthurian enthusiast—placed his hero’s conception here. ‘Artognou’ and ‘Arthur’ are no more the same and no more closely linked than George, Geronimo and Geraldine.”! As for an interpretation of the lettering, which read PATER COLI AVI FICIT ARTOGNOU COL[I] FICIT Charles Thomas suggested “Artognou, father of a descendant of Coll has had this made” though others have since suggested that possible missing letters could make it “Artognou erected this memorial of Colus, his grandfather” or “Paternus son of Colus erected this to the memory of Artognou”.

Twenty years later, much of the furore surrounding this find has died down, but in a strange coincidence, a second slate with an inscription has recently been discovered [*see p.6 of this MM*]. But perhaps the last word should be left to Charles Thomas in his article: “English Heritage, set up in 1973 as a Thatcherite agency to privatise the State’s ancient monuments, is concerned to enhance visitor numbers and at Tintagel to sell the ‘Arthurian’ goodies in their shop. It simply cheapens one of Cornwall’s greatest sites”. In 2018 EH have carved ‘Merlin’s face’ into the rocks, installed a sculpture of an Arthurian warrior on the headland, and are spending millions on a huge modern controversial bridge over to the Island. Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose!

30 YEARS AGO

Delving into the pages of MM from the past

MM issue 6 [June 1988] included an article on ‘The Celtic Year’ by Ian Cooke and Cheryl Traffon, followed by a review of a new pagan music cassette entitled ‘Ancient Dream’ by Aeolian Songspell, a couple of musicians Michael Woolf and Rachel Garcia. The cassette consisted of 8 songs, originally written for a local pagan group in West Penwith (of which your editor was a member) to use to celebrate a year of pagan festivals. “The songs were the result of a unique interaction between the ritual itself as conceived and enacted by the group and Aeolian Songspell who used the ritual material as a basis for their very special and individual response to the festivals. The process was completed by interlacing and interweaving the individual songs into the ritual itself when it was performed: a complete cycle of creative response to the wheel of the year”. The review went on to say: “They are like no songs I have ever heard before: it is as if they come from deep in the Earth herself and Songspell are but the vehicle for transmitting them to us. But an extremely talented and professional vehicle nevertheless: their voices blend with guitars, African drums, flutes, sitar, miniharp, laud, mandolin and harpsichord in a multi-track synthesis that is at once tender and subtle and powerful and perceptive. It is like listening to the spirit that is in all of us and catching glimpses of life itself”.



The original cassette was bought and loved by many people over the years, and some songs from their wheel of the year cycle still continue to be used in ritual today. Now, 30 years later, Aeolian Songspell (now consisting of Michael Woolf and Zoe Martin) have re-recorded the original songs, using modern recording techniques. The songs sound as fresh as ever, and consist of 5 albums, including the original ‘Ancient Dream’ and ‘Blessed be the Corn’ and ‘Wisdom of Wondering’ (other pagan & nature-related songs). Michael Woolf says: “Things have changed so much since the first time around. The digital age has meant that the recordings are far better, but so much is out of our hands. In 1988, everything from recording, preparing cassettes and posting them was ‘cottage industry’, but now it is all much more complicated. But for now we’ve decided to keep things simple and use a local printer. CDs cost £15 each (inc p & p), postal orders or cash payable to Michael Woolf (not Aeolian Songspell), and send to: Landalls, 37 Ferring Street, Ferring Village, West Sussex BN12 5JN. A wonderful 30 year ‘revival’!



THE PIPER'S TUNE

He said: "I've spent decades working as a landscape architect trying to make special places and keep what is important, making the most of local features. A bit of planting here will not be some sort of magic green elastoplast to fix the damage. Let's not down-play the significance of this well either. It's been regarded as a holy well for over a century and has been treated with care and respect all that time, up to this year anyway."

The door to St.Ambrews well at Crantock is back! It was removed in 2017, when the well was incorporated into large scale landscaping works by the owners of the adjoining house

He added: "There was a well associated with the chapel somewhere in the vicinity but its precise location isn't known. Its exact position has been described as 'traditional'. Baring-Gould and Fisher in their *Lives of the Saints* say it was on the other side of the road from the chapel, which would put it the same side of the road as St Ambrew's Well. When it was possible to see inside it you could see that the back and sides were of quite small stones carefully built. This looks to me like it is possibly much older than the door frame and top. I think there could easily have been a well here built into the Cornish hedge, possibly with a stone lintel, like so many other old wells in Cornwall. It really won't do to say it's just a new well with a new door. You can't write off any well simply as modern and therefore of no value just because it's been rebuilt at some time in the 20th C".

Photo © Jenny Robinson [see MM94 p.6].

The oak door (made in 1975 to replace an original from 1910) has been treated with wood preservative and replaced, although it no longer has hinges so it cannot open. The door's carved face possibly represents St.Ambrew.

James Gossip of the CAU claimed on the Facebook Cornish Holy Wells page that "neither the door, nor the site of the well, were ancient in the first place" and that "everything will settle down and soften with the passing of time, as do most things". Andy Norfolk, who has been campaigning against the development which was controversially permitted by Cornwall Council planning department, strongly disagreed with James.

Footnotes to Cornish Folklore article by Alex Langstone on p.18-19

¹ Western Morning News press cutting (possibly 1998). Padstow Museum Darkey Day archive.

² The Calstock Darkeys by Patrick Coleman. Padstow Museum Darkey Day archive.

³ Cornish Feasts and Folklore by Margaret Courtney.

⁴ Old Cornwall Vol 3. No 4. 1938.

⁵ <http://www.bodminwassail.uk/about>

⁶ Boscastle Wassail by Alex Langstone, published in Boscastle Blowhole, No.101. Spring 2018.

⁷ Old Christmas Anthology. Federation of Old Cornwall Societies.

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