

**MYSTICAL GEOGRAPHIES OF CORNWALL**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to contribute to a cultural and historical geography of the mystical through a detailed case study of Cornwall since the mid-nineteenth century. In doing so, it also aims to contribute to a contemporary Cornish Studies literature that has begun to reclaim alternative and forgotten cultural and historical narratives of Cornwall. After a short introduction, chapter two positions this thesis in relation to debates around the region as a unit of geographical inquiry and the mystical as a cultural and historical category. It also positions this thesis in relation to the contemporary Cornish Studies literature; while chapter three engages with debates around the use of archives, interviews and oral histories as research methodologies. Chapter four argues that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Celtic-Cornish Revival was connected to a new and somewhat exploratory version of the mystical that drew upon Anglo-Catholic history and theology in the new Diocese of Truro and in the Cornish landscape, but that was also characterised by a certain degree of slippage beyond the discursive boundaries of Celtic Christianity. The mid-twentieth century, chapter five argues, was characterised by a series of strategies to normalise this earlier version of the mystical by engaging with, and actively incorporating, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding this more inclusive version of the mystical in a new, decentralised and more populist institutional context. In turn, chapter six argues that the later twentieth century was characterised by the emergence of another new and more exploratory cultural formation of the mystical through a particular culture of landscape that was underpinned by the supposed rediscovery of the principles of megalithic science and an associated revival of Paganism among other new social and religious movements. Chapter seven, in conclusion, reflects upon the often understated connections between the mystical and a sense of socio-spatial order, the problematic nature of knowledge, and the consequences of bringing together the mystical, the geographical and the Cornish in the context of this thesis and of existing and future work on the geographies of religion and spirituality.

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## Introduction

### 1.1 'Myths and Megaliths'

In June 2005, the BBC and Tate Britain launched their collaborative project, *A Picture of Britain*. A six-part BBC One television series presented by David Dimbleby, and accompanied by a book and major Tate Britain exhibition, the project was described as 'a celebration of the British landscape as seen through the eyes of artists, writers and composers' (BBC 2005a, see also Dimbleby 2005a). The exhibition, like the series, was separated into six rooms, each corresponding to one of the six television programmes. The first five episodes – 'The Romantic North', 'The Flatlands', 'Highlands and Glens', 'The Heart of England' and 'The Home Front' – explored 'the connection between landscape, art and identity' (BBC 2005a) in the north of England, the east of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the English Midlands, and the south-east of England, respectively. In doing so, they drew from the canon of British landscape painting – including the works of J. M. W. Turner, Thomas Gainsborough, John Constable, Sir Edwin Landseer and the more contemporary Paul Nash and Richard Long – as well as from those of British literature [Charles Dickens, Dylan Thomas] and music [Sir Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams]. Furthermore, VisitBritain designed a map of the locations of some of the paintings featured in the series and in the exhibition, showing them in relation to their nearest towns and airports [see figure 1.1].

The sixth and final episode of the television series, 'The Mystical West', explored Wales, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. It is, for Dimbleby (2005a: 185), 'a magical kingdom of pre-historic ruins, ley lines, druids and bards, King Arthur and Merlin,' which is 'battling against encroaching civilisation'



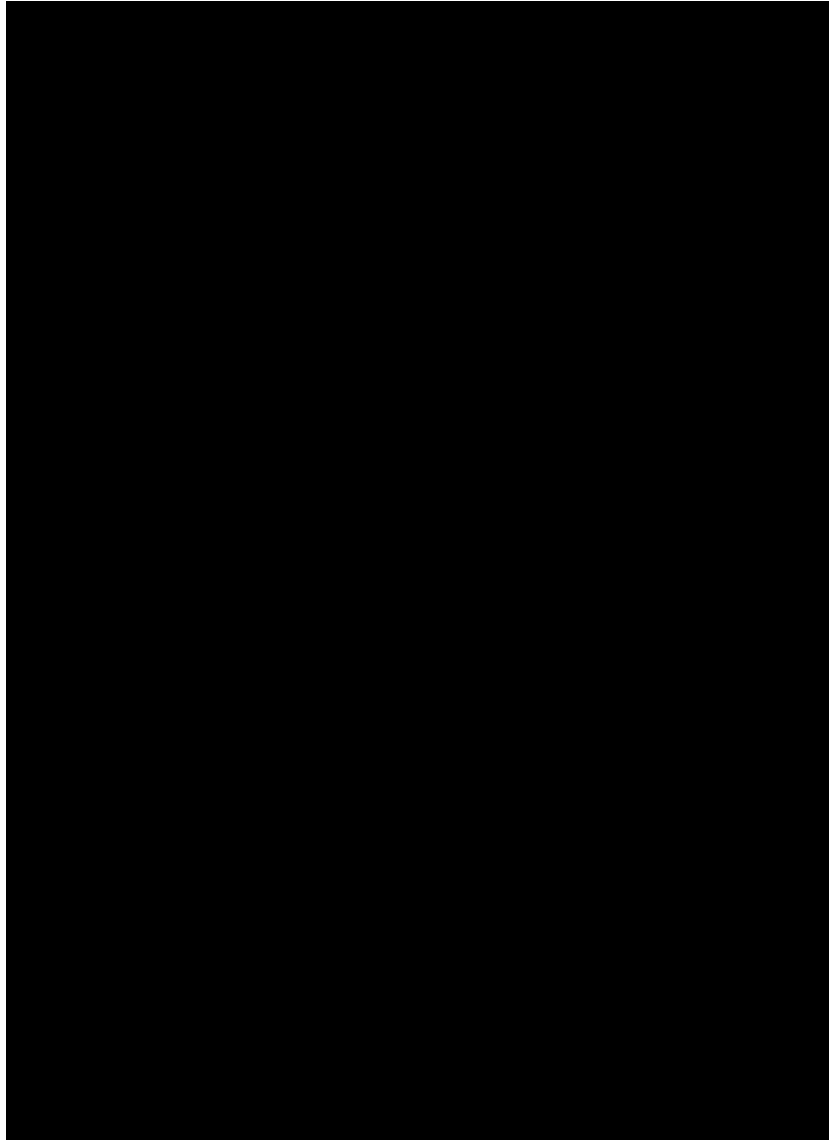


Figure 1.1: *A Picture of Britain* – VisitBritain tourist map, 2005

(Dimbleby 2005a: 187). The programme, the book and the exhibition range across a roughly triangular area of Britain as defined by Stonehenge, Snowdonia and St Ives, so as to incorporate the Stonehenge of Constable and Turner, the Egdon Heath of Thomas Hardy and Gustav Holst, Richard Wilson's Snowdonia and Dylan Thomas' Swansea, the Wye Valley of Reverend William Gilpin, the Devon and Cornwall moorlands of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Daphne du Maurier, and the artists' colony at St Ives. The central theme of the exhibition room, according to Tate Britain (2005; see also Humphreys 2005), was 'that of the mystical landscape of megaliths, burial mounds and Celtic legend,' hence its subtitle: 'Myths and Megaliths'. Dimbleby (2005b) himself, in his introduction to the exhibition room, elaborated upon this theme:

'What you find as you go west is a different kind of Britishness; you find the Celtic view of the world, driven west by successive invasions but which has survived and in some ways is reviving: the idea of life not as something that is absolutely rational and ordered but something where you have to listen carefully to inner voices and spirits and the strangeness of things. Whether it's King Arthur, or the ley lines, or even the crop circles, life can be less prosaic if you just listen and watch. And this is what these pictures are talking about.'

Thus, *A Picture of Britain* raises a series of interesting questions, not least through Dimbleby's identification of 'the West' with a different, Celtic kind of Britishness. There are obvious questions relating to the internal homogeneity of the West as a single, definable entity, both geographically and historically; and, by extension, to the internal homogeneity of the other five regions in the project through which the West can be separated off from the rest of Britain. What other cultural and geographical identities – based on town, district, county or nation; class, gender, race or sexuality – does this schema obscure? Is there a single, definable Celtic identity, one that is always and irreconcilably opposed to the rational and the ordered? Or is it possible to identify different cultural and historical formations of the Celtic in different parts of the West, and at different periods of history? Indeed, is the Celtic unique to 'The Mystical West'? What of the Celtic in Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man? And does the Celtic necessarily imply a kind of Britishness? What of

Brittany and French identity, Galicia and Spanish identity, the so-called Celtic Seaboard of Europe and the international pan-Celtic movement?

The project also raises a series of questions relating to the usage of the title and thematic device of ‘The Mystical West’, and to Dimbleby’s identification of the Celtic with the mystical. It reveals something of the complexities of the mystical as a cultural category, being as it is cut across by the practices and presuppositions of, for example, spiritualism and psychical research, Arthurian myth and legend, Druidism, and megalithic archaeology; of the arts, entertainment, education<sup>1</sup>, academia and tourism. It also reveals the position of the mystical as a cultural category at the centre of a set of discursive tensions between, for example, the rational and the irrational, the ordered and the chaotic, the urban and the rural, the ancient and the modern, the material and the immaterial, the external world and internal consciousness, and the prosaic and the mystical. It moves between a variety of media, including painting and photography, prose and poetry, music, television and the internet. And it reveals how different versions of the mystical connect to a range of different geographical registers: to specific sites, and to wider landscapes and ideas of the environment; to particular individuals or groups of people, and to their corresponding sets of cultural practices. This, in turn, is what this thesis is talking about.

## **1.2 Mystical Geographies of Cornwall: Back Story**

This thesis seeks to contribute to a cultural and historical geography of the mystical through a detailed case study of Cornwall since the mid-nineteenth century. The practicalities of researching and writing a doctoral thesis require the delimitation of potential research material, and the delimitation in this case was prompted by recent histories of Cornwall in the Cornish Studies literature. Cornish mining, in the mid-nineteenth century, was in decline. Mining operations were becoming more difficult and more expensive, in the face of intensifying overseas competition, due to domestic industrial unrest and the need to open up ever deeper and more depleted

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<sup>1</sup> The Tate Learning section of the Tate Britain website provides a downloadable, printable teacher’s resource pack, containing materials from and relating to *A Picture of Britain*, providing for cross-curricular exploration of ideas of landscape, environment and identity in geography, history, English literature, design and technology, and citizenship, and covering all Key Stages of the National Curriculum. See <http://www.tate.org.uk/learning/apictureofbritain/teacherspacks/default.htm>

seams (Payton 1996a, 1997b). During the 1860s, there was a collapse in the prices of Cornish copper and tin, from £102.18s and £71.11s per ton, respectively, in 1860 to £71.16s and £45 per ton in 1866. There was a brief respite for tin mining, as civil disturbances in south-east Asia temporarily disrupted the supply of overseas tin, but prices began to fall again in 1873, and tin mines began to close: 47 in 1874 and another 48 in 1875 so that, by 1896, only there were only nine working tin mines in Cornwall. This contributed to what Payton (1996a, 1997b) calls ‘the Great Emigration’ in which, between 1861 and 1900, 17.5% and 12.4% of the male and female populations of Cornwall left for elsewhere in Britain, or overseas. Strikingly, 74.5% of men and 61.7% of women among the 15- to 24-year-old population of Cornwall emigrated at this time. The total numbers of emigrants in the 40 year period has been estimated at around 118,500 people.

‘With Cornwall’s identity bound so closely to the characteristics of a self-confident industrial society,’ Payton (1997b: 27; see also Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Payton 1996a) argues,

‘the impact of rapid de-industrialisation created a cultural crisis of cataclysmic proportions. The Cornish response was twofold. One reaction was for society to turn in on itself, the hitherto out-going identity becoming increasingly a private affair as communities sought to come to terms with their socio-economic plight. In an atmosphere of fatalism and resignation, quiet stoicism in the face of adversity became a virtue, part of a culture of “making do”... in which the elements of popular culture such as Methodism, rugby football and brass bands were no longer vigorous icons of an assertive identity but had become introverted expressions of a “fossilising” way of life.’

Payton (1996a, 1997b) calls this response, in turn, ‘the Great Paralysis’ of Cornish culture, a prolonged period of cultural introspection and inertia which, for him, lasted from the late nineteenth century until after the Second World War, and which characterises the contemporaneous poetry and prose of the Cornish dialect writer, Jack Clemo (see also Kent 2000).

The other reaction, Payton (1997b: 27) continues, was to ‘attempt to meet this crisis head on, to confront the economic and cultural paralysis in which Cornish society

found itself.’ Holman’s of Camborne, a mining engineering company, began to develop pneumatic tools, using new technology in an effort to open up new markets. ‘However, the experience of Holman’s was at best atypical,’ he concedes (Payton 1997b: 28), ‘and the inability of Cornish mining to deliver its much-vaunted revival caused even some of its staunchest supporters to conclude sadly that Cornwall must look elsewhere for its salvation,’ towards the creation of a post-industrial economy based on an emerging tourist industry. Parallel to the emergence of a post-industrial Cornish economy, there also began to emerge a new Cornish cultural identity, through the work of tourist marketing departments but also through the work of the Cornish themselves. ‘Put simply,’ writes Payton (1996a: 266; see also Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Payton 1997b),

‘a small but significant element of the middle class, aware of the enormity of the situation in which they found themselves in the aftermath of industrial collapse, also proposed to “re-invent” Cornwall – by looking back over the debris of the industrial period,’

towards what Payton (1996a) describes as a pre-Reformation, Cornish-speaking Celtic-Catholic Cornwall.

This thesis aims neither to corroborate nor to contest the above historical narrative, nor to argue that the mystical, as a cultural category, did not exist prior to the mid-nineteenth century in Cornwall. Rather, it uses the above historical narrative as a starting point from which to argue that this re-invention of Cornish cultural identity, ‘the Celtic-Cornish Revival’, was bound up with a new, complex and sometimes contradictory cultural formation of the mystical that, in turn, connected to an identifiable set of geographical registers, thereby to delimit the research material. This thesis, then, is not simply a cultural and historical geography of different ideas of the mystical. Rather, it aims to attend to the ways in which the mystical might itself be active, through particular cultural and historical formations, in contributing to ‘the organization of the mundane everyday practices and presuppositions that shape the conduct of human beings in particular sites and practices’ (Rose 1996: 128), drawing upon the empirical example of Cornwall since the mid-nineteenth century. In doing so, it also aims – albeit secondarily – to contribute to a contemporary Cornish Studies literature that has begun to reclaim alternative and forgotten cultural and historical narratives of Cornwall.

### 1.3 Thesis Structure

The central argument of this thesis is contained in chapters four, five and six, each of which explores a particular cultural formation of the mystical that, in turn, broadly corresponds to an identifiable time period. Chapter four explores the mystical geographies of the Celtic-Cornish Revival, from the mid-nineteenth century through to World War I. The Diocese of Truro was separated from that of Exeter in 1876, during a time of Anglo-Catholic theological ascendancy in the Church of England (Miles Brown 1976; Hastings 1986; Winter 1991). An associated historical narrative of Anglicanism as identical and continuous with early Celtic Christianity thus informed and underpinned the Revivalist version of the Cornish landscape, based on surveys of holy wells and ancient stone crosses (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994 [1894]; Langdon 1896). The largely upper-middle class Revivalists established the Celtic-Cornish Society in 1901 to support the revival of the Cornish language, thence to argue the case for Cornwall's membership of the Pan-Celtic Congress. However, this version of the mystical was new and somewhat exploratory and, consequently, was also characterised by a certain degree of slippage beyond the discursive boundaries of Celtic Christianity. W. Y. Evans-Wentz (2002 [1911]), in *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, used the evidence of folklore and anthropology, spiritualism and psychical research to argue the extra-dimensional existence of fairies, including the Cornish pisky; while the work of Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer (1905) on Cornish standing stones and stone circles challenged the narrative of Pagan-as-heathen with that of Pagan-as-early-astronomical-scientist.

'If we may paraphrase Robert Morton Nance,' writes Payton (1996a: 273), 'one generation had re-invented the Cornish identity, it was for another to make it walk.' Chapter five explores the mystical geographies of Cornwall from the end of World War I to the early 1960s, through the work of this second, lower-middle class generation of Revivalists. The Federation of Old Cornwall Societies was formed in 1920, largely under the impetus of Morton Nance. Dedicated to the preservation and revival of Cornish folk culture, it took a passage from the Bible as its motto: 'Gather ye the fragments that are left, that nothing be lost' [John 6:12]. It was through the Old Cornwall societies, in turn, that the latter-day Gorsedd of the Bards of Cornwall

was formed in 1928. Although claiming to be neither a political nor a religious organisation, the Gorsedd ceremony – held, in its first year, at Boscawen-Ūn stone circle – incorporated recognisable elements of Christianity, Arthurianism and neo-Paganism. And when, in 1933, Frederick Glasscock opened King Arthur’s Great Halls, Tintagel to the public – built as the international headquarters for The Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur, a kind of Arthurian Freemasonry; and incorporating 72 stained glass windows by Veronica Whall, a pupil of William Morris – he looked to representatives of the Old Cornwall societies to attend, so as to bring a kind of cultural legitimacy to his project. Chapter five, therefore, argues that this period was characterised by a series of strategies to normalise the turn-of-the-century version of the mystical by engaging with, and actively incorporating, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding this more inclusive version of the mystical in a new and avowedly more populist institutional context.

If the period from the end of World War I to the early 1960s was characterised, in Cornwall, by a series of strategies to normalise a certain version of the mystical, then the period from the early 1960s through to the end of the twentieth century was characterised by the emergence of a new cultural formation of the mystical that was predicated not upon the revival of Celtic Christianity but upon the rediscovery and reinvention of a much earlier prehistoric mysticism. To some extent, this new version of the mystical was anticipated by Ithell Colquhoun, a surrealist artist and writer who lived and worked in Cornwall and who, in the 1950s, wrote of an association between sites dedicated to St Michael – including St Michael’s Mount – and interlinking lines of energy across the surface of the Earth. Since the early 1960s, most notably, this new version of the mystical has emerged through a particular culture of landscape that is underpinned by the supposed rediscovery of the principles of megalithic science – sacred geometry, archaeo-astronomy, earth energies and their effects on human consciousness – and an associated revival of Paganism among other new social and religious movements. Furthermore, to some extent, this version of the mystical might be distinguished from its mid-twentieth century counterpart by greater individuality and less formal institutionality in its practices and presuppositions. However, upon closer inspection, this late twentieth century version of the mystical can still be seen to work through the socio-cultural

structures of university-based education and the influence of certain privileged figures such as John Michell who, though based in London, has undertaken research in Cornwall. Such work has led to a reterritorialisation of Cornwall through to the supra-regional spatialities of ‘alternative’ archaeology. At the same time, this version of the mystical was cut across by debates around academic knowledge, the Cornish language revival, Cornish politics and contested formations of the Celtic.

These three chapters are framed by three others that position this thesis more broadly within contemporary academic thought. Following this introduction, chapter two engages with debates, in geography and across the social sciences and humanities, around the mystical as a cultural category. At a more abstract level, it discusses the region as a unit of geographical inquiry, and the mystical as a cultural and historical category through the work of writers including William James, W. R. Inge and Evelyn Underhill, before outlining a research focus based on an exploration of the practices and presuppositions that order the mystical as a field of knowledge. At a more empirical level, it discusses the mystical through the work of a number of geographers, historians, sociologists and archaeologists on orthodox religion, Romantic nature-mysticism, spiritualism and occultism, Paganism and New Age mysticism, and alternative archaeology. It also positions this thesis in relation to the contemporary Cornish Studies literature. Similarly, chapter three engages with methodological debates in the geographical literature around the use of archival research, the analysis of primary published materials and visual images and, in particular, the use of interviews and oral histories as research methodologies. In conclusion, chapter seven revisits some of the theoretical discussion in chapter two, focusing on the interconnections between different cultural and historical formations of the mystical and different senses of socio-spatial order, contemporary debates around ‘power knowledge’ and ‘life knowledge’ and the questions that are raised thereof when researching and representing the mystical, and the consequences of bringing together the mystical, the geographical and the Cornish in the context of this thesis and of existing and future work on the geographies of religion and spirituality.



## **The Mystical, the Regional and the Cornish**

Before they do anything else, write Allen, Massey and Cochrane (1998: 32), in *Rethinking the Region*, geographers ‘surely should define their spatial framework.’ Accordingly, the first section of this chapter – section 2.1 – discusses the theoretical understanding of Cornwall as a region that informs and underpins this thesis. Section 2.2 is structured around three interlinked questions that run throughout this thesis, relating to the historicity, sociology and spatiality of the mystical, while section 2.3 explores the ways in which these questions interrelate through a discussion of the practices and presuppositions associated with particular cultures of the mystical. Having elaborated upon the historicity, sociology and spatiality of the mystical with particular reference to Christianity and Christian mysticism at a more theoretical level, section 2.3.1 positions this thesis in relation to the existing body of work on the geographies of religion and spirituality, while sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 review the literature from geography and across the social sciences and humanities on Romantic nature-mysticism, spiritualism and occultism, and Paganism and New Age mysticism. Finally, having connected this thesis to contemporary debates on the region as a unit of geographical study, and on the mystical as a cultural category, section 2.4 discusses how this thesis is informed by – and, in turn, seeks to inform – the field of Cornish Studies.

### **2.1 Cornwall and the Regional Imagination**

If, as Allen, Massey and Cochrane (1998: 32) argue, geographers should ‘define their spatial framework’ before they do anything else, then this thesis, before it does anything else, should justify its theoretical understanding of Cornwall as a region. The justification for this approach is based on an ethical consideration of the

alternative understandings of Cornwall as Duchy, county or nation, relating to the ways in which different senses of Cornwall become active in the empirical research material that is contained in chapters four, five and six. The Celtic-Cornish Revivalist movement, from the late nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century, was largely, though not homogeneously, monarchist: *The Delectable Duchy*, a collection of short stories by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, was published in 1893; meanwhile, several of the other founder members of the Celtic-Cornish Society were involved, in the years before World War I, in legitimist campaigns for the restoration of the supposedly ‘rightful’ monarchies across Europe, including the heirs of the Stuarts in Britain. Furthermore, in 1953, the Gorsedd of Cornwall sent a message of goodwill to the Queen on the occasion of her Coronation. Thus, the Revivalist movement was connected to cultural nationalism but not to political nationalism. In the later twentieth century, especially with the rise of Mebyon Kernow as a political party since the 1950s, a certain version of Cornish cultural nationalism became aligned with political nationalism in the campaign for Cornish devolution. Consequently, the alignment of this thesis with an understanding of Cornwall as Duchy, county or nation would have engendered the delimitation of the research material, and the making of value judgements thereof. Instead, the intention here is to investigate the ways in which different cultural formations of the mystical connect to different territorialisations of Cornwall. While there is still a politics to the understanding of Cornwall as a region in this thesis, it is, as discussed below, not the politics of ‘the picturing of an order’ but, rather, that of ‘a figure of the possible’ (Crang 1997: 162).

### **2.1.1 Alternative Regional Imaginations**

In the final chapter of Ella Westland’s edited collection, *Cornwall: The Cultural Construction of Place*, Crang (1997: 162) begins by outlining a theoretical understanding of the region, that of the regional mosaic:

‘a constructed imagination of the world as being made up of a mosaic of bordering but distinct regions or areas, or perhaps more accurately, a number of such mosaics layered upon each other at different scales – the continental, the national, the regional, the local, the neighbourhood.

These various places are in turn associated with spatially distinct peoples and their “local cultures”.’

For Crang (1997: 158),

‘the mosaic, as a regional imagination, has two severe drawbacks: first, it operates with a spatial and political logic of inside and outside which depends upon a very particular point of view and has limiting political and imaginative possibilities; and second, it casts the region as a pre-existing “thing” evoked, expressed or interpreted by the regionalist, rather than as an ongoing process in which the regionalist is participating.’

In contrast, he goes on to present a series of alternative regional imaginations: the region as story-telling, the regional tapestry, regional circuitry, and the metropolis. All four have, in common, an understanding of the region as ‘a social and cultural process rather than an achieved state or pre-social residue and refuge’ (Crang 1997: 154) in which culture is not something coherent and timeless, associated with discourses around tradition, inheritance and roots, and regional studies are not the search for a geographically-defined regional personality associated, in turn, with discourses around authenticity. By imagining the region as story-telling, it becomes an ‘historically extended, socially embedded argument’ (Shotter 1993, cited in Crang 1997: 158) through which one can study the politics [Who can(-not) speak, and why?] and poetics [How is speech organised, articulated and judged appropriate?] of argumentation. Crang’s concern that this particular regional imagination might privilege the verbal leads him to discuss the region as tapestry, in which the spatial connections and routines of everyday life become individual though interweaving threads in an always unfinished woven frame. This emphasis upon the region as sets of spatial connections and routines informs, and is informed by, a broader theoretical shift in geography from spaces of places to spaces of flows, and from culture as roots to culture as routes. If the region as story-telling might privilege the verbal, however, then the region as tapestry might similarly privilege the visual.

This leads Crang (1997: 160) on to regional circuitry as a regional imagination, ‘an imagination in which the connections do not only make regions but also become them.’ A reformulation of this regional imagination leads, in turn, to an

understanding of the region as metropolis: ‘As a site of life and theory,’ says Crang (1997: 162), ‘the metropolis is marked by travels rather than overviews, and logs rather than maps.’ Despite its theoretical origins in urban geography, Crang (1997: 162) is at pains to point out that the metropolis – and, indeed, story-telling, tapestry and regional circuitry – are not simply ‘cosmopolitan conceits, largely irrelevant to Cornish places such as Truro or Penzance,’ or to Cornwall as a whole, however it might be imagined. The purpose of this section is not to argue the relative merits and drawbacks of Crang’s alternative regional imaginations, thereby to come down in favour of one or another, each of which has its own complex genealogy that raises a set of questions relating to its transferability between cultural and historical contexts. Rather, the purpose of this section is to align the understanding of Cornwall that informs and underpins this thesis with the more general theorisation of the region as a spatialisation of social and cultural processes that, in turn, informs and underpins each of Crang’s alternatives.

‘Thinking a region in terms of social relations stretched out,’ to return to Allen, Massey and Cochrane (1998: 65), ‘reveals, not an “area”, but a complex and unbounded lattice of articulations with internal relations of power and inequality and punctured by structured exclusions.’ Through such a theorisation, the region is understood as essentially unbounded and geographically heterogeneous, its geographies of internal variability and spatial porosity – or nodal ‘hot spots’ and ‘holes’ – suggesting yet another alternative regional imagination, that of the region as doily (Allen, Massey and Cochrane 1998). Again, the purpose of this section is not to argue for or against a particular regional imagination, but to agree with Gilbert (1988: 222) that ‘regional geography does not amount to a mere tool for knowing about the world, it is an instrument for action,’ thereby to align this thesis with the assertion that

‘there is more potential in regional imaginations that... are less about the imagined – the picturing of an order, an answer to our questions, a map of our locations – than about the imaginary – a figure of the possible, a question kept open, a terrain to explore’ (Crang 1997: 162).

Another recent attempt to retheorise the region is that of Paasi (2003), who attempts to distinguish between the identity of a region: ‘those features of nature, culture and

people that are used in the discourses and classifications of science, politics, cultural activism, regional marketing, governance and political or religious regionalization to distinguish one region from others' (Paasi 2003: 478), and regional identity: 'the multiscale identification of people with those institutional practices, discourses and symbolisms that are expressive of the "structures of expectations" that become institutionalized as parts of the process that we call a "region"' (Paasi 2003: 478). However, this thesis does not adopt such a distinction. Indeed, in later chapters, it actively challenges the distinction as, for example, recent work in Cornish Studies on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Celtic-Cornish Revival suggests both collaboration and contestation between the Revivalists and the advertising department of the Great Western Railway over the negotiation of a post-industrial Cornish identity (see, among others, Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Payton 1996a). Furthermore, both groups have complex cultural and political relationships to Cornwall and Cornishness that do not sit easily within either of Paasi's categories.

Paasi (2002) also proposes a three-way distinction between pre-scientific, discipline-centred and critical approaches to regional geography. Pre-scientific approaches, for Paasi (2002: 804), are those that imply 'that "region" is a practical choice, a given spatial unit (statistical area, municipality or locality), which is needed for collecting/representing data but which has no particular conceptual role,' giving the example of the framework for data collection as provided by a Europe of the Regions – a framework that might, but should not, be understood as a neutral background. Discipline-centred approaches, in turn, are those that theorise the region as an object, or as a result of a research process that is often structured around 'formal or functional classifications of empirical elements' (Paasi 2002: 804); while critical approaches to the region 'emerge from social practice, relations and discourse, and strive to conceptualize spatialities as part of a wider network of cultural, political and economic processes and of divisions of labour' (Paasi 2002: 804). Again, while broadly aligning itself with the third of these approaches, this thesis does not adopt such a distinction because of the problematic nature of upholding the distinction while giving due consideration to the complex genealogy of the region as a unit of geographical study (see Gilbert 1988; Pudup 1988; Archer 1993; Thrift 1994; Gregory 2000). Without seeking to evaluate such competing claims to the legacy of

regional geography, this thesis aligns itself with more critical theorisations of the region in the abstract – and, by extension, of Cornwall as a specific case – as an historically contingent socio-spatial process (Gilbert 1988; Pudup 1988; Thrift 1994; Crang 1997; Allen, Massey and Cochrane 1998; Paasi 2002, 2003, 2004).

### **2.1.2 A Question of Scale**

Having discussed the theoretical understanding of the region that informs and underpins this thesis, it is also necessary to emphasise the importance of maintaining a sensitivity to socio-spatial processes operating at different scales, both notionally ‘above’ and ‘below’ that of the region (Gregory 2000). As Allen, Massey and Cochrane (1998: 60) continue,

‘one frequently adopted way of doing regional or local studies is first to sketch in, say, the international situation and its influences, then the national, then the “regional”... proceeding downward through spatial scales until the object of study is arrived at. It is what might be called the “Russian doll” approach to area studies. Against this, we argue that the different levels must be conceptualized together from the start and the empirical work must, where necessary, move back and forth.’

It is in acknowledgement of this sensitivity to the mutual production and reproduction of the local, the regional, the national and the global that the notions of geographical scales being ‘above’ and ‘below’ that of the regional were placed in inverted commas in the first sentence of this paragraph; for, as Gregory (2000: 689) writes, the regionalist must also attend to ‘the ways in which these scalar distinctions have been historically produced and hence enmeshed in constellations of power, knowledge and spatiality.’ Similarly, Paasi (2004) urges the understanding of geographical scales as processes, rather than as boundaries, as part of a theoretical shift from fixed to relational scale.

The same concern is shared by Deacon (2000: 213) who, writing in *Cornish Studies*, calls attention to ‘the explicit consideration outside the discipline of geography of the spatial dimension of social or historical explanations’ – an epistemological and ontological shift to which he refers as ‘the spatial turn’. For Deacon (2000: 213), ‘the cultural turn is now firmly established in the mainstream of work on Cornish

Studies,’ bringing with it ‘a greater awareness of the role of language, meanings and representations in our understanding of the social world.’ However, the spatial turn that, for Deacon (2000: 213), has ‘influenced the social sciences over the past couple of decades,’ has yet to become similarly established. Consequently, he calls for Cornish Studies to become more critically reflexive in its use of spatial concepts, particularly in its understanding of Cornwall. For Deacon (2000: 214),

‘a Cornish Studies perspective offers a clear opportunity to work, for example, with more traditional local history procedures in building on the latter’s focus on discrete places and communities and placing them in a broader and comparative framework.’

Despite this, he continues, ‘Cornish Studies as a discipline has produced relatively few studies of differences, for example of identity or class or gender, *within* Cornwall’ (2000: 214, original emphasis). This thesis seeks to contribute to a more critically reflexive understanding of space and spatiality within Cornish Studies, by approaching Cornwall as an historically contingent socio-spatial process that takes place at the sub-regional, regional and supra-regional scales, with a specific focus upon the operation of the mystical as a cultural category – the subject of the next section of this chapter – within that process.

## **2.2 Theorising the Mystical**

As was outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this section is structured around three interlinked questions that run throughout this thesis, relating to the historicity, sociology and spatiality of the mystical, while the section 2.3 explores the ways in which these questions interrelate through a discussion of the practices and presuppositions associated with particular cultures of the mystical. Mysticism has a long and complex genealogy; the modern historical formulation of the mystical is very different to that which emerged through the ancient Greek pre-Christian mystery religions. First, then, this section addresses the central question of what it means to be mystical. Secondly, this section moves on to address a series of further questions that are raised by this central question around the sociology of mysticism, specifically relating to the rules that govern mystical knowledge and the conditions according to which certain people do and do not count as mystics. Thirdly, though no less importantly given the disciplinary context of this thesis, this section concludes

with a discussion of the spatialities of the mystical – that is, a discussion of the ways in which certain sets of practices and presuppositions become mystical through their connections to particular geographical registers.

### **2.2.1 Historicising the Mystical**

The word ‘mystical’ derives from the Greek verb *myein*, meaning ‘to close’ and, more specifically, ‘to close one’s eyes’ (Jantzen 1995; Carrette 2000). It was used in the context of pre-Christian mystery religions, in association with secret rites of initiation [*mysterion*] about which initiates [*mystes*] were forbidden to speak. According to this early understanding, the mystical was not associated with the ineffable, that which is beyond language and thought; rather, for Grace Jantzen – Research Professor of Religion, Culture and Gender at the University of Manchester, and a practising member of the Religious Society of Friends [or Quakers] – ‘the assumption behind such an injunction to silence is that without such a rule, the ritual *might* have been talked about’ (Jantzen 1995: 323, original emphasis). The assumption, in other words, is diametrically opposed to an assumption that the mystical is inherently ineffable. ‘From this idea of the mystics as those who kept their mouths shut,’ however,

‘came the further idea, linked with Platonic philosophy, that mystics are those whose knowledge of the divine comes with the shutting of *all* the senses: mystical knowledge is knowledge available only to the mind or spirit that is as detached as possible from bodily concerns. And thus the mystical or spiritual came to mean, in this context, that which is beyond ordinary sense perception and the normal means of human knowledge’ (Jantzen 1995: 323-4, original emphasis; see also Inge 1948 [1899]).

Such an understanding of the mystical, associated with ineffability though not with psychological experiences and altered states of consciousness, became woven into early Christian theology. ‘The mystical meaning of scripture,’ writes Jantzen (1995: 324, original emphasis),

‘was not some special intense psychological experience imparted to the reader, but rather the perception of its hidden depths, its reference to Christ even in passages which in literal terms are speaking of something



quite different. Similarly the sacraments, whether of baptism or of the eucharist, were to be understood not merely as literal water or bread or wine but as the mystical entry into the church by the washing away of sins, or as the mystical body and blood of Christ. And it was not held to be the case that receiving them in their mystical sense either required or effected a psychological transformation of the people concerned: indeed, the whole point of *faith* in their efficacy was that no such intense subjective experiences need take place, but that the sacraments are valid for all that.’

Reverend John Bampton [1690-1751], Canon of Salisbury Cathedral, left an endowment in his will to Oxford University providing for the annual preaching, printing and publication of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons. In 1899, the so-called Bampton Lectures were delivered by W. R. Inge – who, in 1911, was chosen by Prime Minister Asquith to be Dean of St Paul’s – on the subject of Christian mysticism. In his lectures, Inge recalled the history of Platonism in early Christian theology, and of the continuing influence of Neoplatonism upon Christian mysticism into the High Middle Ages, especially through the emphasis upon the inner Divine Light and its identification with Pure Reason. He moved on to discuss how, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Christian mysticism

‘emancipated itself from the mischievous doctrine that the spiritual eye can only see when the eye of sense is closed. After the Reformation period the mystic tries to look with both eyes; his aim is to see God in all things, as well as all things in God. He returns with better resources to the task of the primitive religions and tries to find spiritual law in the natural world’ (Inge 1948: 299).

Inge *thus* positioned himself in opposition to what he identified as the dualistic thought of Neoplatonic Christian mysticism – internal and external, spirit and sense, clarity and obscurity, truth and fiction. For Inge, the Biblical precept to ‘Consider the lilies’ [Matthew 6:28] sanctioned Christian nature-mysticism, and the ‘greatest prophet of this branch of contemplative Mysticism is unquestionably the poet Wordsworth’ (Inge 1948: 305). Romantic nature-mysticism is further discussed in section 2.3.2.

In the preface to the seventh edition of *Christian Mysticism*, Inge (1948: vii-viii) also positioned himself in opposition to increasing claims that were being made on the study of mysticism by the nascent discipline of psychology. ‘Psychology,’ he wrote,

‘is the study of states of consciousness as such. While it confines itself to its own domain it does not inquire whether there is any objective reality behind mystical experience. This abstract approach is proper for the psychologist; but too often there seems to be a latent assumption that the whole of mysticism is subjective. This is precisely not the view of the mystics themselves. They care nothing about states of consciousness; and if they thought that their revelations had no reality outside their own minds, they would conclude that they had been grievously deceived. Thus the psychological study of mysticism never penetrates to the heart of the subject; and it is not surprising that these writers collect mainly abnormal and even pathological cases, leaving the impression that they are dealing with a rare and probably unhealthy condition of the human mind.’

In particular, Inge referred to the lectures that comprised William James’ (2002 [1902]) *The Varieties of Religious Experience* as an example of the psychologising of mysticism. For James [1842-1910], a physiologist, psychologist and philosopher, the mystical was an altered state of consciousness, to be contrasted to ‘normal’ consciousness in a similar way to ‘the consciousness produced by intoxicants and anaesthetics, especially by alcohol’ (James 2002: 421); and was characterised by ineffability, a certain noetic quality [mystical states of consciousness being also states of knowledge that are inaccessible in normal states of consciousness], transiency [mystical experiences rarely lasting longer than an hour or two] and passivity [mystical experiences themselves, though often actively facilitated, resulting in the feeling of subordination to some superior will]. The epistemology that underpinned James’ work was post-Kantian. James largely accepted the argument of Kant, critiquing the Platonic idea of Pure Reason, that

‘all knowledge comes to us by experience. However, since the experience of any object is always our experience, rather than the pure grasp of the object, all experience must be shaped by the structure of our minds and the categories of our thinking which are as it were built into us simply by virtue of our being human, rational beings... Consequently, for anything

that we do experience, our subjectivity is indelibly stamped upon it'  
(Jantzen 1995: 308).

Furthermore, for Kant, Christianity taught that God was pure spirit and, as such, was beyond sense experience. God served as a regulatory ideal; mystical experience of God, however, was spurious at best.

James was also influenced by the German Romantics, and the argument that the impossibility of encountering God could be circumvented in particularly intense or unusual emotional states. For James, Kant's theories applied to all normal thought, but not to strange visionary or ecstatic experiences at the fringe of the psyche. 'It is as though James visualises our minds as plates,' writes Jantzen (1995: 310), 'just slightly larger than the grid of Kant's categories, so that at the extreme edges a tiny bit of our psyche manages not to be covered by them,' and so that James could begin to speak of experiences 'beyond the veil'. Likewise, Evelyn Underhill's (1930 [1911]) *Mysticism* – ranging, as does James, across Christian, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist mysticism – argues that mysticism is characterised by a definite psychological experience, but one that belongs to the 'hidden' or 'subliminal' self. While accepting James' definitional characteristics of mysticism up to a point, Underhill [1875-1941], an Anglo-Catholic writer and poet, argued that they were insufficient, and proposed five further characteristics: that mysticism is not merely intellectual or philosophical but, rather, that is an entire active life process; that it is an entirely spiritual activity; that the means and ends of mysticism are divine love; that it entails a definite psychological experience; and that it is never self-seeking but, rather, is the quest for union with the Absolute. As Jantzen (1995) points out, the subtitle of Underhill's book is *A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* and, while Underhill came to be dissatisfied with her book's psychological emphasis, she did not rewrite it. Its popularity – being as it was in its twelfth edition by 1930 – helped to reinforce the modern formulation of the mystical around the psychological and the ineffable, which recurs throughout the three empirical chapters of this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Sociologising the Mystical**

The questions relating to the historicity of the mystical, as discussed above, engender a further series of questions relating to the sociology of the mystical – a term which, in turn, is closely associated with the work of the French sociologist, Emile Durkheim [1857-1917], and, in particular, his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (Durkheim 1954 [1915]). Durkheim outlines two competing theories of knowledge, both centred upon the human individual. One of these, which Durkheim terms ‘empiricism’, argues that the categories of human thought are ‘brought into our minds by the direct action of objects’ (Durkheim 1954: 15). By this argument, for Durkheim, knowledge ‘is composed of individual states which are completely explained... by the psychological nature of the individual,’ thus reducing the study of religion to the study of human psychology. The other theory, which Durkheim terms ‘apriorism’, argues that the categories of human thought are logically prior to, and condition, direct sense experience. This argument, for Durkheim, is insufficient in that it cannot explain the problem of religious knowledge: ‘how it comes that experience is not sufficient in itself, but presupposes certain conditions which are exterior and prior to it,’ in Durkheim’s (1954: 14-5) words, ‘and how it happens that these conditions are realized at the moment and in the manner that is desirable.’ For, as he continues (Durkheim 1954: 15),

‘the categories of human thought are never fixed in any one definite form; they are made, unmade and remade incessantly; they change with places and times. On the other hand, the divine reason is immutable. How can this immutability give rise to this incessant variability?’

Durkheim’s alternative proposal is that

‘religion is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain or recreate certain mental states in these groups’ (Durkheim 1954: 10).

Thus the categories of religious thought ‘show the mental states of the group’; they ‘depend upon the way in which this is founded and organized, upon its morphology, upon its religious, moral and economic institutions’ (Durkheim 1954: 16). For

example, Durkheim (1954: 24) discusses attempts to delineate religion with reference to the supernatural, by which

‘is understood all sorts of things which surpass the limits of our knowledge; the supernatural is the world of the mysterious, of the unknowable, of the un-understandable. Thus religion would be a sort of speculation upon all that which evades science of distinct thought in general.’

Durkheim’s response is to argue that the supernatural presupposes a natural order of things, ‘that is to say, that the phenomena of the universe are bound together by necessary relations, called laws... But this idea of universal determinism is of recent origin,’ he continues (Durkheim 1954: 26); ‘even the greatest thinkers of classical antiquity never succeeded in becoming fully conscious of it. It is a conquest of the positive sciences; it is the postulate upon which they repose and which they have proved by their progress.’

There is little – if any – intellectual debt to Durkheim on the part of Michel Foucault. Indeed, for Durkheim, ‘the emergence of a science of society announces the increasing autonomy of the individual and the objectivity of the social’ whereas, for Foucault, the latter were ‘instrument-effects of specific historical forms of power’ (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 143). However, similar ideas to those of Durkheim regarding the inseparability of power and knowledge in society certainly emerge from Jantzen’s reading of Christian mysticism through the work of Foucault: ‘what counts as knowledge in any given society,’ she writes (Jantzen 1995: 13; see also Carrette 2000),

‘will be bound up with the regimes of authority and power in that society: the interests of power will exert a regulatory influence over “truth” and its production... but in turn that knowledge sustains and constitutes the social reality which it describes... Putting this in terms of the delimitation of mysticism,’

Jantzen (1995: 14) continues,

‘Foucault’s point would be that there is no such thing as an abstract “essence” of mysticism which could be discovered by a theologian pondering in her study or praying in a church. Rather, what counts as mysticism will reflect (and also help to constitute) the institutions of

power in which it occurs. Put starkly, the church (and nowadays the university) will exert its power to determine who counts as a mystic, excluding from that category any who are threatening to its authority: in medieval times, this exclusion was effected by, for example, the Inquisition and the burning of heretics. But on the other hand, what counts as mysticism also in part constituted the church: the church was seen as that body which has within it those who have true access to the mysteries of God.’

In particular, Jantzen focuses on power and Christian mysticism in relation to gender. In early Christianity, she argues, women

‘did not have the education necessary to study the text and its multiple glosses; and even in exceptional cases where they did have the requisite education and access to manuscripts, they were not considered suitable to teach or to have the authority which discernment of the mystical meaning would confer. An alternative source of authority about the mysteries of God might come by visions, a direct communication of God to the most humble creatures of divine creation. Since women were those who could be seen as most like “the handmaiden of the Lord”, they might, ironically, be most likely to be privileged with a vision of the mysteries of God’ (Jantzen 1995: 324).

During the Middle Ages, the male ecclesiastical authorities became increasingly wary of female mystics, setting strict criteria by which to assess their claims to have had mystical experiences, and summarily trying and executing some thousands of ‘false mystics’ as heretics and witches. For Jantzen, it was only with the development of the secular state, the decline in the political authority of religious knowledge and the construction of mysticism as an ineffable, private and personal experience, that female mysticism was deemed to be ‘safe’, compatible as it was with female domesticity and the silencing of women in the public sphere. As aforementioned, Deacon (2000: 214, original emphasis) observes that ‘Cornish Studies as a discipline has produced relatively few studies of differences, for example of identity or class or gender, *within* Cornwall.’ This thesis aims to contribute towards this gap in the literature by returning, in the three empirical chapters, to the question of gender as a dimension of the mystical.

### **2.2.3 Spatialising the Mystical**

‘One of the most damaging ideas that has swept the social sciences and humanities,’ writes Thrift (2000: 44),

‘has been the idea of a disenchanting modernity... This act of purification has radically depopulated thinking about Western societies as whole sets of delegates and intermediaries have been consigned to oblivion as extinct impulses, those delegates and intermediaries which might appear to be associated with forces of magic, the sacred, ritual, affect, trance and so on. Now, however, the contemporary turn towards vitalist ways of thinking... has made it much easier to see that the magic has not gone away. Western societies, like all others, are full of these forces... They can be seen as concentrating, in particular, in a set of practices which can be described as “mystical”.’

Indeed, the mystical has had a paradoxical relationship to the modern (Matless 1991), being both a reaction against, and an essential underpinning of, certain versions of modernity. These include Henri Bergson and vitalism, based on his understanding of life as ‘a distinct nonmaterial entity’ (Bowler 2001: 161) and his identification of an *élan vital* – ‘an unstructured yet unstoppable progress arising from an original impulse’ (Bowler 2001: 123) – in relation to which Thrift positions his own work.

This set of mystical practices, for Thrift, includes various mental and physical techniques – including those that derive from orthodox religious traditions, Romantic nature-mysticism, forms of Eastern thinking which have been imported into the West [especially during the nineteenth century], and the more recent growth in New Age spirituality – that allow such forces to be focused and channelled so as provide the possibility of mystical communication with an Other. It also includes the practices and performative spaces of ritual, ‘practices which offer a heightened sense of involvement in our involvements’ (Thrift 2000: 44) including music, dance, theatre, mime and art, and the various forms of body therapy ‘which try to harness and work with emotional energy on the grounds that movement causes emotion, rather than vice versa’ (Thrift 2000: 45) including dance therapy, music therapy, massage

therapy and body-mind centring. Such an understanding of the mystical informs the central argument of Thrift's paper, that 'nature has become a, and perhaps even the, key site of contemplation and mysticism in the modern world as a result of the evolution of a set of body practices which, as they have taken hold, have produced an expanded awareness of present time' (Thrift 2000: 35). By this argument, nature is both the cause and the effect of certain sensory stimuli that, in the half-second between stimulus and conscious awareness, set up a background of expectation in the cognitive unconscious. The mystical, meanwhile, is a heightened awareness of these non-cognitive processes.

Similar ideas inform Thrift (1999) in his understanding of place, while Lowerson (1992) connects the mystical to the English rural; for Lowerson (1992: 152), 'a mystical geography cannot really be mapped yet it is an essential description of how many English people view the rural world. The phrase,' he continues,

'was used by Terence Ranger in a study of western missionary activities in Zimbabwe where he demonstrated the adaptation of externally introduced theological structures and liturgical practices to indigenous beliefs and the way in which this produced specific regional and local foci for tribal custom.'

Herein lies the difference between Thrift and Lowerson in their understandings of the mystical: for Thrift (2000), the mystical is a set of body practices that offer a heightened or expanded sense of human consciousness, while space is a source of sensory stimuli that both enables and is enabled by these practices but is not, in itself, mystical. For Lowerson (1992), in contrast, space in itself can also become mystical. After a discussion that ranges across Christian theology, church architecture and pastoral provision, folk religion, seasonal ritual and superstition, and the sacred sites and landscape geometry of Pagan revivalism and New Age spirituality, Lowerson (1992: 167) concludes – and this thesis aligns itself with his argument – that, in such cultural formations, 'Nature is often both the location of God or Gods and divine in itself; in the language of professional theology it is both panentheistic and pantheistic.'

Thrift's work on the mystical focuses, in particular, upon the second of the three sets of practices listed above, namely the practices and performative spaces of ritual. It



derives from his recent concern to develop and elaborate non-representational theory (Thrift 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000), in an attempt to overcome the perceived deficiencies of geographical approaches that understand cultural processes and products as generic representations or texts. Therefore, he advocates ‘a new and demanding direction for cultural geography, away from the analysis of texts, images and discourses, and towards understanding the micro-geographies of habitual practices, departing from deconstructing representations to explore the non-representational’ (Nash 2000: 656). Thrift’s aim is to recapture the lived experience of time-space, and a wider historical understanding of Western modernity, from what is, for him, a more static and inert focus on text and representation. ‘The whole fabric of everyday life, in other words,’ writes Thrift (1996: 165, original emphasis), ‘is shot through with dreams, fantasies, superstitions, religious yearnings and millenarian movements. *The magic has not gone away.*’ Incorporating work from actor-network theory [ANT], science studies and feminist theorisations of the body and performativity, Thrift (1996, 1997, 1999, 2000) seeks to work towards an expanded sense of possibility, and process-based understandings of being-in-the-world.

J-D Dewsbury (2003: 1907, emphasis added; see also Anderson and Smith 2001), developing Thrift’s work, calls for the social sciences to attend to

‘that part of the world full of occurrences that have little tangible presence in that they are not immediately shared and therefore have to be re-presented to be communicated. These subsequent re-presentations are fraught with difficulties most apparent in their seeming inadequacy; problematizing representation is, however, the challenge, the solution, towards an engaging reinterpretation of the world. The imperceptibles elided by representation include emotions, passions, and desires, and immaterial matters of *spirit, belief, and faith* – all forces that move beyond our familiar, (because) denoted, world. These are not light matters for they forge the weight of our meaningful relation with the world.’

The implication is that epistemological and methodological approaches that emphasise the non-representationality of ‘immaterial matters of spirit, belief, and

faith' are best placed to understand the cultural and historical geographies of religion and spirituality.

In particular, Dewsbury et al (2002) take issue with representationalism, or discursive idealism. They argue that the notion 'that meaning is first and foremost a picture that is formed in the mind, a cause of action; the precondition of understanding of social action or identity is fundamentally misleading' (Dewsbury et al 2002: 438). 'The representational system,' for Dewsbury (2003: 1911),

'its structure and regulation of meaning, is not complete – it needs constant maintenance, loyalty, and faith from those who practice it. In this regard, its power is in its pragmatic functions: easy communication of ideas (that restricts their potential extension), and a sustainable, defensible, and consensual type of knowledge.'

Furthermore, in the introduction to a special issue of *Geoforum*, Dewsbury et al (2002: 438), argue that representations, in any medium, are 'not causes or outcomes of action but actions in themselves. In this sense representation is perhaps more usefully thought of as incessant presentation,' within which 'each text is a moment in iterative and disseminative chains and processes; exemplary and differential, creative relays which may or may not resonate, which may or may not find a hospitable destination' (Dewsbury et al 2002: 439).

In contrast, Dewsbury (2003: 1911) argues that non-representational theory 'comes into its own in asking us to revisit the performative space of representation in a manner that is more attuned to its fragile constitution.' For Dewsbury (2003: 1911, original emphasis), the non-representational theoretical project 'is to excavate the empty space between the lines of representational meaning in order to see what is also possible. The representational system is not wrong,' he contends; 'rather, it is the belief that it offers complete understanding – and that *only it* offers any sensible understanding at all – that is critically flawed.' His understanding of non-representational theory, in turn,

'is that it is characterised by a firm belief in the actuality of representation. It does not approach representations as masks, gazes, reflections, veils, dreams, ideologies, as anything, in short, that is a covering which is laid over the ontic. Non-representational theory takes

representation seriously; representation not as a code to be broken or as a illusion to be dispelled rather representations are apprehended as performative in themselves; as doings' (Dewsbury et al 2002: 438).

Dewsbury et al (2002: 439) go on to advocate a particular way of attending to the world that they term 'witnessing',

'where to witness is both the moment of experience and a stance thereafter towards the world that acknowledges and attends to the gap between what we have seen and are seeing, with what we have written and could write, and with what we have said and can "say" (can gesture towards).'

Witnessing, they argue, works in two ways. 'First, the world calls us to witness it into being' through, for example, 'the push of terrain upon the "muscular consciousness" of the body', or 'the spiritualized pull or uplift of a chord of music,' or 'the stillness struck by the colour of paint' (Dewsbury et al 2002: 439). Thus, they continue, there is a need for the social sciences 'to move away from speaking of affections and perceptions (which would overemphasise a too subjective, too human, account), to move towards an account that takes seriously the world's own forces' – a world that is 'between potential and determination, between what has happened and what could, a world captured in the tension of its present tense of becoming' – through speaking instead of affects and percepts, which Dewsbury et al (2002: 439) understand as 'that through which subject and object emerge and become possible' and, in doing so, 'speak to the emergent eventuality of the world.' And, second, they argue, 'in the performances that make us, the world comes about,' an assertion that, for Dewsbury et al (2002: 439), demands an attention to 'the active role we too play in actualizing that which happens' through, in particular, 'an awareness of the coming-to-be, the badly formed, the seemingly inconsequential, the ephemerally felt; the desire that lights up a room, the turning you didn't take (but which still haunts you), the anxiety of completing the next task.'

This privileging of non-cognitive thought above its often cognitive and social origins could, however, be misinterpreted as a restatement of 'a classically neo-Romantic desire for a return to an unmediated, authentic relationship to the world, to be like "primitive" others who are unburdened by thought' (Nash 2000: 657). It could also

be misinterpreted as a [re]turn to the individualistic, universalising sovereign subject; and, if a privileging of non-cognitive thought might risk a return to the universal subject, then contemporary vitalist thought might similarly risk a conflation of everyday experiences of the mystical in terms of Bergson's universal post-Darwinian evolutionary spirit. For example, Thrift's understanding of the mystical differs from religious mysticism in its directionality – where religious mysticism [within the Abrahamic religions, at least] seeks union with God for the purposes of individual and collective salvation, the *élan vital* of vitalism is inherently directionless (Bowler 2001; see also Underhill 1930). If, as Nash (2000: 654) argues, 'the strength of cultural geography has been its attention to the material *and* symbolic, to practices *and* images, and to the economies and politics of places, cultural practices, discourses and products,' then non-representational theory might be something of an over-reaction. A more preferable alternative, for Nash (2000: 661), is 'the tradition within cultural geography... of exploring the intersections between representations, discourses, material things, spaces and practices – the intertwined and interacting material and social world Thrift himself espouses.'

One way in which this tradition has avoided a return to the universal subject – and the way that is taken in this thesis – is by approaching such explorations through the use of *subjectification* as a device for critical thought (Matless 1997). Subjectification, for Rose (1996: 130-1), designates 'all those heterogeneous processes and practices by means of which human beings come to relate to themselves as subjects of a certain type.' The problem is not, however, to analyse changing forms of subjectivity or identity as the outcome of wider changes in society, culture and history. To do so is to presume the essential historical continuity of the human subject, and 'the history of subjectification is more practical, more technical and less unified than sociological accounts allow' (Rose 1996: 131). Instead, the problem is to analyse 'the intellectual and practical techniques that have comprised the instruments through which being has historically constituted itself' (Rose 1996: 129). Such techniques

'are not bounded by the enclosure formed by the human skin or carried in a stable form in the interior of an individual: they are rather webs of tension across a space that accord human beings capacities and powers to the extent that they catch them up in hybrid assemblages of knowledges,

instruments, vocabularies, systems of judgement and technical artefacts’  
(Rose 1996: 144),

so that the human subject becomes ‘one significantly congealed state within a wider field of relations of which it is an effect’ (Matless 1997: 336). The intention here is to attend to the ways in which particular versions of the mystical might themselves be active in contributing to ‘the organization of the mundane everyday practices and presuppositions that shape the conduct of human beings in particular sites and practices’ (Rose 1996: 128); the next section, as aforementioned, outlines those particular cultures of the mystical that pertain to this thesis.

## **2.3 Cultures of the Mystical**

Having elaborated, in the previous section, upon the three interlinked questions that run throughout this thesis, relating to the historicity, sociology and spatiality of the mystical – with particular reference to Christianity and Christian mysticism, and at a more theoretical level – this section explores the ways in which these questions interrelate through a discussion of the practices and presuppositions associated with particular cultures of the mystical. Thus, section 2.3.1 positions this thesis in relation to the existing body of work on the geographies of religion and spirituality, while sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 review the literature from geography and across the social sciences and humanities on Romantic nature-mysticism, spiritualism and occultism, and Paganism and New Age mysticism, respectively. Section 2.3.2 also incorporates a discussion of specifically Celtic versions of Romanticism, as they have developed through the early eighteenth century antiquarianism of William Stukeley, the Druidic revivalism of Iolo Morganwg, and the Irish cultural nationalism of the likes of W. B. Yeats. Each of these subsections also highlights the connections between the material being reviewed and the empirical research material contained within chapters four, five and six.

### ***2.3.1 Geographies of Religion and Spirituality***

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, this section positions the rest of this thesis in relation to the existing body of work on the geographies of religion and spirituality. One area of work within the field of the geographies of religion and

spirituality is that which is based on multivariate statistical analyses of the social and spatial distribution, diffusion and dynamics of religion at various scales, and its relationships to demography and development (Park 1994; see also, for example, Winter 1991; Livingstone, Keane and Boal 1998). Park (1994), in a book-length review of such work, argues that these concerns characterised the field until the 1990s. Although Park's book, for Kong (2001: 212), 'does not concern itself with new directions (of spirituality, cultural politics, personal experience, symbolism, for example),' the use of the more traditional quantitative research methods can potentially contribute to the detailed sociologies of religious movements. In one particularly pertinent case, they contributed to a comprehensive investigation into the organisation, demography and dynamics of Christianity in rural England (Davies et al 1991), situated within the wider socio-historical and theological contexts of the relationships and tensions between Anglicanism, Roman Catholicism and the Free Churches (Hastings 1986).

Other work on the geographies of religion and spirituality has sought to develop reciprocal understandings of the material and the symbolic, the geographical and the religious (Tuan 1976, 1978; Sopher 1981). Following on from these, Cooper (1992: 124) advocated new research directions for the field, based on a recognition that 'the complexities of personal religious experience cannot be isolated from the broader context of an individual's other personal experience, and social and material relations.' Similarly, in a recent review of work on the geographies of religion, Kong (2001: 212) argues that, oftentimes, 'in the same breath that race, class and gender are invariably invoked and studied as ways by which societies are fractured, religion is forgotten or conflated with race.' Instead, Kong (2001: 212) continues, 'religion deserves to be acknowledged fully and in like manner alongside race, class and gender in geographical analysis.' Moreover, Kong's assertion raises a series of questions relating to the particular ways in which religion has been, and continues to be, incorporated into other sociological discourses, and vice versa. In an earlier review of the field (Kong 1990), she cites two examples of how religion might be theorised through the language of cultural politics – as both a process and a product of socio-spatial negotiation and conflict, with material and symbolic dimensions (Harvey 1979; Duncan 1990).

Levine (1986) discusses how understanding religion as an institution, in a Marxist sense, allows geographers to investigate the ways in which it is bound up with certain modes of production and the processes of class formation. Similarly, Pacione (1990, 1991, 1999) argues the potential social relevance of religious institutions and foundational religious knowledge in alleviating urban poverty and deprivation, and in overcoming what he perceives as a moral deficiency in contemporary secular capitalism. Extending these class-based focuses, Nagar (1997) considers the inter-related roles of race, caste, class, gender and religion in the continual making and remaking of place, identity and community among Hindus in post-colonial Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanzania. Others have discussed the negotiated relationships between landscapes of religion (Raivo 1997, 2002), religious pilgrimage (Graham and Murray 1997) and national identity, and between religion, ethnicity and the politics of the built environment (Kong 1992, 1993a, b; Kiong and Kong 2000; Naylor and Ryan 2002), in particular cultural and historical contexts.

To the aforementioned assertion of the sociality of religion, Wilson (1993: 75) adds an assertion, welcomed by Cooper (1993), of the spatiality of religion – that is, ‘of how space as a social product affects the construction of religious beliefs and practices.’ Following on from work on the textuality of landscape (Duncan 1990), Kong (1999) reviews some recent research on the ways in which monumental and everyday memorial ‘deathscapes’ are not only products of, but also actively produce, particular social narratives. Raivo (1997, 2002) notes how certain textual aspects of the Lutheran Protestant and Finnish Orthodox landscapes were [and are] variously read, as either appropriate or not, through the discourses of individual and collective identity, religious pilgrimage and heritage tourism in the inter- and post-war Finnish/Russian borderlands. In contrast, MacDonald (2002: 63), in his study of the spatiality of Calvinist worship in the Outer Hebrides, ‘breaks the familiar use of Lefebvre’s work to describe only those processes which are bound up with the geography of mobile capital.’ For Lefebvre (cited in MacDonald 2002: 66), space was not produced to be read at all, but to be lived by people with bodies and lives, in their particular contexts: ‘to underestimate, ignore and diminish space amounts to the overestimation of texts, written matter and writing systems along with the readable and the visible, to the point of assigning to these a monopoly of intelligibility.’ However, ‘the import of Lefebvre’s work is that the study of space... must be

considered alongside other textual sources' (MacDonald 2002: 66) which have been used in writing the history and geography of a socio-spatial order.

This connects back to the wider theoretical debates, discussed in section 2.2.3, around texts and textuality, representation and materiality. In a study of embodied ritual practice at Marian apparition sites, Martin and Kryst (1998: 224) write that such practice 'is not representational in the sense that it does not create a space between subject and object, between meaning and material. Meanings are not merely objectified in symbols or places, rather they are given body or embodied.' But to argue that ritual practice is not merely representational is not to argue that ritual practice is not at all representational (Bell 1992). In contrast, so as to retain a sense of the discursive aspects of religion, Valins (2000; see also Livingstone 1992, 1994) adopts a Foucauldian institutional approach to religion. This is not to separate overarching social institutions from more grounded organisations, as might be the case with a Marxist approach. Rather, it is to refer to institutional religion 'in the sense that it provides, for the ancient and contemporary Jews..., underlying doctrinal codes which structure and frame the everyday practices and beliefs of followers' (Valins 2000: 576; see also Valins 2003a, b), and through which they negotiate claims to space with secular and other religious groups. This attention to the emergence of the mystical through the structures of everyday life, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, informs not only the understanding of orthodox religion in this thesis, but also that of other cultures of mystical.

### **2.3.2 Romantic Nature-Mysticism**

As acknowledged above, the mystical does not refer solely to orthodox religion; conversely, not all versions of Romanticism connect it to a sense of the mystical. For Day (1996), the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth century – of the years leading up to, and in the immediate aftermath of, the American Wars of Independence and the French Revolution – were anti-traditional, with a belief in radical humanist politics and universal progress. Later, some Romantics turned against such Enlightenment thought, becoming in certain cases deeply conservative and reactionary. For one writer (Abrams 1971), a sense of the supernatural, drawing upon both Paganism and the Judaeo-Christian tradition, was central to the nature-



mysticism of late Romanticism. Romantic nature-mysticism promoted an anti-positivist, transcendental and unitary sense of self, nature and time, privileging the individual, emotional and spiritual above the social, rational and material (Day 1996). Reading the late Romantics' solitary walking and their search for Rousseau's noble savage through the language of contemporary cultural studies, they could even be argued to have become masculinist and imperialist: drawing on literary criticism, Wallace (1993; see also Day 1996) theorises the textuality of solitary walking as a social ideology in Romantic poetry and prose, though with little sense of its materiality or of walking as an embodied practice (see Macnaghten and Urry 1998; Edensor 2000; Michael 2000; Thrift 2000).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, argues Trentmann (1994), a new Romanticism began to emerge, its popular manifestations being the ramblers' movement (Matless 1998) and the revival of folk culture (Howkins 1986, 1989; Revill 1991, 2000; Boyes 1993; Stradling and Hughes 1993; Stradling 1998). The cultural history of the latter is complex and somewhat elusive, relating to post-Darwinian social theory, geodemographic and political-economic change, and British Imperial geopolitics vis-à-vis Germany and the USA (Wiener 1981; Howkins 1986; Boyes 1993). Socially, it is generally understood to be a cultural movement relating to the gentrification of the new industrial middle-class (Wiener 1981; Howkins 1986; Trentmann 1994). Although also often associated with the political Left (Gould 1988; Trentmann 1994; Ward 1998), it remained rather ambivalent in its cross-political appeal and, yet, its distance from traditional political ideologies, especially after the experiences of World War I (Fussell 1975; Trentmann 1994). More recently, as an example of Romanticism's continuing political ambivalence, Bate (1991) – in opposition to both neo-liberal and classical Marxist economic materialism – sought to reclaim a foundational and materialist Romanticism for the contemporary environmentalist movement.

Where Romantic nature-mysticism privileged individualism, an historical anti-modernism and metaphysical wholeness, the argument continues (Trentmann 1994), this 'Neo-Romanticism' privileged communitarianism, an anthropological anti-modernism and a new scientific ecological awareness. The Romantic worldview also provides the basis for an historical argument that traces the evolution of post-World

War II cultures of protest in Britain from the fantasy novels of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis through the nascent Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament to early environmentalist politics (Veldman 1994). At times, though, the argument is – like that of Trentmann (1994) – somewhat uneasy. While there might have been certain similarities between early nineteenth and early twentieth century Romanticism, and post-war cultures of Romantic protest, these tend to be overemphasised – and thereby used to conflate – the differences pertaining to the historicities of these specific cultural formations of Romanticism and Romantic nature-mysticism.

### 2.3.2.i Celtic Romanticism

‘Underpinning the mystical attachment to landscape,’ writes Lowerson (1992: 162), ‘has been a paradoxical linkage with post-Enlightenment science.’ The origins of this attachment ‘lie in the work of archaeology’s eighteenth-century founding father, William Stukeley [1687-1765], who combined systematic fieldwork with attempts to find a mystical and patriotic explanation for the artefacts he examined.’ Stukeley is the subject of a biography by an academic archaeologist (Piggott 1985), and features strongly in broader histories of landscape antiquities and the ancient [Celtic] Briton in archaeological thought (Piggott 1976, 1989; see also Smiles 1994). During the principal years of Stukeley’s fieldwork, 1718 to 1724, he made among the earliest recorded surveys of the stone circles at Avebury and Stonehenge. However, under the accepted Biblical chronology of the time, which dated the Flood to 2,448 BC, it was necessary to conflate what are now separated as the Stone Age and the [Celtic] Iron Age. His fieldwork, as a result, became combined with what, for Piggott (1976, 1985, 1989), remain unsupported speculations as to the nature of the Druidic religion of the Celts.

Archaeologists no longer associate the Celts with Neolithic landscapes (Piggott 1985, 1989). Malcolm Chapman (1992; see also James 1999) even questions the existence of the Celts as such. However, the late Romantics’ search for Rousseau’s noble savage led them in the direction of the Celtic Fringe (Morgan 1983; Trevor-Roper 1983; Piggott 1985, 1989). Smiles (1994) discusses the broader eighteenth and nineteenth century cultural significance of the ancient Britons, and the attempts to recover and evoke ancient British culture. The Gorsedd ceremony of latter-day

Druid revivalist groups is the invention of Edward Williams [or *Iolo Morganwg*]: a Welsh nationalist with French Revolutionary sympathies, a reader of Stukeley, and a noted forger of historical documents (Piggott 1968, 1985, 1989; Morgan 1983; Smiles 1994). He held his first Gorsedd at Primrose Hill, London, in 1792, with stones from his own pockets delimiting the requisite circle. At his instigation, the Gorsedd was incorporated into the Eisteddfod of Wales at Carmarthen in 1819, and members oversaw the inauguration of the Gorsedd of Brittany in 1900, and of Cornwall in 1928, the latter being discussed in more detail in chapter five. The figure of the Druid, meanwhile, is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.4.ii, below.

Any understanding of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Celtic-Cornish Revivalist movement, of which the inauguration of the Gorsedd of Cornwall was just one outcome, must also connect it to similar revivalist movements in the other nations of the Celtic Fringe. In Scotland, a contemporaneous Celtic revival sought to unite the Highlands and the Lowlands around a common Scottish national identity (Payton 1992). In Wales, a predominantly Nonconformist middle-class began to self-define as a 'hero-class' in opposition to absentee English landlords and the established Church of England (Williams 1985). Buoyed by Welsh cultural and economic vigour, the movement sought to connect Calvinist Methodism and the survival of the Welsh language (Payton 1992). And in Brittany, the Celtic revival was associated with the political geographies of decentralist regionalism, in opposition to French centralism. However, for Celtic revivalists, it was Ireland that came, in many respects, to represent the Celtic archetype. The early nineteenth century Irish nationalism of the Young Ireland movement developed out of popular antiquarianism, providing a basis for the late nineteenth century campaign for Home Rule that began to regather momentum under the impetus of a new generation of cultural and political nationalists (Sheehy 1980; Boyce 1986; Foster 1997; Kearns 2003). 'The two revivals,' for Sheehy (1980: 95), 'had several things in common. Both, though they involved Catholics, had their roots in the Protestant middle classes, both found their expression in literature, and both were closely bound up with politics and Ireland's freedom.'

The failure of William Ewart Gladstone's two Irish Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1892, argues Boyce (1986), allowed Irish cultural nationalists to make stronger

claims to speak for the nationalist movement in general, having until then had relatively little influence upon political nationalism. Among the institutional vehicles of Irish cultural nationalism – which, as aforementioned, was rooted in the work of middle-class Protestant literary figures like W. B. Yeats and J. M. Synge – were the Irish Literary Society, formed in London in 1891, and the National Literary Society, formed in Dublin in 1892 (Sheehy 1980; Boyce 1986; Foster 1997; Kearns 2003). Sheehy (1980: 95) offers two reasons for this close literary connection. First,

‘When the poets and playwrights of the late nineteenth century wished to create a distinctively Irish literature, drawing on native sources, they found an unbroken tradition of folklore, rich in language and literary invention, which had remained alive in remoter country districts through several centuries of neglect. The people of the Irish-speaking districts, the *Gaeltacht*, had distinctly national music, dancing and storytelling, but no fine art to speak of, and very little appreciation of it. The last great period of Irish art, in the eighteenth century, was associated in people’s minds with the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy, and therefore suspect among Nationalists.’

And second, late nineteenth century Irish cultural nationalism was strongly literary because ‘great literary talents, people like Yeats and Synge and [‘Æ’, aka George] Russell, consciously identified themselves with it’ (Sheehy 1980: 95).

Of particular significance was *The Celtic Twilight*, originally published in 1893, in which Yeats opposed the folklore and oral culture of rural Ireland to urban English bourgeois materialism (Foster 1997). ‘I have desired,’ began Yeats (1908: 1), ‘like every artist, to create a little world out of the beautiful, pleasant, and significant things of this marred and clumsy world, and to show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who would look where I bid them.’ Celticism was, for Yeats, philosophical and anti-materialist (Foster 1997). Furthermore, although this Celtic Revival was strongly literary – much of *The Celtic Twilight* is a simple retelling of Irish folk tales – Yeats’ vision of Ireland was also strongly visionary [as distinct from visual], connecting folklore to spiritualism and psychical research, occultism and theosophy: ‘those who investigated it must, like artists, “dare to mix heaven, hell, purgatory and fairyland together”,’ writes Foster (1997: 130). ‘In this context “twilight” meant the hour before the dawn, when this

world and the next were closest, the interpenetration of the spirit and the “real” world recalling Swedenborg as well as Blake.’ Indeed, Yeats (1908: 2) evoked the spirit of Blake in closing his introduction:

‘Hope and Memory have one daughter and her name is Art, and she has built her dwelling far from the desperate field where men hang out their garments upon forked boughs to be banners of battle. O beloved daughter of Hope and Memory, be with me for a little.’

However, there was some tension between Yeats and other Irish cultural and political nationalists over the revival of Irish Gaelic (Foster 1997): Yeats believed that it was possible to create a distinctively Irish literature in the Gaelic mode but the English language, while others believed that the future of Irish nationalism was much more closely bound up with that of the Irish language. The Gaelic League was founded, also in 1893, with its object being ‘the encouragement of the Irish language and of Irish culture’ (Sheehy 1980: 98). Irish Gaelic was apparently important enough to separate from Irish culture although, conversely, the latter was also demonstrably not limited to the former. In 1884, for example, Michael Cusack founded the Gaelic Athletics Association to further the revival of the ancient sports and games of Ireland (Sheehy 1980). Thus, as well as providing an historical context in which to situate the discussion of the Celtic-Cornish Revival in chapters four and five, this sub-section has also opened up the various dimensions of the revivalist movement through which the mystical is explored therein: politics, language and literary culture, antiquarianism, folk culture and folklore, spiritualism and psychical research, occultism and theosophy.

### **2.3.3 Spiritualism and Occultism**

The years from the mid-nineteenth through to the early twentieth centuries are now recognised as a time of increasing religious uncertainty in Britain. Biblical authority was being brought into question by theological criticism, and by a perceived failure of early Christianity to live up to its own progressive humanitarian ideals. Work in geology – Charles Hutton’s [1788] *Theory of the Earth*, James Lyell’s [1830-5] *Principles of Geology* – and the life sciences – Charles Darwin’s [1859] *The Origin of Species* – added to this uncertainty. This undermined the long-held Biblical

chronology, which dated the Creation to 4,004 BC, and thus brought about a radical rethinking of the age of the Earth. Spiritualism and occultism emerged from this period of uncertainty, not as a reflection of a widespread and complete renunciation of Christianity but, for many, more as a reflection of a rethinking of the specific terms of their religious beliefs (Moore 1977; Oppenheim 1985; Henderson 1987; Owen 1989; Materer 1995; Bowler 2001).

Spiritualism – the assertion of the existence of spiritual forces and entities, transcendent of and yet accessible to humans – attracted some who sought to reconcile their religious beliefs with the new scientific worldview. Socially, it is generally understood to be a cultural movement of the upper working- and lower middle-class, in contrast to the coeval folk revival [see section 2.3.2, above]. A number of studies focus on constructions of the typically female self through spiritualist mediumship (Owen 1989; Basham 1992; Hazelgrove 2000), and the tensions between opening up spaces for women and closing them down by subjecting them to the control of the typically male, more sceptically-minded psychological researchers. In response to psychoanalytic concerns with female ‘hysteria’, theological concerns with Eve and the Fall, and biological concerns with the sexes, spiritualism and occultism emerged in part as new forums in which to construct female difference (Basham 1992). An understanding of the turn-of-the-century spiritualist movement is particularly important in contextualising the work of W. Y. Evans-Wentz, to whom the discussion returns in chapter four.

Occultism – ‘matters regarded as involving the action or influence of supernatural agencies or some secret knowledge of them’ (Henderson 1987: 5) – was particularly linked to the period of interest in spiritualism. It was part of a wider nineteenth and early twentieth century movement towards comparative and syncretic studies of Judaeo-Christian and eastern religions, Egyptian and Greco-Roman myths and legends, and the languages, literatures and religions of past and present cultures including, pertinently, those of the Celts (Materer 1995), one of the outcomes of which was the Theosophical Society, founded in New York in 1875 by Madame Helena Blavatsky, a Russian-born medium, and ‘dedicated to the fusion of world knowledge of the supernatural and divine’ (Hutton 1999: 18). Thurschwell (2001) positions occultism – or ‘magical thinking’, relating to the potential uses and abuses

of occult knowledge – at the nexus of new telecommunications technology, early psychoanalysis and the emergence of a new modern self (see also Owen 2001), and a range of coeval but perhaps otherwise contradictory late nineteenth and early twentieth century works of modernist art and literature including those of W. B. Yeats, Bram Stoker, Rudyard Kipling, George du Maurier, Oscar Wilde and Henry James (see also Harper 1976; Henderson 1987; Kinahan 1988; Materer 1995).

The occultist movement was also characterised by a series of secret societies, perhaps the most important of which was the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. The Golden Dawn was founded in 1888 by a group of occult scholars, largely in protest at Blavatsky's refusal to sanction the practice of operative magic within the Theosophical Society. All of the founder members were Freemasons; joint control was held between William Wynn Westcott, who later resigned because he felt that his occult interests were prejudicing his medical career, and Samuel Liddell Mathers, who assumed sole control on Westcott's resignation. 'It needs to be emphasised how remarkable an organization Westcott and Mathers had constructed,' writes Hutton (1999: 76-7) on the Golden Dawn:

'In its structure it resembled the Societas Rosicruciana and the Freemasonry upon which the latter had been based, having a graded process of initiation, with accompanying ceremonies, robes, and symbolic tools. Instead of lodges, it had temples, the main one being in London with a scatter of offshoots in Edinburgh and the English provinces... Temples were laid out according to the plan of a masonic lodge, with the twin pillars (echoing those of Solomon) and central altar. Masonry also left its mark very clearly on the first-degree initiation rite, which reproduced the structure of blindfolding, binding, challenge, admission, presentation, and oath-taking, followed by the First Instruction.'

Interestingly, in 1890, Mathers married Moina Bergson, the sister of Henri Bergson, and, in 1891, Mathers established an inner order within the Golden Dawn. Whereas the outer, or lower, order 'merely trained its members in mystical and magical systems, and in ceremonies intended to propound and illustrate that training,' Hutton (1999: 76) continues, 'the higher order allowed them to engage in operative magic,

invoking and working with deities and spirits' through a series of rituals that Moina Bergson helped Mathers to design: 'As members studied, so they were also expected to cultivate their psychic abilities, by meditation, visualization, and experimentation with clairvoyance, Tantric techniques, geomancy, numerology, astrology, and the projection of spirit from body' (Hutton 1999: 77). In these rituals lie the roots of modern Paganism and New Age mysticism, discussed in more detail in section 2.3.4, below. Initially, in its attitude to religion and gender, the Golden Dawn 'deliberately adopted the open-door policy of the Theosophical Society' (Hutton 1999: 76); however, in the years after 1900, it began to undergo schisms as members became concerned with Mathers' increasingly autocratic, erratic and polytheistic leadership style – the latter being of concern to a membership whose primary, if not sole, allegiance still lay for the most part, and seemingly not paradoxically, with Christianity. One of these schismatic societies was the A.: A.:, formed by Aleister Crowley, to whom – along with Mathers – the discussion returns, on the subject of the occult associations and interests of the Cornish-based artist and writer, Ithell Colquhoun, in chapter six.

### ***2.3.4 Paganism and New Age Mysticism***

#### **2.3.4.i Paganism**

Pagan, for Ross (1967, 1970, 1999), Green (1983, 1986, 1995, 1997) and Hutton (1991, 1994, 1997), means pre-Christian. In the earliest of these cited works, Ross (1967; see also Piggott 1968) identifies the principal religious sites of the Pagan Celts as being rectangular wooden temples and sacred forest groves but not, interestingly enough in the context of contemporary Celtic revivalism and neo-Paganism, stone circles. Ross (1967, 1970, 1999) and Green (1983, 1986, 1995, 1997) both give significant attention to the gods and goddesses of the Celtic religions, myths and legends, and to certain apparent religious cults that emerge from within the archaeological evidence. Ross (1999) suggests that the profusion of Celtic goddesses might reflect gender equality in Celtic society, within which women could hold property and, if of equal prior social status with their husbands-to-be, were therefore accorded equality in marriage. Green (1995, 1997), however, is more



cautious: although evidence suggests that there were Druidesses, for example, she does not take this to mean that all women were necessarily of equal status to men.

It is notable that these studies of the Pagan religions of Britain tend to focus on the Celts, albeit in their strict archaeological definition and through analyses and syntheses of a range of historical and archaeological evidence. Hutton (1997) suggests that it is the limited nature of the historical and archaeological record pertaining to the Pagan Celtic religions that has contributed to the association of the Celtic and the mystical. Indeed, the record is so limited that Hutton (1991; see also Green 1983, 1986, 1995, 1997) argues there will always be a lack of confident knowledge of the Pagan religions of Britain, save perhaps those of the Roman occupation. If the record points anywhere, it is towards a distinct heterogeneity of Pagan practice so that, for Hutton (1991, 1997), we should give up the notion of a uniform Celtic calendar and of a single Pagan Celtic province. Furthermore, although neo-Paganism can claim little continuity from its prehistoric predecessors, certain fragments of Paganism might have survived through to the present day from non-Celtic mediaeval and more recent folk customs and ceremonies (Hutton 1994, 1997). Questions of the historicities of neo-Paganism recur in chapter four around debates over the figure of the Druid in Cornwall's Celtic past, in chapter five around the revival of midsummer bonfires by the Old Cornwall societies, and in chapter six around the figure of Hutton himself and the relationships between academic and alternative archaeology.

#### 2.3.4.ii Modern Pagan Witchcraft and Druidism

Green (1997) distinguishes between witchcraft, which is characterised by a ritual focus upon the lunar cycle, and Druidism, which is characterised by a ritual focus upon the solar cycle. De Blécourt (1999) and Hutton (1999) further distinguish between traditional and modern Pagan witchcraft. Gerald Gardner, although a follower of Aleister Crowley, did not continue Crowley's work upon the latter's death in 1947 (La Fontaine 1999), beginning instead to develop modern Pagan witchcraft. During the 1950s and 1960s, the questionable prehistoric basis to the work of Sir James Frazer and Robert Graves became blended with academic orthodoxy, as archaeologists including O. G. S. Crawford and Glyn Daniel promoted

the idea of a single pan-European pre-Christian religious cult of the Goddess (Hutton 1991, 1997, 1999). The academic counter-arguments of the late 1960s remained in relatively specialist publications, often only to be found in university libraries, and the Mother-Goddess [or Earth-Mother] has readily lent itself to often feminised understandings of pre-Christian witchcraft.

Druidism, in turn, derives largely from Celtic Romanticism. William Stukeley – in opposition to the deist, John Toland – understood the Druids not as practitioners of a natural religion, but instead as forefathers of Anglicanism (Piggott 1968, 1976, 1985, 1989; Chippindale 1994; Smiles 1994; Bender 1995, 1998; Green 1997). Henry Hurle founded the Ancient Order of Druids [AOD] in London in 1781, as a secret society that he modelled, to some extent, upon the Freemasons (Chippindale 1994; Green 1997). The United Ancient Order of Druids broke from the AOD in 1833, in opposition to attempts to deny membership to the poor. Furthermore, not all members of Druidic revivalist groups are practising Pagans, though one can identify certain common neo-Pagan elements. Of particular importance is a cyclical sense of time, ‘the wheel of the year’ (Green 1997). This is normally contrasted to the linear time of secular capitalism, and consequent social and environmental disharmony. A development of such ideas is an emphasis upon the spiritual importance of the sacred centre as a place of integration, which is explored in more detail, in relation to its use as an analytical concept in alternative archaeology, in chapter six.

#### 2.3.4.iii New Age Mysticism

New Age mysticism, for Heelas (1996), is a reaction to individual identity crises of capitalistic modernity, yet is also facilitated by – and, thus, to some extent, serves to perpetuate – precisely those same conditions. He points to the evidence of pseudo-religious and spiritual content in psychotherapeutic self-help books, seminars and workshops to support his argument that the New Age is a surrogate religion, fulfilling a similar socio-cultural role to late nineteenth and early twentieth century spiritualism and occultism (Heelas 1996; McKay 1996, 2000). Different versions of New Age mysticism variously incorporate a sense of eco-spiritual holism and correspondence as represented by the ‘recovery’ of ‘ancient’ [often ‘Pagan’] methods of simple and rural communal living, and a belief in reincarnation and

karma, alternative archaeology or earth mysteries, astrology, psychics and channelers, crystal therapists and UFO lore (Pepper 1991; Heelas 1996; McKay 1996, 2000; Hetherington 2000; Holloway 2000). For Heelas (1996), though, these are all rather tangential ways in which individuals might resacralise themselves/their selves. New Age mysticism also tends to be associated with left-wing and counter-cultural politics (Pepper 1991; Holloway 1998). Specifically, it is a post-1960s turn to [a consumerist version of] the self as a refuge from the cultural-political mainstream that, for Heelas (1996), characterises New Age mysticism as a religious movement. A development of this argument is that New Age travellers (see McKay 1996, 2000; Hetherington 2000), with their communitarian anti-modernism, are actually marginal not only to mainstream society but also to the New Age movement.

New Age mysticism is also associated, through its incorporation of elements of Paganism and alternative archaeology, with certain key sites: most notably, Glastonbury and Stonehenge. Glastonbury, as Wylie (2002; see also McKay 1996, 2000; Holloway 2000) discusses, continues to be associated with a range of mythopoetic and spiritual meanings: Christian tradition, through Joseph of Arimathea and the Holy Grail; Arthurian myth and legend; pre-Christian Celtic religion; and the neo-Pagan revivalist and New Age movements. Drawing upon personal accounts of a series of ascents of Glastonbury Tor, he positions his essay in opposition to de Certeau's dualistic distinctions between elevation and descent, looking and walking, representation and practice which, Wylie argues, leaves no space for the retheorisation of vision as an embodied faculty. Thus, Wylie (2002: 441-2) aims 'to abet and inflect interpretation of the contemporary or historical cultural significance of experiences of ascension and elevation, through focusing upon a descriptive narrative of their enactment.'

For Wylie, 'the focus is not upon the social, cultural and historical modalities which, it is commonly argued, influence "subjective" perceptions of landscape' (Wylie 2002: 446). Rather than focusing on 'the "symbolism" and multifarious "cultural meanings" of the Glastonbury landscape,' Wylie (2002: 446, emphasis added) seeks 'precisely to illustrate their *emergence* and *resonance* within the sensuous, embodied context of ascending the Tor.' However, he then appears to go on to argue that only

the latter approach has any real explanatory value. Such mythopoetic and spiritual meanings as are associated with Glastonbury, he writes,

‘are not an invisible strata enshrouding the physical bedrock of the landscape (as though they resided aspatially in the perceptions and reflections of those who live in and visit Glastonbury); rather they constitute the cultural and historical being of the visible which emerges through its production of subjectivity’ (Wylie 2002: 446).

Indeed, while Wylie (2002: 454) concludes that the Tor is ‘a modulation of the visible world which lets there be a gaze to behold things open and hidden,’ and that the elevation of the Tor ‘reveals and conducts the surrounding landscape which supports it in turn,’ so that, ‘between their configuration, patterns and orders, myths and meanings begin to emerge,’ he makes no mention of how these myths and meanings might also resonate with one another. While the ‘sensuous, embodied context of ascending the Tor’ might contribute to associations of Glastonbury with the mystical, the awkward separation of the cultural and historical being of subject and landscape suggests that such associations – and, indeed, their respective media of representation – are somehow phenomenologically and ahistorically immanent in experiences of the Glastonbury landscape.

Holloway (2000; see also Holloway 1998), in contrast, seeks to contribute to the engagement of geography with ANT by offering the latter as a new and alternative theoretical and methodological approach to the study of institutional geographies, through a Glastonbury case study of the New Age movement. Institutional geographies are, for Holloway (2000), active space-times that both enrol, and are enrolled by, New Age teachers and practitioners. His focus is on how the institutional networks of spirituality, which connect the New Age movement to other religious/spiritual and secular individuals and groups, become active space-times within the movement, thus locating the New Age subject within a web of spatio-temporal relations and processes. However, in order to achieve this, he separates network spirituality from individual processes of New Age transformation, which serves somewhat to obscure the detailed practices and presuppositions, pertaining to the active role of the mystical, that are at work in the making of the New Age subject.

Since the late nineteenth century, Stonehenge has also been claimed by alternative archaeologists, and has become a focus for contests over rights of access by neo-Pagan and Druid revivalist groups (Chippindale 1994; Bender 1995, 1998; McKay 1996, 2000; Hetherington 2000). Similarly, Glastonbury is variously claimed by, and contested between, elements within neo-Paganism and New Age mysticism. Glastonbury Tor is found in Welsh [i.e. Celtic] folklore, and the Tor is aligned to the rising or setting sun on the four principal dates of the Pagan calendar (Hutton 1997). The Glastonbury Zodiac maps the seven stars of Ursa Major on to the seven hills of Glastonbury and, through the translation of its name into ‘Great Bear’, also connects to Arthurian myths and legends (Stradling and Hughes 1993; Stradling 1998; Revill 2000; McKay 2000; Barczewski 2000) and Celtic Christianity (Lowerson 1994), while the so-called St Michael ley line runs via Glastonbury, from Cornwall to Norfolk (McKay 1996, 2000; but see Bellamy and Williamson 1983). These spatialities, and the associated relationships between neo-Paganism and New Age mysticism, underpin much of the discussion in chapter six.

## **2.4 Cornish Studies**

This section positions contemporary debates on the region as a unit of geographical study, as discussed in section 2.1, and on the mystical as a cultural and historical category, as discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3, in relation to Cornwall and, in particular, to the academic field of Cornish Studies as it has developed since the 1980s through a particular spatialisation of the humanities and social sciences. Section 2.4.1 discusses the ways in which different senses of Cornwall, and of Cornish identity – what one might term different territorialisations of Cornwall – become active in different approaches to Cornish Studies through the variously social, cultural, political and economic inflections of recent research in Cornish Studies, and through a range of engagements with, and evocations of, different sensibilities of the Celtic. Section 2.4.2, meanwhile, reviews recent research on different cultural and historical formations of the mystical in Cornish Studies, utilising similar section headings to those that were used in section 2.3: thus section 2.4.2.i reviews recent work on the cultural history of orthodox religion in Cornwall, section 2.4.2.ii reviews recent work on Romantic nature-mysticism, and section 2.4.2.iii reviews recent work on Paganism, occultism and New Age mysticism,

highlighting the connections between the material being reviewed and the empirical research material contained within chapters four, five and six.

#### **2.4.1 Cornwall in Cornish Studies**

The academic field of Cornish Studies emerged from the early twentieth century Celtic-Cornish Revival, the roots of which lay in antiquarianism and Celtic studies (Payton 1993a, c; Deacon 2002). However, during the 1980s, a new Cornish Studies began to develop out of the social sciences (Payton 1997a). It had a strong social policy-oriented emphasis on the empirical and the applied, as perhaps was first represented by *Cornwall at the Crossroads?* (Deacon, George and Perry 1988; see also Perry 1993a, 2002; Deacon 2002; M. Williams 2002). Further such work has sought to further an understanding of the issues and problems associated with demographic change (Bryant 1993; Mitchell 1993; Williams and Harrison 1995; Williams and Champion 1998; Elzey 1998; Aldous and Williams 2001), regional economic development (Bristow 1993; Perry 1993b, 2002; Crowther and Carter 2001), housing (Buck, Williams and Bryant 1993; Williams 1993; Williams 1995), health care (Sheaff 1996), tourism (Thornton 1993, 1994; Williams and Shaw 1993; Busby 2003, 2004) and local and regional government (Payton 1993d; Lee 1993; Thomas 1994; Wills 1998; Sandford 2003). In practice, continues Payton (1997a: 16; see also Deacon 1993), these research agendas began to coalesce with those of a more cultural-historical underpinning, ‘as the work of historians, political scientists and economists converged with that of sociologists, geographers, anthropologists, environmentalists, psychologists and cultural studies practitioners.’ Indeed, having been born in Cornwall to a Cornish family, Payton himself came to Cornish Studies via a doctoral research project on the Cornish diaspora in Australia at the University of Adelaide, a career as an education officer in the Royal Navy and a senior lectureship in the Department of History and International Affairs at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. Cornish Studies thus now encompasses a wide range of interdisciplinary work.

The Institute of Cornish Studies [ICS] was established in 1970, the result of a partnership between the University of Exeter and Cornwall County Council that was largely engineered by F. L. Harris, who was both chairman of the Council Education

Committee and head of the University's Extra-Mural Department in Cornwall, and who made guarantees that the ICS would be located in Cornwall. Having originally been based in Pool [between Redruth and Camborne], the ICS moved to Truro in 1994 and then to Tremough [just outside Falmouth] to form part of the new University of Exeter in Cornwall campus in 2004. For Payton (1993a; see also Deacon 2000), its director since 1991 and the editor of the annual *Cornish Studies* volume since 1993, the remit of the ICS is nothing less than the study of any and all forms of Cornish difference. 'It is a "difference" that exists not in parochial isolation but is an integral part of that wider pattern of European cultural and territorial diversity,' writes Payton (1993a: 3), and *Cornish Studies* should be seen as 'a reflection of that diversity, a window into the life of one small but (we like to believe) unique part of the Atlantic periphery of Britain and Europe.' Here, and elsewhere, Payton (1992, 1993a, 1995a, 1996a, 1997a, b) links Cornishness to Cornwall's position on the periphery of the UK but at the centre of the Atlantic seaboard of north-western Europe, which itself is on the continental periphery. He is, however, careful to avoid any implications of spatial determinism (cf. Hechter 1975); instead, he investigates the constant cultural remaking of peripherality and its reproduction of experiences of recent Cornish history (Payton 1992). In the first instance, then, the field of Cornish Studies depends upon an understanding of what it means to be Cornish (Deacon 1993, 2004; Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton 1993d, 1997a; Ivey and Payton 1994; Burton 1997; Hale 1997a, 2002a; Vernon 1998; Hayden 2001; C. Williams 2002). Cornwall, in its ambivalent relationships to other regions of the British state and the European Union, presents a particular and unique problem to those who consider the British question.

Furthermore, the implication of the peripherality thesis (Payton 1992) is that an important part of an understanding of Cornish identity lies in an understanding of what it means to be Celtic. Payton (1995a) considers two arguments: that 'the Celtic' is the Romantic invention of English outsiders (Chapman 1992; James 1999), and that it might be a nationalist cultural-political strategy for marginalised insiders (Berresford-Ellis 1985). Ultimately, though, Payton (1995a) concludes that 'Celtic' is simply shorthand for the cultural and historical affinities of peripheral north-west Europe. One such affinity is the experiences of the speakers of the minority Celtic languages – Scots and Irish Gaelic, Manx, Welsh, Cornish and Breton – in relation to

the official and majority state languages of Latin, English and French. Cornish Studies has, therefore, also provided a forum for the ongoing debate over the revival of the Cornish language (Payton and Deacon 1993; Penglase 1994; George 1995; Williams 1996, 1999; Mitchell 1998; Spriggs 1998, 2003; Mills 1999; Hawke 2001; Kennedy 2002; MacKinnon 2002, 2004; Holmes 2003), a debate that Deacon (1996) suggests is part of the post-modernisation of the Cornish Revival. Donaldson (1999), drawing upon the work of the ICS although ostensibly working outside of its institutional structures, studies the potential role for the Cornish language revival as an example of ‘cultural literacy’ in the promotion of rural development in the European regional context.

Another of these affinities is the academic connection between Cornish Studies and the wider field of Celtic Studies. Hale and Payton (2000) argue that Celtic Studies has, until recently, been predominantly historical and archaeological in approach, with a particular focus upon mediaeval history and comparative Indo-European linguistics and literature. There has, on the other hand, been relatively little attention paid to ‘politics, contemporary religion, popular culture, economics or anthropology’ (Hale and Payton 2000: 1). David Harvey et al (2002: 4, original italics; see also Hale 1997a) offer the following definition of the Celtic, in an attempt to capture the contemporary flexibility of the category:

*‘the term Celtic refers to a group of people living on the Atlantic seaboard of Europe who share common cultural and/or ethnic characteristics, but it has been reworked and appropriated in recent years to include a large number of other individuals, living beyond the Celtic territories, who feel an affinity to various aspects of Celtic culture.’*

The point, then, is not to define ‘Celtic’, but to examine the processes by which certain places, peoples and practices become Celticised, thereby opening up a range of new directions to the field of Celtic Studies (see Williams 2000; Deacon 2002).

Some of these new directions lead towards studies of the negotiated cultural and historical construction of Celtic identities, both collectively – within the Celtic Fringe (Lilley 2002; Robertson 2002) and across the various Celtic diasporas (Hale and Thornton 2000; Payton 2000; Hague 2002) – and individually (Curtis 2000; Robb 2002). Others lead more specifically towards studies of the cultural geopolitics



of devolution (MacLeod 2002; Osmond 2002) and the new mediatory spaces of national history (Cooke and McLean 2002; Lorimer 2002). More explicitly policy-oriented directions point towards the evaluation of language tuition schemes (Stowell 2000) and the potential economic benefits of the wider reclamation of a Celtic culture (Pedersen 2000), especially through a tourist industry that still markets the Celtic Fringe in terms of rural folk Romanticism (Minard 2000; Kneafsey 2000, 2002; see also Gruffudd 1994, 1996; Gruffudd, Herbert and Piccini 1999, 2000). Celtic culture also works through various genres of popular music and music festivals (Thornton 2000; Boyle 2002; Kent 2002b; Symon 2002), film & TV (Jones 2000; Kent 2003), tattoo art and surfing (Kent 2002b), and contemporary Celtic spirituality (Bowman 2000; Hale 2002b), the discussion returning to the latter in chapter six.

Some prefer to use Celtic as a strictly archaeological synonym for Iron Age, and others as an exclusively linguistic term. But if, as Chapman (1992; see also Hale 1996, 1997a) argues, the historical origins of the term, 'Celtic', lie in ancient Greek and Roman descriptions of the various non-Greco-Roman ethnic and tribal groups that occupied northern and western Europe, then the Celts might not have conceived of themselves as a single homogeneous people. As Payton (1995a) and Hale (1996, 1997a) point out, though, the Celtic has come to adopt a position of central importance in the Cornish Revival over the course of the twentieth century. Indeed, Cornwall gained membership to the Celtic Congress in 1904. For Hale (1997a), then, the task is not to argue the historical [in]authenticity of Celtic-Cornish identity in terms of narrow categories of truth and falsehood, but to investigate the ways in which different versions of the Celtic give meaning to those who are considered [by themselves and/or by others] to be Cornish, and have thus contributed to different versions of Cornish identity. The ways in which different versions of Cornwall become variously connected to different versions of the Celtic is a theme that recurs throughout chapters four, five and six of this thesis.

Cornish Studies presents a broadly standard historical narrative of the Celtic-Cornish Revival as an ambivalently collaborative effort between the burgeoning railway-based tourist industry and the activities of a group of like-minded middle-class Cornish activists (Payton 1992, 1996a, 1997b; Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and

Thornton 1995; Perry 1997, 1999; Thomas 1997; Vernon 1998; Trezise 2000a). For the early Revivalists, the Celtic referred back to a pre-industrial vernacular landscape of mediaeval [and earlier] settlement patterns, with its associated social structures and its attendant Romanticised visions of a Celtic past (Deacon and Payton 1993; Hale 1997b). Most also referred to the Celtic language of Cornwall, while some – mainly travel writers – wrote of a Celtic temperament. This, reflect Payton and Thornton (1995; see also Perry 1997), sits rather uneasily with the preferred historical narrative of the contemporary ‘Cornish Movement’ that gives sole explanatory power to ‘English’ tourism (see, for example, Angarrack 1999). The Revival grew to encompass language, festivals [for example, the Cornish Gorsedd (Payton 1996a; Hale 1997a, b, 2000, 2002b)], music [including ‘Celtic’ pipes], costume [a Cornish tartan (Payton 1996a; Hale 1997b)] and sport [Cornish wrestling, county rugby (Payton 1996a; Hale 1997b, Seward 1997; see also Clarke 2004)]. Interestingly, though, Tregidga (1997; see also Payton 1996a, 1997b) observes that the early Revivalists were often of a Unionist politics, in contrast to the nationalist movements towards Irish Home Rule, and the establishment of Plaid Cymru [in 1925] and the National Party of Scotland [in 1928]. But the Celtic Revival is ongoing, and Celticity is constantly being reinvented, as Alberro (2001) demonstrates in his attempt to find similarities between Cornish and Galician folklore, thereby to claim Celtic status for Galicia.

Other studies have pointed in potential research directions pertaining to the role of Cornish arts and literature in the reproduction of Cornish identity (Hurst 1993; Murdoch 1996; Laviolette 1999, 2003; Kent 2000, 2002a; Howlett 2004). Some of these landscapes are those of artists and writers who are variously identified as native Cornish, including those that emerge from the poetry of John Harris (Hurst 1997), Jack Clemo (Hurst 1995; Payton 1996a) and Charles Causley (Hurst 1999) and the contemporary literature of Myrna Combellack, Alan Kent and N. R. Phillips (Kent 1997, 2000; see also Payton 1996a). Some associate this native literary tradition with an ‘authentic’ Cornish working-class culture of mining and Methodism (Deacon and Payton 1993; Hurst 1993, 1997; Payton 1996a; Deacon 1997b; Dunstan 1997; Kent 1997, 2000). This native literary tradition is often opposed to the naïve Romanticism of non-native art and literature. Among those non-native writers who are held responsible for Romanticised constructions of Cornwall and Cornishness,

one can find work on Thomas Hardy (Payton 1996a; Trezise 1997), D. H. Lawrence (Payton 1996a; Westland 2002) and Daphne du Maurier (Light 1991; Payton 1996a; Hughes 1997; Birks 1997; Busby and Hambly 2000). However, this dualism of native working-class realism and non-native middle-class Romanticism serves only to obscure the ambivalent subtleties of constructions of Cornish identity in, for example, Arthur Caddick's satirical affiliations with Celtic-Cornish Revivalists (Brace 1999), and Winston Graham's cross-class nostalgias of eighteenth century Cornwall (Moody 1997).

Cornish Studies also encompasses work that seeks to recover other social and cultural histories of Cornwall – especially from the late mediaeval period: from the 1497 and 1549 uprisings (Payton 1993b; Mattingly 1998; Stoye 2002), Shakespearean England (Kent 1996), and the Civil War (Stoye 1996, 2002; Payton 2003) – and that reflects upon the methodological issues associated with research into particular periods of Cornish history (James-Korany 1993; Lay 1995, Harvey 1997; Schwartz 2001; Buckley 2002; Crago 2002; Thomas 2002; Dalley 2003; Deacon 2003; Tregidga and Ellis 2004). Another important aspect of more recent Cornish history is that of nineteenth century Cornish migration, both in- and out-migration (Deacon 1997a; Morris 1999; Schwartz 2002), within Britain (Deacon 1998) and, most especially, to the new mining districts of Australia, South Africa and the eastern USA. Thus some seek to further investigations into the roles of the experience of migration and mining in the reproduction of Cornish identity among the Cornish diaspora (James 1994; Rossler 1994; Davies 1995; Payton 1995b, 1996b, 2001; Mindenhall 2000; Schwartz 2001; Kent 2004a). For Rule (2001), however, relatively few of these studies reflect upon the experience of mining in Cornwall and the reproduction of Cornish identity (though see Payton 2002; Kippen and Collins 2004).

Other work has focused upon recent Cornish political history (Lee 1993, 2004; Elvins 1999, 2001, 2003; Jaggard 2002; Tregidga 2002; Deacon, Cole and Tregidga 2003; Doe 2004). In particular, it has focused on three main areas: on the failure of the Labour Party to achieve significant representation in Cornwall (Jaggard 1993; Lee 1993; Payton 1994; Tregidga 1999; but see Chapman 2004), on the concomitant electoral successes of the Liberal Party and its latter-day successors (Jaggard 1993;

Payton 1994; Tregidga 1997, 1999, 2000; Elvins 1998), and on the rise of Mebyon Kernow and the Cornish Nationalist Party and the adoption of their decentralist politics by the Liberal Democrats (Vink 1993; Tregidga 1997; Deacon, Cole and Tregidga 2003; Lee 2004). Herein, Vink (1993) identifies three aspects of the Cornish ethno-regional movement that it has in common with other similar western European movements – its capacity for internal dissension, and the appropriation of certain aspects of the movement by the political mainstream, but also its paradoxical success in penetrating into European political debate. Payton (2001), interestingly, reflects upon the support of emigrant Cornish miners for the Australian Labor Party.

Some of the most recent work in Cornish Studies has, in line with contemporary cultural studies, attempted to recover the experiences of historically marginalised cultural groups. One such area of work has focused on women's experiences of eighteenth and nineteenth century industrialisation (Schwartz 1999, 2000; Perry 2000), especially of their enforced movement from domestic to more visible forms of employment in the Cornish mining industry, which one writer (Abrams 2000) compares to women's experience of daily life in Shetland. Another such area of work has focused on women's experiences of the suffrage movement in Cornwall (Bradley 2000), and on their experiences of Liberalism and radical politics during the rise of the Labour Party elsewhere in Britain (Crago 2000). Reid (1997) and Trezise (2000b) discuss the co-construction of gender and Cornwall in the writings of Virginia Woolf, while Hubback (1997) draws upon Jungian psychoanalysis to argue the symbolic significance to women of the Cornish coast. Such social, cultural political and economic histories of Cornwall are doubly important to this thesis, in that they contribute to the effective decentring of the mystical as a cultural category throughout chapters four, five and six, and to the broader contextualisation of this thesis within the field of Cornish Studies.

#### ***2.4.2 Cultures of the Mystical in Cornish Studies***

##### **2.4.2.i Orthodox Religion**

Some work in Cornish Studies approaches the subject of religion in terms of the potential historical value of various religious records to Cornish historians

(Woodhouse 1993; Frost 2003) and to the continuing debate over the revival of the Cornish language (Spriggs 1998; Tschirschky 2003; Murdoch 2004). Meanwhile, Cockerham (2000, 2001) explains the apparent growth market in post-Reformation slate slab memorials in Cornwall in terms of increased social cohesion and gradual adaptation to historical change. Drawing on the tradition of multivariate statistical analysis in the field of the geographies of religion [see section 2.3.1, above], Winter (1991) identifies a decline in Methodism in twentieth century Cornwall, and a rise in Anglicanism. However, he also understands his work as merely providing the statistical bones to future research in one particular geographical case study of religion. Of the new research directions suggested by his work, he writes that ‘probably the most neglected and challenging research possibility of all would be to conduct a detailed historical sociology of changing religiosity in post-war Cornwall’ (Winter 1991: 174).

Of the earliest historical sources for those who would research the role of Catholicism in the reproduction of Cornish identity, among the principle sources are the *Ordinalia* – a trilogy of miracle plays, dating from the late fourteenth century (Hall 1999) – and *Beunans Meriasek* [The Life of Saint Meriasek], another miracle play, the earliest collated edition of which dates from 1504 but parts of which might possibly date from the late fifteenth century (Payton 1993b), given that it actually consists of three distinct parts: (i) the life of St Meriasek, (ii) the life of St Sylvester, including the conversion to Christianity of the Roman emperor Constantine, and (iii) the Woman’s Son, being an example of the genre of the Miracles of the Virgin (Olson 1997). In the *Ordinalia*, Hall (1999) identifies proposals for a restructured church, held in tension between Exeter, Canterbury and Rome [and the laity, especially the dissenters among it]. The version of Catholicism that these plays present is one that is divorced from its grass roots (Hall 1999). In *Beunans Meriasek*, Payton (1993b) identifies a theme of pro-Catholic Marianism, in which the central state should be subordinate to the Church. Its performances thus came to play an important role in Cornish identity during Cornwall’s anti-Reformation protests. The identification of this theme of resentment, by the periphery, of the tyranny of the centre, connects to other work by Payton (1992, 1996a; Deacon and Payton 1993) and others.

As parochial Catholicism began to co-opt Celtic Christianity from the seventh century, mediaeval hagiographies and the tithing system came to the fore as local communities negotiated the new emerging sense of territoriality with representatives of Canterbury and Rome (Harvey 2000, 2002, 2003). The Celtic-Cornish Revivalists sought and celebrated the ways in which the Cornish had supposedly maintained a connection to this pre-Roman Catholic past, through folklore, superstition, myths and legends; a past of a Celtic Christianity, of King Arthur and the Saints and a time when the rest of non-Celtic Britain had lapsed back into Paganism (Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Hale 1997b; Beckett and Windsor 2003; Everett 2003). It is notable that Arthurianism is often connected to orthodox religion and the stories of the Saints: a comparison of the formation of saints' names in Cornish, Welsh and Breton, and their use in place names, also includes a section on King Arthur (Williams 1999); and *Beunans Meriasek*, the aforementioned mediaeval miracle play, alludes to the symbolic importance of King Arthur's Castle at Tintagel, in opposition to Tudor claims to Arthurian legitimacy (Payton 1993b; Olson 1997). Saint Meriasek, according to Payton (1993b), had a particular cult following in Cornwall and Brittany. The claims made to the Saints by different cultures of the mystical, as they are informed and underpinned by different religious histories of Cornwall, is a recurrent theme of chapters four, five and six.

'By the 17th and 18th centuries,' write Deacon and Payton (1993: 63-4),

'the older Cornish culture, associated with a Celtic vernacular and clearly non-English meanings... was being firmly marginalised. It was overlaid by an emerging, reconstructed culture of Cornishness based on the twin poles of mining and Methodism. This, by the early 19th century, had become the locally dominant culture, structuring the meanings Cornish people gave to "being Cornish".'

John Wesley visited Cornwall on 32 occasions in the years after 1743, and Methodism – with its promotion of the values of self-help and thrift, and its egalitarian and democratic tendencies – combined with the growing Cornish mining industries to create one particular and distinctive local identity (Deacon and Payton 1993; see also Mildren 2004). Methodist preachers, as noted above, tended to preach self-reliance, in opposition to collective industrial unionisation (Deacon 1997a; but see Chapman 2004). This, in part, explains the close association of Cornish

Methodism with Liberal Party electoral success whereas other industrial communities around the country might have lent their electoral support to Labour (Payton 1994; Tregidga 1999). Indeed, the predominantly Conservative politics of the *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, established in 1803, were challenged by the Liberal and reformist politics of the *West Briton*, established in 1810, and the first editor of which was Edward Budd, a local Methodist preacher (Elvins 2001). The problematic position of Cornwall's Methodist history within particular cultures of the mystical also recurs in the three empirical chapters.

#### 2.4.2.ii Romantic Nature-Mysticism

Histories of Cornish Romanticism tend to refer back to the same historical narrative (compare Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Payton 1996a; Perry 1997; Vernon 1998). The collapse of Cornish copper and tin mining in the 1860s and 1870s left a cultural vacuum that was filled by the Celtic-Cornish Revival and the tourist-oriented Romantic reinvention of Cornwall. The opening of the Royal Albert Bridge across the River Tamar in 1859 was followed by Thomas Cook's first package holiday to Land's End in 1860 (Payton and Thornton 1995; Vernon 1998), and the railway-based Cornish tourist industry began to burgeon. Art colonists' eulogies of Cornwall and, in particular, the work of Alfred Wallis also referred back to this Romantic universal myth of origin (Payton 1996a; Vernon 1998; see also Lübbren 2001, on art colonies; Crouch and Toogood 1999, on Peter Lanyon). 'The celebration of "primitivism" owed much to the idealisation of Wallis as an other-worldly, uneducated, peasant painter whose impoverished life had finely attuned him to the "natural" rhythms of his unspoilt environment,' writes Vernon (1998: 162):

'English artists and critics since [Ben] Nicholson have tended to subsume Wallis's Cornish alterity and difference within some form of transcendental "primitive" consciousness or "nature" over which they claim a superior knowledge.'

But Cornish revivalists also linked their visions of a primitive and innately mystical Cornwall to a perceived spiritual vacuum of England (Deacon and Payton 1993; Payton and Thornton 1995; Payton 1996a; Perry 1997).

Nineteenth century folklorists, too, ‘had hinted at the romantic possibilities of myth and legend against the background of dramatic land and seascapes,’ writes Payton (1996a: 259-260), ‘a heady mix to which other writers soon added the Cornish folk themselves.’ Thomas Hardy’s love affair with Emma Gifford ‘was conducted against the strikingly majestic coast and country of... North Cornwall’ (Payton 1996a: 260; see also Trezise 1997), which Hardy named ‘Lyonesse’. While Westland (2002) does not rule out the possibility of D. H. Lawrence’s encountering the Celtic-Cornish Revival, his engagement with Cornwall was influenced more by his occasional visitors from London. His ‘quest for pre-Christian wisdom and spiritual Otherness was unmistakably of its period’ (Westland 2002: 271), incorporating elements of both early twentieth century Romanticism and occultism into ‘his rejection of the Western Christian civilization which he saw as leading to total European war’ (Westland 2002: 271-2). Payton (1996a: 261) argues that Lawrence came to Cornwall in search of a cultural and geographical Other in which to locate his imaginary utopian commune of Rananim, making him ‘the original New Age traveller.’

Moreover, Vernon (1998: 154) argues that ‘the only way in which the Cornish subaltern could speak itself as a nation’ was through the appropriation of ‘the English imagination of Cornwall as a primitive “Celtic” land of myth and romance against which the forward march of civility could be plotted.’ Deacon and Payton (1993) and Perry (1997), meanwhile, emphasise the failure of intellectual Cornish Revivalists to connect their versions of Cornwall to the socio-economic reality of the Cornish working class. Deacon and Payton (1993) argue that the Revivalists understood, and so sought to promote, tourism as the only means by which to revive the Cornish economy. They were, therefore, compelled by economic necessity to appropriate the English discourses of Romantic Cornishness. Perry (1997), on the other hand, argues that there was no economic agenda to Revivalism, and that it was detached from the economic reality that there still remained, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the potential to revive the Cornish mining industries. Both arguments are linked, albeit in different ways, to the argument that Romantic nature-mysticism has served to reinforce English cultural and political power over Cornwall (see also Chapman 1992; Kent 1996; James 1999).



The rediscovery of the Cornish ‘folk’ was not simply part of an anti-rationalist romance of a pre-industrial golden age, though. It was also part of a genuine attempt to establish the collection and collation of folklore within the realms of serious anthropological science in Britain, as discussed in section 2.3.2. In Cornwall, the inheritor of William Stukeley’s early antiquarian legacy was the Reverend William Borlase (1733 [1754]), who likewise connected the Druidic religion of the ancient Britons to the Neolithic landscape relics of Cornwall (Hale 1997a). Borlase did not connect them to the Celts but, though he and his great-great-grandson, William Copeland Borlase (1893), did not use the word, ‘Celtic’, their comparative foci clearly fell upon the Celtic Fringe. It is in the work of the folklorist, Robert Hunt (1865, 1866), that one might find the earliest bold assertion of the contemporary Cornish as living Celts (Hale 1997a): pantheistic, with fertile and poetic imaginations, and a deep feeling for the mysterious. Hunt’s work towards the collection and collation of Cornish folklore – and, similarly, that of his contemporary, William Bottrell (1870, 1873, 1880) – has been claimed in the name of several different cultures of mystical knowledge in the decades since its original publication. The Celtic has thus become broadly spatially, but not historically, specific; and tourism to the Celtic Fringe continues to draw upon an association of the aesthetic and the sacred, in opposition to industrialism and materialism (Lowerson 1994; Perry 1999) and cutting across early Christianity, Celtic Paganism and the occult (Perry 1999; Bowman 2000; Hale 2002b).

#### 2.4.2.iii Paganism and New Age Mysticism

Rather than examine the Celtic in terms of tradition and authenticity, Hale (1997a) prefers to re-examine the recent history of Celtic Cornwall through ideas of style and meaning. In adopting what she calls an ‘ethnographic’ approach, she aims to investigate the ways in which tradition and authenticity work in Cornish cultural revivalism, and in which these relate to a wider Celtic network. The Celtic is an often ideologically driven historical discourse, albeit one which is open to appropriation through the influence of specific local versions of the Celtic. For example, ideas of a Celtic mysticism developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a native British contribution to the otherwise eastern mysticism that was at the heart of the spiritualist and occult movement of the time (Hale 2000;

Lowenna 2004), as is discussed, in the contexts of Cornwall's application for membership of the Celtic Association and the writing of *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* (Evans-Wentz 2002 [1911]), in chapter four. The story of the Celtic is thus a story of negotiation and change, over space and time. 'In order to understand how the concept of "Celtic" works in late twentieth-century Cornwall,' Hale (1997a: 97) writes, 'it will be crucial to know how it affects the expressive behaviour and stylistic responses of those individuals who self-identify with a Celtic ethnicity, or perhaps with other forms of perceived Celtic inheritance, such as spirituality.' Following on from these conclusions, Hale (2002b) proceeds to investigate the relationships between Celtic spirituality and Cornish identity.

Celtic spirituality 'is a very wide-ranging phenomenon, and today includes such diverse but related groups as Neo-Druids, Wiccans, Celtic shamans, New Agers, New Age Travellers, Goddess worshippers, New Age Christians and Pagan eco-warriors' (Hale 2002b: 159; see also Bowman 2000). Most of these groups respond to the draw of what Lowerson (1994) calls 'Celtic tourism'. Their Celticity is elective, based on affinity to the various connections between Neolithic landscape relics and the Celts, Druidism, and Arthurian myths and legends, rather than on their place of birth or on their speaking of a Celtic language (Bowman 2000). The conflict over claims to historical authenticity is particularly marked in the tension between Celtic spirituality and the Cornish industrial heritage (Hale 2002b). The fact that the Celtic Fringe lies on the west of the British Isles, combined with the fact that the sun sets in the west [and its mythical associations with the afterlife], contributed to the link between the Celtic and the mystical (Trezise 2000a). The various attempts to revive the ancient British Druidic religion have also led to an uneasy relationship between the 'cultural' druidism of the Cornish Gorsedd, which was satirised by Arthur Caddick (Brace 1999) and others (Hale 2002b), and its 'esoteric' counterparts (Hale 2000). This late twentieth century rediscovery and reinvention of the Celtic, and the complex, multiple and sometimes contradictory tensions between claims to the Celtic in the names of both Christian and Pagan groups, is central to the discussion in chapter six.

## Methodology

One might initially suppose there to be something of a paradox in the detailing of a methodological approach to the mystical given that, for William James (2002), one of the defining characteristics of mystical knowledge was that it is inaccessible in normal states of consciousness. Furthermore, for Jantzen (1995: 322),

‘present-day philosophers and theologians... regularly speak of mysticism as though that term is clearly understood: it stands for a subjective psychological state, perhaps a state of “altered consciousness”, in which an individual undergoes a private intense experience, usually of a religious nature.’

Indeed, in a recent discussion on the geographies of religion at the online Critical Geography Forum, Paul Harrison (2004) asked:

‘is it possible within the epistemological and methodological terms of social science to actually study such phenomena as religious experience without explaining it away as ideology or identity, or are the two “language games” completely antithetical to each other?’

However, as discussed in section 2.2, Jantzen (1995: 323) argues ‘that mysticism as it is presently understood is a modern invention, and that within the Christian tradition it has had a variety of meanings quite different from those which are ascribed to it today.’ Instead, her intention – and the intention here – is to examine ‘how the mystical has been understood in a variety of times and places within the Christian west’ (Jantzen 1995: 323). One of the aims of this study is to develop Jantzen’s historical argument in four ways: firstly, to localise an examination of the mystical in one particular region of

‘the Christian west’, namely Cornwall and, secondly and relatedly, to explore the potential contribution of geographical approaches to the study of the mystical; thirdly, to nuance her identification of a modern understanding of the mystical by exploring different modernities and different mysticals in the period since approximately 1870; and, fourthly, to extend the study of the mystical beyond Christian mysticism. Accordingly, this thesis is methodologically based upon archival research and close textual reading, oral history and biography – a set of approaches to the research material that might broadly be termed an historical methodology, and a set of approaches that is discussed in detail in this chapter.

In addition, as was also discussed in the previous chapter, different cultures of the mystical are characterised by different sets of methods, disciplines and techniques by which to attain mystical knowledge. Consequently, this thesis aims to understand the mystical through a close attention to these methods, disciplines and techniques, rather than to explain mystical experience in itself; it does not proceed with a preconceived definition of the mystical but, rather, it seeks to investigate the circumstances in which different sets of methods, disciplines and techniques become mysticised. Nonetheless, such an approach still raises a set of cultural and political questions relating to the relationship between the researcher and the research materials in attending to the spatial, historical and sociological differences over what counts as mystical knowledge. Therefore, sections 3.1 and 3.2 discuss the politics and poetics of archival work and close textual reading, and oral history and biography, respectively, as they relate the researching of this thesis and of the mystical in general, while section 3.3 discusses similar questions as they relate to the position of fieldwork in the research process.

### **3.1 The Mystical and the Archive**

For Carolyn Steedman (2001: 9, original emphasis),

‘commentators have found remarkably little to say about record offices, libraries and repositories, and have been brought face to face with the

*ordinariness*, the unremarkable nature of archives, and the everyday disappointments that historians know they will find there.’

Rather than finding remarkably little to say, it is in this very ordinariness of the archive that, for Thomas Osborne (1999: 51), historians should find much upon which to reflect:

‘Whether as a notion, impression, concept or anti-concept, the image of the archive is a useful focal point for bringing together issues of representation, interpretation and reason with questions of identity, evidence and authenticity; in other words, just those issues that tend to concern those who work on those kinds of problems that typically characterize the history and historiography of the human and cultural sciences.’

Thus, the archive raises questions relating to the nature of archival materials, to the status of archival knowledge, and to the representability and recoverability of history in general and, in the context of this thesis, of the mystical in particular, in the archive.

‘There is everything, or Everything,’ Steedman (2001: 146, original emphasis) continues,

‘the great undifferentiated past, all of it, which is not history, but just stuff... The smallest fragment of its representation (nearly always in some kind of written language) ends up in various kinds of archive and record office (and also in the vastly expanded data banks that Derrida refers to in “Archive Fever”)... From that, you make history, which is never what *was* there, once upon a time. (There was only stuff, Everything, dust...)’

For Steedman (2001: 69), the archive is ‘a name for the many places in which the past (which does not now exist, but which once did actually happen; which cannot be retrieved, but which may be represented) has deposited some traces and fragments, usually in written form.’ As such, she argues (Steedman 2001: 154, original emphasis),

‘there is a double nothingness in the writing of history and in the analysis of it: it is about something that never did happen in the way it comes to be represented (the happening exists in the telling or the text); and it is made out of materials that aren’t there, in an archive or anywhere else. We should be entirely unsurprised that deconstruction made no difference to this kind of

writing. The search for the historian's nostalgia for origins and original referents cannot be performed, because there is actually *nothing there*: she is not looking for anything: only silence, the space shaped by what once was; and now is no more.'

The way in which this thesis circumvents this 'double nothingness' is to focus not on the absence of history from the archive but, rather, to emphasise the materiality of the archival documents that do comprise the archive precisely as archival documents, through what Matless (2000: 335) terms 'the enfolding of subject and object.' As he suggests,

'much work in cultural geography increasingly resists being categorized as a general matter of text and/or representation, in part because of two possible consequences of aligning culture with those terms. If all culture, and all the world, becomes a matter of representation, then we may lose purchase on differences of material substance, whether that material is concrete, earth, paper, celluloid, and similarly the power of the "textual" metaphor may be lost through overextension. Conversely if culture is only in part representation, and if the concern of cultural geography is for that particular part, then we are drawn into unresolvable issues of delimitation and comparison between real, substantive materiality and unreal, insubstantial representation, not to mention debates concerning what kind of cultural product – high, low, popular, unpopular, etc. – we should be studying, debates which often end up reproducing rather than deconstructing hierarchies of value which place the high, or the popular, at an apex of cultural life' (Matless 2000: 335).

The principal Cornish archival collections are split between public and private libraries. In the Morrab Library in Penzance, an independent library that was established in 1818, non-members can pay a nominal day membership fee for unlimited access to the shelf collections, which include the complete series of the journals of the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society [PNHAS] and the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society

[RCPS] – the latter including a report of Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer’s application of his principles of archaeoastronomy, derived from his studies of the Egyptian pyramids, and of Stonehenge and Avebury, to Cornish stone circles, as discussed in chapter four. Moreover, on Tuesdays and Fridays, one can request that items be brought up for viewing from the library archival collections, including the minute books of the PNHAS. Complete series of the journals of the RCPS, the Royal Institution of Cornwall [RIC] and the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies [FOCS] are also available on shelf for public access at the Cornish Studies Library in Redruth, which was enlarged and reopened in October 2001 as part of the Cornwall Centre [*Kresenn Kernow*], a £2.6 million town centre regeneration project, funded by Cornwall County Council, that also incorporated Redruth Tourist Information Centre, twelve shop units and an indoor market area. Again, by request, one can access the library’s newspaper and magazine collection, which includes *Celtia*, the journal of the Celtic Association, the nature and contents of which are also discussed, in the context of the relationship between the pan-Celtic movement and the Celtic-Cornish Revival, in chapter four.

There are two further principal archival collections in Cornwall, both of which are in Truro. The Courtney Library is a private library, owned and maintained by the RIC which, in turn, is a registered charity to support local historical research. The library has occupied the same buildings on River Street as the Royal Cornwall Museum, which is also owned and maintained by the RIC, since the RIC acquired them in 1919. No browsing is possible; all library materials, both shelved and archived, must be specifically requested from the library’s catalogue. The archive contains, among other materials, a collection of letters from W. Y. Evans-Wentz to Jenner on the writing of *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, which are discussed in detail in chapter four. Similarly, no browsing is possible at the Cornwall Record Office, part of the Old County Hall site in Truro, where all materials must also be requested by prior arrangement. These materials include a manuscript of Henry Jenner’s unpublished autobiography, and a collection of letters from L. C. Duncombe-Jewell to Jenner on the founding of the Celtic-Cornish Society, and on Duncombe-Jewell’s subsequent trials and tribulations, which comprise part of the subject matter of chapter four, and the minute book of the

Gorsedd of the Bards of Cornwall, which comprises part of the subject matter of chapter five. These archival collections, of course, are in addition to the published record, which ranges across local history, biography, the Cornish language and place-names, travel writing, folklore and anthropology, antiquarianism and archaeology, and prose and poetic fiction. All of these materials

‘can take us into various dimensions of the geographical self: the production of identity through the internalization of wider spatio-temporal relations, the moral geographies of conduct in place, the constitution of the human through relations with the animal, vegetable and mineral non-human and the historicity and spatiality of experience’ (Matless 2000: 336).

However, as Steedman (2001: 75) acknowledges, ‘the Historian who goes to the Archive must always be an unintended reader, will always read that which was never intended for his or her eyes.’ For Osborne (1999: 52), ‘a sociological history of such places of storage, deposition, testimony and administration... would be a history of at least two kinds of people – archivists and historians – who tend to inhabit such dry, dark, forbidding places,’ and the archive must remain not a centre of knowledge, but a centre of interpretation. This, in turn, raises a series of questions relating to the archival credibility of the researcher and their research. On the one hand, these questions relate to the ethics of archival study: ‘knowledge of the archive is a sign of status, of authority, of a certain right to speak, a certain kind of author-function,’ says Osborne (1999: 53-4).

‘The archive is like a raw material, which is not the same as saying that it is an originary material or an unworked-upon material; rather it is what has been made *available*, what has been thus presented to us, a kind of gift, which is to say also – for future constituencies, future publics – a kind of debt’ (Osborne 1999: 57, original emphasis),

a debt that must be repaid by the researcher in the name of ‘some kind of *public memory*’ (Osborne 1999: 54, original emphasis).

On the other hand, these questions relate to the epistemology of archival study: ‘In epistemological terms,’ Osborne (1999: 58) continues, ‘this debt is typically repaid,



according to the logic of archival reason, by a scrupulous attention to singularity.’ There is an historicity to this logic of archival reason, too, which Osborne, after Foucault, associates with a certain version of the modern, an emerging administrative state and its everyday operation through, in particular, clinical medicine. For Foucault, Osborne argues, clinical medicine was

‘the paradigm-case of all those areas of study that had transgressed the Aristotelian injunction against a knowledge of the “individual fact”; areas of study that were localizing, individualizing, diagnostic, historical, concerned with the question of the “case” in all its singularity and complexity’ (Osborne 1999: 58).

Furthermore, for Steedman (2001: 2), in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* ‘the archive does not so much stand in for the idea of what can and cannot be said, but rather is “the system that establishes statements as events and things”.’ Archival research thus demands the writing of a different kind of history, one

‘which would focus not on the dramatic singularities of great events or on the anonymities of general laws but on the perspective and continuities of something like ordinary or everyday life, work, administration and power wherever it was to be found’ (Osborne 1999: 60).

In the context of this thesis, the focus is, in particular, on the emergence of the mystical in and through such structures as ‘ordinary or everyday life, work, administration and power’, with particular attention being paid to the body as the centre of subjectification that, like the world around it, is made material through sets of culturally and historically contingent social practices and power relations, or ‘technologies of the self’,

‘where the intent is neither to reproduce a philosophy of interiority nor to dissolve the subject as a “mere” effect of things beyond itself, a geography of the object-as-subject emerges whereby an understanding of the object in terms of things beyond itself, effects neither to reinforce an object’s assumed integrity, to fetishize its finish, nor to disaggregate, to leave the object in pieces. The life and power of objects may be understood less through an assumption that hidden relations are concealed in a finished form which

thereby requires dismantling, than by considering that finished form as one significantly congealed state within a wider field of relations of which it is an effect' (Matless 2000: 336; see also Matless 1997).

### **3.2 The Mystical and Oral History**

For Foucault, the transition from the Classical to the Modern is marked by the work of the Marquis de Sade, 'where language is exposed to the tension between "simple" representation of sexual acts and the limits of representation in attempting to portray desire' (Carrette 2000: 77). There is 'an experience of mental "impotence" with language to function according to the male desire for order and control,' says Carrette (2000: 78). 'In this situation men are faced with the problem of "how to speak" and "write" with uncertainty, with a language which turns back on itself and turns man back to his finite body.' If Foucault is correct in his assessment, then this requires the researcher to develop a research methodology that can come to terms with 'a language which turns back on itself and turns man back to his finite body.' One such *rapprochement* might take place, as discussed in section 3.1, through the understanding of primary archival and secondary published materials in terms of 'the enfolding of subject and object'. Another might take place through a close attention to oral history and biography – in the words of Daniels and Nash (2004: 452), to

'the various ways lives are inscribed in time and space, plotted as both story-lines and routeways. Such plots are shaped by meta-narratives on the course, or development, of nature and society as well as of the self, and theoretical propositions on relations of public and private life, thought and action, free will and determinism. Plotlines are inscribed in texts, institutions and material sites and monuments which portray a culture's collective memory and destiny. Cultural forms as various as fairy stories, gardens, novels, prisons, professional careers, life insurance, documentary films and war memorials set out plotlines of various form – linear, cyclical, labyrinthine – which people draw on to shape their own lifestories.'

‘A modern autobiographical canon may still be made up of the writings of elite men and women,’ writes Steedman (2001: 45), ‘but in England at least, from the seventeenth century onwards, the emerging administrative state demanded that it was in fact the poor who told their story, in vast proportion to their numbers.’ Through the administrative requirement of parishes to determine the place of settlement of those who were claiming financial aid under the Poor Laws, and through the parishes’ own desire to minimise their respective charitable burdens by limiting their almsgiving to their own residents, applicants for aid were implicated in the telling of their life-story, and in having it recorded. ‘The assumption of the modern “autobiographical turn”, that there exists and has existed an *urge* to tell the self, and that it comes from within, is of very little help in hearing these eighteenth-century cases of enforced narration,’ Steedman (2001: 55-6) continues.

‘And for the moment, it is impossible to move beyond these suggestions, that the modern literary articulation of selfhood and character had one of its origins among the poorer sort, when their verbal accounts of themselves, told before a magistrate, were recorded by others. What we can be clearer about is one of the sites of this storytelling, the Magistrate as the involuntary and necessary story-taker, and why it is the Archive contains what it does.’

Geography and biography are far from being strange bedfellows; indeed, on the evidence of the edited collections by Buttimer (1983a) and Moss (2001) they are very much complementary. ‘Through our own biographies,’ says Buttimer (1983b: 3), ‘we reach toward understanding, being and becoming.’ Of her own biography, she writes:

‘I was born in a land of story-tellers. The knack of telling a good story is still a cherished art, calling for memory and imagination, dramatic skill and body language in the telling. It reaches its highest appeal when someone speaks of his or her own experiences. Like its ancestral prototype in the epic or saga, the story addresses practical concerns of everyday life and celebrates the splendor and magic of the faraway. It thrives in places and periods where many life experiences meet, as in the medieval *atelier*, forge, or trading post... The tradition of story-telling, for perhaps most of human history, has

served not only to sustain human efforts to live poetically – to create and cultivate meaning, rationality, and wisdom in modes of living on the earth – but has also been the catalyst and wellspring for community and cultural identity’ (Buttimer 1983b: 5-6).

Biography and oral history are thus proving to be particularly apposite research methods in the writing of the disciplinary history of geography. By extension, they are also particularly apposite in the research of other, non-academic cultures of geographical knowledge.

The combination of archival and oral historical research methods, for Lorimer (2003: 203) opens up ‘a blurred methodological terrain where historical geography and ethnography meet. In combination, archival materials and oral reminiscences compress any distance that might be assumed from the “subjects” of historical research.’ For precisely this reason, the research for this thesis mobilised such a combined methodology. Interviews were sought with people whose self-understanding, and whose understanding of the world around them, works – both individually, and in the various communities of which they are key figures – in relation to particular cultures of mystical knowledge, so as to open up the socio-political contexts in and through which the mystical has emerged in Cornwall in the latter part of the twentieth century. For obvious reasons, it was not possible to mobilise such a combined methodology in researching the earlier part of the historical period that is covered by this thesis. Furthermore, there remains to be undertaken a detailed ethnography of the ‘ordinary’ members of such communities; given the quantity of research material that such an approach would have yielded, and given that the central research questions of this thesis are more historical than ethnographic, a detailed ethnography was deemed beyond the scale of this thesis – although, as discussed in section 2.2.2, sociological questions were to the forefront of those interviews and oral histories that did take place.

These interviewees include John Michell, one of the ‘founding fathers’ of alternative archaeology, who was interviewed at his home in North Kensington, London; Cheryl Straffon, who edits *Meyn Mamvro*, the Cornish earth mysteries journal, and who co-

founded the Cornwall Earth Mysteries Group [CEMG], who was interviewed after work in her office at St Just Library; Andy Norfolk, with whom Traffon co-founded the CEMG, who was interviewed at his home in the village of Crowan, a few miles south of Camborne; Craig Weatherhill, a writer and Cornish language revivalist, who was interviewed at the Fountain Inn in his home village of Newbridge, midway between Penzance and St Just; Ian McNeill Cooke, a writer, artist and owner of the Mên-an-Tol Studio, who was interviewed in the studio itself; Sarah Vivian, also an artist and co-owner of the Mariner's Gallery in St Ives, who was interviewed in the gallery itself; and Paul Broadhurst, a writer and shop-owner of 'The Other World' in Boscastle, who was interviewed in The Cobweb Inn in Boscastle. Interviews were tape recorded where feasible though, in the interests of informality, those that took place in pubs were not recorded, the decision being to rely instead upon written and mental notes, rather than insist on surroundings that were quieter and more conducive to tape recording. References are also made to interviews with Weatherhill and Traffon, and e-mail correspondence with Cooke and Paul Devereux, editor of *The Ley Hunter* journal 1976 to 1996, which comprised part of the research that was undertaken for my Masters dissertation (see Phillips 2002) that, in turn, provided an initial exploration of the mystical geographies of contemporary Cornish identities.

For Slater (2004: 246), geographical research into the spaces and spatialities of religion and spirituality is 'almost always from the outside looking in; few geographers speak as "insiders" when writing about religious geography from whatever faith tradition,' a positionality relative to the research material that this thesis does not profess to challenge. However, this thesis does share Slater's (2004: 246) concern 'to fuse the two previously separate experiences of being a geographer and a person of faith; to fuse the two language realms of those experiences (and they usually speak very different languages)' by bringing together 'the literature on space-time concepts' and 'recent literatures on identity and place' from geography and a much-enhanced awareness of 'the reality of the presence of God at particular times, in particular places.' In order to achieve such a discursive fusion, Slater (2004: 246) goes on to suggest that 'it is perhaps time for more of those geographers who profess a faith to spend some time reflecting on

it geographically and for some of that reflection to include autobiographical approaches.’ As aforementioned, this thesis is written from a position of sympathy but no particular affiliation either to the mystical or to Cornishness, though it shares Slater’s suggestion that geographies of religion and spirituality should proceed, in part, through an attention to biography. Such a positionality might have raised certain ethical issues when interviewing those who claim some affiliation to Paganism and/or to Cornishness. The ethics of the epistemological and methodological mobilisation of Cornwall as a region, rather than as a county, Duchy or nation, were discussed in section 2.1. Furthermore, as is discussed in chapter six, alternative archaeologists often use an overtly autobiographical, almost confessional, writing style that both led and, after due ethical consideration, was chosen to lead our conversations through the interviewees’ public expressions of the mystical – their writings, visual artworks and institutional involvements – rather than through their specific personal and private theologies.

‘Once a story is told,’ says Steedman (1986: 143), ‘it ceases to be a story: it becomes a piece of history, an interpretative device.’ Conversely, however, she argues that

‘all stories, no matter what their content, take part in the art of fiction. At the end of the novel, no matter how arbitrary and strange that ending might be, you know that there has been someone there all along, who knew the story, all of it, from beginning to end, and was able to bring you to this place, this ending, *now*... That end, the finished place, is the human being, a body in time and space, telling a story, a story that brings the listener or the reader to the here and now, or to this rounded and finished character in the pages of the book. Written autobiography ends in the figure of the writer, and the narrative closure of biography is the figure that has been created through the pages of the book’ (Steedman 2001: 147).

‘In Classical and Judao-Christian culture,’ indeed, ‘the ideal of a right way, a path of moral rectitude, is compared to the life journeys mortals actually make’ (Daniels and Nash 2004: 452); and biography remains particularly apposite to the opening up of the moral geographies of the body and conduct in space. In the development of a research methodology that can come to terms with ‘a language which turns back on itself and

turns man back to his finite body’, then, oral history and biography thus present the researcher with a kind of double methodological *rapprochement* with both spoken and written language.

### **3.3 The Mystical in the Field**

In addition to archival work and close textual reading, oral history and biography – a set of approaches to the research material that, as suggested above, might broadly be termed an historical methodology – this thesis also draws upon an arguably more recognisably geographical methodology in its acknowledgement of the importance of fieldwork in understanding the mystical. In other words, the intention here is to *argue* that research into the cultural and historical geographies of the mystical requires a close attention to the specific geometries and topographies of landscape, and to the multi-sensory varieties of bodily experience – the phenomenology – of the mystical. ‘The key issue in any phenomenological approach is the manner in which people experience and understand the world,’ says Tilley (1994: 11-2).

‘Phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject. It is about the relationship between Being and Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world resides in a process of objectification in which people objectify the world by setting themselves apart from it. This results in the creation of a gap, a distance in space. To be human is both to create this distance between the self and that which is beyond and to attempt to bridge this distance through a variety of means – through perception (seeing, hearing, touching), bodily actions and movements, and intentionality, emotion and awareness residing in systems of belief and decision-making, remembrance and evaluation.’

For Tilley (1994: 13), a phenomenology of landscape requires ‘a consideration of the body as the privileged vantage point from which the world is apprehended.’ In this sense, the multi-sensory body is privileged above narrowly visual experiences of space, a distinction which also works through a certain understanding of presence and absence.

‘It might be claimed that most academics cannot understand landscapes, except in an abstract objectified manner,’ Tilley (2004: 28) argues, ‘because most of them have not been there or experienced them except in a vicarious way, and temporal experience is lacking, which is precisely why most reduce landscape to a matter of visual representation as opposed to bodily experience.’ Citing works including *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988), *Landscape and Memory* (Schama 1996) and *Stonehenge* (Bender 1998) as examples, he continues: ‘what they all have in common is the lack of any embodied perspective: they can only provide us with abstract models for thinking landscapes rather than models *of* landscapes as they are sensuously lived’ (Tilley 2004: 28).

Tilley’s alternative framework within which to approach to landscape is worth quoting in full:

‘As a contemporary subject observer interested in interpreting the meanings of prehistoric landscapes I make no claims to an empathetic understanding of their significance, to some incredible feat of being able to find and recover meaning in prehistoric minds. To think *that* is either illusion or to act like God. However, I believe that the experience of place *is* of fundamental significance in the attempt to provide an account. There is one, all too contemporary, experience of place with which most people will be familiar. Locate a monument or site on a map. Drive for hours in a car, and attempt to arrive as close as possible to the place. Walk a shorter or longer distance, if necessary, and you are there. In the case of all but a few well-preserved chambered monuments the result is inevitably disappointing: a few overgrown stones or a low mound covered with rank vegetation in summer is hardly inspiring. You acquire little sense of the feel and character of the land. A monument or place encountered in the course of a walk between places is an altogether different matter. Approaching it slowly, from different directions, and anticipating arriving, it is possible to observe in a much more subtle manner the way in which it is related to its physical surroundings... Even a site which you cannot see, such as a Mesolithic flint scatter, acquires



in this way a greater significance and interest. Even the most dilapidated monument becomes worth visiting. To make the point in a slightly different way, all places are in landscapes, but landscapes constitute the place. Walk from one place to another or approach it from a different direction and everything will change. Things that loomed large in your visual field may become small, or look different. What was at the centre may now be on the periphery; what could be seen has now disappeared, and new horizons have come into view' (Tilley 1994: 74, original emphasis).

Pearson and Shanks (2001: 153) take issue with Tilley's engagement with phenomenology. In a passage that is similarly worth quoting at length, they write:

'Tilley begins his *Phenomenology of Landscape* (1994) with ethnographic cases of land as penetrated by cosmology, and is able to assert that "writing about an economic base in relation to resource utilisation or landscape use seems quite irrelevant" (1994: 67). There is a problem though in giving primacy to a subjectivist aesthetic – walking the land with an eye to the experience can easily lapse into a "past-as-wished-for". In spite of its humanistic and critical commitment to an ethnographic sensitivity, the validity of Tilley's phenomenology is based upon the sophistication and subtlety of his projection back into the past from present landscapes. This conspicuously includes reliance, in all his illustrations of archaeological landscapes, upon that distinctive distanced aesthetic which we have been so concerned to denaturalise; the photographs and plans hold no surprises. And it is a pastoral aesthetic in this rejection of any involvement or engagement other than empathy informed by reading. For Tilley it sometimes seems we are to walk the ancient countryside in order to escape the constraints of social science.'

On the contrary, for Tilley, we are to walk the ancient countryside in order to redefine the epistemological and methodological terms of social science in general, and of archaeology in particular. Tilley's concern is to argue the limitations of social scientific

approaches to sites of archaeological interest that do not connect studies of these sites to understandings of their wider situation in particular cultural and historical landscapes, and to the agency of these wider landscapes in sustaining cultural and historical meanings, through the evocation and privileging of a certain sense of local, practical knowledge (see Matless 2003). It is precisely because of these concerns – connecting specific sites to wider understandings of landscape, a sense of the local, and an associated model for fieldwork – that alternative archaeologists often cite Tilley’s work as providing academic support for their own, as is discussed in chapter six. Particular cultures of the mystical make claims upon particular spaces which, in turn, will suggest and sustain particular cultures of the mystical above others. Madron Holy Well, for example, is a relatively private space, reached only via a frequently muddy track and enclosed by overhanging trees, lending itself more readily to practices of solitary contemplation and ritual associated with Celtic monasticism and certain strands of Pagan witchcraft. The Merry Maidens stone circle, by comparison, is a much more open space, standing in a field beside the B3315 coast road from Penzance to Land’s End and exposed at all times of year to sun, wind and rain, lending itself more readily to public ceremony, like that of the Gorsedd of Cornwall. Close attention to such landscape geometries and topographies – in particular, to the mystical geographies of alternative archaeology, in the context of their being partly based on a development of Tilley’s work – could only be realised through approaching such sites with a similarly close attention to [though, due to inevitable time constraints, without ever a full re-enactment of] the associated practices of alternative archaeology in the field.

## **Twilight or Dawn?**

### **Mystical Geographies of the Celtic-Cornish Revival,**

**c.1860-1914**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the mystical geographies of the Celtic-Cornish Revival, from the mid-nineteenth century through to World War I. The Diocese of Truro was separated from that of Exeter in 1876, during a time of Anglo-Catholic theological ascendancy in the Church of England (Miles Brown 1976; Hastings 1986; Winter 1991; Everett 2003); the various associations between this version of Anglicanism and the Revivalist movement are the subject of section 4.2. For Payton (1996a), the antecedents of the Celtic-Cornish Revival can be traced back as far as Robert Stephen Hawker, the Anglican vicar of the parish of Morwenstow, on the north coast of Cornwall, from 1834 until his death in 1875. Section 4.2.1 therefore traces the antecedents of the associated Revivalist cultural formation of the mystical back to Hawker, who claimed to have had visionary encounters with angels, demons and other spiritual beings during his clerical life. Following on from this, section 4.2.2 explores the connections between the Revival and the renewed Anglo-Catholic sense of sacramentalism following the establishment of the new Diocese of Truro, through church history and theology, visual culture, the revival of the Cornish language and a particular Royalist politics. Similarly, section 4.2.3 explores the interplay of these connections through the mystical geographies of antiquarianism; while section 4.2.4 discusses the ways in which these concerns were

brought together in the Celtic-Cornish Society, and the ways in which it, in turn, connected to the wider Celtic movement through a new and exploratory version of Celticism that was also characterised by certain degree of slippage beyond the discursive boundaries of Anglo-Catholicism and into those of spiritualism and occultism.

The Celtic-Cornish Revival was also connected to a certain version of the Cornish landscape, which is the subject of section 4.3. An historical narrative of Anglicanism as identical and continuous with early Celtic Christianity informed and underpinned this version of the Cornish landscape, based on surveys of holy wells and ancient stone crosses (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994 [1894]; Langdon 1896), as discussed in section 4.3.1. However, as aforementioned, the associated cultural formation of the Celtic was new and somewhat exploratory, and was characterised by a certain degree of slippage beyond the discursive boundaries of Celtic Christianity through its connections to other new cultural movements. Burial chambers and stone circles, in particular, represented problematic intrusions of a potentially contradictory version of the Celtic and the mystical into the Revivalist landscape. Section 4.3.2, therefore, investigates attempts to decouple the active agency of the Druids from the Cornish landscape, in an attempt to write such potentially contradictory versions of the Celtic and the mystical out of the Celtic-Cornish Revival. Meanwhile, the work of Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer (1905) on Cornish standing stones and stone circles challenged the Revivalist narrative of Pagan-as-heathen with that of Pagan-as-early-astronomical-scientist. Finally, section 4.4 explores the position of folklore and the Cornish folk in the Celtic-Cornish Revival. Section 4.4.1 argues that the revival of folk culture, as recorded in the work of William Bottrell and Robert Hunt, was also bound up with the Anglo-Catholic revival as a way of performing the parish; while section 4.4.2 explores the correspondence between Henry Jenner, one of the founding members of the Celtic-Cornish Society, and W. Y. Evans-Wentz, an American anthropologist, on the writing of *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*, in which Evans-Wentz (2002 [1911]) used the evidence of folklore and anthropology, spiritualism and psychical research to argue the extra-dimensional existence of fairies, including the Cornish pisky.

## 4.2 Anglo-Catholicism and the Celtic-Cornish Revival

### 4.2.1 *'I saw, not with my eyes, but with my whole body': Robert Stephen Hawker and the Celtic-Cornish Revival*

In 1851, the Census on Religious Worship found that only 27% of the Cornish population were Anglicans, while 60% were Methodists and most of the remainder were Nonconformists of other denominations (Payton 1996a). Miles Brown (1976: 2) suggests that this was the result of Cornwall's geographical isolation, its lack of diocesan status – being as it was incorporated into the Diocese of Exeter – and the greater evangelical proactivity of Nonconformists, as exemplified by the rise of Methodism following John Wesley's 31 visits to Cornwall between 1743 and 1789. Methodism, for Payton (1996a: 226), was central to the self-improvement culture of modernity, and led 'to the emergence of all manner of temperance, educational, literary and "improving" societies, and even prompting the development of a rudimentary welfare system' in larger mine workings, and in the form of a liberal philanthropy. While Methodism was culturally conservative, disapproving of Cornish folk customs including wrestling, and contributing to the decline of smuggling and wrecking, it became wedded to Liberalism, especially in its non-Wesleyan denominations. 'In general,' Payton (1996a: 226) continues,

'Cornish Methodism exhibited a strong egalitarian strand, reflecting the potential for socio-economic mobility and the relative lack of class consciousness in nineteenth-century Cornwall. Its theology, stressing the concern for the needy and the equality of men before God, matched the political ideology of Cornish Liberalism.'

It was in 1847 that the first moves had been made towards addressing Cornwall's lack of diocesan status, having been subsumed into the Diocese of Exeter since about the year 1050. Lord John Russell introduced a Bill in the House of Commons that, had it been passed, would have established a diocese of Cornwall with a cathedral city of Bodmin (Miles Brown 1964, 1976; Everett 2003). Bishop Henry Philpotts of Exeter, convinced of the need for a Cornish diocese, offered £500 of his annual income towards that of the

putative Bishop of Bodmin; but the Bill came to nothing, and later plans were delayed by rival claims that were made for a new diocese to be centred on Truro. Philpotts was a pre-Tractarian high churchman with both sympathies for, and criticisms of, the early Victorian Tractarian movement. This movement, in turn, was so named after the publication, by a loose affiliation of high church Anglicans, of the series of 90 *Tracts for the Times* between 1833 and 1841, the general argument of most of which was to claim a direct descent for the Church of England from the early Christian church that was established by the Apostles. Tractarianism, writes Miles Brown (1976: 7),

‘caught up the awakening feeling for old things and the romanticizing of medieval art and architecture with its attendant culture. It brought again an emotional element into the drab religious scene. The bleak churches, the uninspiring drone of parson-and-clerk services all at once appeared repulsive. The study of Prayer-book principles from this fresh basis seemed to demand a colourful, ritualistic service, the observance of forgotten rubrics, and the revival of ancient doctrines common to the undivided Church rather than those of provincial protestantism.’

Philpotts had not long been Bishop of Exeter when, in 1834, he offered the vacant position of vicar of the parish of Morwenstow to Robert Stephen Hawker [see figure 4.1], an assistant curate in the parish of North Tamerton, midway between Bude and Launceston on the Cornwall-Devon border (Brendon 2002; Hutton 2004). For Payton (1996a), the antecedents of the Celtic-Cornish Revival can be traced back as far as Hawker; the argument in this section is that, as such, although his life almost entirely pre-dates the notional time period covered in this chapter, it is worth some further discussion of Hawker, back to whom the antecedents of the associated cultural formation of the mystical can also be traced. Hawker, like Philpotts, was a pre-Tractarian high churchman, placing a strong emphasis upon sacramental religion: ‘he certainly believed most fervently in the presence of Christ at the Eucharist,’ writes Patrick Hutton (2004: 83-4), in a recent biography:

‘He would never preach then, “in my Master’s presence”, and he expressed himself strongly if obliquely about priests who did so. It was the priest’s task

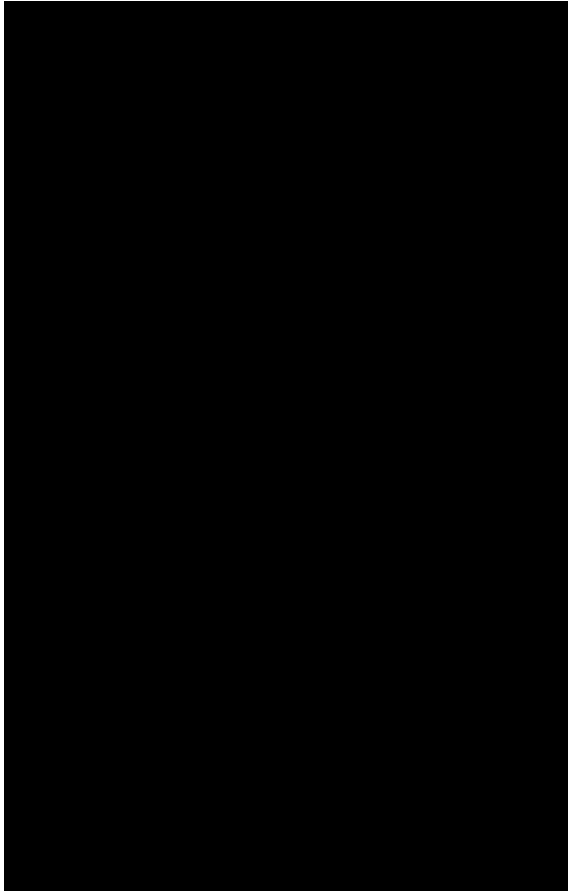
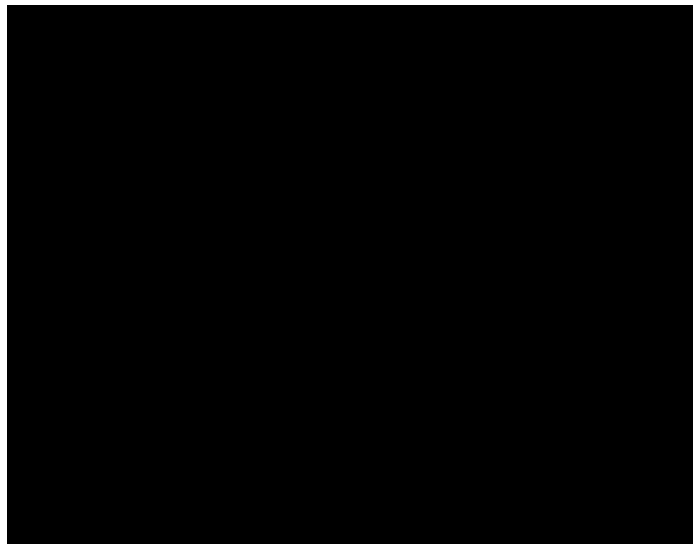


Figure 4.1 [above]: **R. S. Hawker [1803-75], 1870**

Figure 4.2 [below]: **Hawker's Hut, c.1975**



first and foremost to present the Host to each communicant, and those who encouraged the custom of passing the bread and wine down the line at the altar-rail were simply finding a means of saving time so as to enable them to preach, which they had no business to do.’

Hawker was born in a Plymouth vicarage on 3 December 1803, both his father and mother coming from families of clergymen. He was educated at Liskeard Grammar School, Cheltenham Grammar School and Pembroke College, Oxford, before embarking upon a career in the Church. While at Oxford, in 1827, he won the Newdigate Poetry Prize for a poem on Pompeii, and he continued to write collections of poetry for the rest of his life. For his first few years at Morwenstow, Hawker observed how his parishioners celebrated a successful wheat harvest, in the words of Brendon (2002: 77), ‘in pagan fashion with beer and tumult.’ In 1843, however, Hawker called his parishioners to a Harvest Festival in Morwenstow Church, convinced as he was that the successful germination of the wheat was of divine origin (Brendon 2002; Hutton 2004). The Harvest Festival became an annual event, and Hawker, as Brendon (2002: 77; see also Hutton 2004) writes, has ‘a fair claim, though not an unchallenged one, to be considered the initiator of this service in the nineteenth century.’ He also believed it to be his pastoral duty to give a full Christian burial to the bodies of seamen who were washed up on Morwenstow’s shores, which brought him into some conflict with many of his parish who were more accustomed to searching bodies for valuables than waiting for the next high tide to wash the bodies back out to sea (Brendon 2002; Hutton 2004). In addition, Hawker used timber from shipwrecks to build a hut on the cliffs at Morwenstow [see figure 4.2], where he would conduct much of his correspondence, read poetry to his wife and take opium – initially to cure rheumatic pain and during his increasingly frequent bouts of depression, especially after the death of his first wife in 1863.

Hawker also believed in the very real presence of spiritual beings in the world. Through practices of solitary contemplation, he claimed to have discovered ‘The Atmosphere of God’, which he called ‘Numeyne’ and described as:



‘An Element so rarified, so thin, elastic, pure, that it forms the Medium or Woof wherein Solar Light undulates, glances and glides: so holy and divine that it is the native Atmosphere of Angels and Spiritual Things, and so replete with Godhead that therewithal The Celestial Persons can become tangible to the senses’ (quoted in Brendon 2002: 204; see also Hutton 2004).

One occasion at which ‘the Celestial Persons’ became ‘tangible to the senses’ was Baptism. In Hawker’s own words:

‘You bring within your arms a little child, the offspring of parents on earth, overshadowed with the hue of original guilt – angels enter with your concourse at the door, and one ministering angel unassigned... In their eyes, the child is dark, the waters dull and dim.

But at Consecration light flashes around the font and flows from the water like a sudden radiance of dawn. At the instant of Baptism the water falls gleamy with God upon the infant brow. The babe grows bright. The halo of the baptised surrounds its voiceless form. The angel touches its lip and clings to it with guardian wing’ (quoted in Hutton 2004: 91).

*Ecclesia*, a collection of Hawker’s poems, was published in 1840, one of which was entitled ‘Ephphatha’ – a Hebrew word meaning ‘be opened’, or ‘be made clear’, and hence ‘knowledge’. Twelve years later, in 1852, he described a not unrelated visionary experience that had come to him while alone in church:

‘Deep in thought I saw, not with my eyes, but with my whole body, a grave calm noble form in white. He said, or breathed, this phrase, “Ephphatha is good but Amen is better still”. I went away with this saying in my head for long before I understood its force. At last in chancel too it came to me that in the Mysteries “be opened”, “be made clear”, is not so churchlike or so happy for a Christian mind as “so it is”, “so let it be”. “Knowledge”, in this portal of the Church Universal, Life, is not so desirable as “Acquiescence”’ (quoted in Hutton 2004: 79; see also Brendon 2002).

But not all spiritual beings were so beneficent. In 1856, Hawker recalled an incident that occurred during a two-and-a-half mile trip to Welcombe Church, in Devon, just over the

northern boundary of his parish. The road, as Hawker described it, was ‘down one precipice (half a mile long) and up another, and this repeated twice without 100 yards of level on the brow between the hills’ (quoted in Brendon 2002: 62; see also Hutton 2004). ‘As I entered the Gulph between the Vallies to-day,’ Hawker wrote (quoted in Brendon 2002: 62; see also Hutton 2004), ‘a Storm leaped from the Sea and rushed at me roaring – I recognised a Demon and put Carrow’ – Hawker’s pony – ‘into a gallop and so escaped.’

Hawker died in Plymouth on 15 August 1875, having made a death-bed conversion to Roman Catholicism that recent biographers believe him to have been considering for some years, not least because his second wife was a Roman Catholic (Brendon 2002; Hutton 2004). His version of the mystical worked through an established [if also somewhat eccentric] Anglo-Catholic religiosity: his preferred dress, especially towards the end of his life, was a claret coat, a blue fisherman’s jersey and sea-boots [see figure 4.1]; his belief in a spiritual world that exactly overlapped the visible world, existing immediately ‘beyond the veil’, worked through an extrasensory perception in which one could initially train oneself through practices of solitary contemplation. With experience, moreover, one need be neither in church nor in a specifically contemplative state in order to perceive the spiritual alongside – and not to the exclusion of – the visible, as was the case in his encounter with the Demon. This version of the mystical also worked through a particular pastoral mode of authority, within which Hawker – as an ordained churchman – was a privileged figure. As aforementioned, he believed that the primary role of the priest at the Eucharist was to present the bread and wine to each communicant in turn. It was, for Hawker (quoted in Brendon 2002: 97), ‘the office of the priesthood “to unfold the mysterious mind of God – to utter his messages from on high in the human echo of the voice of the Lord”.’

Philpotts, meanwhile, had died in 1869. ‘In this year,’ Miles Brown writes (1976: 18-9; see also Everett 2003),

‘taking advantage of the need to appoint a new bishop of Exeter, the learned curate of St Paul’s, Truro, Wladislaus Lach-Szyrma, a member of a

naturalized Polish family, and a zealous priest, wrote to the Prime Minister, at the time W. E. Gladstone, an open letter on the subject, setting out the usual arguments and need.'

The late Philpotts' hopes for a diocese of Cornwall were finally realised through the support of his successor, Frederick Temple. In March 1875, seeing that no additional state funding would be made available for the new diocese, Temple had announced his offer of a proportion of his annual income – in his case, £800 – towards that of the new Bishop. Lady Rolle of Bickton, on the River Otter between Exmouth and Sidmouth, offered £40,000, conditional on the total sum needed being forthcoming. The money having been raised within twelve months of Temple's initial offer, the Bill to establish the Diocese of Truro was passed on 11 August 1876, and the Order in Council was made on 15 December, later that same year (Miles Brown 1964, 1976; Winter 1991; Everett 2003). It is to cultures of the mystical in the new Diocese that the discussion now turns.

#### ***4.2.2 'A Sacramental Act': Anglo-Catholicism, the Diocese of Truro and the Celtic-Cornish Revival***

Regardless of doctrinal differences, the clergy of the late nineteenth century Church of England continued to take 'its pastoral task with deep seriousness and mounting efficiency,' writes Hastings (1986: 34): 'New church buildings went up by the thousand, attendances steadily increased. England in the mid-Victorian age – at least middle-class England – can be claimed as one of the most consciously religious societies that ever existed.' However, it was the Anglo-Catholic rather than the Evangelical wing of the Church that had the greater influence upon Anglican theological doctrine (Hastings 1986; Winter 1991). The relatively greater intellectual vigour of Anglo-Catholicism was, to some extent, the consequence of the loss of Evangelicals to the more missionary-oriented overseas activities of the late nineteenth century movement. It was also a consequence of the legacy of the mid-nineteenth century Tractarian movement:

'Anglo-Catholicism took many forms, some more, some less attractive, but it represented an intense desire to recover the deep sense of sacrament, ritual

and symbolism, the concern with prayer, mysticism and monastic asceticism, a theology of the Church, the consciousness of communion with the majority of other contemporary Christians rather than of a self-righteous criticism of them, the willingness to listen to the whole past (rather than Scripture and Reformation alone), an openness to art, music and literature' (Hastings 1986: 81).

The national campaign of Anglo-Catholic proactivity was replicated at the regional scale in Cornwall, with the separation of a new Diocese of Truro from that of Exeter in 1876, though the new Diocese remains not quite coterminous with Cornwall, incorporating as it does two additional parishes in Devon (Davies et al 1991). Interestingly, on the second reading of the Bill to establish the new Diocese, the voting was 76 for and 23 against, 'the opposition consisting of radicals, Irish and Scots dissenters and some who, recalling that the finances were to be voluntarily raised, opposed a State-nomination of the bishop in which the Cornish had no say' (Miles Brown 1976: 20). Not only was the Diocese created at a time of Anglo-Catholic ascendancy, but the first Bishop of Truro, Edward White Benson [see figure 4.3], was also of Anglo-Catholic sympathies (Miles Brown 1964, 1976; Everett 2003; Williams 2004). 'Perhaps for this reason,' suggests Winter (1991: 157-8), 'high churchmanship has been a prominent characteristic of Cornish Anglicanism since [Benson's consecration in] 1877, and this, of course, has served to underline the differences between the Methodist and Anglican traditions.' The diocese was made, and made itself, immanent through these differences. Benson was nominally a broad churchman rather than a high churchman; he could recognise spirituality where it existed, and could write sympathetically about elements of Cornish Methodism. However, he had no doubts as to the primacy of sacramental religion.

There was also an early interest, in the new diocese, in the antiquity of the Church in Cornwall. The idea of the Anglican Church as the Catholic Church in England, identical and continuous with the early Celtic Church, was agreeable to those who adhered to the Tractarian movement:

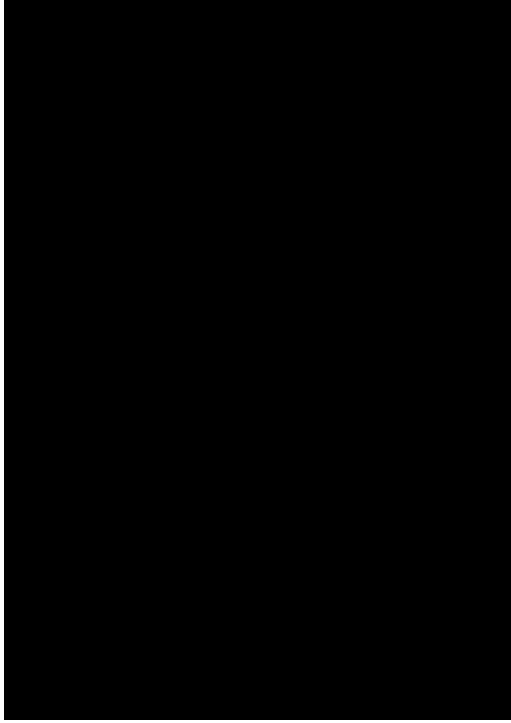
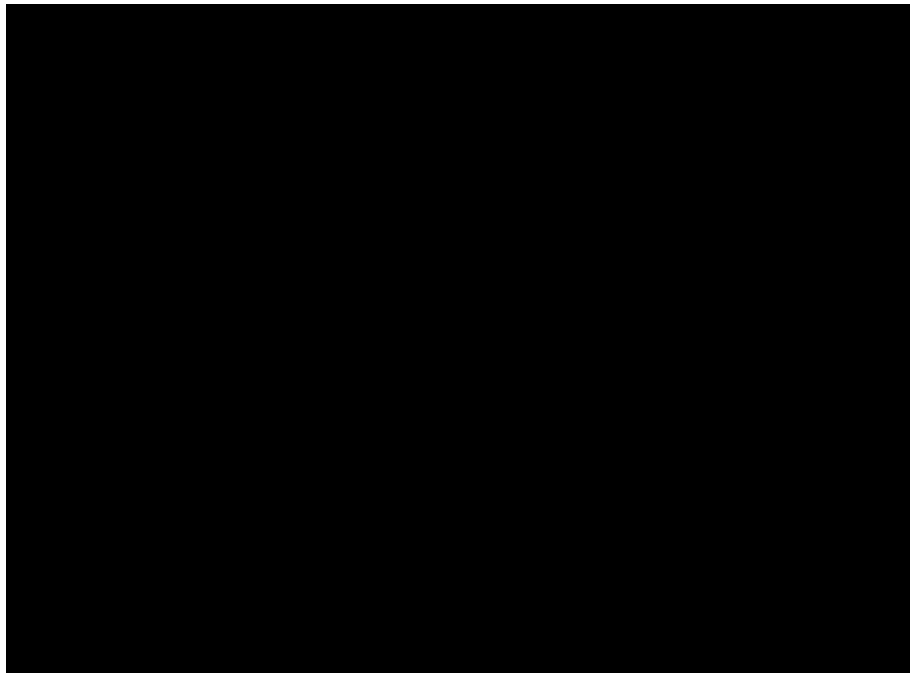


Figure 4.3 [above]: **Edward White Benson [1829-96],  
Bishop of Truro 1877-1882**

Figure 4.4 [below]: **November, from *Cornish Church Kalendar*, 1933**



‘The very first issues of the diocesan Kalendar [see figure 4.4; for more on the Kalendar, see section 5.2], the very first addresses of the new bishop, are full of references to the Celtic and medieval past. There were articles on the ancient Celtic Church,... lists of Celtic dedications of the churches, and their parish feast days... This interest carried on, and underlies a good deal of the preaching and activity of the time. Parishes were reminded of their antiquity; it gave meaning to otherwise meaningless survivals; it helped towards a diocesan and county identity’ (Miles Brown 1976: 35).

In this version of Church history, England was united with the Celtic Fringe. In 1882, Gladstone, himself of high church sympathies, nominated Benson to be the next Archbishop of Canterbury; in 1893, Cornish churchmen met in protest against the threatened separation of the Church in Wales from the Church in England as part of Gladstone’s ‘Newcastle Programme’.

The principal evidence of the replication of the national campaign of Anglo-Catholic proactivity at the regional scale in Cornwall was, as Miles Brown (1976) observes, the building of Truro Cathedral [see figure 4.5] as a visible symbol of the new diocese. New Cornish church buildings from the earlier part of the nineteenth century were, as Miles Brown (1976: 6) describes them, ‘rectangular boxes devoid of any architectural grace, or... with skimpy Gothick adornments like a child’s toy fort. Any sense of architectural style, of liturgical propriety or aesthetic appearance’ was, for Miles Brown (1976: 6), ‘almost entirely lacking in these structures, which reflect if anything a primacy of preaching and the reduced prominence of the sacraments.’ Towards the later part of the nineteenth century, however, Anglo-Catholicism encouraged the revival of a mediaeval architectural style in new church buildings, and the preservation of much more of the older churches’ original structures and furnishings when undergoing repairs. This trend was most apparent in the building of Truro Cathedral itself, John Loughborough Pearson’s consciously mediaeval gothic designs having gained him the position of chief architect, the laying of the foundation stone taking place on Thursday 20 May 1880 [see figure 4.6]. ‘The actual laying of the foundation-stone was to be a combined ecclesiastical and Masonic function’, writes Miles Brown (1976: 31), with the duties



Figure 4.5 [above]: **Truro Cathedral, 2004**

Figure 4.6 [below]: **Foundation Stone, Truro Cathedral, 2004**



shared between the Prince and Princess of Wales, in their roles as the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall. The Prince of Wales, who would become King Edward VII, ‘drove to a private house and assumed Masonic regalia as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England,’ Miles Brown (1976: 31) continues, ‘processing down Lemon Street with the other Masons to the enclosure at High Cross’ (Miles Brown 1976: 31). A memorial stone was first laid on the base of one of the pillars of the proposed nave, as a sign of faith that the Cathedral would be completed, ‘and then the actual foundation-stone at the north-eastern corner of the building was formally laid by the Prince and others with due Masonic ceremony after prayers and psalms sung by the choirs and clergy’ (Miles Brown 1976: 32). The Cathedral was indeed completed, with the nave being dedicated in 1903, and the western towers [see figure 4.5, the western towers being to the left of cathedral building] being dedicated in 1910.

One key figure in the Celtic-Cornish Revival for whom such questions of church history and theology were both intellectually and personally important was Henry Jenner [see figure 4.7]. Jenner was a former assistant in the Department of Manuscripts and the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum, and a founder member of the Celtic-Cornish Society [on which, see section 4.2.4], who retired to his native county in 1909 and went on to serve as a president of both the Royal Institution of Cornwall [RIC] and the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society [RCPS] [on which, see section 4.2.3] (Everett 2004; Williams 2004). Born at St Columb, near Newquay, in 1848, Jenner was one of six children and, his father being a beneficed Anglo-Catholic clergyman, he spent most of his childhood living in the vicarage of St Mildred’s Church, in Preston-next-Wingham, in east Kent. Jenner devoted the sizeable first chapter of his unpublished autobiography to tracing his family tree<sup>2</sup>. The Jenner family, he wrote, was ‘a typical

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<sup>2</sup> Jenner, H. (undated) *Four Score Years and Four: The Memories of Henry Jenner, M.A., F.S.A.*, unpublished autobiography manuscript, in Jenner Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1141; Jenner, H. (undated) *Short Synopsis of the Reminiscences of Henry Jenner, M.A., F.S.A.*, unpublished manuscript notes, in Jenner Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1141



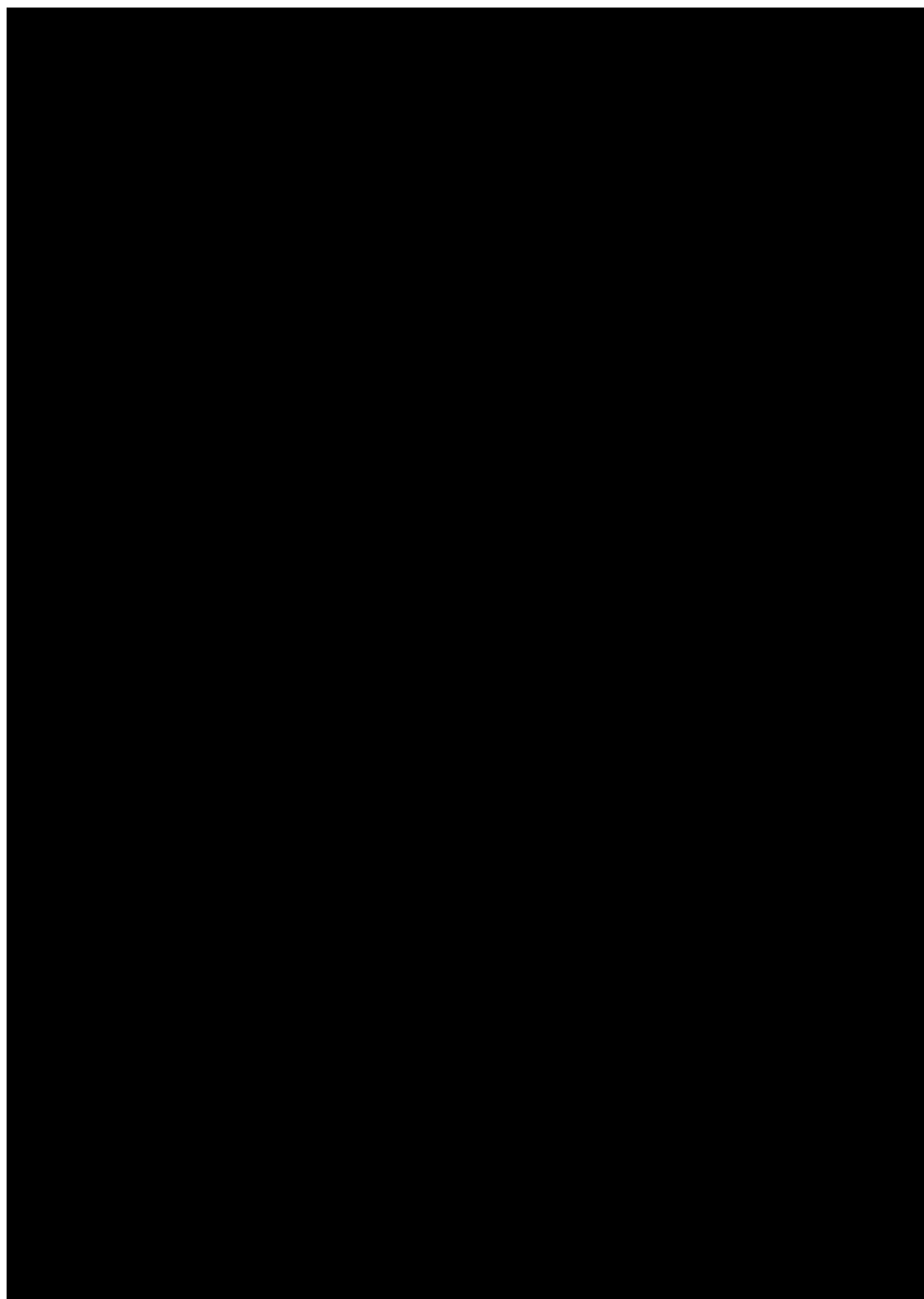


Figure 4.7: **Henry Jenner [1848-1934], Grand Bard of the Gorsedd of Cornwall,  
Boscawen-Ûn, 1928**

instance of a family of the smaller gentry of the sort that has done good service, and attained to some quiet distinction, in the Services, the Universities, Law, the Church and other careers’<sup>3</sup>. On his father’s side, however, Jenner celebrated his Jacobite ancestry, tracing the Jenner name back in local Sussex history to the thirteenth century through a family tree that included one Sir Thomas Jenner [1638-1707], Recorder of London in 1683, Baron of the Exchequer from 1686 to 1688/9, one of three Commissioners of King James II to Magdalen College, Oxford in 1687, and one of 32 exempted from pardon in the Act of Oblivion of William of Orange for his loyal service to the deposed King. His mother, in turn, traced her family descent to the Finlaisons of Caithness, themselves descended from Clan Fhionlaidh of Braemar.

In the autumn of 1865, Jenner’s father, Reverend Henry Lascelles Jenner, was invited to become the first Bishop of the new diocese of Dunedin, New Zealand (Everett 2004; Williams 2004). He accepted, and was consecrated on St Bartholomew’s Day, 24 August 1866, at Canterbury Cathedral. It was not until late in 1868 that the family moved out to New Zealand, though; and during the four month voyage, the General Synod took the decision, under pressure from the Dunedin diocesans, to force Jenner’s father to stand down as Bishop over fears that he would introduce ‘ritualism’ into the Church in New Zealand. Jenner’s antipathy towards the Reformation would appear to have stemmed from his Anglo-Catholic upbringing and, perhaps, especially from this one episode:

‘I am not at all an admirer of the Reformation in England or elsewhere, and my feeling is that, apart from its theological aspect, its iconoclasm and general destructiveness, which as an antiquary I resent, did more to harm the things which I value than any good that may be alleged to have come of it’<sup>4</sup>.

The family remained in New Zealand for less than four months. This episode in Jenner’s early life also demonstrates his early interest in languages: on receiving the news of the imminent move overseas, Jenner wrote, he, ‘rather characteristically, set to work at once to try and learn Maori’<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Jenner, *Short Synopsis*, no page numbers

<sup>4</sup> Jenner, *Four Score Years and Four*, p.215

<sup>5</sup> Jenner, *Four Score Years and Four*, p.277

In 1877, Jenner and Reverend Lach-Szyrma – who had since become Vicar of St Peter’s, Newlyn (Everett 2003; Williams 2004) – conducted a memorial ceremony to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the death of Dolly Pentreath, in the Paul parish churchyard where she lies buried. Pentreath, a fisher-wife from Paul [near Mousehole, on the western shores of Mount’s Bay], is still often, though mistakenly, said to be the last native speaker of the Cornish language. ‘When much excited,’ wrote William Bottrell (1870: 183), the Cornish folklorist [of whom more will be said in section 4.4.1], of Pentreath,

‘she seemed to forget the little English she knew; and her voluble Cornish speech, then imperfectly understood by the younger and educated folks, impressed the people with far greater terrors than if she argued or scolded in a language of which they knew the import.’

Jenner and Lach-Szyrma had earlier embarked upon a separate project to gather fragments of the Cornish language at Newlyn and Mousehole in 1875; and Jenner had also presented papers on the subject of the Cornish language to the Philological Society in 1871, and the British Archaeological Association in 1875 (Everett 2004; Williams 2004). At this time, Robert Morton Nance (1934: 2) later wrote of Jenner, ‘it was worth noticing that we then find Mr. Jenner himself congratulating Cornish people that they no longer had a second tongue.’ In other words, Jenner originally attached no value to the revival of the Cornish language.

Jenner remained ambivalent regarding the revival of the Cornish language for the rest of his life. When Jenner (2004 [1904]: 51) ‘was asked by the Secretary of the Celtic-Cornish Society’ – L. C. R. Duncombe-Jewell, on whom more will be said below, and in section 4.2.4 – ‘to undertake a Cornish grammar,’ which was published as *A Handbook of the Cornish Language* in 1904, ‘it was more than twenty years since he had dropped his Cornish studies in favour of other and more immediately necessary matters.’ Jenner connected the Cornish language to his pre-Reformation Anglo-Catholicism: ‘The Reformation did much to kill Cornish,’ he wrote (quoted in Saunders 2004: 40).

‘Had the book of Common Prayer been translated into Cornish and used in that tongue, two things might have happened which did not – the whole language might have been preserved to us, and the Cornish as a body might have been of the Church of England, instead of remaining (more or less) of the old religion until the perhaps unavoidable neglect of its authorities caused them to drift into the outward irreligion from which John Wesley rescued them.’

He also connected it to his burgeoning Cornish nationalism, arguing that ‘every Cornishman knows well enough, proud as he may be of the belonging to the British Empire, that he is no more an Englishman than a Caithness man is’ (Jenner 2004: 51) and that, though language ‘is less than ever a final test of race’, it remained the case that ‘no one can talk about the country itself, and mention the places in it, without using a wealth of true Cornish words.’

Everett (2003: 197) quotes a letter from Lach-Szyrma to Jenner, in which he claimed that Cornish Methodists thought that the Cornish language was ‘carnal: and wicked (which does not affect our old-fashioned church people) and that “it does not pay”.’ In Jenner’s theology, in contrast, Saunders (2004: 43) argues that

‘Cornish is to have a sacramental role. A sacrament is defined as the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Race, for Jenner, is of the essence. It is race that separates the Cornish from the working class of England’s big cities. That racial essence, like grace, is freely offered. In order to accede to this essence, it will be necessary to undertake the sacramental act of acknowledging the Cornish language as one’s own. One advantage of sacraments is that they do not necessarily have to be repeated often, if at all. Depending on denominational understandings the Christian is obliged to take part in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at prescribed intervals during the year. The Sacrament of Baptism, on the other hand, may only be undertaken once. There is a nice juxtaposition here. Sacramental acts, undertaken on special occasions, are peculiarly suited for expression through classical

languages. Learning the classical Cornish that Jenner is codifying, and making appropriate use of it, will itself constitute a sacramental act.’

As well as the Cornish language, although with no revivalist intent from first to last, Jenner also attempted to reconstruct the rites of sixth and seventh century Celtic Christian worship. ‘There is hardly any documentary evidence for the rites used in the British part of the Celtic Church,’ Jenner (1912a: 48) wrote, ‘but for the Irish part there is a good deal.’ Based on fragments of seventh century manuscripts from Britain and across western Europe, and the rites that were still practised in Toledo Cathedral, Jenner concluded that Celtic Christian worship was of the Hispano-Gallic religious family. His detailed findings relate to the dating of Easter, the correct form of tonsure [the Celtic form being to shave the front half of the head] and the like, describing the Celtic rite as ‘a complicated and rather muddled rite’ that included ‘sensuous, diffuse, and exuberant prayers’, which he compared to ‘the clear, crisp, and dignified utterances of the sober and restrained Roman rite’ to which he had by then converted (Jenner 1912a: 63). Indeed, in 1900, Jenner’s only child – Cecily Katharine Ysolt Jenner – joined the [Roman Catholic] Order of the Visitation of Our Lady at Harrow-on-the-Hill, becoming Sister Mary Beatrix Jenner, at the age of twenty-one (Kent 2004b). The Celtic-Cornish Revivalist subject thus began to emerge through the sacramental body – both in terms of attention to it in church history, and in terms of the body of the practising Revivalist. Theologically, the sacramental body connects to the corporate body of the communion and the Church, and to the Church as the body of Christ (Miles Brown 1976).

One other aspect of Jenner’s life is worth further discussion here, and that is his active involvement in Legitimism – that is, the campaign for the restoration of deposed though supposedly still legitimate monarchies, including the heirs of the Stuarts in Britain. As aforementioned, he celebrated his Jacobite ancestry; he was also Chancellor of the Society of the Order of the White Rose [OWR], founded in 1888 by Bertram, the fifth Earl of Ashburnham, to commemorate King Charles I, but ‘intimated in personal letters, however, that he preferred his involvement in Legitimist politics to remain publicly low-profile’ (Lowenna 2004: 65) and was therefore variously documented as ‘Recorder’ and

‘Thesaurarius’. Closely connected to the OWR was *The Royalist*, a Legitimist magazine that was funded by Jenner and edited, for a while, by Duncombe-Jewell. In 1899, the three men – Ashburnham, Jenner and Duncombe-Jewell – were also implicated in a foiled plot to smuggle a large cache of firearms into Spain, where they were to be stored at the residence of Dom Miguel, the Portuguese Legitimist claimant, near St Jean de Luz, close to the French border, for use in a long-planned *coup d’état* in the name of Don Carlos VII, the Spanish Legitimist claimant (Lowenna 2004). The gunrunning vessel [the yacht, *Firefly*, owned by Ashburnham] was intercepted and forced into the port of Arcachon, where its crew – led by Vincent English, Vice-Chairman of the Thames Valley Legitimist Club– was detained and its cargo was confiscated. Fortunately for the crew and their employers, another member of the OWR – E. R. Crump, a solicitor – successfully carried out his brief ‘to obscure any documentary evidence of Ashburnham’s role,’ and ‘to address the international legalities necessary to have *Firefly* and her crew released from arrest, on payment of a substantial fine’ (Lowenna 2004: 67).

Jenner’s involvement in Legitimist politics did not go unnoticed, though. The OWR shared in the organisation of the first, at least, of a series of historical exhibitions at the New Gallery on Regent Street, in London, between 1889 and 1902. This first exhibition was the Stuart Exhibition, followed by, among others, the Tudor, the Victorian and the Monarchy of Great Britain and Ireland Exhibitions. Derek Williams (2004: 94) quotes from an account of Jenner’s being presented to Queen Victoria, ‘in company with other promoters of the Stuart Exhibition,’ whereupon ‘she at once turned her back on him, saying curtly: “I have heard of Mr Jenner”.’ But Jenner was not alone, neither in his interest in church history nor in his support for the Legitimist cause, among the Celtic-Cornish Revivalists following his retirement to Cornwall, ten years later. For Thurstan Collins Peter (1900: 173), another founder member of the Celtic-Cornish Society and a president of both the RIC and the RCPS, there was no branch of history that better repaid study than that of the Church, ‘which in all ages of our country has represented what is highest and best in our national character.’ Peter was born in Redruth in 1854, the third son of John Luke Peter, a solicitor. Educated at Sherborne School, he returned

to Cornwall and joined his father's business as a partner. A postcard to Jenner from Peter, written in 1913, reads: 'The Stuarts were better – far better – than the Georges who were merely vulgar horrors. It is lovely nowadays to meet a man who thinks a king has any more "rights" than a mere man!'<sup>6</sup>

Elsewhere, Peter and two fellow RIC members used strongly vivid language to comment favourably upon the Anglican revival of a more Catholic visual culture:

'Our ancestors did not hesitate to add to the beauty of form the warmth of colour. Our mediaeval churches glowed with colour – the walls covered with paintings; the roofs and screens bright with scarlet and white and gold; richly wrought hangings; tombs adorned with polychrome; and windows filled with richly coloured glass; brought the building to one harmonious whole, which suited better our northern climate, than the cold bare church so much in vogue until almost the present time, although, fortunately, we are now gradually returning to an appreciation of the use of decorative colour' (Enys, Peter and Michell Whitley 1902: 136).

If the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist subject emerged through the sacramental body, then some importance was attached to practices that worked through the eye: not the disembodied eye, however, but the embodied and reverent eye through which the church – as a building, and as a body – could sustain divine warmth and harmony.

#### ***4.2.3 Being Correctly Mystical: Anglo-Catholicism, the Cornish Language and the Moral Geographies of Antiquarianism***

The co-production of Celtic-Cornish Revivalism and Anglicanism also took place through the spaces of the nineteenth century Cornish natural history and antiquarian societies. The Royal Geological Society of Cornwall [RGSC] was founded in Penzance in 1814, the RIC was founded in Truro in 1918, and the RCPS was founded in Falmouth in 1833. These earlier nineteenth century scientific institutions marked out moral advancement more as a fortunate by-product of institutional innovation (Naylor 2002).

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<sup>6</sup> Peter, T. C. (1913) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 19 November, in Jenner Collection (Courtney

They were utilitarian rather than philosophical in outlook, being particularly interested in the applied sciences [especially where applied to the development of the region's mining, engineering and agricultural industries], the promotion of scientific and mechanical inventions and improvements and, in the case of the latter, the education of the Cornish miner (Naylor 2002) Furthermore, although most of these societies' ordinary members were of the middle classes, they were patronised and led by local landed gentry. Later institutions – the Royal Horticultural Society of Cornwall [founded in Truro in 1833] and the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society [PNHAS; founded in Penzance in 1839] – began to challenge this prevailing utilitarian spirit, promoting science as a recreational activity rather than as a utilitarian aid to working life, and moral advancement as an important guiding principle (Naylor 2002). Most of the more prominent members of the PNHAS – which, unlike the various Royal societies, lacked the support of the local landed gentry – were of the upper middle class, working in medicine, law, politics, local administration or the Church.

Naylor (2002) identifies two main ways in which nineteenth century Cornish natural history and antiquarianism diverged from their eighteenth century predecessors. First, he argues, 'the county's scientific practitioners began to see their region less as a locality to be studied for its own sake' (Naylor 2002: 498), and more in terms of the contribution that their endeavours could make to scientific inquiry at a much larger scale. Certainly, as the nineteenth century progressed, the work of local scientific societies increasingly moved across 'a range of social and spatial contexts, primarily through the publication of local work in society *Transactions* or *Proceedings*, but also through inter-club and member's correspondence' (Naylor 2002: 509), so that a 1903 catalogue of books owned by the PNHAS included natural history society publications from Belfast, Glasgow, Huddersfield, Manchester, Nottingham, Bristol, London and Plymouth. Second, Naylor (2002: 498, original italics) continues, in the nineteenth century, 'Cornish science became a group endeavour, its use of a set of institutional spaces for *collective* and *associational* scientific inquiry marking one clear division from earlier, individual, approaches to regional study.' Among these institutional spaces, three were



of particular importance: the museum, the lecture hall, and the field. Intellectual and moral advancement were bound up with the aforementioned institutional spaces and, it is argued here, the two were bound up with a particular sensibility around the mystical based on the moral geographies of the correct sacramental deployment of the Cornish language.

The museum as a cultural space, while of particular importance to natural history and antiquarian societies, became yet more so with the outbreak of World War I. ‘I heard Germany proclaim that it was “by nature” “the master race” and that all others were inferior,’ Peter (1915: 23) said, in his presidential address to the annual meeting of the RIC in the early months of the war,

‘and I wondered if it were so. I read of German *Kultur* being forced on others till the very word revolted me, and I wished that we English could find another phrase for our culture – a word which, though so like, is (however the newspapers may mistake it) not the same in meaning. At first, I confess, I trembled for the ultimate consequences of this terrible contest of nations, but my trembling was of short duration, and it was not long before I came to feel that, awful as might be the strife, it could be but temporary, and that, if Britain were but true to herself, the end could only be the abolition of militarism and the reassertion of culture, healthier for its purgation and fed and nourished by peace on earth and goodwill between nation and nation.’

At the time of Peter’s presidential address, in December 1914, the Royal Cornwall Museum occupied a site on Pydar Street, in the centre of Truro, moving to the larger buildings that originally housed the Truro Savings Bank in 1919. The museum exhibits of the time were organised, largely as they are today, into separate galleries on the subjects of geology, natural history, archaeology [with Cornish archaeology being afforded a separate gallery to non-Cornish archaeology], fine art, applied and decorative art, and world cultures, with special exhibitions on Egyptology and numismatics [i.e. the historical design and manufacture of coins]. ‘Many have an idea that a museum ought to be confined to strict science,’ Peter (1915: 25-6) continued,

‘that it should be a place where the student can attend and learn facts which he would not otherwise know, and that all such exhibits as the high and mighty intellectual dubs “merely popular” should be severely excluded. I think this is a mistaken view, and I hope that the learned scholars by whom I am surrounded will forgive me if I say that their scholarship does little to advance the world unless and until it reaches the general mass of the people, and that, when it reaches them, it must not be cold and harsh and dry, but instinct with life and full of pure emotion.’

For Peter (1915: 28), the Royal Cornwall Museum’s exhibits were ‘curiosities, and nothing more,’ in opposition to which he advocated a very clear set of alternative ideas as to the content and purpose of the Royal Cornwall Museum. As part of his perceived need for a reassertion of culture, Peter called for the reinvigoration of the declining tradition of the use of churches as museums. *This tradition dated back to a time, before the Reformation, when social life and religious life were closely intertwined through ‘judicial meetings, fairs, church plays, and many other things over which the clergy exercised supervision, on the whole, for the public good’* (Peter 1915: 32). By reclaiming a moral mission for the Royal Cornwall Museum from an idealised pre-Reformation Anglo-Catholic past, and by reorganising the exhibitions into a series of teleological narratives, the various exhibits could instead become ‘links in the chain of evolution, helping to carry the imagination back into the past, and, by teaching us that even in trifles we have advanced, fill us with hope and courage for greater progress still’ (Peter 1915: 28). In the Dark Ages, the early Cornish abandoned their ‘cruel, heartless and mysterious’ Pagan religion for a Celtic Christianity that instead taught ‘gentleness and love’ (Peter 1893: 55); in the post-war world, Anglo-Catholicism – being identical and continuous with the early Celtic Church – could not but contribute to progress towards ‘the abolition of militarism’ and towards ‘peace on earth and goodwill between nation and nation.’ Peter did not survive to pass judgement upon the post-war world; he died in 1917.

Field excursions, too, enabled expert antiquarians to relay contemporary understandings of the visited sites to other excursionists, and to demonstrate ‘appropriate ways of *conducting* antiquarian research’ (Naylor 2003: 325, original emphasis). Inductive inquiry, and the use of accurate field surveying techniques, would pay dividends by shedding light upon the purported age, original configuration or use of a particular prehistoric site, hence the PNHAS’s appeal that,

‘as barrows can be opened but once with any chance of discoveries within, it would be better for the public if gentlemen owning barrows would communicate to you [i.e., the society’s membership] their intention of opening them so that every chance may be obtained of their being fully and successfully explored’ (Barclay Montgomery and Cornish 1863: 7-8).

Miss E. Carne, the owner of the land upon which stood the stone circle of Boscawen-Ûn, near St Buryan in West Penwith [see figure 4.8], answered this appeal, giving the Society prior permission to break open some of the unopened chamber tombs surrounding the stones (PNHAS 1864). When the Society’s first excursion, in 1864, reached Boscawen-Ûn, the excursionists duly employed some labourers to open the tombs, finding some fragments of bone, pottery and copper. Furthermore, during its field excursions, ‘the Society took great care to ensure that excursionists were granted plenty of time for lunch and afternoon tea,’ by way of an ‘interjection of a more leisurely pace into the hurry of the day’ (Naylor 2002: 506). Therefore, ‘on the venerated “Gorsedd of Boscawen,” or Druids’ place of Judgment’ – see section 2.3.2.i – ‘the party enjoyed the fare provided for them’ (PNHAS 1864: 10).

Antiquarianism thus worked through a particular mode of engagement with sites of antiquarian interest that was based, as Naylor (2003: 326) points out, on a dialectical tension between the valuation of ‘a closer and corporeal education’ and a reluctance over certain kinds of bodily encounters with the Cornish landscape. A detached and leisurely empiricism was deemed to be better from a scientific standpoint and to more benefit the members of the leisured classes, as was the attitude of irreverence that led the excursionists to take refreshments while seated upon the stones. There were also more practical considerations: ‘The rather cumbersome nature of the excursionists’ clothing –



Figure 4.8 [above]: **Boscawen-Ûn Stone Circle, St Buryan, 2001**

Figure 4.9 [below]: **St Cuby's Holy Well, Duloe, 2004**



especially the women's dresses – go some way to explain the reticence of participants to venture beyond the realms of their transportation,' writes Naylor (2002: 506), 'especially when they were required to cross relatively inhospitable, and certainly muddy and wet, moorland.' This mode of engagement was apparent in Jenner's approach to local history through place-names. The RIC (1913: 156) reported an example of his approach, from a visit to St Cuby's Well, in Duloe [between Liskeard and Looe; see figure 4.9] in the south-east of Cornwall, during the annual excursion of 1912:

'It is situated in a field adjoining the vicarage grounds, in a valley called "Kippiscombe," which is evidently "Cuby's Coombe or Combe." St. Cuby, Keby or Cybi, who is the patron of the church, was one of the few indigenous "Cornish Saints." He was the son of Selyf (or Solomon), King of Cornwall, or Damnonia, son of the Geraint ap Erbyn, who was killed at Llangporth, as related in Llywarch Hen's Elegy.'

There remained, then, an unresolved class tension between engaging with the topography and toponymy of the landscape, and engaging with the materiality of the landscape. Furthermore, of those women who did participate in field excursions, few ever submitted any papers for lecture hall presentations, given the relatively small proportion of female membership of the various antiquarian and natural history societies and the typically masculine nature of debates (Naylor 2002). Indeed, Peter (1907: 154) used a paper on the legend of Tristan and Iseult to urge those of more leisure than himself – 'especially the ladies – to turn their attention to the folklore and legends of Cornwall. I am confident,' he continued,

'there is a rich harvest to be reaped, and, so far as Cornwall is concerned, the field is almost clear. To trace a story back from its form today through the romances of the middle ages to the mythology of the ancient Celt is to learn what have been the thoughts, the actions, the manners of our ancestors in every age through which we pass upon the road. I refer rather to the study of our folk tales than to their collection, though there is still useful work to be

done in the latter direction in spite of what has been done by Hunt and Bottrell.’

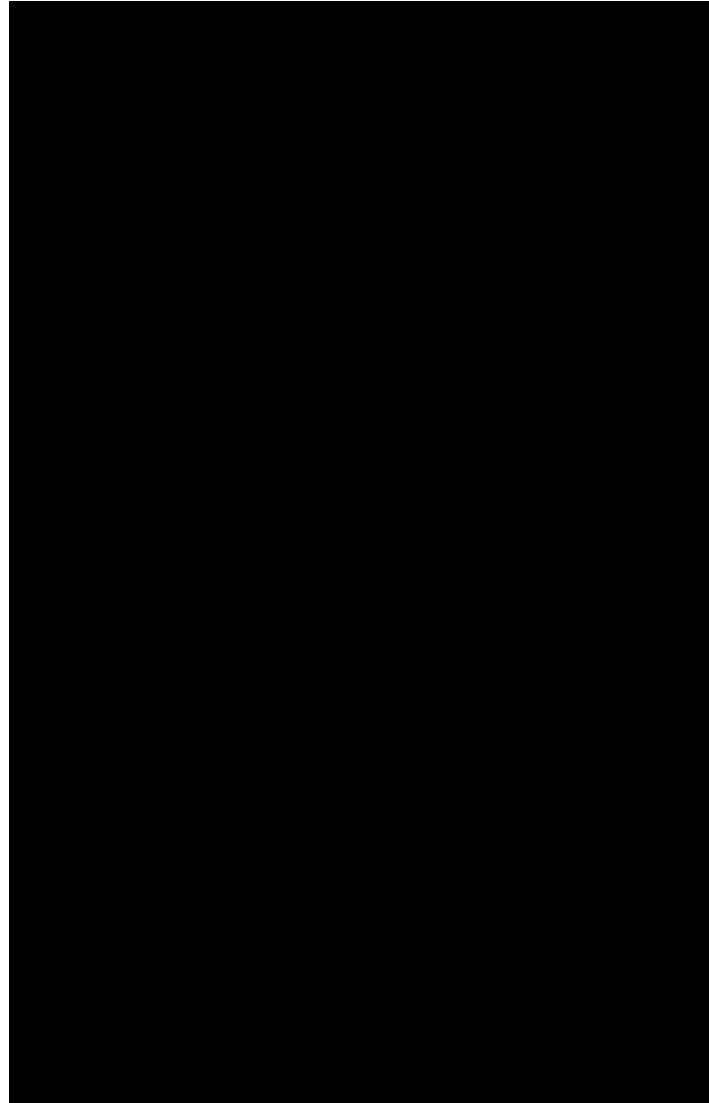
Thus, women were discouraged both from primary antiquarian fieldwork and from making public lecture hall presentations of any resulting research findings, setting up a gender division between antiquarianism and folklore.

Jenner’s philological approach could also be used to challenge the work of others. The first stop along the route of the RIC’s summer excursion of 1913 was at the Nine Maidens stone circle, Wendron [near Helston]. ‘The ordinary explanation of the word “Maidens” is that it is a corruption of Men, a stone,’ it was reported in the *Journal* (RIC 1914a: 310), ‘but with this Mr. Jenner would have nothing to do, such a derivation offending, as he held, against the rules of Celtic philology.’ As well as the general rules of Celtic philology, the correct application of the philological method required the correct interpretation of place-names. In an earlier paper presented to the RIC, Jenner (1912b: 88) had warned all potential historians ‘that when there is a choice between an interpretation of a name which is romantic, historical, mythological or poetical and one which is commonplace and prosaic, the latter... is more likely to be correct.’ Thirdly, it required the deployment of moral geographies of the mystical. As aforementioned, Saunders (2004) argues that the speaking of the Cornish language was, for Jenner, a kind of sacrament, especially when it was used to speak, and to speak of, Cornwall. The field thus held particular value for Jenner as both a sacramental and a scriptural space, so that the correct application of the philological method, whether in the lecture hall or in the field, became a religious ritual through which the Revivalist subject could only truly experience Cornwall if their intellectual and physical practices accorded to a specific set of codified rules – in other words, if they were correctly mystical. The Cornish-speaking Revivalist subject could thus know – and speak – the antiquarian landscape through the educated tongue, as well as by means of careful contemplation through the empirical eye.

#### **4.2.4 'The Question of Questions': Anglo-Catholicism, Spiritualism and the Celtic-Cornish Society**

The connection between the Cornish language revival and sacramental religion extended to the campaign for Cornwall's accession to the Celtic Congress as the sixth member nation, alongside Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, Wales and Brittany. Duncombe-Jewell [see figure 4.10] had a personal interest in the Celtic Revival, having been born in Liskeard on 6 September 1866, before moving out of Cornwall to make a living as a freelance journalist with the *Daily Mail* and the *Morning Post*, for which he travelled to South Africa as war correspondent during the Boer War (Hale 1997b; Lowenna 2004). Indeed, it seems that the main purpose of the Celtic-Cornish Society 'was to provide substance for Duncombe Jewell's lobby to have Cornwall recognized as a Celtic nation by the Celtic Association' (Hale 1997b: 103) and, in particular, to satisfy the Association's leadership as to the status of Cornish as a living language. *Celtia*, the monthly magazine of the Celtic Association, printed a letter from Duncombe-Jewell (1901a: 117) in which he claimed that the 'Credo, Paternoster, Ave, and Gloria' had 'recently been printed in Cornish for daily use.' Catholicism – Roman, for Duncombe-Jewell, though the apparent lack of tension in the Celtic-Cornish Society between adherents of the Churches of England and Rome indicated the common ground that lay between the two at the time – was thus bound up with the wider institutionality of the Celtic-Cornish Revival.

The Celtic Association came into being in around 1898-9; it began to publish *Celtia* in January 1901, and held its first Pan-Celtic Congress in Dublin in August of the same year. It united cultural and political nationalism by bringing together the various national Celtic societies in pursuit of a new geopolitical order of small nations based on their separate languages, and on Esperanto as a neutral, universal language through which the Celtic nations were to communicate with each other (Celtic Association 1901a, 1902). The Congress was effectively a pan-Celtic antiquarian society; the programme, as printed in *Celtia*, being divided into six sessions of papers, reports and debates across four days and the sessions, in turn, being on art and economics; modern Celtic languages; music; Celtic costume, customs, games and folklore; Celtic philology



**Figure 4.10: L. C. R. Duncombe-Jewell [1866-1947],  
at the Pan-Celtic Congress, Cardiff, 1904**



and archaeology; and a final plenary session (Celtic Association 1901b). ‘I want to know whether you are going to the Pan-Celtic Congress in Dublin next week,’ Duncombe-Jewell wrote, in a letter to Jenner that was dated 12 August.

‘I shan’t be able to go, but am sending a paper to be read advocating the claims of Cornwall to inclusion among the Celtic Nations... There is a Rev<sup>d</sup> Percy Treasure at Hereford, a member of the Celtic Assoc<sup>n</sup>, who is very keen and who will join. He goes to Dublin & will probably read my paper’<sup>7</sup>.

Duncombe-Jewell’s paper was duly read to the Congress, and reproduced in the October edition of *Celtia*. ‘The only objection [to Cornwall’s membership of the Celtic Association]’ he had argued, in his letter to Jenner, ‘seems to be that there is no Cornish Society to take the necessary lead. I am therefore forming one: to be called the Cornish Celtic (or Celtic-Cornish Society) for the study & preservation of Celtic remains in Cornwall, including the language’<sup>8</sup>. It was upon this argument that Duncombe-Jewell (1901b: 159) based the conclusion of his paper: ‘Language, it is true, is the real badge of nationality, and the Cornish language... is on the eve of revival. To-day there is a growing movement among the lettered class in Cornwall to learn something of their own language.’ He did not only foresee the revival of the Cornish language in and of itself, though: ‘so soon as I shall have broken more ground in the new County History,’ Duncombe-Jewell (1901a: 117, see also Duncombe-Jewell 1902) wrote, ‘I shall attempt to found a Cornish Language Society, a part of whose programme will be the revival of the [mediaeval] Miracle Plays in the language.’ A set of handwritten notes entitled ‘The Cornish Drama’, in the Jenner Collection at the Cornwall Record Office, reveals the significance of the miracle plays to the Celtic-Cornish Revival: ‘With the exception of a poem of about 2000 lines on the Passion of Christ, written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century,’ Jenner believed, ‘the whole of the real literature of the Cornish language consists of religious dramas’<sup>9</sup>, including the Ordinalia cycle [the Creation, the Passion and the Resurrection] and the Life of St Meriasek. The sacramental body and the educated tongue of the

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<sup>7</sup> Duncombe-Jewell, L. C. R. (1901) unpublished letter to H. and K. Jenner, 12 August, in Jenner Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1141

<sup>8</sup> Duncombe-Jewell, letter to H. and K. Jenner, 12 August 1901

Cornish-speaking Revivalist subject were thus bound up with the mystical geographies of [Anglo-]Catholic Celtic Cornwall.

But the stated aims of the Celtic-Cornish Society, as Duncombe-Jewell (1902: 79) announced them in the May 1902 edition of *Celtia*, did not stop at the revival of the Cornish language. In fact, the three stated aims of the Celtic-Cornish Society cover much of the same ground as the aforementioned programme for the first Pan-Celtic Congress:

I. To preserve from damage and destruction and to study the stone-circles, cromlechs, menhirs, hut-circles, beehive dwellings, camps, hill forts, castles, logan and crick stones, crosses, oratories, holy wells, cemeteries, barrows, and inscribed stones.

II. To keep carefully every National Custom, and above all the truly Cornish sports of Wrestling and Hurling, by presenting every year a Belt to be contended for by Cornish wrestlers, and inscribed silver Hurling balls to each Parish in the Duchy that will ordain an annual Hurling Match on its Feast Day.

III. To revive the Cornish Language as a spoken tongue, by publishing a Grammar and Dictionary of the Language, by printing all Cornish manuscripts not yet printed, by giving prizes for fresh compositions in Cornish, by paying a premium for teaching Cornish to Schoolmasters able to satisfy the Council of their fitness, and also by reviving the ancient Cornish Miracle Plays, and re-establishing the Cornish Gorsedh of the Bards at Boscawen-Un.’

J. D. Enys and Thomas Robins Bolitho – two local landowners – were the Vice-Presidents for Celtic antiquities and Cornish sports, respectively, and Jenner was the Vice-President for the Cornish language. Duncombe-Jewell, meanwhile, took the position as honorary secretary. Thus Duncombe-Jewell attempted to use the Celtic-Cornish Society to bring the revival of the Cornish language together with a particular vision of the Cornish landscape and a certain version of Cornish folk culture. The complex and sometimes contradictory ways in which the Celtic and the Cornish became

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<sup>9</sup> Jenner, H. (undated) *The Cornish Drama*, unpublished manuscript notes, in Jenner Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1141, no page numbers

active in this associated culture of landscape are discussed in section 4.3; the ways in which they became active in the associated understanding of folklore and the Cornish folk are discussed in section 4.4.

Furthermore, the story behind Duncombe-Jewell's reference to 'the new County History' reveals something of his character, as well as something of the wider networks of the Celtic-Cornish Revival, both within and beyond Cornwall. In 1901, H. Arthur Doubleday – one of the founders of the Victoria County History – appointed Duncombe-Jewell to seek support, subscriptions and possible contributors for a projected Victoria History of Cornwall, which would follow a similar format to those of other counties: two volumes of articles on general, county-wide subjects, two to cover the topographical histories of each parish, and a volume of family histories. Duncombe-Jewell assumed that he had been appointed to the position of Local Editor, until his precarious personal financial situation – which led Duncombe-Jewell to write a series of letters to Jenner, asking for loans, and Duncombe-Jewell's father to write to Jenner, asking that he stop acquiescing (see Lowenna 2004) – brought about his dismissal from the project altogether in the summer of 1902. A county committee was then formed under the chairmanship of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, who was also the County Council Chairman. Among the other members of the committee were Lord St Germans, Lord Clifden, Lord St Levan and Lord Arundell of Wardour, John Gott [the third Bishop of Truro] and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch ['Q'], a founder member of the Celtic-Cornish Society. An editorial committee was also formed, including Thurstan Peter and J. D. Enys, two more founder members of the Celtic-Cornish Society, along with the Reverend [later Canon] Thomas Taylor, vicar of St Just-in-Penwith, and H. Michell Whitely, an engineer who was then living in Eastbourne but an honorary member and contributor of antiquarian papers to the *Journal* of the RIC. The committee was discharged in 1904, whereupon Canon Taylor assumed the position of Local Editor for Cornwall, overseeing the publication of the first volume in 1906 before financial constraints delayed further work until well after World War I.

After Duncombe-Jewell's paper had been read to the Congress, Edmund Edward Fournier D'Albe, Secretary of the Celtic Association, argued that Cornwall could not be recognised as a Celtic nation unless a Celtic language were actually still spoken (Hale 1997b), as opposed to being merely 'on the eve of revival.' However, he then read a letter from Duncombe-Jewell, in which the latter claimed that 'Cornish was not dead,' that 'Cornwall had a rich literary heritage in the Cornish language,' 'that a Celtic-Cornish Society had been founded to preserve and revive the Cornish language, and that a Cornish grammar and English-Cornish dictionary were in production' (Hale 1997b: 104). Fournier D'Albe therefore supported the case for Cornwall's recognition as a Celtic nation but Lord Castletown, the Anglo-Irish President of the Celtic Association, expressed doubts as to whether Cornish was still a living language. His alternative suggestion, that the decision be postponed until the second Pan-Celtic Congress – held in Cardiff, in 1904 – was carried by a margin of 32 votes to 22. Duncombe-Jewell abruptly disappeared from the Revivalist movement, accepting instead an invitation to stay for a week at Boleskine House, near Loch Ness, which had recently been bought by Aleister Crowley. Instead of staying for a week, 'he became settled there as Crowley's general factotum' (Lowenna 2004: 72-3), changing his name to Ludovick Cameron – an expression, he claimed, of his Jacobitism, but perhaps more probably for the purposes of tax evasion (Lowenna 2004) – by which he was known upon his death, in Folkestone, in 1947.

It is interesting that Fournier D'Albe, a physicist by profession, took such an active involvement in the early Pan-Celtic movement for he was also involved in spiritualism and psychical research. In *New Light on Immortality*, published in 1908, he claimed authority as a physicist to answer "the question of questions," the possibility of human immortality' on the basis that 'the relations between mind and matter are at the root of all possible theories concerning immortality' (quoted in Oppenheim 1985: 326). The answer to 'the question of questions' was therefore one for physics, for the physicist 'is permanently confronted with problems concerning the ultimate nature of matter.' Oppenheim (1985: 338) goes on to discuss Fournier d'Albe's answer, in the context of the paradoxical relationship between cultures of science and spiritualism at the time:

‘At at time when discoveries in electromagnetism commanded the attention of scientists and educated public alike, it was all too tempting to borrow bits and pieces of electrical theory and hitch them to fantastic, inappropriate partners. Fournier D’Albe, for example, worked up the theory of “psychomeres,” or “soul-particles” – “the really vital part of the cell” that constitutes the individual’s immortal spirit – and decked it out with ionization and condensation, electric polarity, molecular dimensions, and electrons for good measure.’

Ultimately, though, having wrestled with ‘the question of questions,’ Fournier d’Albe was forced to concede the irreconcilability of science and spiritualism. ‘Spiritualism as a religion may legitimately be studied in a section of anthropology,’ he wrote (quoted in Oppenheim 1985: 390),

‘but spiritualism as a science does not exist. To be a spiritualist, the scientist must surrender his wishes, his methods, his views into the hands of his “spirit friends” on the “other side.” If he does that he may achieve a certain peace of mind, but his scientific work will be at an end.’

The discussion returns to this paradoxical relationship between science, spiritualism and the Celtic in section 4.4.2. In the meantime, suffice it to note that it was Jenner (2004: 68) who addressed the Congress at Cardiff in 1904: ‘The Cornish are again beginning to show their interest in their old language,’ he said.

‘I do not say that they are likely to introduce it as a spoken language to the exclusion of English, but I think a good many of those who do not know it will repair that defect, and will learn certainly to read it, probably to write, and possible to speak it. That it can be spoken intelligibly by modern people was proved very clearly at the Breton Congress at Lesneven. At the dinner which ended the Congress I made a speech of about four or five minutes’ duration in Cornish, and – much to my astonishment, for I must confess that I did not think it would be so – I was very well understood by my Breton audience.’

Despite Castletown's continuing doubts, the vote was carried in favour of Cornwall's membership.

### **4.3 The Cornish Landscape and the Celtic-Cornish Revival**

#### **4.3.1 'Land of Holy Wells and Ancient Crosses': The Fabric of the Cornish Landscape**

Charles Causley (1981: no page numbers), the late Cornish-born poet, playwright and children's author, introduced a more recent edition of Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould's [1899] *A Book of the West: Cornwall* by writing of its original author that he 'believed that any attempt to comprehend Cornwall and the Cornish failed without first taking into account the ancient age of saints.' Baring-Gould [see figure 4.11], who is perhaps best known as the author of the hymn, 'Onward Christian Soldiers', was also a president of the RIC, and a Devon country parson whose writings ranged across south-west England (Trezise 2000b; Everett 2003). In the very first chapter of the book, then, he 'plunges us at once into a semi-fabulous world of Celtic missionaries, and writes of it with the splendid ease and authority of one who has just returned from a long stay there' (Causley 1981: no page numbers). Baring-Gould's *Lives of the Saints* comprised 3,600 biographies collected in 15 volumes and arranged in order of the saints' days; from which he drew his nine-part study of saints connected with Cornwall, including brief accounts of saints' lives and lists of churches and chapels dedicated to them, which earned him the RIC's fifth triennial Henwood Gold Medal in 1902 (Baring-Gould 1898, 1900b, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907). Not only were the saints, in themselves, essential to any understanding of Cornwall, but they were also essential to any understanding of the parishes, the holy wells and the ancient crosses that, it will be argued in this section, made up the fabric of the contemporaneous Cornish landscape.

While many parishes in England reflect earlier patterns of manorial estates, Cornish parishes are more reflective of 'the spheres of influence of local clerics who were loosely attached to a local monastic house' (Harvey 2000: 203; see also Harvey 2002, 2003). They are often named not after a town or settlement, but after one of many local

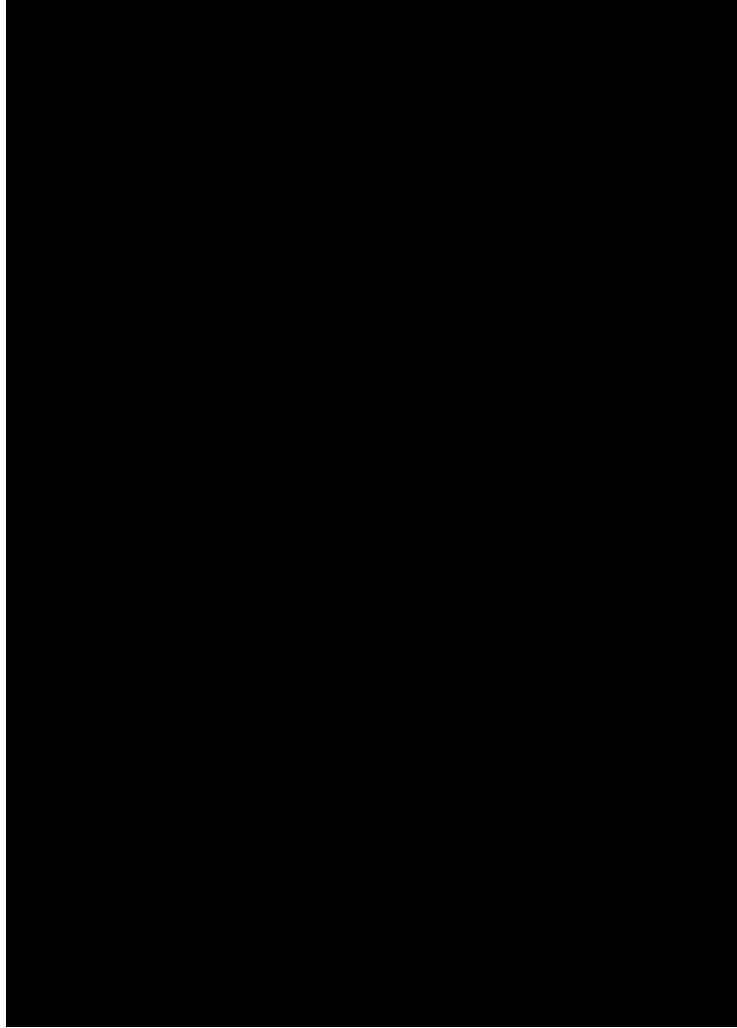


Figure 4.11: **Sabine Baring-Gould [1834-1924], date unknown**

saints: Penzance, for example, is in the parish of Madron, which is so called after the fifth and sixth century saint of the same name. However, in a presidential address to the RIC, Baring-Gould (1900a: 47) argued that mediaeval hagiographers could not understand ‘the condition, of half-savagery and half-Christianity, in which the first founders existed,’ and that they often embellished the original accounts so as to satisfy a craving for the marvellous and the miraculous. This was consistent with the interpretation of Anglicanism as identical to, and a continuation of, Celtic Catholicism. ‘The object of the Bishops of Exeter,’ for Baring-Gould (1902: 37), ‘was to transform a local saint of the Celtic church into one who had a place in the Roman Calendar. So at Madron,’ to continue the above example, ‘they converted the original founder into Maternus, Bishop of Trèves, a reputed disciple of S. Peter, but actually belonging to the 3rd century. Madron, however, is the Irish Medran, a favourite pupil of S. Kieran, of Saighir.’

This historical narrative, of the conversions from Celtic to Roman Catholicism having taken place through the direct substitution of the former by the latter, was in contrast to that of the conversions from Paganism to Celtic Catholicism. For Baring-Gould (1910, 1981 [1899]; see also Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994 [1894]), these took place through the practice that was adopted by St Patrick in Ireland, of the sensitive co-option of elements of Pagan folk religion, so that it was often difficult to distinguish between the two. Thus:

‘The Holy Wells of Cornwall are a distinct feature of the county. In all Celtic lands, previous to the introduction of Christianity, there was a great veneration for wells, and the early missionaries took advantage of this to turn them into baptisteries, or in other ways to consecrate them’ (Baring-Gould 1910: 124-5).

Baring-Gould’s historical geography of Cornwall thus worked through a synthesis of common Celticity and unique Cornishness that resonated with the claims that were made on behalf of Cornwall by the Celtic-Cornish Society.



Mabel and Lillian Quiller-Couch were brothers of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch who, as aforementioned, was a founder member of the Celtic-Cornish Society. All three were children of Thomas Quiller-Couch, a doctor who practised in Bodmin until his death in 1884 and who, in turn, was the son of the Cornish naturalist, Dr Jonathan Couch (on whom, see Naylor 2005). Discovering a set of manuscript notes belonging to their late father, on the ancient and holy wells of Cornwall, the sisters set about enlarging and completing his work. The result remains one of the most significant sustained antiquarian works on one specific type of landscape antiquity: *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*, a survey of almost one hundred wells, was originally published in 1894 [see figure 4.12]. An extended preface set the wells in their folk-historical context, after which they were arranged in alphabetical order, so that the entry for Madron Well [see figure 4.13] was preceded by that for the nearby St Ludgvan's Well and followed by that for Manaton Holy Well, South Hill, to the east of Bodmin Moor and close to the Devon border. The holy wells were made knowable through a general survey, because [and so that] they were, in themselves, as much a part of the fabric of the landscape as the villages, fields, hills and streams.

The sisters [actually, their father] described Madron Holy Well in the following words:

‘It is impossible to guess, such are the ravages of fanatic violence and time, as to what the well and baptistery originally were. About thirty years ago I visited it, and it was then in a very ruined state. There was nothing of the shapely and sculptured form of many of our Eastern wells about it. It was merely an oblong space, enclosed by rough old walling, in which were, in the south-west corner, a dilapidated well, with an inlet and outlet for water; a raised row of stones in front of this, and the remains of stone benches’ (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994: 125)

There is then reproduced, from the work of J. T. Blight [on whom, see section 4.3.2], his description and his accompanying plan of the baptistery [see figure 4.14], according to which the building was 25 feet by 16 feet, with walls of two feet in thickness, and the altar stone was five feet ten inches by two feet seven inches, standing two feet ten inches above the floor [see figure 4.15]. The mystical geographies of the Celtic-

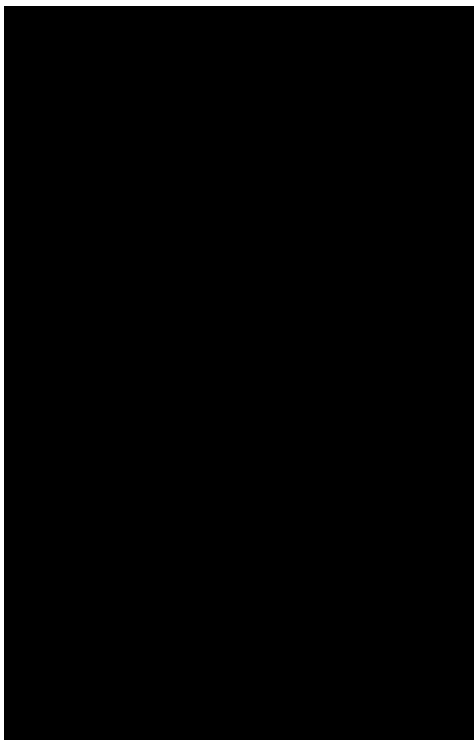


Figure 4.12 [above]: *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*, front cover, 1994

Figure 4.13 [below]: **Madron Holy Well**, 2004



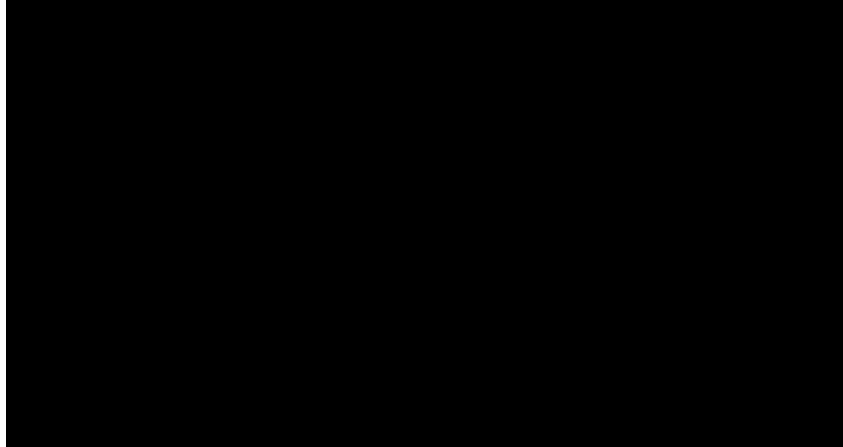


Figure 4.14 [above]: **Madron Holy Well Baptistry,**  
**from *Ancient and Holy Wells of Cornwall*, 1894**

Figure 4.15 [below] **The Altar, Madron Holy Well Baptistry, 2004**



Cornish Revivalist landscape thus also worked through the ‘accurate field surveying techniques’ (Naylor 2003: 316) of Cornish antiquarianism.

Two years later, Arthur G. Langdon’s *Old Cornish Crosses* (Langdon 1896) was published. It built upon Langdon’s work-in-progress reports on the ornamentation of early Cornish crosses in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* in 1888, and in the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* (Langdon 1890). Langdon, another founder member of the Celtic-Cornish Society, died in 1911; the RIC (1912: 22) paid tribute to his work, thus:

‘His volume on the Ancient Crosses of Cornwall is the most complete that has been issued. It is carefully illustrated by means of his drawing, to scale, taken from his own rubbings of the stones; the specimens shewn being of the period which preceded the Gothic. As an architect he was interested in their forms and more or less elaborate ornamentation.’

His discovery of the first Cornish standing stones inscribed in Ogham, the ancient Irish alphabet (Langdon 1893, 1895) – also reported in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, and the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* – was almost a side project.

Langdon’s work, like that of the Quiller-Couch sisters, took the form of a survey. Although the crosses were classified according to their shape and ornamentation, the entries under each classification were arranged in alphabetical order. The stone cross in the churchyard at Madron was classified under ‘Ornamented Crosses’, and further sub-classified with other such crosses that bear the figure of Christ. Langdon (1890) listed the cross at Madron in between those at Lelant and at St Buryan; on the accompanying page of sketch diagrams, that of the cross at Madron is positioned in between those of crosses from Camborne and St Erth [see figure 4.16]. The cross itself was described as being three feet seven inches high, the head of the cross as being two feet two-and-a-half inches wide, and the shaft as being eighteen inches wide and ten inches thick. Of the figure, Langdon (1896: 279) wrote that it was much larger than was usually found on crosses of a similar size: ‘The arms are very much widened at the ends, and



Figure 4.16: **Subjects connected with the Crosses – Figure Sculpture,**  
**from *Old Cornish Crosses*, 1896**

provide an excellent example showing the full sleeves of the tunic, although the body of the vestment does not appear to be indicated; the legs are short in proportion, and the feet are missing.’ Stone crosses worked in the same way as holy wells in the making of the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist landscape.

Contradictory moral geographies of the correct ways in which to perform this landscape of holy wells and ancient crosses characterised the relationship between the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist and the Cornish folk, wherein the wells were, on the one hand, connected to Anglo-Catholicism and, on the other, to pre-Christian Pagan folk religion. Having praised the sensitive co-option of certain elements of Pagan folk religion into early Celtic Catholicism, Baring-Gould (1981: 32) went on to declaim those surviving elements of the former that had not been co-opted into the latter:

‘It is said that rags may still be seen on the bushes about Madron well as they are about holy wells in Ireland and about tombs of fakirs and Mussulman saints. I doubt if any Cornish people are so foolish as to do such a thing as suspend rags serving as an oblation to the patron of the spring for the sake of obtaining benefits from him.’

It is unclear as to whether Baring-Gould was arguing that this folk ritual was being maintained by non-Cornish, or whether, alternatively, he was denying that it had survived at all. If the latter was true, then Baring-Gould was contradicted by William Copeland Borlase, who found evidence of this practice at Madron Holy Well, albeit the only site in Cornwall at which he did find such evidence, though he drew exact parallels with practices from parts of Scotland and Northern Asia, and in Japanese Shintoism (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994); and, as will be discussed in chapter six, votive offerings are left at Madron and other holy wells around present day Cornwall [see figure 4.13].

Baring-Gould’s methodology when researching folk beliefs, customs and tales was limited to reading the work of others; he ‘engaged in little or no fieldwork’ of his own (Dorson 1999 [1968]: 296), perhaps even combining the Quiller-Couch sisters’ work with his own hagiographical studies and theologically-derived personal opinions. In

researching their book, in contrast, the sisters – like their father before them – employed the twin methodologies of the walking tour and the first-hand attention to oral historical sources (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994; Dorson 1999). While Cornish antiquarianism, in the nineteenth century, ‘became a group endeavour, its use of a set of institutional spaces for *collective* and *associational* scientific inquiry marking one clear division from earlier, individual, approaches to regional study’ (Naylor 2002: 498, original italics), the field remained, for the folklorist, a space for individual study. Furthermore, such study – given the differences in research sources and, consequently, in nature of the field itself – took place not through the empirical eye and educated tongue of the antiquarian Celtic-Cornish Revivalist, but through the attentive ear of the Cornish folklorist.

While Baring-Gould preferred to believe that Pagan folk religion remained in the pre-Christian past, the Quiller-Couch sisters and others (see Bottrell 1873; Courtney 1973 [1870]) adopted a common trope in positioning such mystical sites and practices in the living memory of the eldest generation of the Cornish folk. Moreover, they were pointedly non-judgemental in their writing, passing neither favourable nor disapproving comment upon the practice of leaving votive offerings at Madron. Their research was not straightforward: ‘It is difficult, even now, to gain authentic information of the old customs, ceremonies and traditions of these holy springs, so quickly and surely does the hand of civilisation and progress wipe away the old beliefs and superstitions,’ Thomas Quiller-Couch bemoaned, in another of the sections of his original manuscript that was incorporated into his daughters’ publication. ‘Within my remembrance the cromlech, the holy well, the way-side cross and inscribed stone, have gone before the utilitarian greed of the farmer and the road man’ (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994: xvi-xx).

It is thus possible to make a distinction between Baring-Gould’s clerical landscape and the Quiller-Couch sisters’ folkloric landscape. It is also possible to problematise such a distinction, by showing how orthodox religious groups and antiquarians co-opted folk practices into their own rituals. Interestingly, local Methodists continued to hold an open-air sermon on the first Sunday in May at Madron Holy Well, which was typically

followed by the dropping of pebbles, pins and little crosses of rush-pith into the well for the purposes of divination. It was not only the Methodists who preserved this folk custom, either. According to the notes issued prior to the PNHAS excursion of 1868, Madron was a wishing well, ‘the *modus operandi* being to drop in a pin, head downwards (be particular about this), and wish whilst it is sinking’<sup>10</sup>. In response to those who were sceptical of faith-healing, a later group of excursionists from the PNHAS were told that Bishop Hall, formerly of Exeter, testified to some cases during his time in the diocese; and that the medical profession was increasingly coming to recognise that the imagination might have a curative effect on certain nervous disorders (PNHAS 1888).

A similar version of the Cornish landscape worked in a very different way in the publicity materials of the Great Western Railway [GWR]. GWR had set up an advertising department as early as 1888; in 1904, it published A. M. Broadley’s *The Cornish Riviera*. Through Broadley (1905: 9), GWR marketed Cornwall, first and foremost, as a health resort:

‘It is obviously in the best interests of the British household and taxpayer that the favourable climatic conditions of Cornwall between October and April should be made as widely known as possible. To this end reliable statistics on the subject of the winter climate of Cornwall have been added to a brief account of the other features of the old-world country of “Tre, Pol and Pen,” which have rendered it an object of supreme interest both to English and foreign travellers from time immemorial.’

From Plymouth, Broadley (1905: 28) passed into ‘the heart of the Cornish Riviera,’ by which he meant the area around Liskeard, Looe, Lostwithiel, St Blazey and St Austell. ‘Runic crosses are as abundant as sacred wells’ in the area, to which he consequently referred as the land of holy wells and ancient crosses, ‘and full particulars of both are to

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<sup>10</sup> Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society (1868) ‘Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society’s Excursion No. 5: Notes on the Excursion’, unpublished leaflet in *Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society Minute Book 1880-1898*, in Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society Collection (Morrab Library) MOR/NAT/1



be found in the interesting works on the subject by Messrs. Langdon and M. and L. Quiller-Couch' (Broadley 1905: 30).

The first edition of *The Cornish Riviera* sold out all of its 250,000 copies, and ran to four more editions (Payton 1996a). Broadley (1905) located Cornwall in a distant though indeterminate 'old-world' past and, moreover, made it the passive subject of tourists from the rest of England and Britain, and from 'foreign' countries, apparently existing only to serve the interests of the tourist whenever they should turn their interest upon it. In addition, if the various Cornish antiquarian societies promoted moral advancement, be it as a fortunate by-product or as an important guiding principle of intellectual inquiry (Naylor 2002), then Broadley promoted physical improvement very much as an important guiding principle of any interest in the antiquarian landscape. For Broadley (1905), the relationship in question was between the tourists and Cornwall as a landscape and a climate, rather than the Cornish as a people. Interestingly, in *The Cornish Riviera* (Broadley 1905), he promoted neither the Cornish Riviera nor the Cornish themselves as being in any way Celtic.

There was also, for Broadley, a regional geography to this Revivalist landscape, within which the holy wells and stone crosses were concentrated in south and east Cornwall, while west Cornwall offered the antiquarian-minded tourist a landscape characterised more by stone circles and chamber tombs. In contrast, as discussed in section 4.2.4, Duncombe-Jewell (1902: 79) claimed not only holy wells and stone crosses but effectively every kind of prehistoric landscape antiquity on behalf of the Celtic-Cornish Society, which would aim:

'I. To preserve from damage and destruction and to study the stone-circles, cromlechs, menhirs, hut-circles, beehive dwellings, camps, hill forts, castles, logan and crick stones, crosses, oratories, holy wells, cemeteries, barrows, and inscribed stones.'

Similarly, in his aforementioned paper that was read to the Pan-Celtic Congress in 1901, Duncombe-Jewell (1901b: 154) included

‘the 300 odd Celtic crosses, ornamented with some of the finest known examples of interlaced and knot work: the numerous holy and wishing wells bearing the names of Celtic saints: the remains of hill and cliff castles, including Tintagel, where King Arthur was born:... its barrows and cromlechs: the stone-circle of Boscawen-Un, once, according to the Welsh triad, one of the three Gorsedds of Britain’

as evidence of Cornwall’s Celticity. This latter site was also singled out for special attention in the third aim of the Celtic-Cornish Society, in which Duncombe-Jewell (1902: 79) set out to revive the Cornish language, in part, by ‘re-establishing the Cornish Gorsedh of the Bards at Boscawen-Un.’ The paradoxical position of such sites within the Revivalist landscape is the subject of the next section.

#### ***4.3.2 Stone Circles and Druids in the Celtic-Cornish Landscape***

Naylor (2003: 316) identifies ‘the comparison of Cornish sites with those elsewhere in Britain’ as one of the ‘key features that defined the anatomy of Cornish antiquarianism in the second half of the nineteenth century.’ However, looking beyond Britain, Batten (1864: 26) compared the stone circle at Carnac, Brittany to ‘an ordinary Celtic circle like that of Boscawen-un.’ In doing so, his concern was not only to connect the scientific study of Cornwall to scientific inquiry at a national scale (Naylor 2002), but also to make a more cultural-historical connection to the other Celtic nations. Such a concern was central to the Celtic-Cornish Revival. Regarding the Celts, though, Batten (1864: 29) was careful to avoid reaching the kind of speculative and under-supported conclusions that led William Borlase [1696-1772] – Rector of the parish of Ludgvan, to the east of Penzance, for fifty years from 1722 and a correspondent, during the 1750s, of William Stukeley – to ascribe many Cornish sites of both artificial and natural origin to the Druids (Pool 1986):

‘I know it is the custom to call all monuments of the kind Druidical, and it is probably true that many of them were erected in connection with religious observances, but our knowledge of Celtic institutions is I think too limited to

warrant us in ascribing these gigantic works to the sole agency of their priesthood.’

This section argues that, in order to exert a measure of control over the mystical by attempting to contain it within constructions of an Anglo-Catholic Celtic subject, it was also necessary to uncouple the Druids and the otherwise associated landscape of burial chambers and stone circles, so as to write potentially contradictory versions of the Celtic and the mystical out of the Celtic-Cornish Revival.

The PNHAS passed through a short period of stagnation between the years 1856 and 1862, during which time it ceased to issue its *Transactions* and annual reports. By 1863, however, its secretaries were ready to report its ‘resuscitation’ (Barclay Montgomery and Cornish 1863: 5), which its members undertook principally ‘so that the Cambrian Archaeological Society of Wales could be met by a comparable body on their visit to Penzance’ in 1862 (Naylor 2002: 499). The members of the Cambrian Archaeological Society were then conducted on a two-day tour of sites of archaeological interest in the Land’s End peninsula, as mentioned in Borlase’s *Antiquities*:

‘The Cambrians, conveyed to Penzance station by the West Cornwall Railway, were driven in carriages by way of various old stones, to the Land’s End, where a “handsome luncheon” had been spread on the turf by gentlemen of the neighbourhood. In the evening there was a banquet followed by the reading of learned papers’ (Michell 1977: 54).

The honour of conducting the tour was given to J. T. Blight [see figure 4.17], a local artist and antiquarian (Michell 1977; Cooke 2004) whose work, at the time, was held in such comparable esteem to that of Borlase that a leaflet advertising the PNHAS’s annual excursion of 19 August 1868 promised that ‘The Secretaries will have on the ground Borlase’s *Antiquities*, the *Transactions* of the Society, and Blight’s Papers on the

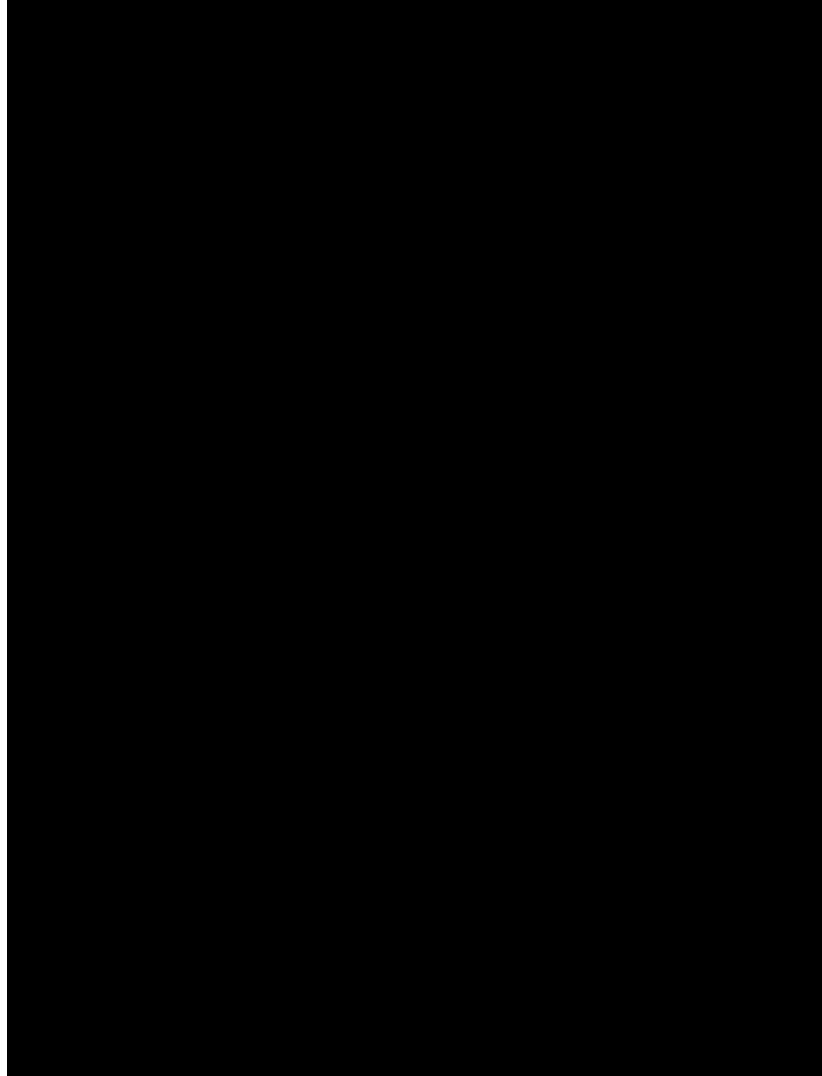


Figure 4.17: **J. T. Blight** [1835-1911], *c.*1864

various objects visited, with other books for reference'<sup>11</sup>.

John Thomas Blight was born on 7 October 1835 in Redruth, the eldest of the two children of Robert Blight and Thomasine Thomas (Michell 1977; Cooke 2004). While still young, he moved to Penzance with his parents and younger brother, Joseph, where his father had taken up a position as a schoolmaster. Both boys taught themselves wood engraving, Joseph leaving Cornwall for London in 1869 to pursue a career as an illustrator. John [hereafter 'Blight'] remained in Cornwall to pursue a similar career, having a collection of his engravings published as *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the West of Cornwall* by subscription in 1856. 'The destruction of many monuments of remote antiquity which formerly existed in the West of Cornwall, and the mutilation which several others have sustained by mischievous and ignorant persons,' Blight (2004: 5) wrote, introducing the collection as a salvage archaeology, 'have induced the author to attempt the present work, in order to preserve the forms of those remains which are so valuable to the Antiquary and the Historian.' Later that same year, Blight travelled to Morwenstow to meet Hawker for advice on a companion volume on the east of Cornwall. Hawker responded enthusiastically, posing for Blight in his cassock and hat, and accompanied by his dog, Berg, at Dupath Well, near Callington [see figure 4.18]. Hawker also obtained the names of some forty or fifty additional subscribers, and elicited Royal permission – through correspondence with a Colonel Phipps of the Royal household – to dedicate the book to Prince Albert, the Duke of Cornwall. The book, *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall* was published by subscription in 1858.

Hawker also provided Blight with some poetry to use alongside the engravings of Dupath Well and of St John's Well, on Morwenstow Glebe, to which Hawker insisted

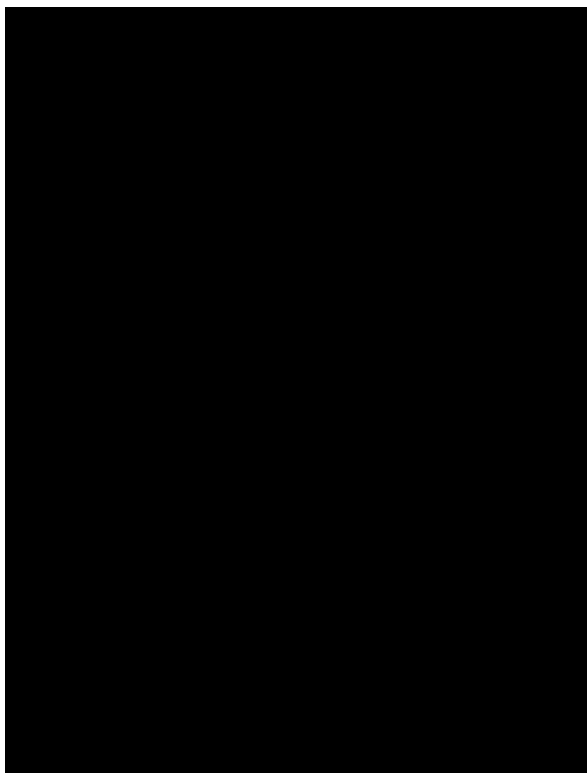
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<sup>11</sup> PNHAS, 'Excursion No. 5'



Figure 4.18 [above]: **Parson Hawker at Dupath Well,**  
**from *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall*, 1858**

Figure 4.19 [below]: **Parson Hawker at St John's Well,**  
**from *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall*, 1858**



that Blight transfer his pose [see figure 4.19]. The poem refers to the prophesied birth of the child who would become St John the Baptist: ‘They dream’d not in Old Hebron,’ wrote Hawker (see Blight 2004: 181), ‘that here, in this far ground, / Beside the Severn Sea, that Hebrew child / Would be a cherish’d memory of the Wild!’ Hawker invests the well building – what he assumed, given its having been named after St John, to have been a Baptistery – with a certain animistic capacity for living memory, and a divine immunity to the worst effects of natural and human erosion: while ‘the pulses of the ocean, bound / Whole centuries away,’ this ‘one meek Cell, / Built by the Fathers o’er a lonely Well, / Still breathes The Baptist’s sweet remembrance round!’ Furthermore, the waters of the well still dutifully serve the sacramental needs of baptism in the name of St John: ‘A Spring of silent waters, with his name / That from the Angel’s voice in music came, / Here in The Wilderness so faithful found, / It freshens to this day the Levite’s grassy mound!’ Hawker’s own visionary understanding of baptism was discussed in section 4.2.1; here, he seems to imply that, whether or not the well had any pre-Christian associations, its co-option in the name of early Christianity was somehow so powerful and so true that both the meaning and the materiality of the well landscape would endure long after the occupant of the Baptistery had departed.

In addition, Hawker provided Blight with a sketch by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland of the ruined pier head at Bude, of which Hawker insisted that Blight include an engraving in the second *Ancient Crosses* volume, despite its having only been built in 1823 (Michell 1977; Cooke 2004). He also provided some contributory remarks for Blight’s *A Week at the Land’s End*, a self-illustrated natural history and antiquarian guide book to the peninsula, which was published in 1861. However, in 1862, complaining that the ‘RSH’ moniker was not prominent enough alongside his contributions in these latter works, Hawker (quoted in Michell 1977: 27) wrote to J. G. Godwin – who worked for Hawker’s publisher – describing Blight as ‘a singular embodiment of those Brain-suckers who have surrounded my life.’ Blight was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1866 but, two years later, under the pressures of a high self-imposed workload for low financial rewards, he suffered a nervous breakdown from which he never fully recovered (Michell 1977; Cooke 2004). He began to believe that Druids had

infiltrated the Church of England, through which they planned to restore their religious rites; and the Reverend Prebendary Philip Hedgeland, of whom Blight was a parishioner, wrote in response to an enquiry as to Blight's mental health that "I am in perpetual fear of some outbreak in church, where he claims to have a full right to the pulpit" (quoted in Michell 1977: 61-2). Blight was committed by magistrate's order to the County Lunatic Asylum, Bodmin on 20 May 1871, where he died some forty years later, on 23 January 1911.

Both of Blight's *Ancient Crosses* collections included a section entitled 'Celtic, Druidical and Roman Remains'. 'It is generally supposed that cromlechs were erected by the Ancients for the purpose of distinguishing the burial-places of their chiefs, or of other celebrated individuals,' Blight (2004 [1856]: 76) wrote: 'Paulinus and Agricola, in their several descents on Anglesea, found Druidical circles and cromlechs here; and this mode of burial continued to be practised for some time after.' However, discussing Lanyon Quoit [see figures 4.20 and 4.21] in *A Week at the Land's End*, Blight (1989 [1861]: 16-7) noted that the quoit, or cromlech, as a generic type of monument was never exclusive to the Druids,

'as they have been found where the Druids never had footing. Similar monuments appear to have been worshipped in Ireland, and Dr. Borlase refers to one in Wales on which crosses were cut. As it is well known that the early Christians so marked the blocks of stone held sacred by the heathen, that when they knelt to them they might pay a kind of justifiable adoration, it seems probable that some of them were regarded as objects of worship. Some have considered them Druid altars on which sacred fires were kindled, but any one who has seen them will soon dismiss this conjecture, as from their construction they are not applicable to this purpose. They were probably tombs, raised in honour of distinguished personages.'

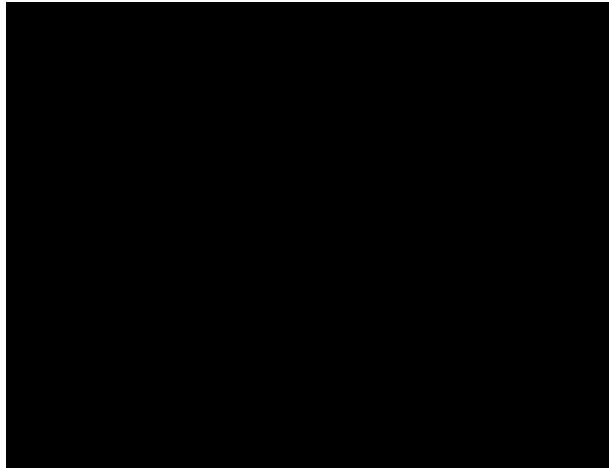
Thus Blight attempted to write the active agency of the Druids out of the historical narratives of the Cornish landscape where possible and, where this was not definitively possible, to normalise their religious rites – from the use of quoits as altars for the





Figure 4.20 [above]: **Lanyon Quoit, 2001**

Figure 4.21 [below]: **Lanyon Quoit,**  
**from *A Week at the Land's End*, 1861**



lighting of sacred fires, to their use as burial sites for ancestor worship. Such scepticism towards the pre-Christian Paganism of the Druids continued into the early Celtic-Cornish Revival. Holy wells and stone crosses could be interpreted as the earliest archaeological evidence of Christianity in Cornwall, and therefore readily connected to the Revivalist movement. Langdon (1896) and Taylor (1916) insisted that the crosses had only ever been Christian symbols – for use as wayside prayer or preaching posts, or as markers along old church paths from dispersed rural settlements. As such, they dated back to no earlier than the arrival of the early Celtic Christian missionaries from Ireland, Wales and Brittany in the years following the Roman withdrawal from Britain. They were, explicitly, not Christianised relics of an earlier Pagan religion. Peter, meanwhile, used the occasion of the RIC’s summer excursion of 1913 to urge those present to reject all Borlase’s ‘nonsense’ about ‘those “mistletoe cutting old humbugs”’ (RIC 1914a: 314) in connection with rock basins on Carn Brea, a natural hilltop rock outcrop, at the eastward and westward feet of which lie Redruth and Camborne, respectively [see figure 4.22]. For Peter, not only was there no evidence to connect the Druids to Carn Brea, but – given that the classical Roman writers discussed the Druids only in connection to Anglesey – there was also none to connect them to Cornwall.

Stone circles, too, Blight (2004: 77) conceded, were ‘supposed to have been connected with the religious rites of the Druids,’ associating the Druids with the stone circles of Boscawen-Ûn, the Merry Maidens, Tregeseal, the Nine Maidens at Boskednan [all in the Land’s End peninsula] and the Trippet Stones at Blisland [on Bodmin Moor; see figure 4.23]. Of these, Boscawen-Ûn– with its central stone, unique in the Cornish archaeological record [see figure 4.8] – presented something of an exceptional and problematic case. ‘Dr. Borlase considered these circles to have been places of council or judgment,’ Blight (2004: 72-3) wrote,

‘and of this one he says, “Whilst any election or decree was depending, or any solemn compact to be confirmed, the principal persons concerned stood each by his pillar, and where a middle stone was erected in the circle, there stood the prince or general elect.” It has been the custom with some writers

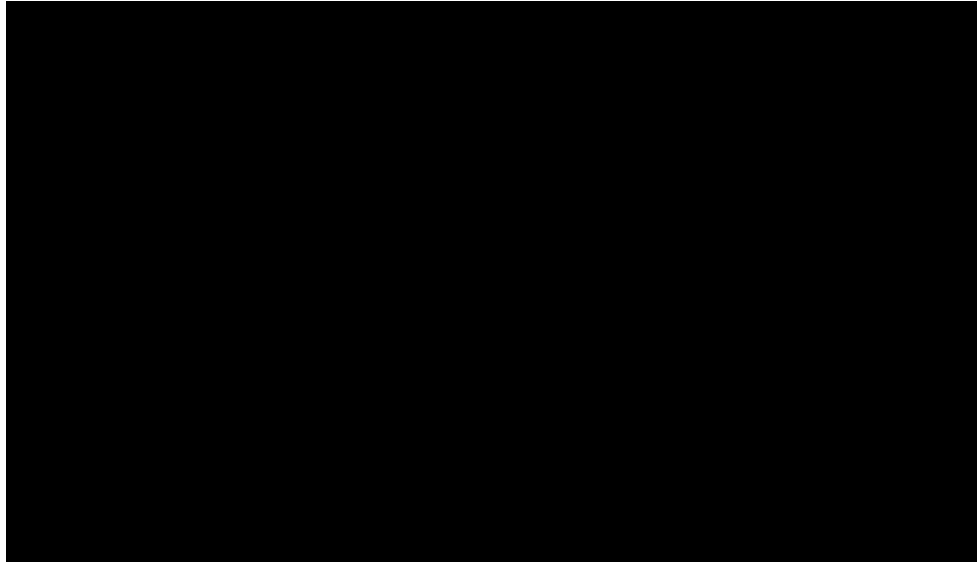
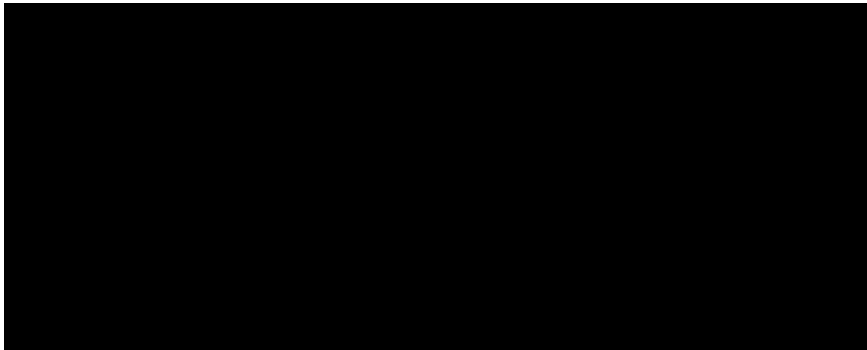


Figure 4.22 [above]: **Carn Brea, c.1895**

Figure 4.23 [below]: **Trippet Stones, Bodmin Moor,**  
**from *Ancient Crosses and Other Antiquities in the West of Cornwall*, 1856**



when alluding to Dr. Borlase's remarks on such subjects, to treat them as idle dreams or worthless speculations; but we must remember that this great antiquary studied particularly the customs of the Druids, and his observations were always founded on his acquaintance with ancient authors and with what had been recorded of that strange priesthood. Thus many of his theories startle those who are unacquainted with such matters, whilst others assume to be offended with his writings, rather than confess their own ignorance of the subjects which he has treated.'

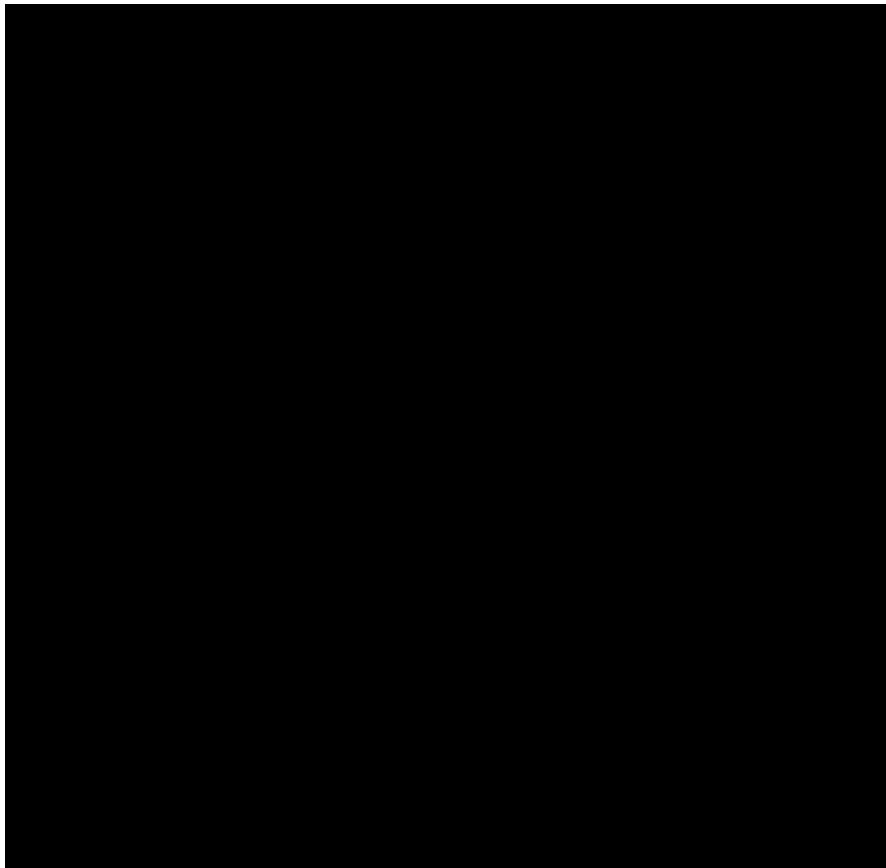
The argument here is that stone circles in general, and Boscawen-Ūn in particular, represented a particularly disruptive site in the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist landscape, and the associated problematic attempts to dissociate the Druids and the Cornish landscape.

An alternative, though no less problematic, version of stone circles was presented when Cornwall's four principal scientific societies – the PNHAS, the RIC, the RGSC and the RCPS – jointly hosted a lecture by the visiting astronomer, Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer [see figure 4.24]. 'They built no temple in Egypt which was not pointing to a star,' Lockyer (1905: 63) argued, 'or which was not laid down on well-defined astronomical principles,' such as alignment to the rising and/or the setting sun on the principal dates of the Pagan calendar – Imbolc [1 February], Beltane [1 May], Lughnasadh [1 August] and Samhain [1 November]. He went on to compare possible such astronomical alignments at Boscawen-Ūn, the Merry Maidens and the Trippet Stones to those at the likes of Stonehenge, publishing his findings, most famously, as *Stonehenge and other British Monuments Astronomically Considered* in 1906. Thus Boscawen-Ūn was located at latitude 50°5'20" north and longitude 5°37'0" west, with alignments to the rising sun at both the May/August and February/November quarters and a possible alignment to the setting sun at the latter [see figure 4.25]. However, Lockyer cautioned that nothing had yet been scientifically proven. He suggested that only five to ten per cent of the information that was potentially available had as then been gathered, and called for a census of all prehistoric standing stones and stone circles together with their azimuths and the heights of the surrounding skyline, in order to provide the data necessary to test his hypothesis.



Figure 4.24 [above]: **Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer [1836-1920], date unknown**

Figure 4.25 [below]: **Boscawen-Ûn Alignments**  
from *Stonehenge and other British Monuments Astronomically Considered, 1906*



Born in 1836, Lockyer was a self-taught astronomer and astrophysicist who, in 1869, became the founding editor of *Nature*, the science journal (Meadows 1972, 2004). A trip to Greece and Turkey in 1890 sparked his later interest in the possible astronomical alignments of ancient monuments and, in 1907, he was elected honorary member and president of the PNHAS. Baring-Gould (1910; see also Taylor 1916), in his contribution on Cornwall to the Cambridge County Geographies series, dated the stone circles of Cornwall to the pre-Celtic late Stone or early Bronze Age. Lockyer's work did not challenge this common archaeological understanding of the age of the stone circles which, as argued above, was necessary to the writing of the spaces and spatialities of the Druids out of the Celtic-Cornish Revival. However, in proposing his programme of study of sites that disrupted the fabric of the Revivalist landscape, Lockyer was also proposing an alternative visuality to the landscape by attempting to introduce the astronomical horizontal view into the 'accurate field surveying techniques' (Naylor 2003: 316) of Cornish antiquarianism, the latter being related, as discussed above, to the Celtic-Cornish Revival. Furthermore, he proposed replacing the historical narrative of Pagan-as-heathen with that of Pagan-as-early-astronomical-scientist. Perhaps, to some extent, as a result, his influence on turn-of-the-century antiquarianism and the Celtic-Cornish Revival, beyond the aforementioned position of office [which was for the most part served *in absentia*], appears to have been relatively muted; though his work was reclaimed by alternative archaeologists in the later twentieth century, as is discussed in chapter six.

Lockyer's hypothesis, while not suggesting that sun worship in Cornwall was of Egyptian historical origins, makes sense in the context of the wider late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement towards comparative religion, mythology and philology. Similar concerns underlay the monograph by William Copeland Borlase (1893) – the great-great-grandson of the aforementioned Reverend William Borlase – on the development of early Christianity in Cornwall, in which he identified Irish, Welsh, Breton and Eastern influences, Christianity being in origin an Eastern religion. Taylor (1916) followed Peter in writing the Druids out of Cornish cultural history; for Taylor, as for Peter, there was no direct evidence for the Druids' presence in Cornwall, save for this close cultural and historical relationship with Ireland and Wales. Pre-Celtic Pagan sun worship gave way to Peter's 'cruel, heartless and mysterious' but non-Druidic Celtic Paganism which, in turn, gave way

to monastic Celtic Christianity. But in 1901, Jenner was made a Bard of the Gorsedd of Brittany and, in 1907, he began translating parts of the Welsh ceremony into Cornish, with a view to its eventual re-establishment in Cornwall (Miners 1978), the problematically Druidic nature of which is discussed more fully in chapter five. Despite attempts to contain the mystical within constructions of an Anglo-Catholic Celtic subject, by attempting to uncouple the Druids and the otherwise associated landscape of burial chambers and stone circles, then, there was some leakage of control through certain sites and certain historical narratives into new and exploratory but potentially contradictory versions of the Celtic and the mystical.

## **4.4 Folklore and the Celtic-Cornish Revival**

### ***4.4.1 Performing the Parish: The Cornish Folklorist and the Cornish Folk***

Similar debates – relating to the nature of, and the relationships between, Cornwall’s Pagan and Christian past – also arose through early county-scale anthropology and folklore studies. By the nineteenth century, the venerability of the parish as an organisational unit in the landscape – both secular and religious; in Cornwall, and across Britain – underpinned the tradition of local histories (Hoskins 1959). Joseph Polsue followed what had by then become ‘a well-established pattern of alphabetical parish histories’ (Brayshay 1996: 19) as a systematic basis for the writing of his unfinished four-volume work known, after its original publishers, as *Lake’s Parochial History of the County of Cornwall*. In the preface to volume four, Polsue (1974 [1867-72]: no page numbers) stated that he avoided ‘all speculative philosophisings on the romance of Cornish history, all visionary and uncertain traditions, and all vague and doubtful anecdotes.’ Thomas (1974) takes this as a reference to the contemporaneous work of the folklorists, William Bottrell [see figure 4.26] and Robert Hunt [see figure 4.27]. For Polsue, the Anglican tradition and parochial systematic basis for his antiquarian history of Cornwall provided it with certain foundations, in contrast to the uncertainty of the folklorists’ methods of research and of the folklore itself. However, the argument in this section is that the revival of folk culture, as recorded in the work of Bottrell and Hunt, was also bound up with the Anglo-Catholic revival as a way of performing the parish.

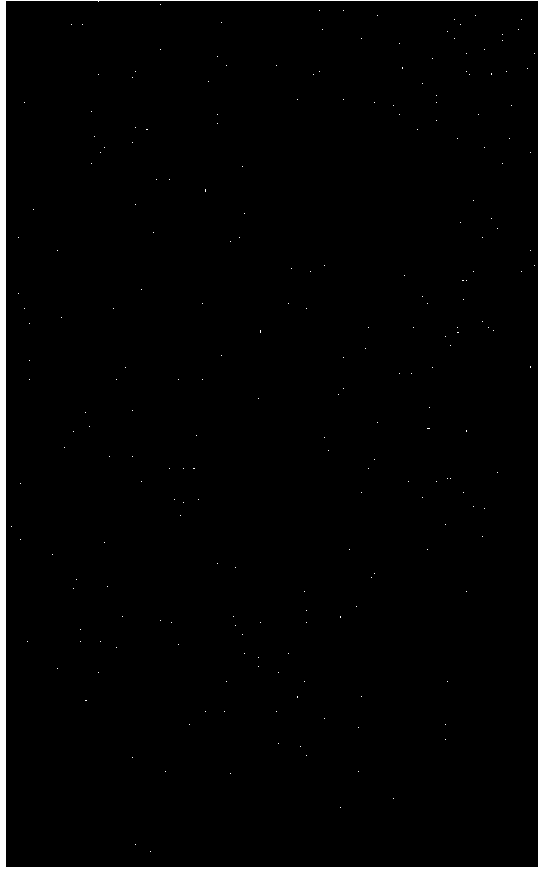


Figure 4.26 [above]: **William Bottrell [1816-1881], date unknown**

Figure 4.27 [below]: **Robert Hunt [1807-1887], date unknown**





Hunt was born in Plymouth in 1807. His father having died before Hunt was born, his mother supported herself and her son on his late father's naval pension before the two of them moved to Penzance in 1816, where relatives of Hunt's mother lived. He was apprenticed to a surgeon in Paddington at the age of 12 and, despite leaving after 18 months due to harsh treatment, Hunt continued in the medical profession, training as a dispensing chemist. Hunt also undertook early researches into the photographic process, writing *A Popular Treatise on the Art of Photography* in 1841 and becoming a founder member of the Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1853, on the basis of which he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1854 (Pearson 2004). In January 1827, Hunt fell into the River Thames while attempting to find a vantage point from which to watch the funeral procession of the Duke of York, causing a lengthy illness. During a convalescent stay in Penzance, he spent ten months walking in Cornwall, visiting sites of antiquarian interest and gathering folk tales which, due to a perceived lack of a market for such folk tales, were only published some 40 years later as *Popular Romances of the West of England* (Hunt 1865, 1866).

Bottrell, meanwhile, was born in Raфра, near Land's End, on 7 March 1816, where his paternal grandmother would take him on long cliff-top walks, regaling him with folk tales from her childhood. After an education at Penzance Grammar School and Bodmin School, he left Cornwall to travel across Europe, and spent the years between 1847 and 1851 working as an English teacher at a school in Quebec. On his return to Cornwall, he lived at Lelant, near St Ives, gleaning more folk tales from local tinnerns and entering into a correspondence with Hunt, supplying him with upwards of 50 of his folk tales until the editor of the *Cornish Telegraph* persuaded Bottrell to publish them himself, initially as newspaper columns, then in three volumes as *Traditions and Hearthsides Stories of West Cornwall* (Bottrell 1870, 1873, 1880).

As discussed in section 4.2.4, the second of the stated aims of the Celtic-Cornish Society was:

‘To keep carefully every National Custom, and above all the truly Cornish sports of Wrestling and Hurling, by presenting every year a Belt to be contended for by Cornish wrestlers, and inscribed silver Hurling

balls to each Parish in the Duchy that will ordain an annual Hurling Match on its Feast Day' (Duncombe-Jewell 1902: 79).

Hurling, according to Hunt (1865) and Bottrell (1870), used to be played on Sunday afternoons, within and between the parishes to the west of Penzance, by teams of 40 to 60 men. The hurling ball was wooden and of three inches in diameter, covered in silver plate and inscribed with the motto: *Guare wheag y guare teag* ['Fair play is good play']. According to Bottrell (1870: 145), it was the usual custom, 'whenever large parties of men went from one parish to take part in the game held in another, to take their silver ball with them, that they might practice hurling on the road.' Bottrell (1880: 145), in the third volume of *Traditions and Hearthside Stories of West Cornwall*, also gives an account of 'a grand hurling-match on the Eastern Green,' in the Penzance of our grandfathers,

'between Ludgvan hurlers and any two other parishes who have a mind to accept the challenge. There we shall see all the gentry from the eastward, who no more think themselves degraded by joining the commonry, in the ancient manly game, than a real old squire's lady would think it unbecoming to ply the spinning-wheel in the ancient hall, surrounded by her maidens at the same work.'

Both Hunt and Bottrell agreed that hurling was played by men and, moreover, that it was inherently a masculine game, bound up with certain ideas of fair play. This version of the masculinity of hurling worked through a distinction between the mobility of outdoor hurling – which Hunt (1865: 194) says requires a nimble hand, a quick eye, a swift foot, and skill in wrestling' – and the inertia of seated indoor spinning. Furthermore, Bottrell rather awkwardly, and not entirely successfully, attempts to negotiate the inter-class tensions between 'the gentry' and his rather Romantic eulogisation of 'the commonry'. But class was one of the ways in which the folklorists, as early social anthropologists, distinguished their emerging field of study from that of historians and antiquarians – both through the folklorists' claiming a more sympathetic relationship with the working class, and through their claiming a lower class status for themselves. Regarding the former point, for Bottrell (1880: iii),

'the folk-lore student, in collecting the myths, the proverbs, the traditions, the customs of the peasants of many lands, is doing an important work in

accumulating facts bearing on the history of mankind; not the mere records of the wars and doings of kings and generals, but of the beliefs, aspirations, thoughts and feelings of the working classes of various nations.’

Regarding the latter point, Hunt (1865: 192) wrote of folklore as presenting an alternative belief system to that of ‘the learned,’ referring to those who argued that the stone circles of Cornwall were of Druidic origins. ‘Tradition, and the common people,’ told that the stone circles were ‘everlasting marks of the Divine displeasure, being maidens or men, who were changed into stone for some wicked profanation of the Sabbath-day’ – including, for example, hurling. There was not only a simple tension at work here between class-privileged secular reason and the tradition and faith of the Cornish folk, though. Elsewhere, Hunt (1865: xii-xiii) explained that ‘our Celtic ancestors – in the very darkness of their ignorance – were taught, through their fears, a Pantheistic religion’ and that, ‘in the maturity of the people, the dark shadow still sometimes rises, like a spectre, partially eclipsing the mild radiance of that Christian truth which shines upon the land.’ The tension, then, was also between enlightened free Christian thought, and the unquestioning acceptance of inherited folk religion. There was a further site of tension in a game of which participation was spatially and temporally enabled through the parish boundary and the occasion of the parish feast day, but at the same time denied through traditional cautionary folk tales of Sabbath-breaking.

Bottrell (1880: 144-5) also described a ‘wrestling-match on the Western Green, where the best gentlemen in the land do not disdain but to try a hitch with the poorest labouring man – not for the value of the prize, but for the honour of proving their manliness.’ Furthermore, in the story of Uter Bosence and the piskey, Bosence and William Tregeer, the brother of his fiancée, ‘were so near a match in wrestling, boxing, and all other manly exercises, that they often bruised each other black and blue by practising – not for the mastery, but that each might train the other to be the best man in his parish’ (Bottrell 1870: 55). One famous wrestler, John ‘Cousin Jacky’ Trevail of Ladock, was reputedly once so swaggering in his pride at having beaten a neighbouring parish’s champion wrestler that he promptly challenged the Devil to a match (Bottrell 1880). A dark-clothed stranger later challenged Trevail to

a match. Trevail suspected that the stranger was the Devil, come to answer his challenge, and was able to get the better of his diabolical challenger by arranging for the presence at the match of Parson Wood.

Wrestling, like hurling, was spatially and temporally enabled through the parish, especially through parish festivals. Thus, Polsue's aforementioned use of the parish to distinguish antiquarianism from folklore studies was rendered paradoxical given the importance of the parish in Cornish folk customs. Wrestling, like hurling, was also a masculine sport, for which 'prizes were given by the ladies of the parish, and usually consisted of a pair of spurs for the first prize, a laced hat or waistcoat for the second, and a pair of gloves for the third' (Bottrell 1870: 145). Here, the distinction is between male participation and female observation. In addition, it is the women's duty to reward the most successful – that is, the most masculine – wrestlers by presenting them with prizes in a kind of pseudo-sexual mating ritual. Wrestling is also used to set Cornwall apart from Devon. Baring-Gould (1909: 54) notes that 'Cornish wrestling was very different from that in Devon – it was less brutal, as no kicking was allowed.' This, in part, accounted for the defeat of James Polkinghorne [1788-1854], the Cornish wrestler, by Abraham Cann of Devon on Tamar Green, Plymouth, on 23 October 1826, in what was, for Baring-Gould (1909), Polkinghorne's most famous match.

Despite Duncombe-Jewell's desire to revive certain folk customs – which, this section has argued, was bound up with the revival of a particular Anglo-Catholic version of the Cornish past – the collection and study of folklore was largely undertaken, in pre-war Cornwall, by and for the folklorists themselves. For Dorson (1999: 319), county folklore collectors – 'the leisured country vicar, doctor, squire, and their spouses', including Bottrell and Hunt – shared the same casual amateur spirit as their contemporary antiquarians: 'the work was done for its own sake, with little sense of urgency or desire to publish.' Evidence from Cornwall would suggest that folklore could also provide similar principles of moral advancement for modern utilitarianism as could antiquarianism. 'From early youth,' Hunt (1865: ix) began, 'accidental circumstances have led to my acquiring a taste for collecting the waifs floating upon the sea of time, which tell us something of those ancient peoples who have not a written history. The rude traditions of a

race who appear to have possessed much native intelligence, minds wildly poetical, and great fertility of imagination, united with a deep feeling for the mysteries by which life is girdled, especially interested me.’

Furthermore, during the RIC’s annual excursion in 1910, Peter praised the members’ continuation of the work of Hunt and his contemporary, William Bottrell. He considered this work to be

‘quite as important as some of the more material sciences, as they helped to make people more tolerant and imaginative. No nation which had ceased to cultivate its imagination had failed to go to the ground. True imagination is the opposite of mere idle fancy. It is the fruit of knowledge’ (RIC 1911: 279; see also Peter 1907, 1913; RIC 1909).

Another reason that Duncombe-Jewell’s desire to revive certain folk customs went largely unfulfilled, until the inter-war years, was the tensions that existed between reviving a culture of imaginative story-telling and reviving folk ritual, due to its possible origins in Pagan religion. For Hunt (1865: xxiv), we might, through folklore, ‘obtain a shadowy image of the people who have perished’. Peter (1907: 154) agreed: ‘To trace a story back from its form today through the romances of the middle ages to the mythology of the ancient Celt is to learn what we have been, the thoughts, the actions and the manners of our ancestors in every age through which we pass upon the road.’ This anthropological concept of survivals, as it was derived from the work of Sir James Frazer and Friedrich Max Müller, meant the tracing of apparently disparate elements of folklore, through the comparative philological method, back to their putative common origins in Pagan sun worship. ‘Conspicuous in every collection,’ Dorson (1999: 326) continues, indeed,

‘the [anthropological] concept of survivals binds together the county traditions in a uniform product. Not every scrap of folklore could be traced back to its murky origins in nature-worship and sacrificial cults and pagan pantheons, but where the evidence looked promising the collectors happily supplied the missing connections.’

It was through this comparative philological approach that Peter engaged with – and, as discussed in section 4.2.3, encouraged the female members of the RIC to engage

with – Cornish folklore. He suggested that St Michael’s Mount, having once been known as Dinsul, was formerly a sacred site of Sul, the Celtic equivalent of Minerva, the Roman goddess with whom are associated the springs of Aquae Sulis, in Bath (RIC 1909). Similarly, he pointed out that May 8 is close to the date of the Celtic festival of Bealtaine [Beltane], and of the Feast of the Apparition of St Michael on Monte Gargano, where the saint had supplanted the sun-god, Apollo. Given that the Padstow Hobby Horse and the Helston Furry Dance festivals both take place in early May, he reached the conclusion that they were ‘ancient pagan festivals of revival and fruitfulness, one of those forms of magic, not by any means implying the notion of invariable cause and effect, but an attempt to express in ritual the emotions and desires’ (Peter 1913: 267). On to these had been grafted ‘on the one hand folk-lore and on the other Christian ceremonies, the history being still further confused by mistaken efforts of well-meaning persons to remove elements regarded by them as coarse.’ This concept of survivals was also taken up by other figures who were involved in the collection and study of folklore in other Celtic regions than Cornwall, and it is through their work that the next section explores similar relationships and tensions between Christianity and pre-Christian Paganism, spiritualism and psychological research.

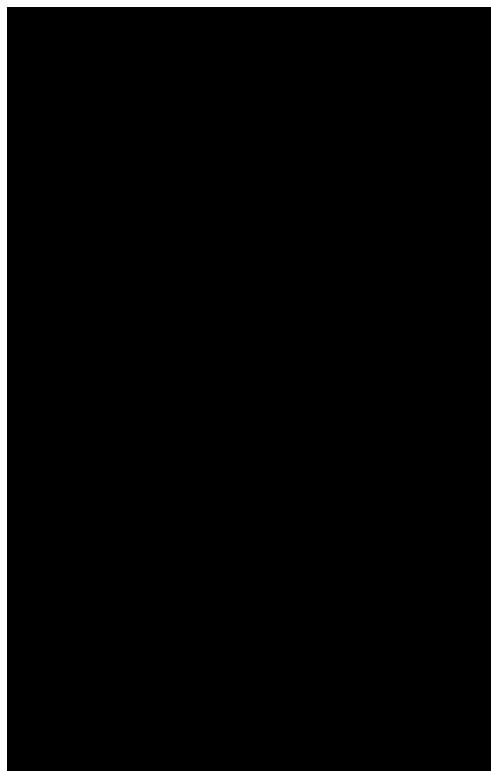
#### ***4.4.2 A ‘Mystic Message to the World’: Henry Jenner, W. Y. Evans-Wentz and the Fairy-Faith in Celtic Cornwall***

Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz [see figure 4.28] was born on 2 February 1878 in Trenton, New Jersey. His parents, formerly Baptists, had cut their ties with orthodox Christianity and turned instead to spiritualism, which afforded Evans-Wentz easy access to a range of spiritualist and occult literature – including the writings of Madame Helena P. Blavatsky, the founder and figurehead of the Theosophical Society – during his later childhood and early teenage years (Winkler 1982). Moving to California in 1902, he earned both a Bachelors and a Masters degree from Stanford University, writing term and examination papers that ranged across religion, history, morality and ethics before, in 1907, being accepted by Jesus College, Oxford University to study under Professor Sir John Rhys. It was at Stanford that he encountered two visiting professors who encouraged his interest in



Figure 4.28 [above]: **W. Y. Evans-Wentz [1878-1965], right, with Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub in Gangtok, Sikkim, c.1920**

Figure 4.29 [below]: **The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries, front cover, 2002**



religion and spirituality: William James, the author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and W. B. Yeats, whose role in the Celtic Revival was discussed in chapter two. Indeed, Evans-Wentz (2002 [1911]: iii) wrote that it was Yeats ‘who brought to me at my own alma mater in California the first message from fairyland, and who afterwards in his own country led me through the haunts of fairy kings and queens.’ ‘Such a man of language was Yeats,’ adds Winkler (1982: 18-9), in his biography of Evans-Wentz, ‘that he conceivably could have put the seed of further study under Sir John in young Evans-Wentz’s mind,’ the results of which were published in 1911 as *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*.

Rhys, born John Rees in Cardiganshire [now Ceredigion] in 1840, was primarily a linguist and grammarian, especially of the Welsh and Manx languages. He changed his surname to the Welsh spelling in acknowledgement of his birth and research interests, the latter also leading him to become the first Professor of Celtic at Oxford University (Fraser 2004). His research also led him into the history of religion, archaeology, ethnology and folklore and, in *Celtic Folklore: Welsh and Manx* [1901], he attempted to do for the two nations what Yeats’ *The Celtic Twilight* had done for Ireland. As Dorson (1999: 420) writes, though, *Celtic Folklore* succeeded only in revealing ‘the unexpected poverty of the Welsh oral tradition’ through ‘the spinning out of seven hundred pages to make the point. In his anxiety for bona fide, fully developed oral texts,’ Dorson (1909: 420) continues, Rhys resorted, in one instance, to a Scottish folk tale to piece out a similar Welsh fragment, in another to ‘a florid version written out for him by a novelist,’ and in yet another to ‘a hypothetical tradition based upon a chance conversation’ at Abbey Dore railway station, in Herefordshire. However, on a more successful note, Winkler (1982: 18; see also Fraser 2004) writes of Rhys that ‘he had worked for social reform in England’ for over 40 years and that, in the year that Evans-Wentz arrived at Oxford, ‘he had been knighted for his efforts.’

On 24 June 1910, Evans-Wentz wrote to Henry Jenner: ‘My plan for final publication of my study is to have from the leading scholars and folk-lorists among the Celts, short introductions to the lore from each of the six Celtic countries,’ he wrote, ‘and my purpose in writing this letter is to invite you to write the introduction for



Cornwall'<sup>12</sup>. It was intended, he continued, that the introduction give Jenner's 'general point of view in respect to the nature and probable origin of the belief in fairies in Cornwall.' Jenner agreed to write such an introduction and, clearly, did not take too much time in deciding to do so. Five days after the first letter, Evans-Wentz wrote again: 'I feel highly honoured that you have consented to speak for the fairies and piskies of your native and romantic Cornwall'<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, it appears that Jenner had, in turn, requested an elaboration of Evans-Wentz' theory on fairies:

'My theory, briefly stated, is that the belief in fairies of various orders is essentially a specialized form of a world-wide animism, that the Fairy-Faith as a whole is exceedingly complex and in its superficial aspects may contain ethnological elements attracted to an ancient animistic creed either through a folk memory of pre-Celtic races or else through pseudo-history – to discuss this fully requires much space. My theory is, therefore, confirmed by the latest results of psychical research in such phenomena as hallucinations, dream and trance states, so-called spirit manifestations, etc.'

In the earlier letter, Evans-Wentz told Jenner that he was going to spend some time in London with Dr Andrew Lang, born in Selkirk in 1844, who had offered to help prepare his research for publication<sup>14</sup>. From London, Evans-Wentz was going to Dublin 'to have the aid of Irish scholars and men of literature' – including that, one presumes, of Yeats. 'Above all,' writes Foster (1997: 525), Yeats

'was determined to present folk-stories as "an ancient system of belief", echoing the implications of anthropologists like E. B. Tylor and [Sir James] Frazer as well as devotees like Evans Wentz, and echoing a controversy between Edward Clodd and Andrew Lang.'

This controversy related to Lang's arguments, during the 1890s, that the Folk-Lore Society should take seriously the claims of the contemporaneous spiritualist movement (Stocking 1995; Dorson 1999; on spiritualism, see Moore 1977;

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<sup>12</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1910) unpublished letter to H. Jenner, 24 June, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>13</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1910) unpublished letter to H. Jenner, 29 June, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>14</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 24 June 1910

Oppenheim 1985; Owen 1989; Basham 1992; Hazelgrove 2000; Bowler 2001; Thurschwell 2001). ‘Like Lang,’ continues Foster (1997: 525), Yeats

‘argued that psychical researchers and anthropologists were confronting the same reality. And he felt it equally important to assert the seriousness of spiritualist inquiry; for all the seedy deceptions practised in Holloway and Soho, there remained – as in folktales – the “gravity and simplicity” of the idea that the dead are all around us, and that there are spirits who can guide us.’

During the autumn of 1910 and the winter of 1910-11, Evans-Wentz worked towards editing his material from its original three volumes down to a more publishable single volume of around 550 pages, continuing to revise the material into the following spring<sup>15</sup>. There was a brief flurry of correspondence between Jenner and Evans-Wentz in August 1911. A postcard from the American Club [a private club for American expatriates] in Oxford, dated 10 August, told Jenner that Evans-Wentz had asked his publishers to send the proofs of chapter two, part six – ‘The Taking of Evidence: In Cornwall’ – to Bospowes for Jenner’s final approval<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, nine days later, an American Club postcard told Jenner that Evans-Wentz had asked his publishers to send the proofs of the much shorter section on Cornwall from chapter one, ‘Environment,’ and requested Jenner’s criticism<sup>17</sup>. Apparently, Jenner duly provided his criticism, for a third postcard, dated 29 August, thanked Jenner for his corrections to the proofs, and informed him that ‘The Fairy-Faith is now all set up. Hope to have it appear in October’<sup>18</sup>. As it transpired, it was 20 November 1911 before Evans-Wentz was in a position to send Jenner a copy of the first edition of his book<sup>19</sup>, requesting Jenner’s criticism with a view to a second, revised edition that

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<sup>15</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished letter to H. Jenner, 14 March, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1; Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished letter to H. Jenner, 16 March, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1; Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 30 March, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>16</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 10 August, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>17</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 19 August, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>18</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 29 August, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

<sup>19</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished postcard to H. Jenner, 20 October, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1; Evans-Wentz, W. Y.

was never forthcoming, despite that Evans-Wentz did not die until 17 July 1965 (Winkler 1982).

The book itself is divided into four sections: 'The Living Fairy-Faith', 'The Recorded Fairy-Faith', 'The Cult of Gods, Spirits, Fairies, and the Dead', and 'Modern Science and the Fairy-Faith; and Conclusions'. By far the most substantial of the four sections is the former, of which the first chapter discusses the environmental influence upon the fairy faith in the six Celtic nations in turn. On Cornwall, Evans-Wentz (2002: 12) wrote that

'There are there ruined British villages whose builders are long forgotten, strange prehistoric circular sun-temples like fortresses crowning the hill-tops, mysterious underground passage-ways, and crosses probably pre-Christian. Everywhere are the records of the mighty past of this thrice-holy Druid land of sunset. There are weird legends of the lost kingdom of Fair Lyonesse, which seers sometimes see beneath the clear salt waves, with all its ancient towns and flowers fields; legends of Phoenicians and Oriental merchants who came for tin; legends of gods and giants, of pixies and of fairies, of King Arthur in his castle at Tintagel, of angels and of saints, of witches and of wizards.'

Here, Evans-Wentz attempted to claim both the mystical and the prosaic in support of his study, similar to the way in which Duncombe-Jewell attempted to claim both the Celtic and the non-Celtic in support of his argument for Cornwall's membership of the Celtic Congress. For Evans-Wentz, Celtic villages and prehistoric tin-traders were as 'strange,' 'mysterious' and 'weird' as stone circles, the Arthurian legends and, of course, piskies and fairies.

Before St Augustine came to Britain, Evans-Wentz (2002: 12) continued, 'the Celts of Cornwall had already combined in their own mystical way the spiritual message of primitive Christianity with the pure nature-worship of their ancestors.' However, for Evans-Wentz (2002: 13), 'in later times new theological doctrines were superimposed on this mysticism of Celtic Christianity, the Sacred Fires were buried

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(1911) unpublished telegram to H. Jenner, 6 November, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1; Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished

in ashes, and the Light and Beauty of the pagan world obscured in sackcloth.’ But Evans-Wentz did not reserve his criticism for Roman Catholicism alone. He also went on to criticise increasingly universal and compulsory school-based education, the Education Act of 1870 [under Gladstone’s first Liberal government] having provided for a national system of primary schools, and ‘civilisation’ more generally:

‘The Cornishman’s vision is no longer clear. He looks upon cromlech and dolmen, upon ancient caves of initiation, and upon the graves of his prehistoric ancestors, and vaguely feels, but does not know, why his land is so holy, is so permeated by an indefinable magic; for he has lost his ancestral mystic touch with the unseen – he is “educated” and “civilized”’  
(Evans-Wentz 2002: 13).

For Evans-Wentz, the mysticism of pre-Christian Paganism and early Celtic Christianity was, like Yeats’ Ireland, visionary, which he set in opposition to modern secular visuality. It was seers who were afforded sights of Lyonesse; and it was the initiated, not the educated, who could sense the unseen.

It would be wrong, however, to understand *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* as an anti-modern argument. Rather, the argument here is that it represents one episode in a wider conflict between two contradictory versions of the modern: the one defined by established religion – which Evans-Wentz, as Winkler (1982: 20) adds, ‘never really forgave... for disavowing reincarnation’ – and state-sponsored education, and the other defined by nature-mysticism and the early human sciences – folklore and anthropology – and spiritualism and psychical research. ‘I am well aware of the non-catholic nature of much of the book,’ Evans-Wentz wrote to Jenner, thanking him for his ‘long and careful criticism’ of the book, ‘and can expect all sorts of reviews. But, as I think you feel, the study is not intended to be controversial in matters touching religion: it is chiefly a presentation of theory from an historical and scientific view point’<sup>20</sup>. This was a dual appeal to science, in the underlying methodological principles of both the collection and the analysis of his evidence. For the early human sciences, it was necessary to appeal to the epistemological bases of the natural sciences in order to achieve intellectual respect. County folklorists, more

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letter to H. Jenner, 20 November, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

often than not, ‘emphasized the trustworthiness and fidelity of their contents although the idea of accuracy did not at this stage require the literal reproduction of the spoken word’ (Dorson 1999: 321). Similarly, in his introduction to chapter two, ‘The Taking of Evidence’, which accounts for over 200 pages of the book, Evans-Wentz (2002: 20) emphasised: ‘The only liberty taken with some of the evidence has been to put it into better grammatical form, and sometimes to recast an ambiguous statement when I, as collector, had in my own mind no doubt as to its meaning.’ His study might be presumed to have achieved such intellectual respect, being as it was originally published by Oxford University Press.

Evans-Wentz’ field collection revealed a regional geography of the Celtic fairy faith in Cornwall, covering as it did ‘the region between Falmouth and the Land’s End, which is now the most Celtic; and the Tintagel country on the north coast’ (Evans-Wentz 2002: 170). Cornwall was also, for Evans-Wentz, the most Anglicised of the six Celtic nations in his study, and its folklore was the least ‘virile’. Nonetheless, the material on Cornwall occupies 22 pages of the chapter. ‘It has become, perhaps always has been in modern times, a widespread opinion, even among some scholars,’ Evans-Wentz (2002: 19) argued,

‘that the belief in fairies is the property solely of simple, uneducated country-folk, and that people who have had “a touch of education and a little common sense knocked into their heads”, to use the ordinary language, “wouldn’t be caught believing in such nonsense.” This same class of critics used to make similar remarks about people who said there were ghosts, until the truth of another “stupid superstition” was discovered by psychical research.’

Thus, through interviews with an assortment of figures, including middle-class newspaper editors, architects, local historians, artists and folklorists, as well as elderly farmers, fishermen, miners and retired rural policemen, he collected enough evidence to reach and support his conclusion

‘that Fairyland exists as an invisible world within which the visible world is immersed like an island in an unexplored ocean, and that it is peopled

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<sup>20</sup> Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (1911) unpublished letter to H. Jenner, 9 December, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 8: bundle 1

by more species of living beings than this world, because incomparably more vast and varied in its possibilities' (Evans-Wentz 2002: 18).

In response to Evans-Wentz' initial request, Jenner wrote his introduction within six weeks. Evans-Wentz wrote to Jenner again, on 1 August 1910, to acknowledge its receipt: 'The introduction,' he wrote,

'contains ideas not heretofore known and these coming from a true Celt whose name is inseparable from that of Cornwall make it a scientific document of utmost value to Celtic scholars. Not only is it scientific, but it is excellent reading and in places delicately humorous'<sup>21</sup>.

Evans-Wentz intended his book to be 'a pan-Celtic study by a Celt' – he being of Welsh descent on his mother's side of the family<sup>22</sup>. Not only did he emphasise the 'trustworthiness and fidelity' of its contents, so as to claim scientific status, then, but he also emphasised the Celticity of its contents so as to claim further authenticity. 'The essential ideal is to make my study of the "Fairy-Faith" thoroughly pan-Celtic and representative of every class of Celts from the peasant to the scholar,' he told Jenner. 'Such little introductions will complete the survey and make a complete picture of the state of the Fairy-Faith in the early years of the twentieth century, rather than merely introduce the lore collected'<sup>23</sup>. Jenner's introduction thus became part of Evans-Wentz' research material, hence the importance of emphasising its Celticity.

There was, at least initially, little difference between Evans-Wentz' conclusions and Jenner's own ideas. 'In reading over the Introduction,' Evans-Wentz wrote, 'I was agreeably surprised to learn how much your theory of fairies is like my own. There really is no great difference between our views: and what you say particularly of the pixies coincides with the less clear conclusions I have arrived at about them... The etymological part of the paper,' he added, 'is very striking'<sup>24</sup>. The etymological part of the paper in question reads as follows: 'If we take the root of *Pixy*, *Pix*,' Jenner (2002 [1911]: 166, original italics; see also Jenner 1916) suggested,

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<sup>21</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 1 August 1910

<sup>22</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 24 June 1910

<sup>23</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 24 June 1910

<sup>24</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 1 August 1910

‘and divide the double letter *x* into its component parts, we get *Piks* or *Pics*, and if we remember that a final *s* or *z* in Cornish almost always represents a *t* or *d* of Welsh and Breton (cf. *tas* for *tad*, *nans* for *nant*, *bos* for *bod*), we may not unreasonably, though without absolute certainty, conjecture that *Pixy* is *Picty* in a Cornish form.’

He, like Evans Wentz, berated education: ‘That which with unconscious humour men generally call “education” has in these days caused those lower classes, to whom the deposit of this faith was entrusted, to be ashamed of it, and to despise and endeavour to forget it’ (Jenner 2002: 163). The distinction was not between education and ignorance, but between classroom learning and practical native intelligence. The pre-Christian Cornish Celts, he concluded, combined ‘exaggerated traditions of a dark pre-Celtic people’ and ‘an already existing belief in elementals’ (Jenner 2002: 169); the folk, therefore, self-defined in relation to a composite racialised and supernaturalised other.

By early 1911, however, a certain difference of opinions had emerged regarding the Legend of the Dead in Brittany and its parallel in Cornwall, according to which ‘the spirits of the faithful dead are all round us, and are not rapt away into a *distant* Paradise or Purgatory’ (Jenner 2002: 169, original italics), continuing to exist on the same spiritual plane as piskies and fairies. It must be noted here that Jenner (2004: 62), at his address to the Pan-Celtic Congress at Cardiff in 1904, spoke of ‘that most beautiful of religions, Breton Catholicism.’ For, in his introduction, Jenner (2002: 168-9) wrote:

‘I do not think that the piskies were ever definitely held to be the spirits of the dead, and while a certain confusion has arisen, as some of Mr. Wentz’s informants show, I think it belongs to the confused eschatology of modern Protestantism. To a pre-Reformation Cornishman, or indeed to any other Catholic, the idea was unthinkable... and the transmigration of the souls of the faithful departed into another order of beings, not disembodied because never embodied, was to them impossible.’

Evans-Wentz, in editing the material for publication, might have responded to this passage, or its equivalent in Jenner’s first draft; or else Jenner, having taken up Evans-Wentz on his offer to send him a manuscript copy of the first draft of the

section on Cornwall to which Jenner was writing the introduction, might have responded to some objectionable passage that does not apparently survive in the published book. Either way, Evans-Wentz wrote:

‘With respect to your interesting dissent from a generally held view among folk-lorists that there is a relation between the Legend of the Dead and belief in Fairies, I though[t] you might like to see how I have treated the matter in following suggestions from Prof. Anatole Le Brez and other scholars. Hence I have mailed you some pages from my thesis showing the parallels between Breton and Irish beliefs, which I have felt apply also to Cornwall. As you will note, the Death legend among Celts, on the authority of ancient writers, really antedates Christianity, and I am convinced that in Brittany, at least, Christian doctrines have coloured it but have not originated it’<sup>25</sup>.

Jenner’s reply, although unrecorded, was clearly conciliatory. ‘I am greatly interested in your letter just received,’ Evans-Wentz wrote,

‘and I think your position as to the Dead being one order of disembodied beings and the elementals as piskies or fairies being another order of not necessarily disembodied beings but of spirits in another “plane” is very logical and so far as I know in complete harmony with folk beliefs. If I may be permitted to suggest such a thing, I should think a restating of your position in that matter would be highly desirable in the Introduction.

Yes, I think, also, that the Breton Fairy-Faith aside from the Breton Death-Faith has some non-Celtic strands, but in essence it appears to be as genuinely Celtic and pre-Christian in origin as its Irish parallel... And undoubtedly the Celtic pre-Christian beliefs were in most cases Christianized, and there has been a tendency now-a-days to call many folk beliefs outgrowths from Christianity whereas the reverse is true’<sup>26</sup>.

Though the Jenner Collection, at the RIC, does not contain any early drafts of Jenner’s introduction, one might suppose the following passage from the published version to represent such a restatement:

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<sup>25</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 14 March 1911

<sup>26</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 16 March 1911



‘This [the Breton Death-Faith] may be of pre-Christian origin, but does not contradict any article of the Christian faith. The warnings, apparitions, and hauntings, the “calling of the dead” at sea, and other details of Cornish Death-Legends, seem to point to a conception of a “plane” of the dead, similar to but not necessarily identical with that of the elementals. Under some quite undefined conditions contact may occur with the “physical plane”, whence the alleged incidents; but this Cornish Death-Faith, though sometimes, as commonly in Brittany, presenting similar phenomena, has in itself nothing to do with piskies, and as for the unfaithful departed, their destination was also well understood, and it was not Fairyland’ (Jenner 2002: 169).

‘It is my earnest hope,’ Evans-Wentz wrote to Jenner, enclosing a copy of the first edition of his book,

‘that you will feel as you examine it that I have not been unfaithful to the great trust reposed in me by the Celtic peoples. The book is their mystic message to the world. I have been for them not much more than a scribe and an advocate. If it pleases them I shall feel amply repaid for the four years devoted to its preparation’<sup>27</sup>.

To a certain extent, it seems that his hopes were fulfilled. In the last of Evans-Wentz’ letters in the Jenner Collection, he wrote of the early response to the book:

‘I have now had some very good reviews, in The Western Mail, in The Glasgow Herald, in The Freeman’s Journal. The first two were altogether favourable, the third was faulty, due to careless reading by the reviewer. I corrected two of his errors through a letter to the editor. I shall watch all reviews and make it a business to correct any error. A review in The Scotsman was too sketchy and careless to be worth while’<sup>28</sup>.

But perhaps the response was not as favourable as he had hoped for, as aforementioned, Evans-Wentz did not return to write the second, revised edition that he spoke of in his letters to Jenner<sup>29</sup>, devoting instead most of the remainder of his life to the study of Tibetan Buddhism, co-editing the first English translation of *The*

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<sup>27</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 20 November 1911

<sup>28</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 9 December 1911

<sup>29</sup> Evans-Wentz, letter to Jenner, 20 November 1911

*Tibetan Book of the Dead* [1927] with Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup [1868-1922; see figure 4.28] in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Through the work of the likes of Bottrell, Hunt, the Quiller-Couch sisters and Evans-Wentz, folklore, like antiquarianism, became a means of both writing and challenging the narratives of modernity (Vernon 1998). It was, for the most part, a middle-class field of enquiry; its subjects of enquiry, furthermore, were, for the most part, of the working class – a point on which Evans-Wentz (2002: 22), as discussed above, begged to differ: ‘When we state our conviction that the Fairy-Faith is common to all classes of Celts,’ he argued, ‘we do not state that it is common to all Celts.’ He emphasised that nearly every one of his interviewees was a Celt, and remarked that it was extremely fortunate ‘that an unusually large proportion of these Celtic witnesses are actual percipients and natural seers’ because ‘scientifically and strictly speaking, there will remain as a residual or unknown quantity, upon which our final conclusion must depend, solely the testimony of reliable seer-witnesses’ (Evans-Wentz 2002: 21). Upon closer investigation, however, his middle-class interviewees had often been introduced to the fairy faith by working-class neighbours; his male interviewees by female ‘seers’: Henry Maddern [a Penzance architect] spoke of being ‘initiated into the mysteries of the Cornish folk-lore’ as a young boy by his nurse (Evans-Wentz 2002: 174), and a retired rural policeman in Tintagel said that he ‘used to sit round the fire at night and hear old women tell so much about piskies and ghosts’ (Evans-Wentz 2002: 184). As such, it is interesting that the figure at the centre of the spiritualist movement, the medium, was also typically female, and that Peter (1907: 154) urged those of more leisure than himself – ‘especially the ladies – to turn their attention to the folklore and legends of Cornwall,’ for the argument here is that the Cornish folk emerged through a tension between the opening-up of spaces within which women could participate in the collection of folklore, but within which they were participating in the construction of an often feminised and racialised mystical other (see also Silver 1999).

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the various cultural and geographical dimensions of the mystical that were associated with the late nineteenth and early twentieth century

Celtic-Cornish Revival – the diocese of Truro and an established sacramental Anglo-Catholic religiosity; the parochial basis of antiquarianism and folklore and the possible Pagan roots of Cornish folk culture; the Celtic Christian landscape of holy wells and stone crosses, and the disruptive presence of burial chambers and stone circles; and the spiritualist and occultist connections of certain versions of Celticism – as they cut across each other, and were cut across by Legitimist politics; the revival of the Cornish language and literary culture; the spaces of antiquarianism, anthropology and early modern science; and the nascent Cornish tourist industry. It has also explored the ways in which concerns for Cornish landscape antiquities, folk customs and sports, and the Cornish language and literary culture were brought together and briefly institutionalised as the Celtic-Cornish Society, until it folded with the withdrawal of Duncombe-Jewell’s speculative impulse from the Revival, and the ways in which these concerns connected, in turn, to those of the wider Celtic movement.

‘Put simply,’ writes Payton (1993a: 6-7),

‘the Revivalists ignored (even rejected) nineteenth-century notions of a Cornish identity based on industrial prowess and technological advance, and – in the face of the traumatic effects of rapid de-industrialisation that lay all around them – looked back to a Medieval, pre-industrial Celtic-Catholic Cornwall for their model for the future.’

The triumph of the Revival, Payton (1996a: 273) elsewhere observes, ‘was not the moving or mobilising of the Cornish people (which it had singularly failed to achieve) but rather the credible “re-invention” of the Cornish identity in the face of industrial collapse and social paralysis.’ The next chapter argues that mid-twentieth century Cornwall was characterised by a series of strategies to normalise the turn-of-the-century culture of the mystical by engaging with, and actively incorporating, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding this more inclusive version of the mystical in new and avowedly more populist institutional contexts. ‘If we may paraphrase Robert Morton Nance,’ writes Payton (1996a: 273), ‘one generation had re-invented the Cornish identity, it was for another to make it walk.’

## **Gathering the Fragments: Mystical Geographies of Mid-Twentieth Century Cornwall**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the mystical geographies of Cornwall from the end of World War I to the early 1960s, arguing that this period was characterised by a series of strategies to normalise the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist version of the mystical by engaging with, and actively incorporating, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding this more inclusive version of the mystical in a new and avowedly more populist institutional context. Section 5.2.1 argues that Anglo-Catholicism, in the form of an Anglo-Catholic sense of collective social responsibility and a cautious engagement with possibly originally Pagan folk ritual, continued to underpin the mid-twentieth century Revivalist movement through the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies [FOCS]. Formed in 1920, the FOCS was dedicated to the preservation and revival of Cornish folk culture, including the lighting of midsummer bonfires, and the harvest ritual of Crying the Neck. It took a passage from the Bible as its motto, from which this chapter takes its title: ‘Gather ye the fragments that are left, that nothing be lost’ [John 6:12]. Meanwhile, section 5.2.2 investigates the moral geographies of the broader version of the Cornish landscape, beyond that of holy wells and stone crosses, that also informed and underpinned the Old Cornwall movement in the new institutional context of the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England [CPRE], the burgeoning Cornish tourist industry, and the concern to separate the archaeological and the folkloric – at sites such as Tintagel

– that characterised both the voluntary work of the West Cornwall Field Club and the professionalisation of the emerging academic field of archaeology.

Section 5.3 develops this discussion of Tintagel through an exploration of the different ways in which Arthurianism connected to mid-twentieth century cultures of the mystical. Section 5.3.1 takes the latter-day Gorsedd of the Bards of Cornwall, which was formed through the FOCS in 1928, as its subject. Although claiming to be neither a political nor a religious organisation, the Gorsedd ceremony – first held, in 1928, at Boscawen-Ûn stone circle – incorporated recognisable elements of Christianity, Arthurianism and neo-Paganism, as well as an Anglo-Catholic [and, indeed, Arthurian] cult of pilgrimage. And when, in 1933, Frederick Glasscock – a self-made millionaire from London – opened King Arthur’s Great Halls, Tintagel to the public – built as the international headquarters for the Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur, a kind of Arthurian Freemasonry; and incorporating 72 stained glass windows by Veronica Whall, a pupil of William Morris – he looked to representatives of the FOCS to attend, so as to bring a kind of cultural legitimacy to his project. However, despite these mid-twentieth century attempts to pursue a more inclusive version of the mystical, section 5.4 argues that the 24 year period between 1912 and 1936 during which Bernard Walke was vicar of St Hilary, five miles east of Penzance – and during which St Hilary Church was attacked and vandalised by militant Protestant protesters, who objected to Walke’s taste for Anglo-Catholic ritual and décor – provides evidence of continuing tensions between a syncretic Anglo-Catholicism and other contradictory versions of the mystical.

## **5.2 Anglo-Catholicism and the Old Cornwall Movement**

The argument in this section is that a cautiously syncretic Anglo-Catholicism, through the folk revivalism of the FOCS and a broader – though carefully ordered – archaeological sense of landscape, underpinned the mid-twentieth century Cornish Revivalist movement. Randall Thomas Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1903 to 1928, claimed exemption for the Church of England from the Ancient Monuments Act 1913 (Miles Brown 1976; on Davidson, see Hastings 1986) [for more on the Ancient Monuments Act, see section 5.2.2]. The result of this exemption

was that the Church would be responsible for its own property, so that work on new and existing church buildings would have to be funded largely, if not entirely, through the voluntary contributions of the congregation and other parishioners, giving these projects a certain local missionary appeal. Anglicans also conceived various voluntary schemes for housing projects; and a ‘World Call’ campaign, launched in the autumn of 1926, sought to awaken interest in the needs of the Church overseas (Miles Brown 1976). This latter, despite inter-war economic depression, raised donations to the value of over £6,000. ‘But was there something more radically wrong with society,’ asked others in the Church, in the aftermath of the General Strike of the same year,

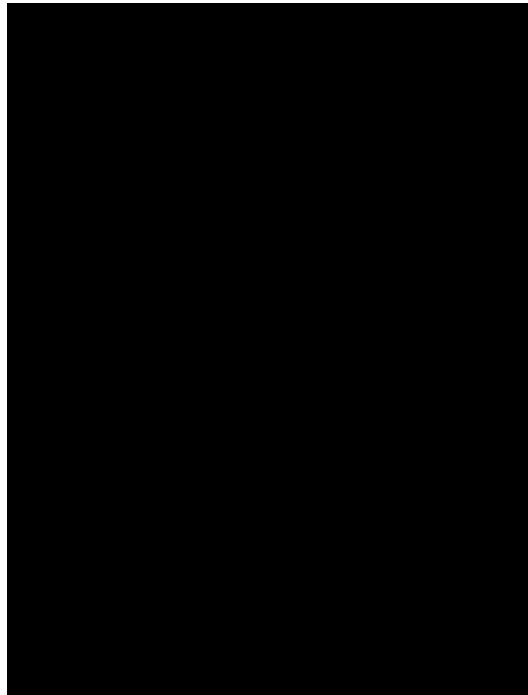
‘that wealth should be held by some and not by others no less deserving? Was the distribution of things wrong? Some thought it was very wrong and unjust, and that it lay at the root of many of the troubles of society. To these the attraction of socialist, indeed of communist, ideals was strong, as being merely the practical implementation of Christian beliefs’ (Miles Brown 1976: 91; see also Hastings 1986).

Charles William Stubbs – the fourth Bishop of Truro, from 1906 to 1912 [see figure 5.1] – was of a broader churchmanship than his three predecessors. He was also a declared Christian socialist. By contrast, Walter Howard Frere – the seventh Bishop of Truro, from 1923 to 1935 [see figure 5.2] – was a founder member and, at the time of his consecration, Superior of the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, in Yorkshire (Miles Brown 1976; Winter 1991). Indeed, Protestant opponents of Frere’s appointment – which came at the insistence of Davidson, who convinced Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin of the need for a noted historical and liturgical scholar on the episcopal benches (Miles Brown 1976; Hastings 1986) – referred to him as the ‘Mirfield Monk’. Yet it was with Frere’s knowledge, if not his support, that Bernard Walke – vicar of St Hilary from 1912 to 1936 [for more on Walke, see section 5.4] – wrote an article for the diocesan *Gazette*, entitled ‘Our Lord and Social Righteousness’. In his article, Walke pinpointed the social wrongs of the day, and the inadequacy of political socialism to remedy them. The cure, for Walke, ‘lay in the acceptance of catholic sacramentalism as giving the true priorities and values of men, community, and things’ (Miles Brown 1976: 91). While Evangelicalism tended



Figure 5.1 [above]: **Charles William Stubbs [1845-1912],  
Bishop of Truro 1906-12**

Figure 5.2 [below]: **Walter Howard Frere [1863-1938],  
Bishop of Truro 1923-35**



to stress ‘individual salvation in religion and the importance of individual initiative in social and economic life,’ Anglo-Catholicism stressed ‘the corporate aspects of the Christian faith’ and ‘the value of collective responsibility’ (Hastings 1986: 174) which, in turn, fed into the Old Cornwall movement.

### **5.2.1 ‘Gather ye the Fragments’: Folk Religion and the Cornish Folk**

With the end of World War I, wrote Robert Morton Nance (1934: 5) in his obituary of Henry Jenner, ‘it became possible for the idea of Cornish nationality to rise again, and starting inconspicuously the Old Cornwall movement and the Cornish Revival as a whole began.’ Morton Nance [see figure 5.3] was born in Cardiff in 1873 to Cornish-born parents – his father was a coal agent and colliery manager from Padstow; his mother was from St Ives (Murdoch 2004). He was educated at Cardiff Art School, and later studied under Sir Hubert von Herkomer [1849-1914], the German-born British social realist painter, at Herkomer Art School in Bushey, Hertfordshire. Morton Nance married his first wife, Beatrice, an artist, in 1895, and the two of them set up an art school in Wales<sup>30</sup>. Beatrice died in 1900; six years later, Morton Nance married his second wife, Annie Maud, and the two of them moved to Nanceldra, near St Ives, later that same year, then to St Ives itself in 1912. ‘Artists travelling into the countryside,’ to rural artists’ colonies like St Ives, writes Lübbren (2001: 38), ‘thought they were going to a place that was recognisably non-urban, pre-modern and home to stable communities of countryfolk, living according to the ancient customs of their forefathers and attuned to the rhythms of “nature”.’ While such a spirit of agrarian Romanticism was clearly present in the Old Cornwall movement, the argument here is that it did not, at the same time, advance an unproblematic anti-modernism; rather, the Old Cornwall represented the advancement of an alternative version of modernity, though one that was not without its own internal tensions.

In 1909, Morton Nance met Jenner, who lived a few miles further east along the coast in Hayle, and the two men went on to found the first Old Cornwall society in

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<sup>30</sup> Examples of their art work proved impossible to locate during this research project.





**Figure 5.3: Robert Morton Nance [1873-1959], left,  
Grand Bard of the Gorsedd of Cornwall, 1934-59**

St Ives in 1920 (Payton 1996a). Four years later, there were enough societies to justify the formation of the FOCS, which took a Cornish rendition of a phrase from the Bible – specifically, from the Feeding of the Five Thousand [John 6:12] – as its motto: *Kyntelleugh an brewyon es gesys, na vo kellys trawyth*, ‘Gather ye the fragments that are left, that nothing be lost’. Jenner’s biography – in particular, the centrality of his Catholic religiosity to his involvement in the early Celtic-Cornish Revivalist movement – was discussed in some detail in the previous chapter. For Morton Nance, in contrast, religion might appear to have been less consciously and outwardly important to his own involvement in the mid-twentieth century Cornish movement; the only reference to his religious beliefs in his entry in the online *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* is to his being buried in the graveyard of the Anglican parish church of St Senara at Zennor (Murdoch 2004). However, the argument here is that the FOCS motto and the wider activities of the Old Cornwall movement are suggestive of a pastoral mission based on collective social responsibility on the part of the members of the FOCS. It is also suggestive of a strategy to normalise a certain version of the mystical by engaging with, and actively incorporating, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding this more inclusive version of the mystical in a new and avowedly more populist institutional context. Orthodox religion and, in particular, practising Anglo-Catholicism, thus remained central to formations of the inter-war Cornish Revivalist subject.

*Old Cornwall*, the twice-yearly journal of the FOCS, was launched in 1925. In the first number, Morton Nance (1925: 3) reflected upon the Federation’s motto:

‘these fragments we set to gather, not in the spirit of collectors of quaint and useless curios, but as gleaners of the folk-culture of Cornwall, upon which all really Cornish art and literature of the future must be based, and hoping that future generations will arise, Cornish still, to make good use of them.’

The future work of the FOCS was, for Morton Nance (1925: 4), to proceed in contrast to that of the mid-Victorian antiquarian societies whose members understood Cornwall’s past, he argued, to be merely ‘a subject for antiquarian discussions.’ For the antiquarians, he implied, the past was detached from, and qualitatively different to, their present; and, while they would argue for the

preservation of Cornwall's landscape antiquities, the value of doing so lay only in the potential of the latter to provide the resources by which the antiquarians might further their intellectual and moral refinement, so as to guide the development of early Victorian gentlemanly capitalism (see also Naylor 2002, 2003).

In contrast, for the FOCS, a sense of the local would be a much more overt and intrinsically valuable guiding principal; the past held 'a living spirit' and the Old Cornwall members would aim to spread 'a knowledge of this past amongst Cornish people of every sort,' as such a knowledge was 'necessary to them if they would remain Cornish' (Morton Nance 1925: 4). The true value of preserving old Cornwall should lie not in providing the resources for a distanced formal literary education, in the interests of promoting individual and collective material prosperity and a work-for-profit economy, but 'in the spiritual and intellectual life that means character and personality, for more depends on that sense of race and locality which has always distinguished Cornish people in the past, and comes of just such local knowledge' (Morton Nance 1925: 5). To engage only with the material artefacts of old Cornwall would be to suggest that the associated ways of life were no more. By understanding that the past was not detached from the present but, rather, that the present was an adaptation of the past that preserved certain [pre-]historic elements, the FOCS could engage with an 'authentic' Cornish folk culture.

Morton Nance (1925: 4) wrote of himself and his fellow FOCS members that

'we are as much interested in the holiday, workaday, and home life of older generations – the festivals, the hearthside tales, the printed dialect literature, and the old songs and words – as in any other side of the past of Cornwall, and are as ready to honour the teller of a good Cornish story in the good old way, as we are to recognise the value of more difficult but less love-inspired research on Cornish Antiquities.'

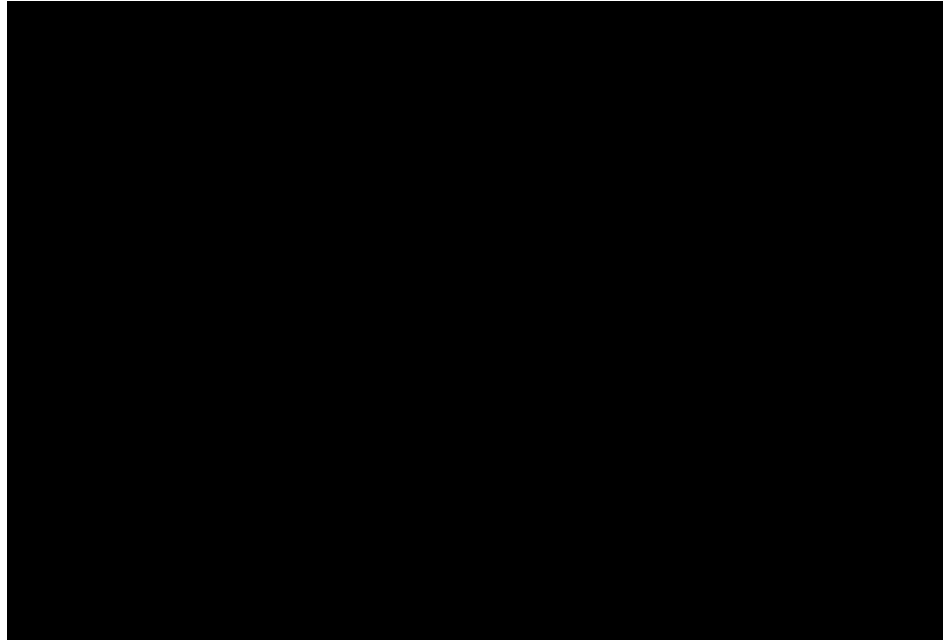
The typical Old Cornwall member, he went on,

'is a person who is first of all on the watch for anything that is not generally known of the words and ways of the Cornish people of old times, with perhaps a preference for those of times not too old; one who never misses a chance of talking over these old times with the right person; who is ready to help with anything that brings Cornish people

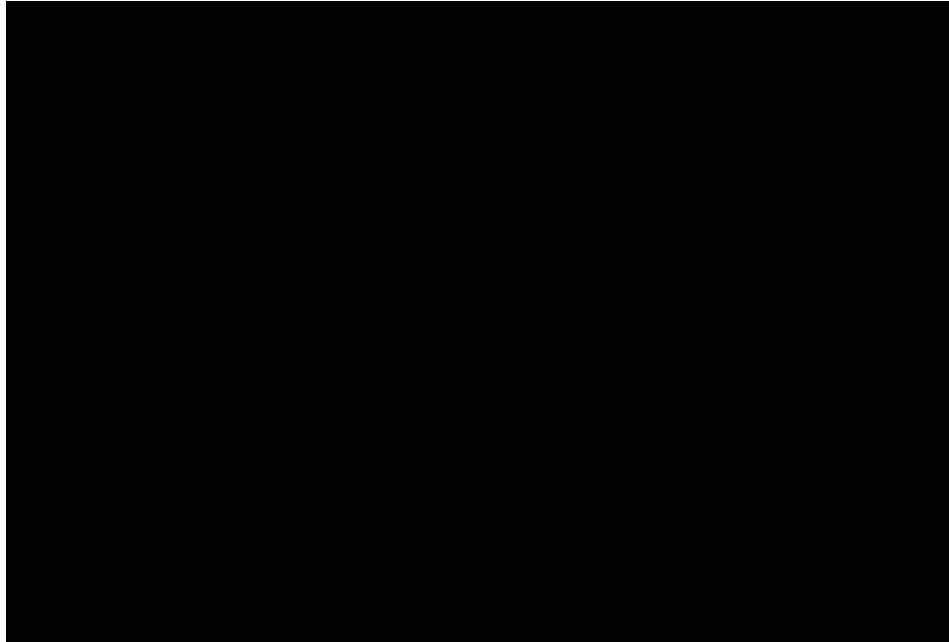
together as such; is as ready to acknowledge his kinship with a Breton or a Welshman, and who, however able to give the current coin of English speech when it is wanted will be as ready with a good supply of Cornish fashioned small change for familiar use' (Morton Nance 1925: 6).

*Old Cornwall* thus quickly became a kind of Cornish 'Notes and Queries', containing short comic and cautionary tales, references to old traditions or customs, scraps of folklore, and observations on dialect words and the origins of place-names. Each Old Cornwall society's committee included one person in the position of Recorder, upon whom was the onus to collect such fragments and to note their sources, beyond what was said in the various societies' annual programmes of talks, and send them in to the regular 'Around the Societies' feature in the journal. The second and third Old Cornwall societies were formed in Truro and Redruth in 1922, followed by Hayle and Camborne in 1923, Helston and Madron in 1924, Penzance, Padstow, St Austell, St Agnes and Falmouth by 1926 and Bodmin, Callington, Liskeard, Looe and Newquay by 1930. There was thus a radial spread of the formation of new societies outward from St Ives, as neighbouring societies provided the impetus for new societies to form and affiliate to the central Federation under the efforts of interested local individuals. The chapter-and-branch structure of the FOCS played an important part in grounding the Old Cornwall movement in a populist context, as new societies were encouraged to form and sustain themselves under their own energies, and to organise and pursue their own programmes of events, requiring only a quorum of three officers to be recognised by the Federation.

One of the most notable outcomes of the Old Cornwall movement's interest in 'the holiday, workaday and home life of older generations' related to the rural calendar. In 1928, as part of its annual programme of events, St Ives OCS revived Crying the Neck, to mark the end of the harvest, at Hugh Dunstan's farm, Towednack (Hamilton Jenkin 1945). It was observed and recorded by R. S. Hawker and Robert Hunt, both of whom were discussed in the previous chapter, and it is in a form based on their observations that 'Crying the Neck has become institutionalised within the calendar of Old Cornwall Society events' (Payton 1996a: 28) [see figures 5.4 and 5.5]. Members of the St Ives OCS, and other interested visitors, gathered at Dunstan's farm on a pre-arranged date towards the end of the summer harvest, where



Figures 5.4 [above] and 5.5 [below]: **Crying the Neck, dates unknown**



reapers had left a small area of corn uncut. Upon their arrival, the vicar of the local church said a short harvest prayer, after which the last sheaf of corn – the neck – was cut and bound with twine. The reaper held it up high, raised it in turn to the east, the south and the west, and shouted out, three times, ‘I have ’en!’ The gathered Old Cornwall members responded, three times, ‘What have ’ee?’, to which the reaper replied, three times, ‘The neck!’ After three cheers, the gathered Old Cornwall members followed the Neck as it was carried to a local church for a harvest service. In this folk ritual, then, one can identify a strategy to normalise and popularise a more inclusive yet still self-consciously ‘traditional’ version of the mystical by actively incorporating elements of potentially contradictory folk religion into a ceremony that becomes framed by a cautiously syncretic Anglicanism.

Another revival that raised similar questions was that of the lighting of midsummer bonfires along a chain of Cornish hilltops in 1929, which are now

‘organised and lit each year by the Old Cornwall movement through the agency of its individual local Societies, and carried out in accordance with a very ancient custom. For the practice of celebrating Midsummer Eve in such a fashion goes back to remote pagan times; and the perpetuation of this interesting observance thus forms a bond between Cornish people of the present age and their distant Celtic forbears’ (Noall 2003 [1963]: 1).

In 1963, the FOCS published a booklet on the midsummer bonfires by Cyril Noall, the curator of St Ives Museum, in which he wrote that

‘there can be no question but that these fires owe their origin to a form of sun worship. Although the opinions of Dr William Borlase and other 18th century antiquaries concerning Druidical religious practices have been largely discounted by later historians of a less romantic turn of mind, it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the existence of this ancient midsummer custom without invoking some such explanation’ (Noall 2003: 2).

The early Church, he argued, co-opted the custom as part of the celebrations of *Golowan*, the Eve of St John [23 June], in which form they survived until some time around the turn of the nineteenth century.

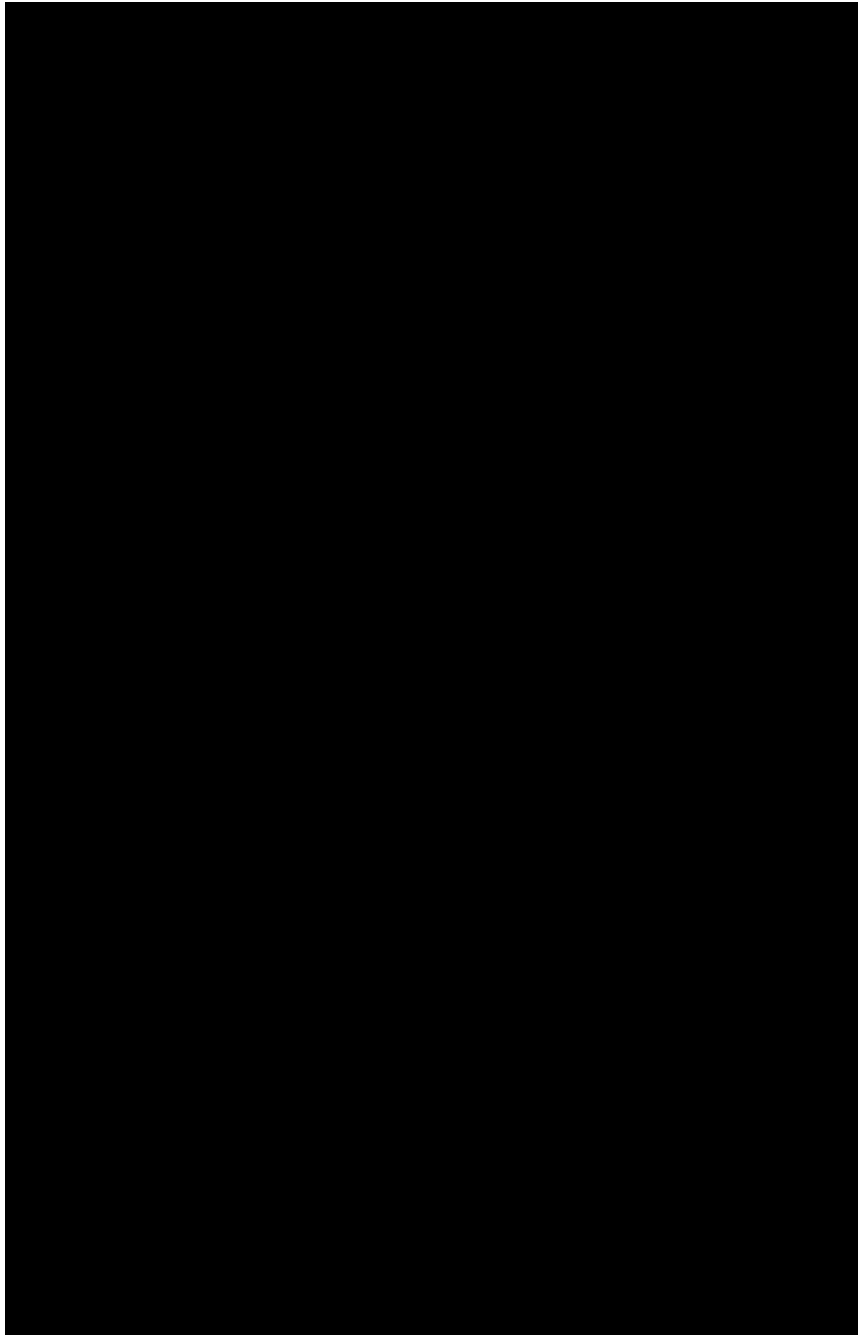
Noall's booklet also contains details of the revived bonfire lighting ceremony [see figure 5.6], which begins with the words, in Cornish, of the Master of Ceremonies (Noall 2003: 13):

‘According to the custom of our forefathers in days of old, Behold us making our Midsummer Bonfire, this night in the middle of Summer.  
Now set the pyre  
At once on fire,  
Let flame aspire  
In God's high Name!’

The fire is then lit, usually by the local mayor or other officer, and the Lady of the Flowers then casts into the fire of a bunch of ‘good’ herbs [those of known medicinal properties and that were reputed to offer protection from witchcraft, including foxglove, sage and St John's wort] and ‘bad’ herbs [weeds, and those that were reputed to possess malign influences, including corn cockle, nettle and thistle], bound with coloured ribbons. A prayer for the benediction of the midsummer bonfire, in Cornish, is also said:

‘O Lord Jesus Christ, the True Light, Who dost enlighten every man that cometh into the world, do Thou bless this bonfire which in our gladness we light to honour the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist: And grant to us, being lighted by Thy grace, and fired with Thy love, that we may come to Thee, Whom that Holy Forerunner did announce beforehand as the Saviour of the world. Who livest and reignest with the Father in Heaven in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. AMEN’  
(Noall 2003: 12).

Of the other practical works undertaken by the FOCS, Atchley (1938) reported the renovations and repairs to Trevornick Holy Well, Cubert and Chapel Towan Well, St Austell by the Newquay OCS and the St Austell OCS, respectively. In addition, in 1927, the Synod of Clergy had ‘requested sanction by the bishop of a Kalendar of the saints of Cornwall, together with collects and readings to commemorate them liturgically’ (Miles Brown 1976: 90), with the *Cornish Church Kalendar* duly appearing in 1933 [see figure 5.7]. The Kalendar listed all of the saints after whom Cornish churches and parishes were named, along with their saints' days and



**Figure 5.6: Wadebridge Old Cornwall Society  
lighting the Midsummer Bonfire on St Breock Downs, 1961**



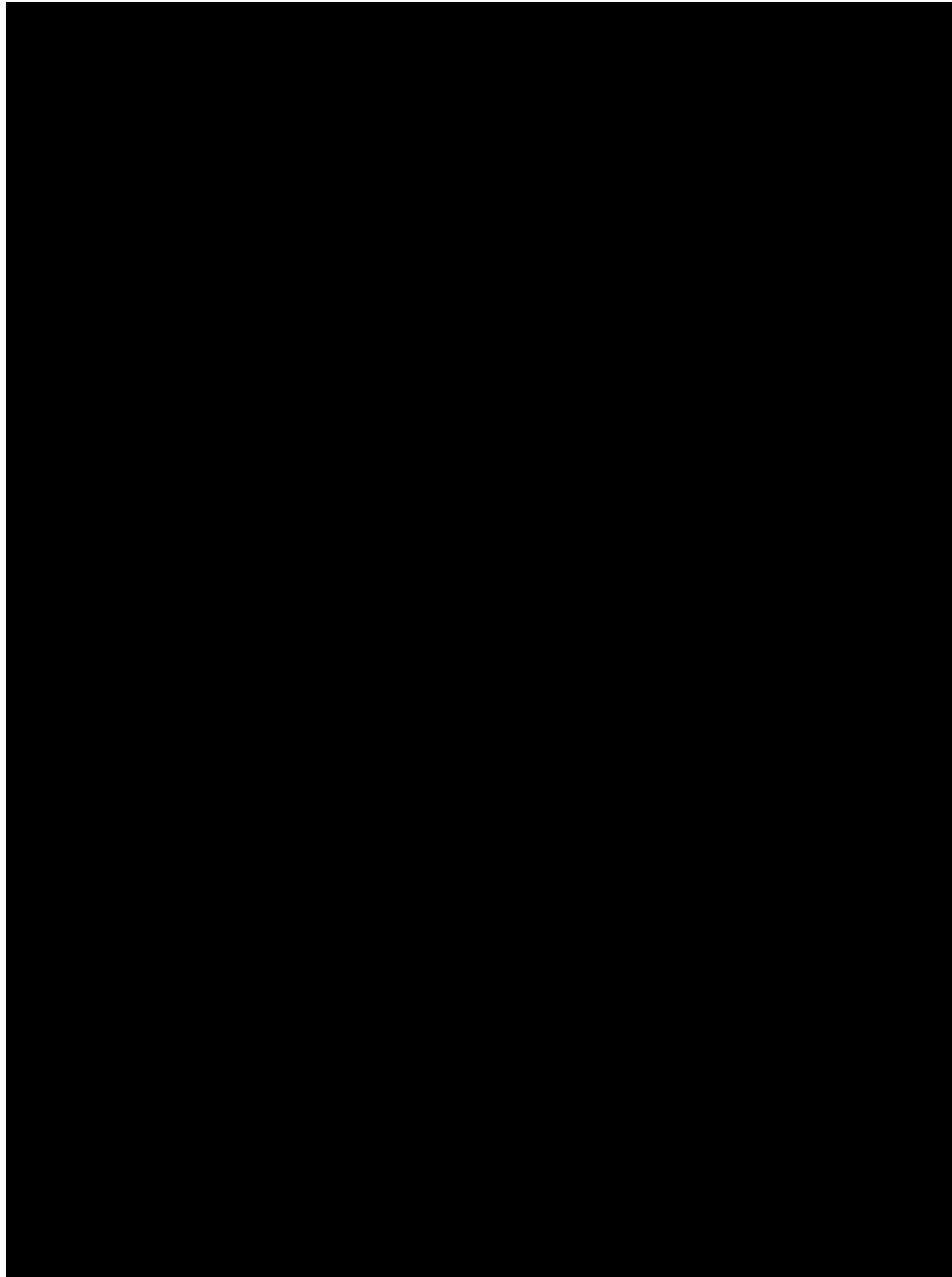


Figure 5.7: **November**, from *Cornish Church Kalendar*, 1933

specially written prayers for the principal saints. Subsequently, through Anglicanism, these saints were incorporated into the Old Cornwall movement. Joseph Wellington Hunkin, the eighth Bishop of Truro [from 1935 to 1951; see figure 5.8], rededicated both of the aforementioned restored and repaired wells in 1937 using the designated Cornish Well Service from the Kalendar, which consisted of a reading from John 4:5-14, a prayer for the saint after whom the well was named [where a specific reading was provided, otherwise the prayer for All Saint's Day was to be used], and the following blessing:

‘O God, with Whom is the well of life, by Whose mercy we have been born again of water and the Holy Ghost, and have been all made to drink of one Spirit: Grant that as we go through the vale of misery we may use it for a well, and may finally in the Heavenly Jerusalem drink of the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb’ (Taylor et al 1933: 56).

‘St Mawes Holy Well,’ Berry (1949: 79) added, ‘had long been bricked up in a wall and buried under a garden before 1938, when it was reconditioned and reconsecrated’ [see figure 5.9]. The holy wells connected the Cornish saints to the Cornish landscape at specific sites; the Cornish Well Service directly engaged with and, in doing so, attempted to contain these sites as ritual spaces. It did so through the incorporation of the potentially contradictory legacy of prehistoric Paganism at the holy wells into the controlled sacramentalism of contemporary Anglican theology and practice, so as to normalise a certain version of the mystical.

Underpinning this folk revivalism, and the concern to ground a more inclusive version of the mystical in a new and avowedly more populist institutional context, were certain broader historical and socio-political arguments. Henry Jenner, in his 1920 Presidential Address to the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society [RCPS], elaborated upon the historicities of the Old Cornwall movement. ‘My former addresses as President of this Society have been concerned with the past – the history and antiquities of Cornwall,’ Jenner (1921-2b: 51) said. ‘This time I propose... to talk rather of the future. For want of a better title, I have called it “The Renaissance of Merry England,” counting Cornwall, for this occasion only, as if it were part of England.’ He went on to present a Romanticised vision of mediaeval village life,

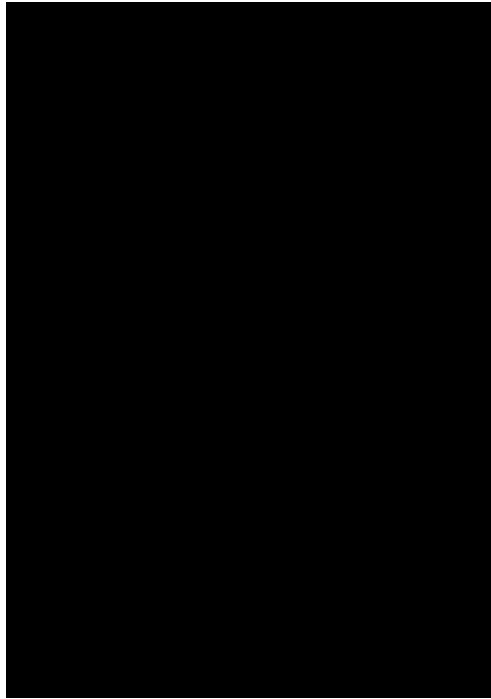


Figure 5.8 [above]: **Joseph Wellington Hunkin [1887-1950],  
Bishop of Truro 1935-51**

Figure 5.9 [below] **St Mawes Holy Well, St-Just-in-Roseland, 2004**



which, he argued,

‘must have been a very jolly life at its best. To take one aspect of it, the round of church festivals, with their accompaniment of folk-songs, folk-dances, village dramas and the rest, was a very real thing to the people of those days, and though our history-books concern themselves chiefly with wars, and so give a general impression that people were always fighting, there was really plenty of peace and security of life and property, far more so in England than in other countries. And the amusements were neither vulgar nor immoral, and all classes joined in them alike. Those who played in the same games and fought side by side in the same battles were not likely to have much class hatred’ (Jenner 1921-2b: 53).

For Jenner, the Restoration was not a time of the revival of folk culture but, rather, a time of the invention of new customs, traditions and ceremonies. In contrast, Jenner understood himself to be speaking at a time at which the revival of folk culture, although not necessarily in its authentic form, was possible. ‘Unlike the Restoration period,’ he continued (Jenner 1921-2b: 55-6),

‘the present is a time at which what may be called antiquarian revivals of old manners and customs are possible, though not necessarily in their exact old form. There is considerable movement in this direction already. The collection and revival of folk-songs, folk-dances and folk-dramas goes on apace.’

However, the Restoration was, for Jenner, redeemed by ‘the finest and most perfect game that man has ever invented, a game at which all classes can play together with perfect equality, good humour and mutual respect, the noble game of cricket’ (Jenner 1921-2b: 55). Jenner also connected the revival of folk culture to the preservation of a certain version of rural landscape, which he set in opposition to the industrialisation of northern Italy, where he had often spent holidays: ‘Once it was a beautiful land,’ he said (Jenner 1921-2b: 58), ‘full of delightful ancient and mediaeval antiquities. Now what one remembers as lovely valleys are full of factories and huge smoking chimneys.’

There was also a certain class politics behind the folk revivalism of the Old Cornwall movement. ‘Laudable and fairly successful attempts to enliven country life were made all over the country in the middle of last century, largely by clergy who had come under the influence of what is known as the “Oxford Movement”,’ Jenner (1921-2b: 57-8) added, associating folk revivalism with a certain version of Anglicanism and, in doing so, implying that the Old Cornwall movement could be understood as a continuation of the Oxford Movement:

‘But all these Merry England revivals have been as yet, compared with the population, on a very small scale. What is wanted is to make them general, in every parish in the kingdom, and to interest the people in them, so that they may organise and work them themselves. By which I do not mean that they should be left entirely to the so-called “working classes,” and that the upper and middle classes should stand by and look on or avoid them altogether. In spite of the common count of Labour leaders, the “People” and the “Folk” do not consist entirely of the proletariat. We have as much right to be part of the People as they have, and the same right to a share in folk-songs, folk-dramas and folk-dances as they have, and we should claim our right and our share of the things worth having, our right to enjoy them too.’

Jenner’s involvement in pre-war legitimist politics was discussed in the previous chapter; but when, in the inter-war years, talk began to turn to the revival of the Order of the White Rose [OWR] after a wartime interregnum, Jenner was advocating a different political cause. ‘I think that the Order of the White Rose was killed by the war,’ he wrote to W. C. Meller, a fellow pre-war legitimist and member of OWR, in 1923, ‘and I do not see any good object to be gained by reviving it. Socialism and Bolshevism are the present enemies, and it behoves all who are against those to support the de facto monarchies, and not to confuse the issues by waging Legitimist claims’<sup>31</sup>. Similarly, Jenner wrote to F. A. Lumbye, another fellow pre-war legitimist and member of OWR, the following year:

‘I am quite convinced that anything that tends to complicate matters in these days, when the struggle is not between rival dynasties but between

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<sup>31</sup> Jenner, H. (1923) unpublished letter to W. C. Meller, 27 October, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 13: packet 5: bundle 2

any sort of dynasty at all, any sort of decent government, on the one side, and Labour, Socialism, Communism, Bolshevism +c. on the other, is not only foolish but wrong'<sup>32</sup>.

Jenner also dissociated himself, and the Old Cornwall movement, from Irish nationalism. 'Personally I have gone out of it [i.e. legitimism] altogether,' he continued, in his letter to Meller, 'and am devoting my attention to Celtic Cornwall, which, having no quarrel with the neighbouring kingdom of England, has no intention of translating the Irish words "Sinn Fein" into Cornish'<sup>33</sup>. Jenner's suggested Cornish alternative, which he first proposed at the Pan-Celtic Congress at Birkenhead in 1917, was *Onen Hag Oll*, 'One and All' (Payton 1996a).

Nor did Jenner believe that the folk revivalism of the Old Cornwall movement should be left entirely to people of his own generation. At the annual meeting of the Royal Institution of Cornwall [RIC] in 1919, Jenner spoke highly of the scheme for the collection of rural lore through the elementary school system in Wales, praising it for its 'educational as well as for its historical and antiquarian value' (RIC 1920: 445; see Gruffudd 1996). Under this scheme, school children collected fragments of information pertaining to the names of places and [pre-]historic sites, to local industries, customs, dialects, folklore and the like, which was sent to the Board of Celtic Studies at the University of Wales for collation, then deposited in the National Library. Based on Cornwall's cultural and historical similarity to Wales, Jenner proposed the resolution that, in the opinion of the RIC,

'some form of the scheme for the collection of rural lore by means of elementary and other schools, recommended by the Welsh Department of the Board of Education to the local education authorities of Wales and supported by the Board of Education itself, might with great advantage be applied to Cornwall' (RIC 1920: 446).

Seconding Jenner's proposal, Morton Nance also found value in the possibility of school children's securing some practical rural education, with a view to training a new generation of antiquarians. The resolution was passed, unanimously.

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<sup>32</sup> Jenner, H. (1924) unpublished letter to F. A. Lumbye, 5 November, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 13: packet 5: bundle 2

<sup>33</sup> Jenner to Meller, 1923

Mr W. Hawk, speaking as Chairman of Cornwall County Council on behalf of the County Education Committee, was applauded when he told the meeting that the resolution would have ‘the very respectful consideration of the Education Committee’ (RIC 1920: 447). A copy of the resolution was duly sent to the Committee, along with a similar resolution from the Penzance District Education Committee. Both, the following year’s annual meeting was told, were ‘warmly received’ (RIC 1921: 518). Jenner himself had been invited to draw up suggestions for the scheme, and to attend a meeting of the School Management Sub-Committee to explain his suggestions, which were then printed in pamphlet form and sent to all schools. He had also already addressed meetings of the National Union of Teachers [NUT] at Launceston, St Austell and Liskeard, and planned to address the NUT in west Cornwall in early 1921. ‘It is too early yet to make any guess at what will come of the plans,’ ran the report of the annual meeting (RIC 1921: 519), ‘but it seems probable that the researches here and elsewhere will not have only good educational effects, but will also provide students of philology, archaeology, anthropology, and history with a vast amount of valuable material.’

Jenner’s proposals were also well received by societies other than the RIC. Sir Edward Nicholl MP offered £25 in annual prizes to be presented to schools, through the RCPS (1921-2; RIC 1921), in connection with the scheme for the collection of rural lore. F. R. Pascoe, secretary to the Cornwall Education Committee, suggested that school children might be admitted to FOCS lectures, and that FOCS lectures might be given to school audiences, as well as to Wesleyan Guilds and to towns and villages not yet represented by an Old Cornwall society (FOCS 1926). Underpinning this focus upon children was an idealisation of the rational citizen-subject, and a culture of landscape based on the orderly and the purposeful as picturesque. Alfred Davies, permanent secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education, ‘felt that the fragile human spirit of the young was in particular danger from a “vicious system” of materialism practised within the “grim ramparts” of Wales’ schools’ (Gruffudd 1996: 415), and so ‘urged Welsh schools to strive towards the beautiful – to hang paintings at child’s eye level, to provide large windows looking out into the landscape, and to cultivate plants and flowers in the school yard and in the classroom.’ Children thus educated would

‘see themselves as a part, not of a chance world nor of an incomprehensible universe, but of a co-operative scheme of things devised and developed for the community by the ancestors. Such children, Davies maintained, were more likely to contribute with interest and ardour to the economic and the political system when the time came for them to emerge in industry business and to assume the duties and functions of citizens’ (Gruffudd 1996: 418).

Documentary and archival evidence of the achievements of the inter-war scheme for the collection of rural lore in Cornwall is elusive, if at all extant. However, Edwin Chirgwin (1951: 16), Headmaster of St Cleer School and Secretary of the Gorsedd of the Bards of Cornwall, suggested that the parish should form the geographical basis for a similar post-war scheme for the collection of rural lore, for ‘the Parish Church is the common heritage of every parishioner, and the fixed parochial and national standard from very ancient days... Perhaps through local knowledge and interest we can imbibe a little of the wisdom of our country folk,’ Chirgwin (1951: 19-20) continued, ‘that wisdom which is outside and beyond all books, which comes from daily contact with Nature and the elements, and from long struggles with the soil which claims their souls long before it claims their bodies... The world,’ he concluded, ‘is but an extension of the Parish.’ But the revival of a Cornish nationality – based on new artistic and literary expressions, by a new generation of Cornish Revivalists, of Old Cornwall– was neither anti-modern nor anti-scientific. Children were to be encouraged to read and draw maps, and to make ‘notes, measurements and sketches, and if photographs can be obtained, so much the better’ (Chirgwin 1951: 17). Indeed, the FOCS passed favourable comment upon the use of photographic records by Falmouth OCS (R.H.R. 1939).

Furthermore, Reverend Canon H. H. Mills, President of the RIC, cautioned that verification would be necessary to the scheme for the collection of rural lore in order to avoid factual inexactitudes resulting from inter-school rivalries (RIC 1920); Jenner agreed that collation would be used to filter out spurious isolated facts. Instead, Anglicanism and the Anglican parish – as both a secular and a religious organisational unit in the landscape – provided the typical Old Cornwall member with a certain systematic, and therefore scientific, basis for their activities. The Old



Cornwall movement worked as a strategy to normalise folk culture by selectively incorporating it into a more syncretic version of Anglicanism that was simultaneously religious and, in the interest of scientific knowledge, secular, thereby making it respectable and able to be mobilised as a more populist expression of Cornish nationality. Indeed, in 1958, as part of the British Association for the Advancement of Science's campaign to establish area committees, a preliminary meeting was held at the RIC's Royal Cornwall Museum by Professor L. Dudley Stamp and Sir George Allen, with a particular emphasis on the interesting of young people (RIC 1958).

Despite the Old Cornwall movement's attempt to normalise this more syncretic of the mystical by grounding it in a new and avowedly more populist institutional context, there remained tensions over the specific inclusivities and exclusivities of Old Cornwall. A. K. [Alfred Kenneth] Hamilton Jenkin was born in Redruth on 29 October 1900, into the Jenkin family that had owned Trewirgie House in Redruth since 1770 [see figure 5.10]. He read English at University College, Oxford where, in 1919, he met and became a close lifelong friend of C. S. Lewis. Returning to Cornwall, he settled in St Ives and worked as a freelance writer, lecturer and broadcaster, especially on the subject of the Cornish mining industry. He helped to found both St Ives and Mullion OCS and, later, served as President of both the FOCS and the RIC, before being elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1974. In 1945, three of Hamilton Jenkin's earlier books on aspects of Cornish cultural history – *Cornish Seafarers* [1932], *Cornwall and the Cornish* [1933] and *Cornish Homes and Customs* [1934] were collected and published in one single volume as *Cornwall and its People*. 'Of piskies and giants the average Cornishman of to-day knows little and cares less,' Hamilton Jenkin (1945: 314-5) wrote,

'He has probably never visited the holy wells and prehistoric remains which lie but a few miles from his door, has never seen a Cornish chough, nor heard of its associations with King Arthur... In many respects, of course, it would be nothing short of sentimentalism to deplore such changes, for the state of being tied and bound by the chains of superstition implies both a servitude of mind and body. And yet there was in the old people's thought much of that beauty which poets seek, many

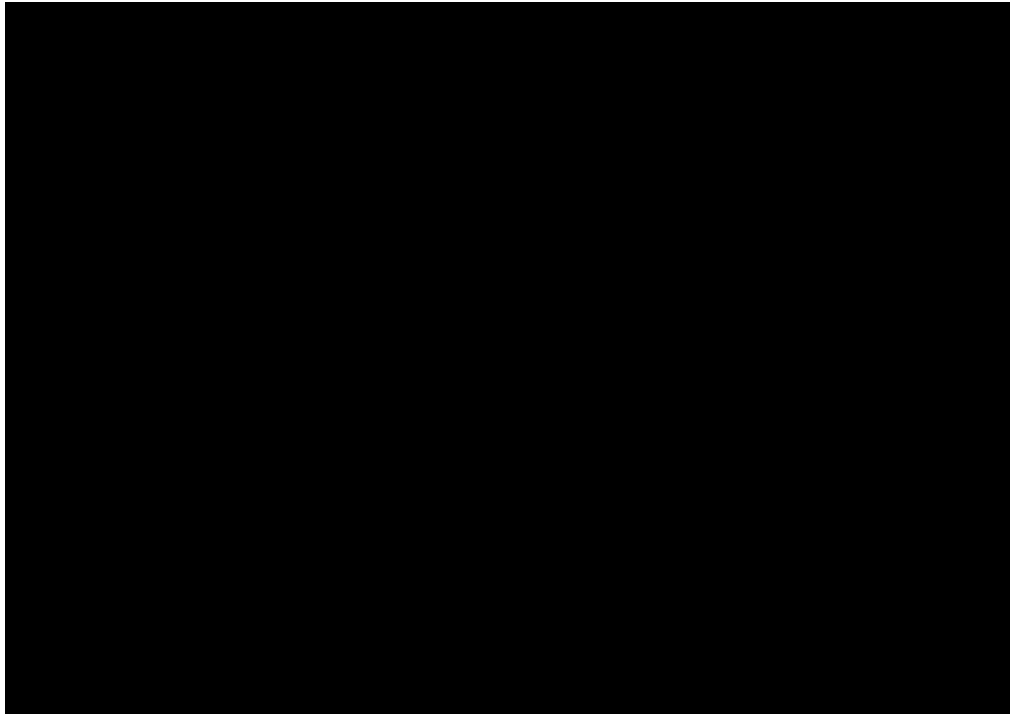
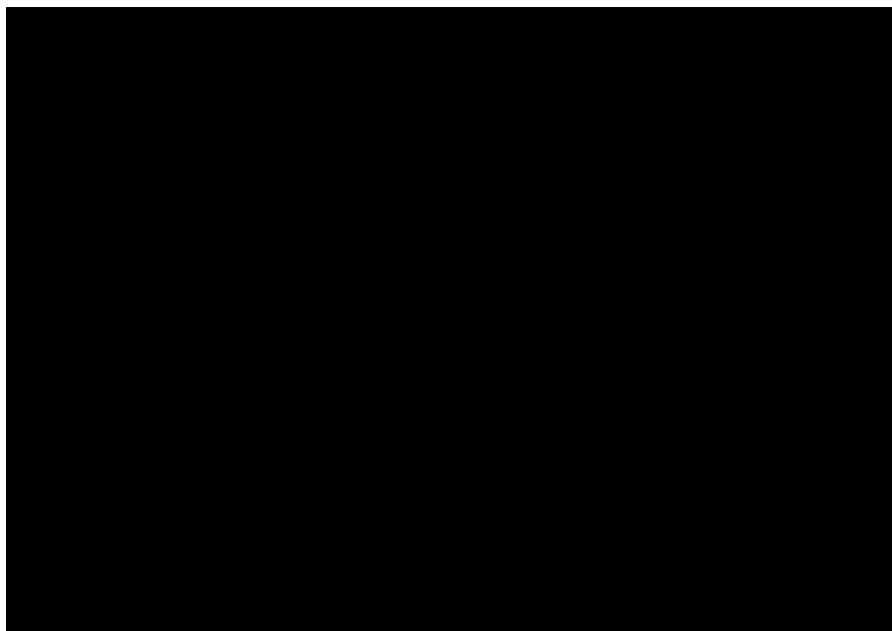


Figure 5.10 [above]: **A. K. Hamilton Jenkin [1900-1980], left, as a Turkish Knight in an Old Cornwall production of St George and the Dragon, c.1924 – further evidence of the political unionism of the Old Cornwall movement**

Figure 5.11 [below] **Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch [‘Q’; 1863-1944], from *On the Art of Writing*, 1920**



rare flowers of the imagination, which the world of to-day, with all its advance in mechanism and science, can ill afford to lose. Whilst fully admitting the impossibility (even if it were desirable) of engrafting upon such a world the beliefs and outworn notions of a bygone day, there must surely lie between that and the ascendancy of a deep materialism some state of compromise! For now, more than ever, folk-lore is coming to be recognised as an essential part of human knowledge, a magic casement opening on to the past through which the eye of modern man may see, down infinite vistas, the struggles of the awakening mind, and those primitive movements towards the goal of truth which constitute the earliest history of the human race.’

Here, Hamilton Jenkin adopted the rhetorical device of distancing the Old Cornwall movement from a serious and involved folk revivalism, aligning the movement instead with a more detached stance towards folk culture in order to normalise and make respectable such revived folk rituals as Crying the Neck and the lighting of midsummer bonfires.

Hamilton Jenkin also objected to the mobilisation of Anglo-Catholicism as an expression of the Cornishness of the Old Cornwall movement. If orthodox religion were to be mobilised as an expression of Cornish nationality, then it should be the fervent religion that lay dormant from the Reformation until it was revived by John Wesley. Methodism, for Hamilton Jenkin, sought to revive the established Church; it became a Nonconformist movement only when it was rejected by Anglicanism. Furthermore, Hamilton Jenkin (1945: 199-200) quoted the Superintendent of Cornwall Wesleyan Circuit, thus:

‘When incense is burnt in Truro Cathedral and confessions are heard there, and in many parish churches; when the validity of the sacraments is made to depend on episcopal ordination and apostolic succession, then, by implication, if not by direct assertion, the Methodists and all Free churchmen are unchurched.’

For dwindling church attendances, especially among the young, Hamilton Jenkin blamed their ministry for failing to address ‘the really vital problems of the modern world,’ namely peace, disarmament and social injustice and, instead, for preaching on the subjects of prohibition, gambling and Sunday games. The trend, he predicted,

would not be reversed until the arrival of ‘the John Wesley of to-day’ (Hamilton Jenkin 1945: 201).

### **5.2.2 ‘How rapidly the storm has come upon us’: Archaeology, Tourism and the Landscape of Old Cornwall**

The culture of landscape that was associated with the Old Cornwall movement went beyond that of the Celtic-Cornish Society, of holy wells and stone crosses. In 1912, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch [see figure 5.11] was elected on to a county council committee for the preservation of ancient monuments that included past and present presidents and secretaries of the RIC, the RCPS and the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society [PNHAS]. Furthermore, in addition to ‘Q’, three more founder members of the Celtic-Cornish Society – namely, Henry Jenner, Thurstan Peter and J. B. Cornish – were co-opted on to the committee (RIC 1914b). It was resolved that the committee should prepare a preliminary list of antiquities for preservation, under the forthcoming provisions of the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913. The task of preparing the list of disused ecclesiastical buildings fell to Peter; of ancient ruined castles, to Otho Peter [who was only distantly, if at all, related to Thurstan Peter, the former’s family being from Redruth and the latter’s family from Launceston]; of prehistoric monuments [comprising cliff castles, hill forts, earthworks, stone circles, longstones, quoits, underground structures and barrows], to Cornish; of ancient and holy wells, given the completeness of their researches already undertaken, to Mabel and Lillian Quiller-Couch (1994 [1894]); and of crosses and inscribed stones, to Canon Thomas Taylor, who simply referred the committee to *Old Cornish Crosses* (Langdon 1896).

‘It was also resolved to recommend that the county council should assume the guardianship of monuments of historic, traditional, and artistic interest within its administrative area,’ the RIC (1914b: 325) reported. At a meeting on 23 July 1913, in the wake of the passing of the Act, Jenner (1914: 445) was elected to chair the committee and duly brought the implications of the Act to the attention of the RIC:

‘The principal provisions of the Act to which attention should be called are the powers given to the authorities to prepare lists of monuments which ought to be preserved, to enforce Preservation Orders with regard

to them, and to make arrangements with landowners to take over the responsibility of the care of the monuments. Added to this is the power of punishing destructive hooligans, which in a tourist-ridden district is of great importance.’

As an example of such hooliganism, Jenner cited the case of an American tourist who had chipped off a piece of Mên-an-Tol as a souvenir. ‘If such things happen again,’ he continued (Jenner 1914: 445), ‘it will be our own fault, when once this excellent Act has got into working order.’

Having been held in abeyance from the outbreak of war, the activities of the committee resumed in 1920, with Charles Henderson taking the place of the late Thurstan Peter (RIC 1921; Jenner 1921-2a). The committee appointed eleven district correspondents, based on the districts of the Education Act 1902, who were each to prepare a preliminary list of ancient monuments for schedule by the Ancient Monuments Department of the Office of Works, and periodically to report on the condition of the monuments once scheduled (RIC 1922). Jenner (1925) also advocated a role for FOCS members as informal inspectors of ancient monuments, claiming a version of landscape – based on preservation, order and control, on the roles and responsibilities of central government and the secular spatial frameworks of local government – on behalf of the Old Cornwall movement. The ancient monuments in question were not themselves understood as being mystical in any contemporary sense; the versions of the mystical that had once been attached to them remained, for the FOCS, in the prehistoric past. Where the preservationism of the Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913 worked through local authority districts, though, the parish remained, for Jenner (1925), the principal geographical unit of survey for the Old Cornwall movement.

Henderson was born in Jamaica on 11 July 1900 to Cornish-born parents [see figure 5.12], though only his mother could trace any Cornish ancestry in her family tree; Henderson’s father, Major J. S. Henderson, was part-Scottish, part-Irish (Rowse and Henderson 1935). The following year, the family moved back to Britain, living first at Okehampton, then at Falmouth, then at Hayle before, in 1923, Henderson’s mother decided to move into her late father’s home, Penmount House – now a crematorium, two miles north of Truro. Henderson read Modern History at New

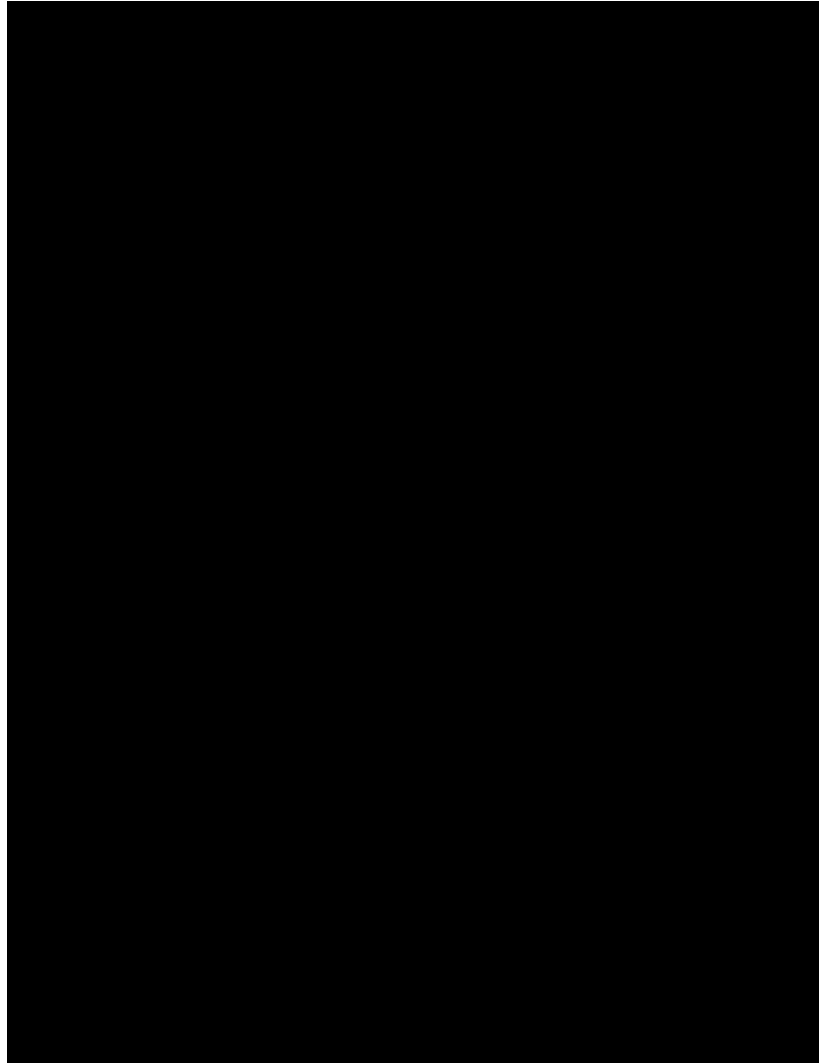


Figure 5.12: Charles Henderson [1900-1933],  
from *Essays on Cornish History*, 1935

College, Oxford, gaining a first class honours degree in 1922, and went on to become a lecturer at University College, Exeter and subsequently at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. 'Like many scholars brought up in the shadow of the War [i.e. World War I],' wrote A. L. Rowse and Mary Henderson (1935: xix) in *Essays in Cornish History*, a collection of essays and newspaper articles that was published two years after the latter's husband's death, he 'had seen his life's programme early and worked at it with an urgent passion, as if against time.' Henderson's life programme was to write the definitive documentary parochial history of the eight Hundreds of Cornwall. On 19 June 1933, he had married Mary Isobel Munro, a fellow of Somerville College, Oxford and daughter of J. A. R. Munro, the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Having been suffering for some months with chest pains, Henderson and his wife set out for what was intended to be a recuperative holiday in Italy at the end of August 1933, where he died, in Rome, on 24 September, of heart failure resulting from pleurisy (Rowse and Henderson 1935).

Henderson, working on his history of Cornwall, followed what had by the middle of the previous century become 'a well-established pattern of alphabetical parish histories' (Brayshay 1996: 19). Excerpts from the history, which remained unfinished and unpublished upon Henderson's death, were published in the *Journal of the RIC* in the mid-1950s (Henderson 1955, 1956), demonstrating that the use of the parish as a systematic basis for local history research and writing was still current in inter-war, if not post-war, Cornwall. Henderson (1930) also compiled a catalogue of Cornish antiquities for a Council for the Preservation of Rural England [CPRE] report, classifying them as prehistoric, Roman, early Christian, ecclesiastical buildings, domestic buildings [including castles, manor houses and parsonages], or miscellaneous other buildings [including town houses and Nonconformist chapels]. In ecclesiastical buildings, he remarked that a recent interest among the clergy had led to 'a general improvement of taste' (Henderson 1930: 63). The author of the report was W. Harding Thompson (1930), for whom it was limited to a broad historical and topographical survey of Cornwall. There was, he argued, a need for a detailed social, economic and aesthetic study of each community and its history, so as to provide 'a scientific basis' (Henderson 1930: 16) for future planning. Specific sites in the report are located by local authority district, however, and not by parish.

Henderson (1930: 72, original italics), in his catalogue of antiquities, deemed it fitting to make mention ‘of the valuable work done by the Federation of *Old Cornwall Societies* in diffusing interest in the History and Antiquities of Cornwall all over the County. These Societies,’ he continued, ‘which are the result of spontaneous local efforts, have already roused considerable interest among farmers and labouring people in the monuments committed to their charge.’ Harding Thompson (1930: 116), too, praised the FOCS for fostering such local interest, comparing its structure to the local sub-branches of the CPRE, and suggesting that both could function as ‘centres of authoritative opinion.’ There was a need, Henderson (1930) continued, for Cornish people to work together to ensure the successful administration of the Ancient Monuments Act 1913. However, the response to World War II was one of renewed urgency, recognising the need for archaeological involvement in the redevelopment of historical urban centres, and the archaeological value of wartime aerial photography. Nationally, this response resulted in the formation of the Council for British Archaeology in 1943 as a central body to integrate and promote all aspects of British archaeology; regionally, it resulted in Cornish archaeologists reaffirming the value of field archaeology above the study of folk culture. An editorial in the *Proceedings of the West Cornwall Field Club* [WCFC (1954: 128)] described the interests of the FOCS – in ‘the past history and culture of Cornwall, and the continuation of the Cornish language and dialect’ – as ‘praiseworthy’ though ‘to a certain extent... static.’ Archaeology, on the other hand, ‘in the dual sense of field-work and the preservation of ancient monuments by official scheduling, and of actual excavation, brings to light something new almost every month. Could not a really sizeable contribution,’ the editor wondered (WCFC 1954: 128), ‘in the form of a large money grant, or even of a hundred new members, be made by the Federation to the West Cornwall Field Club?’

The West Cornwall Field Club was formed by Colonel F. C. Hirst and members of his voluntary staff on an archaeological excavation of the Iron Age settlement at Porthmeor, on the north coast of West Penwith, in 1933; the members ‘being of the opinion that it was very necessary that excavation work in West Cornwall should be placed upon a systematic basis such as alone could lead to the solution of the numerous problems awaiting investigation in that area’ (WCFC 1936a: 20). West Cornwall was defined as that part of Cornwall to the west of a line drawn between



Newquay and Truro; West Penwith, defined as that part of Cornwall to the west of a line drawn between Hayle and Mounts Bay, was to be the particular focus of their attention (WCFC 1953). There was an historicity, too, to the activities of the WCFC. From its inception, its activities were to be focused upon establishing a detailed chronology of West Cornwall for the period 500BC-400AD, being the period for which archaeological evidence was deemed to be more abundant than for the earlier Bronze Age and the later Dark Ages, of which investigations could then proceed from this chronological base (WCFC 1936b: 6). Thus the archaeological landscape of west Cornwall, dating from the nine centuries in question and centring on Iron Age settlements and hill forts, came to stand for the Cornish archaeological landscape more generally.

Hirst [see figure 5.13], who had served as a cartographer with the British army in the North-West Frontier of Imperial India before retiring to Cornwall, collected the finds from WCFC excavations and put them on public display at his home, Tregeraint House [just outside Zennor, on the St Just to St Ives road], in July 1937. Further exhibits were bought, using money loaned by friends and WCFC members, while others came from a consignment of farm implements that he found on the harbour-side at Hayle, where they were awaiting shipment as scrap. The loans were paid back through the entrance fees of some 1,132 visitors to the exhibition in the remaining months of 1937. Hirst had planned to establish and expand his museum on a more permanent site, where he intended that it would act as a research facility for WCFC members and promote the WCFC to non-members, and take on a wider importance as an educational facility and folk museum of ‘the industries and occupations of West Cornwall’ (WCFC 1937a: 18). Hirst’s version of the folk differed to that of the Old Cornwall movement, being based on material culture rather than folk ritual. However, Hirst died in 1938; but William and Constance Lloyd, two friends of Hirst and fellow members of the WCFC, transferred the collection to their house in Zennor village itself, continuing to add to the exhibits into the early 1950s and displaying them in rooms dedicated to domestic life, and the fishing and mining industries. Much of Hirst’s original collection was displayed beside the road that ran past his house, so the Lloyds adopted the name of the Wayside Museum for their exhibition – under which name, and on which site, it still exists, albeit under different ownership, today [see figure 5.14].

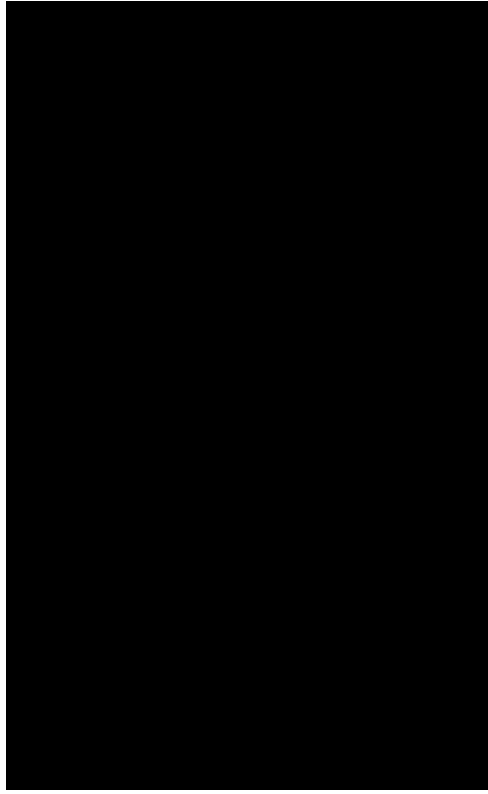
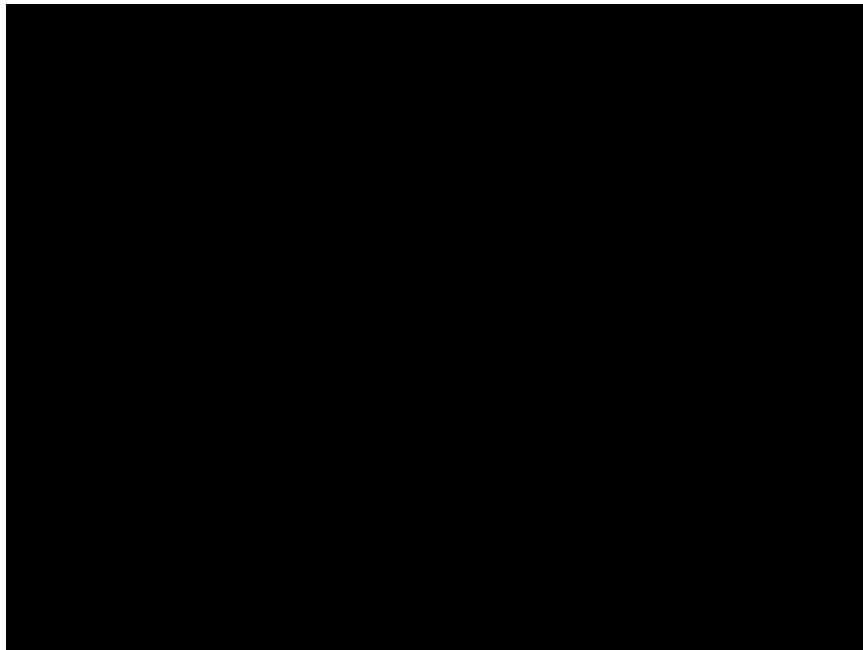


Figure 5.13 [above]: **Colonel F. C. Hirst [d.1938], date unknown**

Figure 5.14 [below]: **Wayside Folk Museum, Zennor, 2003**



Intriguingly, as well as distancing its version of the Cornish folk from that of the Old Cornwall movement, the WCFC also moved to distance itself, as an institution, from other societies such as the FOCS. According to the rules of the WCFC (1937b: 21), ‘the Club, as such, will not accept representation on the administrative bodies of other Societies, nor may those Societies, as such, be represented on the Committee of the Club.’ This was not, however, to deter members of the WCFC from joining other societies, or vice versa, in an individual capacity; indeed, as the Old Cornwall movement became grounded in an increasingly populist institutional context, inter-society exchange became more common. In 1959, the *Proceedings of the West Cornwall Field Club* carried an obituary of Morton Nance: ‘though not himself much concerned with archaeological research,’ it read, ‘he was a keen Antiquary in the best sense of the word’ (Pool and Thomas 1959: 130). Referring to Morton Nance’s position as the second Grand Bard of the Gorsedd of Cornwall, the obituary continued: ‘The duties of a Grand Bard are mostly ceremonial, but Nance, following the work of his great predecessor Jenner, filled the office for so long, and with such wisdom and dedicated leadership, that it became no mere titular dignity’ (Pool and Thomas 1959: 130). Moreover, Morton Nance

‘served on the Cornwall Excavations Committee, and it was to refute the allegations of bogus antiquarianism that he and others who revived the Gorsedd rejected the style of Druid, becoming and remaining Bards – a title borne with pride by all the leading archaeologists of Cornwall’ (Pool and Thomas 1959: 130),

including those who wrote the obituary: Peter Pool, a Cornish historian and linguist, and Charles Thomas, a Cornish-born lecturer in archaeology at the University of Edinburgh [now Emeritus Professor of Cornish Studies at the University of Exeter], under their bardic names of Gwas Galva and Gwas Godhyan, having been made bards in 1955 and 1953, respectively. The position of the Gorsedd in relation to the Old Cornwall movement, and inter-war cultures of Arthurianism, is discussed in more detail in section 5.3.1.

In addition to West Cornwall, mid-twentieth century Cornish archaeology had a second regional focus: Tintagel, which was one of the archaeological specialisations of Courtenay Arthur Raleigh Radford [see figure 5.15]. Raleigh Radford was born in



Figure 5.15 [above]: **C. A. Raleigh Radford [1900-1999], second left, at a Prehistoric Society meeting in Edinburgh, 1954**

Figure 5.16 [below]: **Tintagel Castle, 2004**



Middlesex in 1900, and read modern history at Exeter College, Oxford, before becoming an inspector of ancient monuments in Wales in 1929. He became director of the British School in Rome – an institute founded in 1901 for research in archaeology and Italian studies, funded through the British Academy – in 1936, returning to Britain with the outbreak of World War II and becoming Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in 1946. Raleigh Radford's later career also saw him serve as president of the Prehistoric Society, the Royal Archaeological Institute and the Society of Mediaeval Archaeology. Subsequently, he moved to Devon, which allowed him to develop his professional work in mediaeval archaeology, with a particular interest in the sites of Tintagel and Glastonbury. It was for his earlier archaeological work on the former that he was made a bard of the Gorsedd of Cornwall, taking the bardic name of Gwas Rumon, in 1937. In a paper in the *Journal* of the RIC, Raleigh Radford (1942) summarised contemporaneous archaeological knowledge of the Tintagel island site [see figure 5.16], presenting a straightforward historical narrative that included evidence of a sixth century monastic settlement founded by St Juliot, and of the probable origins of the castle in no earlier than the twelfth century.

Furthermore, Raleigh Radford (1942: 36) believed that 'no account of the site can be complete if it stops with the history,' and went on to consider the Arthurian connection to Tintagel. Arthur, for Raleigh Radford (1942: 37), is 'the successor of a late Roman official... while his knights are the heavy armed cavalry,' who led the British Celts in their defence of the island against invading Anglo-Saxon tribes during the late fifth century. As the Celts 'were driven back to the western highlands,' however,

'the memory of their victories tended to lose precision and Arthur, whose sphere of activity originally extended over much of Lowland Britain, became associated with localities still unconquered, even though they lay far beyond the area in which he actually lived and fought' (Raleigh Radford 1942: 37).

In contrast, he argued that 'Earl Reginald and Earl Richard, the Castle builders, are not heroic figures' (Raleigh Radford 1942: 40). Separating the Tintagel of history from that of legend, Raleigh Radford (1942: 41) could thereby conclude that

‘Arthur therefore rules supreme in Tintagel and few would wish to displace him. Fewer still would desire to see his memory tied to those midland or northern sites where his victories were won, a fate which would condemn his spirit to a peripatetic existence as scholars favour first one and then another identity. For Arthur is above all a Celtic hero and it is fitting that popular memory should picture him in a Cornish setting.’

This strategy also facilitated the containment of the mystical by mid-twentieth century Cornish archaeology, by properly delimiting its emerging disciplinary boundaries through contested versions of the Cornish landscape, so as to prevent its scientific status from being contaminated by popular Arthurianism.

The tensions between the Old Cornwall movement and the WCFC, over their respective attempts to mobilise folk culture and field archaeology as the primary expression of Cornish landscape, were also made apparent in their respective concerns to exert some measure of control over the version of the Cornish landscape that was being mobilised by the burgeoning Cornish tourist industry. In September 1898, a full six years before the Great Western Railway [GWR] published A. M. Broadley’s (1905 [1904]) *The Cornish Riviera*, Q’s editorial conclusion to a readers’ debate in *The Cornish Magazine* had compared and contrasted Cornwall’s nascent tourist industry to that of the [French] Riviera (Quiller-Couch 1898). Some 32 years later, in the preface to the first CPRE regional survey, he reiterated the assertion from his editorial comment that ‘it is unhappily certain that any people which lays itself out to exploit the stranger and the tourist runs a grave risk of deteriorating in manliness; and as I had rather be poor myself than subservient, so I would rather see my countrymen poor than subservient’ (Quiller-Couch 1930: xi). Although Q had cautioned that the inevitable expansion of the tourist industry should be properly planned, with as much respect for the native Cornish as for the tourist (Quiller-Couch 1898) – and a desire to exclude the wrong kind of tourist, the kind who pronounced ‘Camborne’ [as Robert Morton Nance (1925) phoneticised it] as ‘Kem-bawne’ – it was, perhaps, too late.

Q (1930: x, original italics) wrote in his preface to the CPRE regional survey that:

‘The invasion of our County by motorist traffic did not seriously begin until a year or two after the armistice... Just here I merely ask it to be

noted how rapidly the storm has come upon us, an ancient people, with its inrush of motors and descent of the ready-made-bungalow builder, the hotel-investor, the holiday-maker who thinks no cove complete without a minstrel (negro) and a gramophone, the *pater familias* who brings his youngster to Tintagel with spade and bucket. Cornwall is *not* an improvised playground; it is *not* a “Riviera”, and the use of that word, whoever first applied it to Cornwall, was and has been a commercial “inexactitude”.’

It is difficult not to smile; one imagines that even Q himself was aware of the irony in this last sentence. Indeed, A. K. Hamilton Jenkin (1945) made Q responsible for first referring to Cornwall as the Riviera, and for thereby precipitating the influx of tourists with their acoustic geographies of open-air gramophone music and Cockney accents.

The right kind of tourist, on the other hand, was of the kind to whom Thomas (1954) appealed in his West Cornwall Field Club guide to *The Principal Antiquities of the Land's End District*. Herein, Thomas (1954: 1) provided Ordnance Survey map references and pronunciation guides ‘to help visitors to Cornwall, whether pedestrians, cyclists or motorists, who wish to find and recognize the many relics left by prehistoric men.’ A correct visual and oral bodily regime – with regard to a particular preservationist attention to, and knowledge of, prehistoric sites of Cornwall – distinguished the right kind of tourist from the wrong. The former had to be aware, for example, that stone circles had only possibly once been of religious significance; that there was little evidence to connect them to sun worship, and still less to support other astronomical theories. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that the tourist industry was complicit in promoting only the wrong kind of tourist: ‘He must have both eyes and legs that would fathom Cornwall,’ S. P. B. Mais (1934 [1928]: 2) insisted, in another GWR publication of the familiar title of *The Cornish Riviera*. ‘History and archaeology may have passed us by without our wishing to do so much as turn our eyes in their direction before,’ he continued (Mais 1934: 6), ‘but once we find ourselves wandering among the beehive huts, standing amazed before a giant cromlech, exploring ruined Restormel, or the keep of Launceston, there is born in us anew an ardent desire to become historians and antiquarians at once.’

The CPRE regional survey connected to a particular version of the Cornish landscape. ‘One so often and so unexpectedly comes across evidence of primitive ancestors long since vanished,’ Harding Thompson (1930: 43) wrote, ‘that imagination can re-people the desolate wastes with men of another age – carrying on their ritual, burying their chieftans under colossal cromlechs and erecting their great monoliths as symbols of virility... All these and more,’ he continued,

‘have combined to make the Cornish Moors unlike other parts of Britain.

The sea encircles them in the west; in the north the legend of King Arthur casts a spell of romance over the landscape.

Now, over the bones and crumbling habitations of successive races, wild nature is again supreme. Heather, furze and lichen flourish where once the peat of many fires was kindled. The skyline is here and there punctuated by the grim silhouette of granite smoke stack over a mine long since abandoned, recording man’s past efforts to wrest riches from the soil.’

Harding Thompson’s version of the Cornish landscape was carefully controlled through the separation of different land uses into distinct planning areas [see figure 5.17]. He contrasted the view from Brown Willy of the spatially compact china clay spoil heaps on Hensbarrow Down – which, he wrote, looked ‘like miniature snow-clad Alps’ (Harding Thompson 1930: 44) – with the view eastwards from Rough Tor which, for him, was marred by china clay spoil heaps intruding on to Stannon Marsh, the former being incongruous with the primitive moorland of the latter. ‘It is, however, necessary to point out to those who are foreign to Cornwall, that the deserted mine working with its great stone or granite stack is at present an accepted feature of this western landscape,’ he added (Harding Thompson 1930: 107-8). ‘Like the cromlech, Celtic hut-dwelling, and mediaeval castle, they may be regarded as milestones marking the progress of man’s constructive ability throughout the ages.’

The Old Cornwall movement also connected to a particular version of landscape, as well as to a particular formation of the Cornish folk. Dr Joseph Hambly Rowe, a Cornish-born doctor whose career had led him from Cornwall to the running of a practice in Bradford, wrote a short biographical article on William Bottrell, the nineteenth century folklorist, who was discussed in the previous chapter. Where



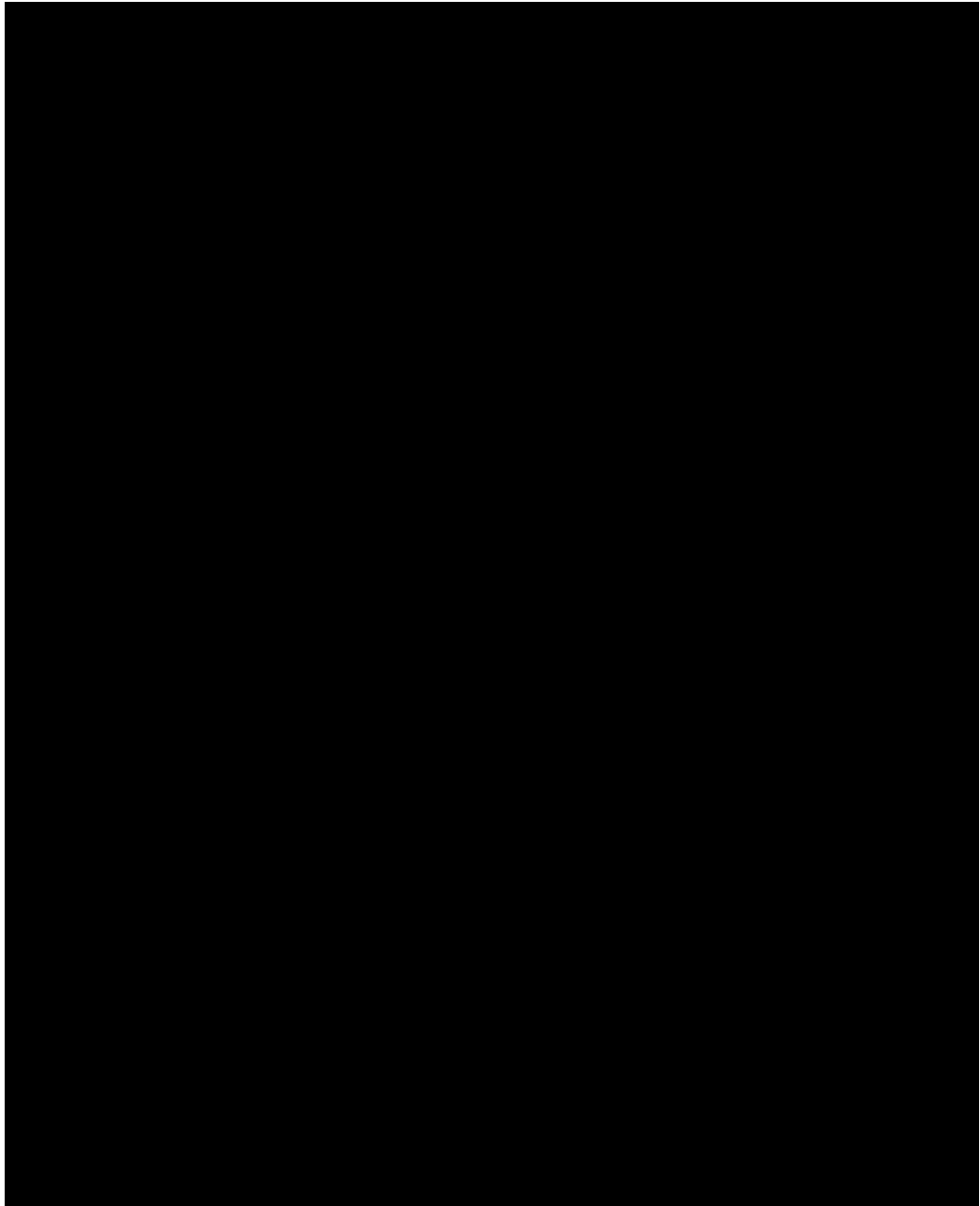


Figure 5.17: Views on Moors and Downs,  
from *Cornwall: A Survey of its Coast, Moors, and Valleys*, 1930

Cornish antiquarians and archaeologists might have looked back to Reverend William Borlase, the eighteenth century antiquarian, as a founding figure, Hambly Rowe (1929: 1) claimed Bottrell as ‘the posthumous founder of the Old Cornwall movement.’ Bottrell, for Hambly Rowe (1929: 1), was ‘not merely the scientific recorder of facts of folk-lore,’ but was also himself ‘brought up in an atmosphere of chimney-corner tale telling.’ His folklore evoked a Cornish landscape, in which was manifested

‘the very spirit of all that we think of as “Old Cornwall.” It is a narrow, winding lane of high moorstone hedges, topped with many an obscuring furze-bush and bramble, through which, with a glance over every gap and an excursion over every stile, he leads us into this magic country’ (Hambly Rowe 1929: 1-2).

This version of landscape is perhaps the antithesis of Harding Thompson’s: it is disordered, even chaotic; a ramble, rather than a purposeful field visit to the summit of the nearest hill; providing only occasional glimpses through hedgerows and over stiles, rather than the broad views of the planner-preservationist. Thus, as with its evocation of an Anglo-Catholic religiosity, and despite the Old Cornwall movement’s attempt to mobilise the mid-twentieth century language of planning and survey as part of its campaign to preserve and revive a certain version of Cornwall, there remained tensions over the specific inclusivities and exclusivities of Old Cornwall.

### **5.3 Legend Land: King Arthur in mid-twentieth century Cornwall**

In 1922 and 1923, as part of a wider national series of publications on its principal tourist destinations, the Great Western Railway [GWR] published a series of four small books, collecting and conflating together folk tales from Cornwall, Devon and Wales as ‘Western’, under the pseudo-Bardic authorship of ‘Lyonesse’ (1922a, b, 1923a, b; see also Vernon 1998)<sup>34</sup>. The tales are described as dating from ‘those older, simpler days, when reading was a rare accomplishment’ (Lyonesse 1922a: 3).

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<sup>34</sup> Lyonesse is the name of the legendary lost land between Land’s End and the Isles of Scilly, over which the surviving Knights of the Round Table are said to have fled after Arthur’s last battle; the

Indeed, he claims that ‘in origin most of these old legends date from the very dawn of our history,’ until

‘with the spread of education they began to die. When many folk could read and books grew cheap there was no longer the need to call upon memory for the old-fashioned romances.

Yet there have always been those who loved the old tales best, and they wrote them down before it was too late, so that they might be preserved for ever’ (Lyonesse 1922a: 3).

‘Such refrains for a pre-modern pastoral Eden,’ as Vernon (1998: 165) observes, ‘had especial resonance in an early twentieth century shaken to the core by the trauma of the First World War and obsessed with the spectre of national degeneracy.’ Central to such narratives, in the Cornish context, were constructions of Cornwall as ‘a “primitive” land of magic and romance’ (Vernon 1998: 164), so that it functioned as ‘a repository of all that England had once been before its fall into a corrosive and effeminate modernity’ (Vernon 1998: 165).

In the introduction to the second volume, Lyonesse (1922b: 3) attempted to explain this regional geography of British myths and legends: ‘Perhaps this is because of the Celtic love of poetry and symbolism inherent in the blood of the people of the West,’ he suggested;

‘perhaps because of inspiration drawn from the wild hills and bleak moors of the lands in which they live; perhaps because life is, and always was, quieter there, and people have more time to remember the tales of other days than in busier, more prosaic districts.’

Indeed,

‘These romances are perhaps the most “genuine antiques” that our country can offer, and they come from the corners of our land where romance still lingers and where, to the country folk, rocks and lakes, streams and great hills, are matters of history – not geology.

And we, who travel to these distant parts of Britain, can better enjoy their charms if we go there knowing something of the stories that have clung about them for many centuries, and if we leave our critical business

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author of the same name was, in reality, an otherwise historically elusive writer named G. B. Barham (Burdett Wilson 1970).

method of mind behind us locked in our office desks' (Lyonesse 1923a: 3).

The study of Cornish folklore could, for Lyonesse, perform a similar function to that accorded to it by the Old Cornwall movement, for which revival of folk religion promoted a 'traditional' and transhistorical Celtic Cornishness. 'If you look into them, with the eyes of imagination,' Lyonesse (1923a: 3) wrote,

'you will see behind them the simplest romances of a very simple people; a people that explained some uncomprehended thing with some comprehensible story, or who would invest the memories of their great men and women with records of wonderful achievement often formerly attributed to some yet earlier hero.'

Intriguingly enough, though, the fourth volume presents twelve tales from the 'nearer West' (Lyonesse 1923b: 3) – which extends as far east as Reading and Windsor – where, more than anywhere else in Britain, 'civilization is "improving" away romance very rapidly. And it is worth while to hang on fast to the last remaining shreds of those other days when life, though ruder, had more time for simple dreams of wonderful things' (Lyonesse 1923b: 7). The argument in this section is that the *Legend Land* books, through the character of Lyonesse, were symptomatic of a broader cultural trend – as evidenced by the establishment of the Gorsedd of Cornwall in 1928, and the opening of King Arthur's Great Halls, in Tintagel, in 1934 – towards the incorporation of Arthurianism into mid-twentieth century cultures of the mystical.

### **5.3.1 The Return of the King?: Christianity, Arthurianism, Neo-Paganism and the Gorsedd of Cornwall**

'Also tending to awaken the Cornish self-awareness,' writes Miles Brown (1976: 90), besides Bishop Frere's interest in historical and liturgical matters, 'were the diocesan pilgrimages, which were inaugurated with one to the Oratory of St Piran, in the sands near Perranporth, in 1924' [see figure 5.18 which, despite its poor quality,

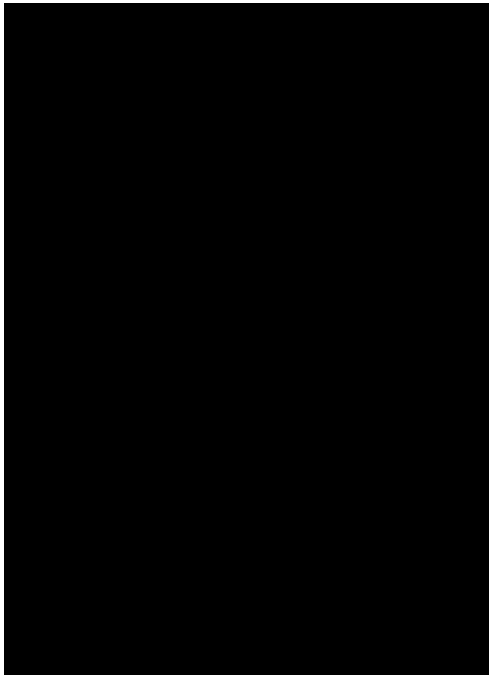


Figure 5.19 [above]: **Oil *P*ainting of  
St Piran's Old Church,  
date unknown**

Figure 5.18 [below]: **Diocesan  
Pilgrimage to St Piran's Oratory  
[Frere in centre left], 1926**

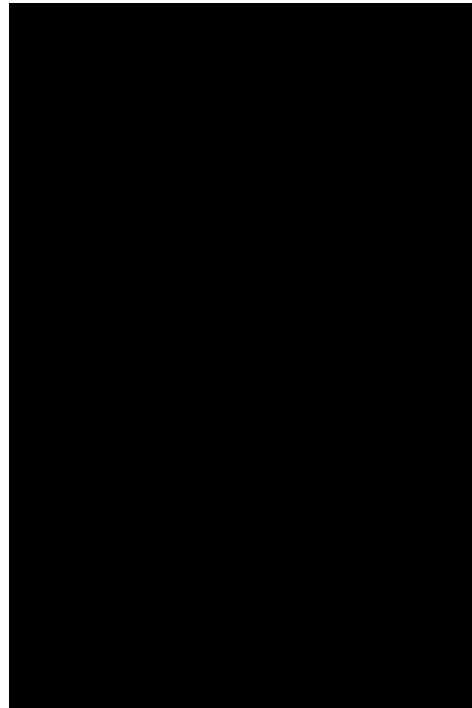
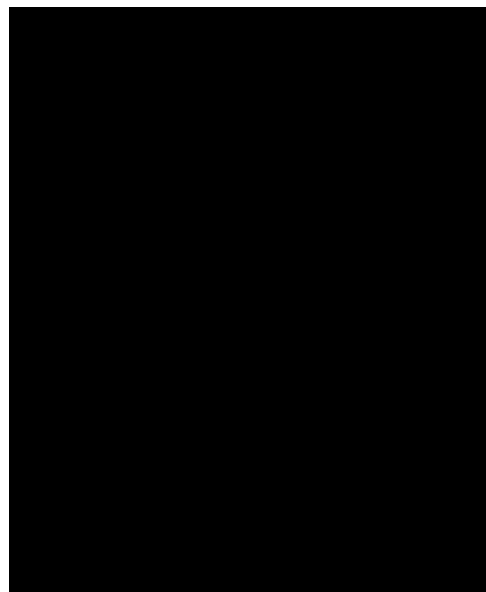


Figure 5.21 [above]: **St Piran's  
Oratory under cover, 1922**

Figure 5.20 [below]: **Excavations at  
St Piran's Oratory, 1910**



illustrates the central importance of Frere to the pilgrimage]. The Oratory was abandoned to the encroaching sand dunes some time between around the tenth century, when St Piran's old church, as it is now known, was built on the other side of a small stream from the Oratory [see figure 5.19]. The saint's head was kept in a silver casket in the church, and his relics were paraded on a reliquary around the countryside. Initially built to the same plan as the Oratory, St Piran's old church grew becoming a collegiate church by the twelfth century and an important pilgrim centre by the fourteen century, receiving hundreds of pilgrims passing through on their way to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. However, in the late eighteenth century, the canons of Exeter Cathedral deemed the church to be structurally unsafe, whereupon it was largely dismantled, the tower, columns and windows being incorporated into a new church on a sounder inland site. The Oratory, meanwhile, was excavated in 1910 and 1911 [see figure 5.20], then encased in a concrete structure with a glass domed roof, in which state it remains to the present day [see figure 5.21]. It was Frere himself who inaugurated and led the pilgrimage, fully vested, through the sand dunes to the Oratory, where he conducted an open-air service 'as an act of worship and of recognition of the ancient culture remaining in the county' (Miles Brown 1964: 111).

This Anglo-Catholic culture of the pilgrim in mid-twentieth century Diocesan practices was also incorporated into the Old Cornwall movement. Where the Victorian antiquarian and natural history societies organised annual excursions, the FOCS organised an annual summer 'pilgrimage'. In 1927, the FOCS summer pilgrimage passed through the parishes of St Buryan and Paul, stopping at two churches and the stone circle of Boscawen-Ûn along the way. At the latter, Jenner – having donned his Breton bardic robes – spoke on the subject of the Gorsedd as an organisation and as a ceremony, and of the re-establishment of *Gorseth Kernow* (Miners 1978). As a pilgrimage, rather than an excursion, the FOCS marked out not only the sites that it visited but also the very act of travelling between them as being in some way mystical (Graham and Murray 1997). The connections between the typical Old Cornwall member and Anglo-Catholicism have already been discussed; this section focuses on the figure of the Bard, and its connections to Anglo-Catholicism, Arthurianism and neo-Paganism. It is the argument here that there was

a symbiotic relationship between the typical Old Cornwall member and the Bard where, indeed, the two were not in fact one and the same.

On 6 August 1928, the *South Wales Echo* carried a report on the Gorsedd of Wales which, that year, was held as part of the Eisteddfod in Treorchy, in the Rhondda valleys of south-east Wales<sup>35</sup>. The report follows Iolo Morganwg in dating the Gorsedd back to Prydain, son of Aedd the Great, a pre-Christian king of Wales who brought the entire island of Britain under his rule. Indeed, Prydain was said to have named Britain after himself. In its present form, the report continued, the Gorsedd dated back to Owain, son of Maxen Wledig and, according to a triad, one of the chief officers of the island of Britain in the late fourth century. The ceremonial proclamation of *Y gwir yn erbyn y byd* [‘The truth against the world’] is ascribed to Owain. The ceremony was reworked in the eleventh century under Gruffyd ap Cynan, Prince of North Wales, ‘according to the custom of the feats of King Arthur’<sup>36</sup>; and then recodified under Queen Elizabeth I after an appeal by Welsh nobles, who believed that too many bards were falsely claiming the hereditary bardic privileges of exemption from taxation, and the right to the hospitality of other nobles. This, then, is the historical narrative that underpinned the Gorsedd of Cornwall into the mid-twentieth century.

By invitation, the FOCS had nominated eight of its members to be initiated into the Gorsedd of Wales at the Eisteddfod in Treorchy the following day. The new Bards, with their Bardic names [Welsh spelling], were Morton Nance [*Mordon*], Annie Pool [*Merch Piala*], Canon James Sims Carah [*Gwas Crowan*], Dr Joseph Hambly Rowe [*Tolsethan*], A. M. Bluett [*Gwreichionen Few*] – editor of the *West Briton*, Reverend G. H. Doble [*Gwas Gwendron*], Trelawney Roberts [*Gonador Abell*] and W. D. Watson [*Tirfab*]. Watson then addressed the Gorsedd in Cornish and Welsh: ‘Speaking in his Cymric tongue,’ reported the *Western Mail* of Cardiff<sup>37</sup>, ‘he said they in Cornwall were children of the British race, and longed for a closer union with the people of Wales, whom he described as the leaders of the Ancient Britons and

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<sup>35</sup> D.I.M. (1928) untitled newspaper cutting, *South Wales Echo*, 6 August, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1

<sup>36</sup> D.I.M., untitled newspaper cutting, p.13

the inspired interpreters of their race.’ The new Bards – along with Jenner and his wife, Kitty Lee, who was also already a Bard of the Gorsedd of Wales [as *Morvoren*] – became the core of the Gorsedd of Cornwall: Jenner was to be Grand Bard, Morton Nance was to be his deputy, and Doble was to be the treasurer; the annual subscription being set at five shillings.

The FOCS (1928: 33) described the Gorsedd of Cornwall as the ‘outstanding event of this year’, adding that it was ‘safe to say that but for the Old Cornwall movement, there would have been no Gorsedd.’ Although the FOCS conceded that the Gorsedd had a wider significance than that of the Old Cornwall movement, it also claimed the Gorsedd as very much an affair of its own: Jenner, it pointed out, was Grand Bard of the Gorsedd and President of the FOCS; Q was initiated as a Bard at the first Gorsedd, and was also a member of the FOCS council. In a meeting on 25 August, at the Jenner residence in Hayle, the council had considered 12 names for initiation as Bards at the Gorsedd. The names included those of Q, Hamilton-Jenkin, Henderson and Reverend Canon Thomas Taylor. In 1929, the Gorsedd asked the Redruth and Camborne OCSs to make the local arrangements for the ceremony that was held on Carn Brea, the natural hilltop rocky outcrop that stands between the two towns (Miners 1978). Similarly, in 1931, the Gorsedd asked the Penzance OCS to help make local arrangements for the Gorsedd, and to notify other OCSs of the ceremony. Ever since, the arrangements for the Gorsedd have almost always entrusted to the local OCS.

The connections between the FOCS and the Gorsedd extended beyond the organisation of the annual open Gorsedd ceremony: At the ceremony itself, the inner circle of Bards stood within the outer circle of Old Cornwall members carrying banners that represented, having been made by, their local OCS (Laws 1948) [see figure 5.22]. At a council meeting in 1932, it was suggested that *Old Cornwall* should be made the official magazine of the Gorsedd of Cornwall. Furthermore, the

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<sup>37</sup> Ap Idanfryn (1928) untitled newspaper cutting, *Western Mail*, no date, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.14



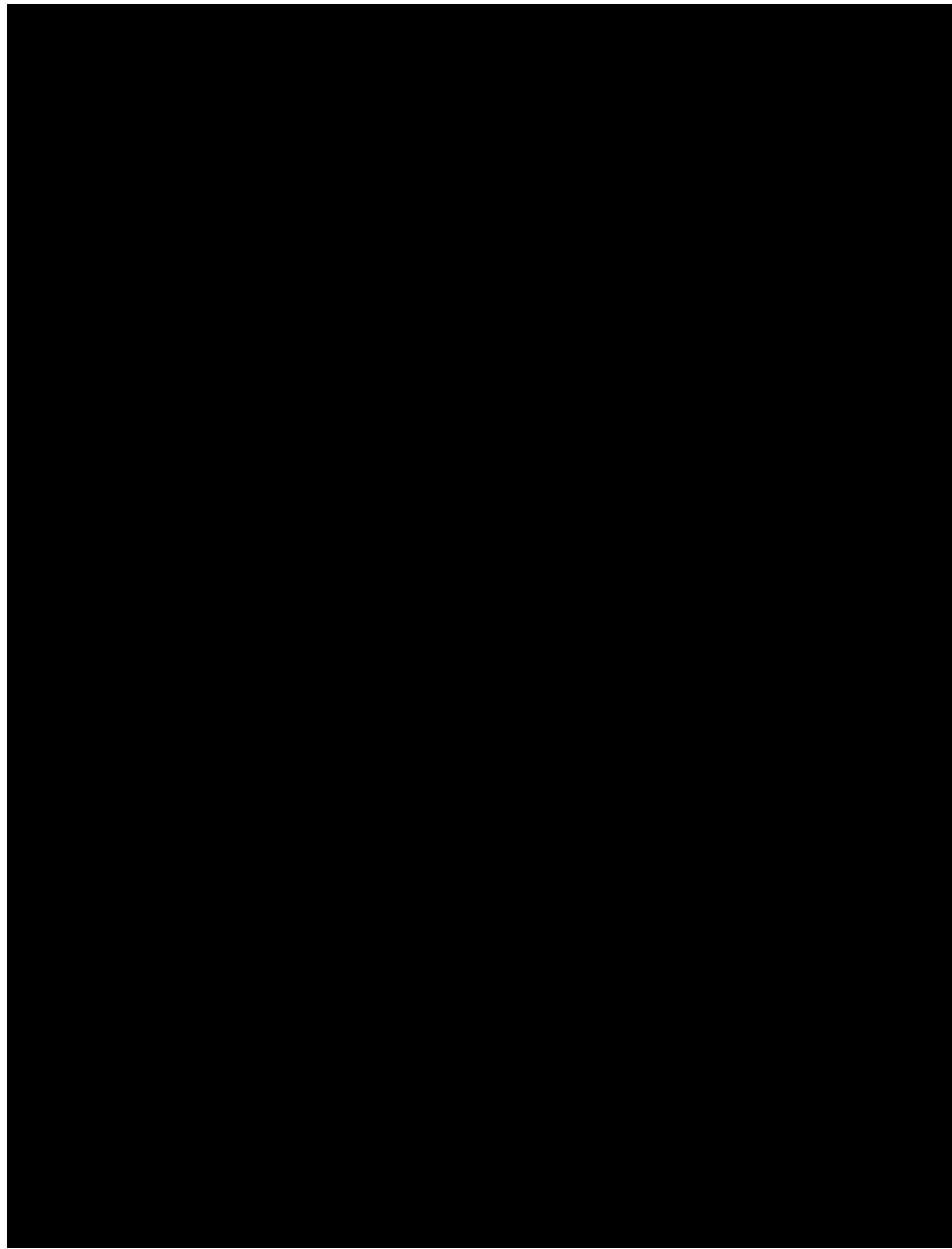


Figure 5.22: **The Gorsedd of Cornwall, Boscawen-Ûn, 1928**

Gorsedd was explicitly marked out as Celtic. For the FOCS (1938: 157), the modern-day Gorseddau of Wales, Brittany and Cornwall were established ‘as a focus of patriotic feeling in each country’ and, as such, formed the ‘closest link of all’ between the three Brythonic Celtic nations. However, in a paper that he presented to the RIC and that, in turn, was reported by the *Western Morning News*, F. B. Cargeege [*Tan Dyvarow*] conceded that Gorsedd of Cornwall’s task was ‘immeasurably greater’ than that of the other five Celtic nations, ‘for there is a wide gulf between the spirit of the Gorsedd and the mass of our people... Their indifference,’ he continued<sup>38</sup>, ‘is but a reflection of the spirit of modern civilization with its ruthless scientific standards, artificial amusements, and mass suggestion, which threatens with destruction all we hold dear in Cornwall.’

The constitution of the Gorsedd of Cornwall was agreed at a meeting in the Mayor’s Parlour, Penzance, on 21 September 1928, according to which the degree of Bard would be conferred upon such people as did meritorious work in one of three fields: the Cornish language and dialect; Cornish history, antiquities, traditions and social customs; and ‘other work for the preservation, fostering [and] promoting of the Celtic Spirit in Cornwall’<sup>39</sup>. Jenner (1928a: 11) was concerned that the Gorsedd should operate as ‘the medium between academic scholarship and popular culture,’ and that its activities should not be confined to ‘pageantry and ritual only’ but should serve as ‘something much more serious and beneficial.’ Indeed, there was an ongoing concern to establish the Gorsedd as a central aspect of popular Cornishness: at the 1935 AGM, Herbert Thomas [*Colonnek*], one of those who were made Bards at the Gorsedd of Cornwall in 1928, argued that the Gorsedd should promote ‘real’ Cornish contributions to present-day life above the unearthing of the ancient Celtic lore and spirit of Cornwall (Miners 1978). ‘Celtic’, he argued, was at once too narrow and too vague a term, though one that was redolent with class interest. Morton Nance, who had acceded to the position of Grand Bard following Jenner’s death the previous year, took this as a criticism of his leadership and resigned his position, though only for a matter of minutes until the passing of a vote of

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<sup>38</sup> Anon. (1935) untitled newspaper cutting, *Western Morning News*, 17 June, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.109

confidence<sup>40</sup>. Likewise, in a letter that was read to a 1941 meeting, Henry Trefusis [*Map Mor*] wrote: ‘if we are to grant the honour to anyone who gives a lecture to an “Old Cornwall” Society, there is no knowing where one will stop’<sup>41</sup>.

Similar debates arose around the Gorsedd ceremony itself. Jenner, on the FOCS pilgrimage in 1928, effectively became a Bard upon his entering Boscawen-Ûn and donning his bardic robes. There was a certain controlled spatiality to the body of the Bard, whereby the Bard could only become a Bard at and around ancient monuments, and during the Gorsedd ceremony. Furthermore, ‘to refute the allegation of bogus antiquarianism’, the Gorsedd ‘rejected the style of Druid’ (Pool and Thomas 1959: 130); all of its members, including ‘all the leading archaeologists of Cornwall’, were made Bards. However, at a 1936 council meeting, Ashley Rowe [*Menhyrion*] argued that Bards should not just attend the annual Gorsedd ceremony, but should also be seen to work for Cornwall as ‘Historians of the people’<sup>42</sup>. ‘The proceedings of the Gorsedd are long,’ reported one newspaper correspondent, whose article survives as a cutting in the Gorsedd of Cornwall minute book<sup>43</sup>, ‘and are entertaining only to those with an appreciation of Welsh oratory and verse-making.’

This debate over Bards and Druids was one dimension of wider debates over Celticism, over different and potentially contradictory versions of the Celtic. The twenty-first Gorsedd was held around ‘a great Celtic Cromlech’ in the parish of Treslothan, south of Camborne, being as it was a ‘great memorial of Cornwall’s Celtic past’<sup>44</sup>; and, as the 1932 Gorsedd programme notes explained, the title of Bard was only conferred ‘in recognition of some unusual manifestation of the Celtic

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<sup>39</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1928), untitled minutes of meeting held in Cox’s Café, Cardiff, 7 August, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.34

<sup>40</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1935), untitled minutes of Annual General Meeting, 30 August, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1

<sup>41</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1941) untitled minutes of meeting, 19 July, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.182

<sup>42</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1936) untitled minutes of meeting, 6 June, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.125

<sup>43</sup> Anon. (undated) untitled newspaper cutting, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.18

<sup>44</sup> Laws, P. (1948) ‘The Coming of Age of the Bards of Cornwall’, unknown newspaper cutting, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/2/2

Spirit, not necessarily in literature or in the study of the Cornish Language'<sup>45</sup>. As Payton (1996a) observes, the ceremony incorporated elements of Christianity and Arthurianism, as well as having certain resonances with post-war neo-Paganism. Bards swore allegiance to 'Cornwall, our Motherland' upon a representation of Excalibur, but sung 'Old Land of our Fathers', setting up a gender division between the Cornish land and the Cornish people. This – along with the formation of a circle, and the Offering ceremony – resonates with neo-Paganism, especially with certain elements of eco-feminist Paganism (Lowerson 1992), and its claims on the Celtic, which are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Thus the Gorsedd, like the Old Cornwall movement with which it was so closely connected, can also be understood as a Christian strategy to engage with, to incorporate and to contain, other such versions of the mystical. The Awen, the symbol of the Gorsedd, represented three rays from Heaven: the power of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, and the goodness of the Holy Spirit (Miners 1978). Iolo Morganwg, the founder of the modern Gorsedd of Wales, wrote the Gorsedd prayer in 1792:

'Grant, O God, Thy protection;  
And in protection, strength;  
And in strength, understanding;  
And in understanding, knowledge;  
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice;  
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it;  
And in that love, the love of all existences;  
And in the love of all existences, the love of God,  
God and all goodness,'

and additional thanks were made to God during the Offering of the Fruits of the Earth. At the outbreak of World War II, Morton Nance told the annual meeting that 'it behoves us more than ever to pray to God for His threefold help. Strength, Wisdom and Love, remembering that the greatest, of these also, is Love; for without

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<sup>45</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1932) *Gorsedd Programme* (unpublished pamphlet, Gorsedd Kernow) in Cornwall Record Office X757/1

Love, never can there be a lasting peace'<sup>46</sup>. Furthermore, Jenner (1928b: 5) thought that 'it would be a good idea for Cornish people who get bardic degrees in future to put themselves under the patronage of Cornish saints in the same way' as he had done in taking *Gwas Myhal* [Servant of St Michael] as his Bardic name, such an evocation of the saints leaning the Gorsedd towards the Anglo-Catholic wing of Christianity.

The Gorsedd ceremony also involved the singing of hymns: *Kernow Agan Mamvro* ['Cornwall Our Motherland'], and *Arta Ef A Dhe* ['King Arthur Shall Return']. This latter, along with the collective ritual assertion of *Nyns yu marrow, Myghtern Arthur, arta ef a dhe* ['King Arthur is not dead, he will come again'], was, for Laws, the high point of the twenty-first Gorsedd. Reporting on the Gorsedd, he wrote:

'The great moment came when the Deputy Grand Bard, Mr. Henry Trefusis, recited in Cornish "Still Arthur watches our shore..." and the reply came from the Bards "King Arthur is not dead." ...Then the Grand Bard, raising on high the great golden sword, cried "Behold the Sword which represents Excaliber [sic], the Sword of King Arthur," and the Bards swore allegiance to it and to be loyal to Cornwall their Motherland'<sup>47</sup>.

Jenner (1928b: 6) even suggested that the name of Boscawen-Ûn might be derived from *Beisgawen* ['The Dwelling of Gawain', Sir Gawain being one of the Knights of the Round Table]. 'But all this,' he admitted, 'may only be a passing fancy.'

For F. E. Halliday (1959: 310), in *A History Of Cornwall*, the post-World War I English tourist 'invasion' of Cornwall had revived a 'stubborn Cornish nationalism', one of the results of which was the 'picturesque' though defensive Gorsedd. 'This second English invasion,' he wrote,

'although only an annual one confined to the main roads and beaches, seems to have revived the stubborn Cornish nationalism, and moved those of the western hundreds in particular to a protest, mainly unconscious, comparable to that of a thousand years before when

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<sup>46</sup> Gorsedd Kernow (1939), untitled minutes of Annual General Meeting, 16 September, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.166

hundreds of Celtic crosses were set up in the newly conquered county from the Land's End to Bodmin Moor.'

Religious ceremony or not, Jenner (1928b) argued the appropriateness of holding the Gorsedd at possibly Pagan prehistoric sites by simply making an analogy between their orientations to the seasons and the starts, and the orientation of churches to the east. However, on the question of whether or not the Gorsedd was a religious ceremony, Morton Nance told the 1941 annual meeting that it was not religious ceremony, 'but one designed to foster the Celtic spirit of Cornwall, yet the most vital part recognised by the Bards was the Gorsedd prayer'<sup>48</sup>. He added that, though a Christian prayer, he believed the Gorsedd prayer to promote universal morals of peace and happiness that, as such, were acceptable to all nations and creeds. Indeed, the Gorsedd sent a message of support to Queen Elizabeth II upon her accession to the throne in 1953, receiving the following telegram in reply: 'THE QUEEN SINCERELY THANKS THE BARDS OF THE CORNISH GORSEDD FOR THEIR KIND AND LOYAL MESSAGE WHICH HER MAJESTY MUCH APPRECIATES'<sup>49</sup>.

### **5.3.2 The Fellowship of the King: Tintagel and the Fount of Chivalry**

In 1934, the annual RCPS excursion visited King Arthur's Great Halls at Tintagel which, in the words of the Society's annual report, the late Frederick Glasscock had had built 'to idealise all that was good and noble in the Arthurian Romances' (RCPS 1934: 38). Glasscock was a self-made millionaire [see figure 5.23], having co-founded Monk and Glass Custard in Clerkenwell, London, with his business partner,

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<sup>47</sup> Laws, 'Coming of Age'

<sup>48</sup> Anon. / Gorsedd Kernow (1941), untitled minutes of Annual General Meeting, 6 November, in *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/1, p.189

<sup>49</sup> H. M. Private Secretary (1953), telegram, 7 June, in Gorsedd Kernow Collection (Cornwall Record Office) X1104/2/3

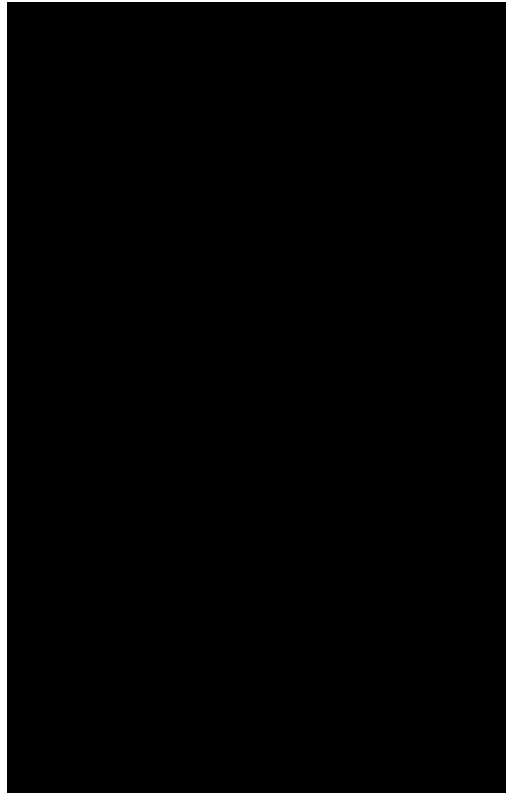


Figure 5.23 [above]: **Frederick Glasscock [1871/2-1934], date unknown**

Figure 5.24 [below]: **King Arthur's Great Halls, Tintagel, 2004**



a Mr Monkhouse – grandfather of the late comedian and television presenter, Bob Monkhouse<sup>50</sup>. The company manufactured confectionary as well as custard, the two founders reputedly inventing the multi-coloured sugar-based sweet decorations known as ‘hundreds and thousands’. Retiring to Tintagel in the 1920s, Glasscock bought Trevena House – which was built by John Douglas Cook, editor of the *Morning Chronicle* and founder-editor of the *Saturday Review*, in the early 1860s [see figure 5.24] – and began the work of converting it into its present form (Hutchinson et al, no date).

Jonathan Howlett (2004: 31), Curriculum Co-ordinator for the Visual and Performing Arts in Adult and Continuing Education at Northbrook College, Worthing, uses the Halls as an example of what he terms the ‘kitsch’ in Cornish visual culture, alongside paintings of the west Cornwall fishing industry dating back to the late nineteenth century, holiday posters and postcards from the twentieth century, and contemporary food and drinks labels. ‘The great power inherent in kitsch,’ he argues, ‘is to reduce genuine sensation and sentiment to a tawdry cheapness and to replace “the subtlety and ambiguity of art with instantly recognisable stereotypes”.’ This argument, Howlett acknowledges, is open to accusations of elitism: ‘The apologists of kitsch defend it on the grounds of its mass availability and democratic accessibility,’ he writes (Howlett 2004: 31). ‘Such a defence is intended to disarm opposition by labelling it “elitist” before debate can be initiated.’ Howlett makes no apologies for his defence of ‘high’ culture, using kitsch to denote works that have wide popular appeal but are considered somehow inadequate by the art-educated elite. This thesis neither aligns itself with the privileging of ‘high’ over ‘low’ art nor, in turn, with an inverted privileging of ‘low’ art over ‘high’. Rather, the argument here is that Howlett’s model of kitsch, while raising some interesting questions regarding the work of visual culture in modern Cornwall, serves to obscure some of the more subtle relationships between King Arthur’s Great Halls as a space and the legendary as a particular version of the mystical.

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<sup>50</sup> By a curiously circuitous coincidence, King Arthur’s Great Halls played host to one of the first televised live National Lottery draws in 1995, presented by Gordon Kennedy and Anthea Turner; several years later, Bob Monkhouse would go on to present the draws.



Glasscock had the walls removed from the front half of the ground floor of Trevena House to serve as an entrance foyer; today, it serves as a gift shop. ‘By taking out the floors and walls dividing the various rooms in the rear part of the house,’ furthermore, ‘he created space for a large hall with sufficient height for an oak-finished barrel vaulted ceiling’ (Hutchinson et al, no date: 8), which became King Arthur’s Hall [see figure 5.25]. At one end of the hall is a dais, upon which stand the solid oak thrones of Arthur and Guinevere. A solid oak Round Table stands in the centre of the hall, the names of the Knights of the Round Table carved into it in gold, and the flags, standards and shields of the Knights hang from the ceiling and along the walls. In 1928, Glasscock commissioned ten oil paintings from William Hatherall, to hang on the walls of the hall [see figure 4.26]. Hatherall had exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of British Artists, and the New Society of Painters, and had illustrated the works of William Blake, Thomas Hardy and J. M. Barrie (Hutchinson et al, no date). However, he was also in the seventy-sixth and final year of his life, and seven of the paintings are unsigned, leading to a suggestion in the official guidebook that he might have died before completing his commission, the outstanding works being finished by an unknown other hand (Hutchinson et al, no date). ‘Undistinguished in colour and technique,’ as Whitaker (1990: 315) describes them, ‘they present static tableaux of familiar subjects such as the acquisition of Excalibur, Galahad’s arrival at court, Launcelot’s failure at the Perilous chapel, his rescue of the condemned Queen, the last battle and the departure for Avalon.’

In 1929, building began on an extension to the rear of Trevena House. Seen from the outside, the extension is unprepossessing enough: a long, single-storey, flat-roofed building, constructed of local Tintagel stone, stained brown by iron deposits in the groundwater, and with a series of small windows, high up in the walls (Sword in the Stone Ltd., no date: 3). The extension, which became the Hall of Chivalry, was seemingly always intended to be viewed exclusively from the inside. From King Arthur’s Hall, one enters a gallery, which circumvents the Hall of Chivalry on all four sides [see figure 5.27]. Six arches, three down each of the two long sides of the gallery, lead into the Hall of Chivalry itself [see figure 5.28]. The walls and floor of the Hall of Chivalry are built from greenish-grey granite, quarried

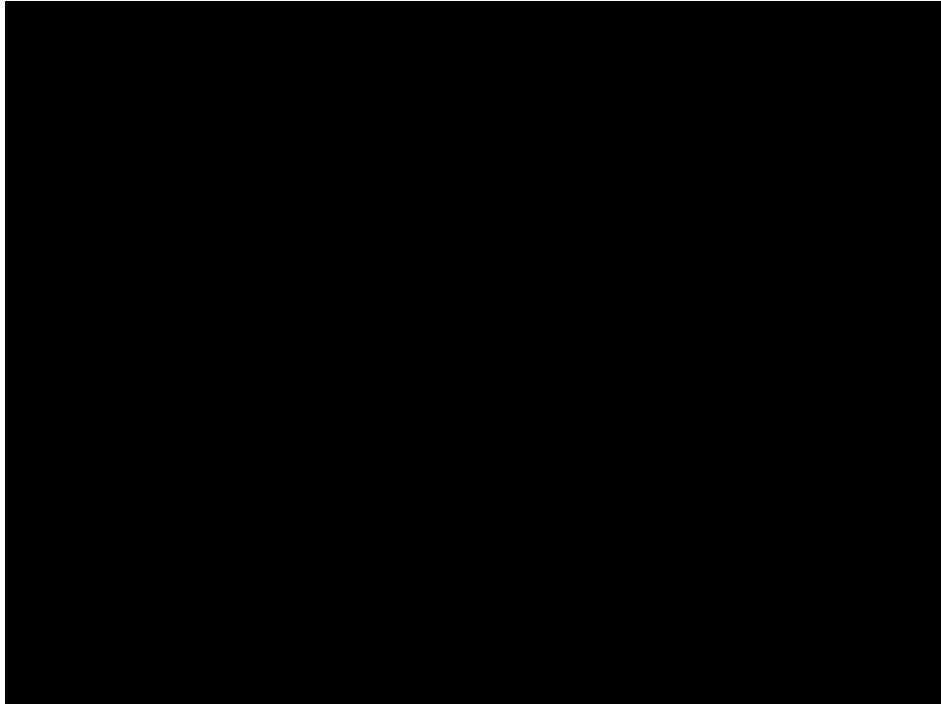


Figure 5.25 [above]: **King Arthur's Hall, 2003**

Figure 5.26 [below]: **William Hatherall, *The Rescue of Queen Guinevere*, 1928**

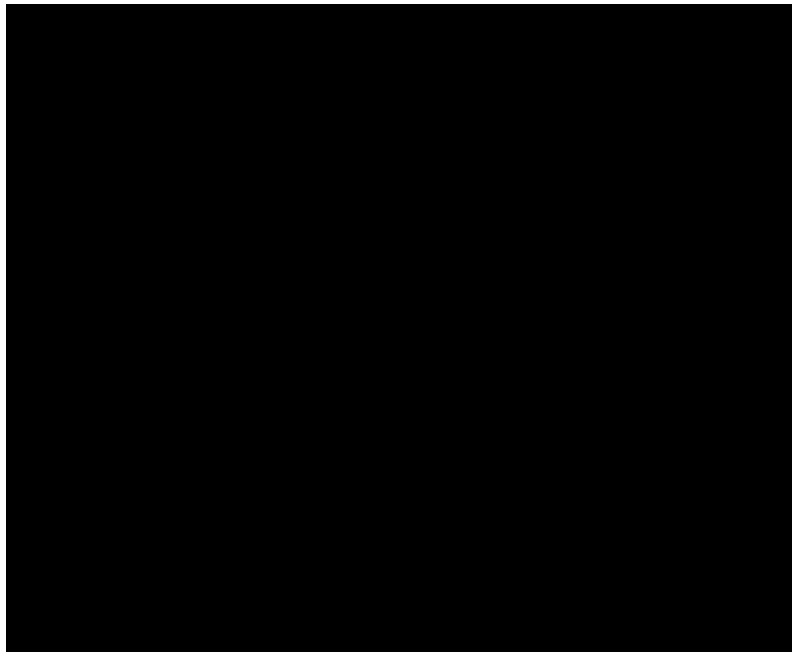
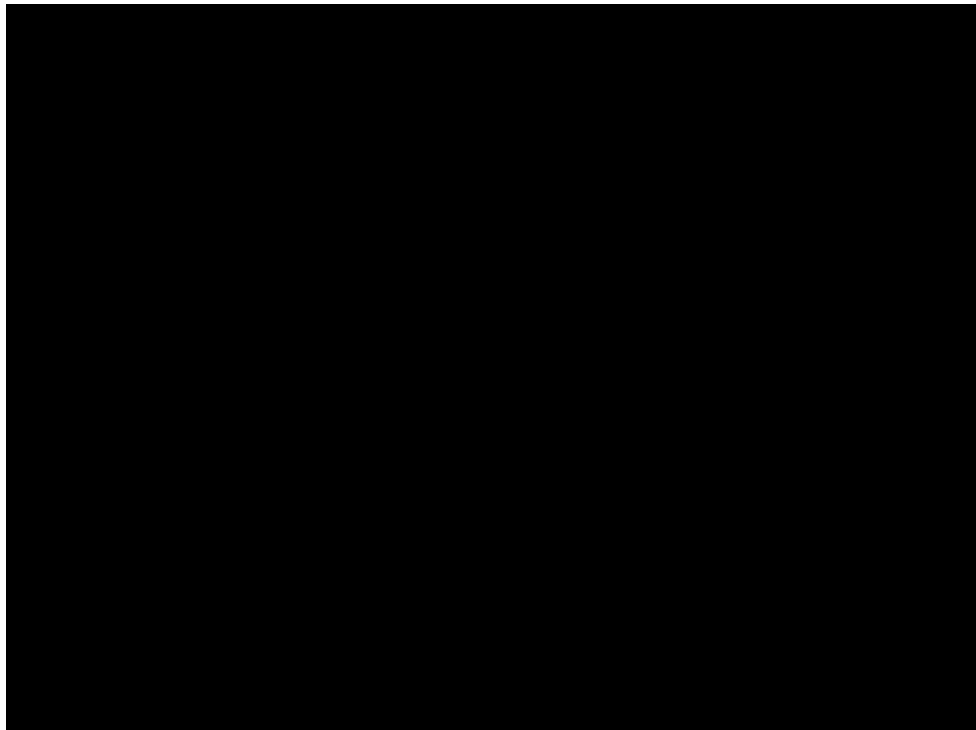




Figure 5.27 [above]: **The Gallery, King Arthur's Great Halls, 2004**

Figure 5.28 [below]: **Hall of Chivalry, King Arthur's Great Halls, 2003**



in Polyphant, near Launceston, with a Round Table design set into the floor in red mottled porphyry, and a Cross of the Knights in white elvan (Whitaker 1990; Sword in the Stone Ltd., no date). The roof, like that of the gallery, is oak panelled. There are two more Round Tables, an oak table at the end nearest to the original building, and a granite table at the opposite end of the Hall. Beyond this table is the throne of Arthur and Guinevere, standing on a granite dais and beneath a granite canopy, weighing almost six tons and supported by nine granite pillars, each one of a distinctive Cornish stone. Atop the canopy is an uncut stone block, upon which is a sword in an iron anvil.

‘What are the King Arthur’s Halls?’ asks the official guide book (Hutchinson et al, no date: 15). ‘A church? A monument? A folly? A museum? No – just one man’s dream! That apart, they are also a geological museum for the granite industry that thrived throughout the county of Cornwall up to the 1930s.’ As the report of the RCPS annual excursion observes, ‘only Cornish building and decorative stones were employed in the construction of the Hall, and practically all the different varieties of granite, elvan, porphyry, catacluse, polyphant, quartz, etc. found in the County are represented’ (RCPS 1934: 38). Moreover, some 72 granite shields are set into the walls of the Hall of Chivalry, and a further 53 into those of the surrounding gallery, representing over 50 Cornish quarries. ‘All the shields were cut, set and polished from blocks brought to the Halls and raised by derricks into position,’ Hutchinson et al (no date: 15) continue. ‘It is amazing to see not only the different colours but also the different consistencies. The 72 shields on both sides of the Hall range in colour from jet black, through various greys and pinks, to almost snow white.’ Even the labour was sourced, as far as was possible, in Cornwall, though this should not imply that Glasscock was anything other than a hard taskmaster: ‘An exacting employer of the builders and stonemasons,’ as the guidebook describes him (Hutchinson et al, no date: 6), ‘Glasscock hired and fired with great rapidity to ensure that his Hall was built exactly to his wishes and timescale.’

To complete the Hall of Chivalry, Glasscock commissioned Veronica Whall to design and build two sets of triptych windows, one set for either end of the Hall [see figures 5.29, 5.30 and 5.31]. Her father, Christopher Whall, was a teacher, designer and pioneer

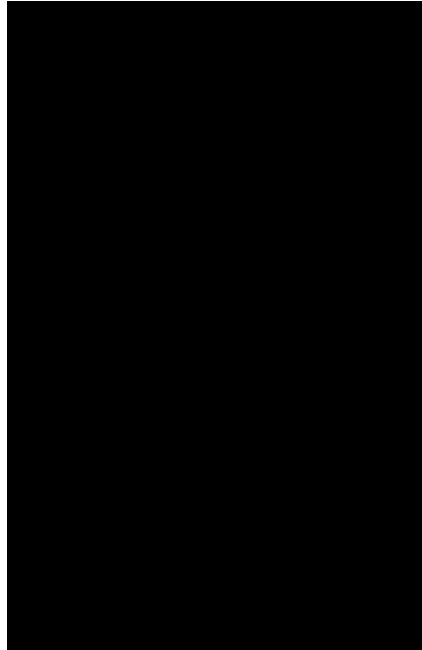


Figure 5.29 [above left]: **Veronica Whall [1887-1967], date unknown**

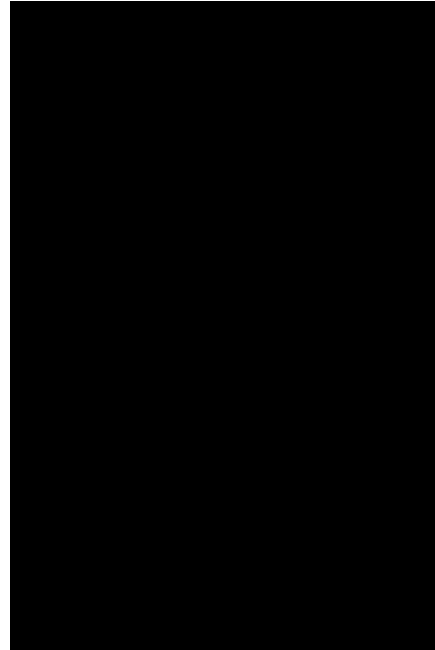
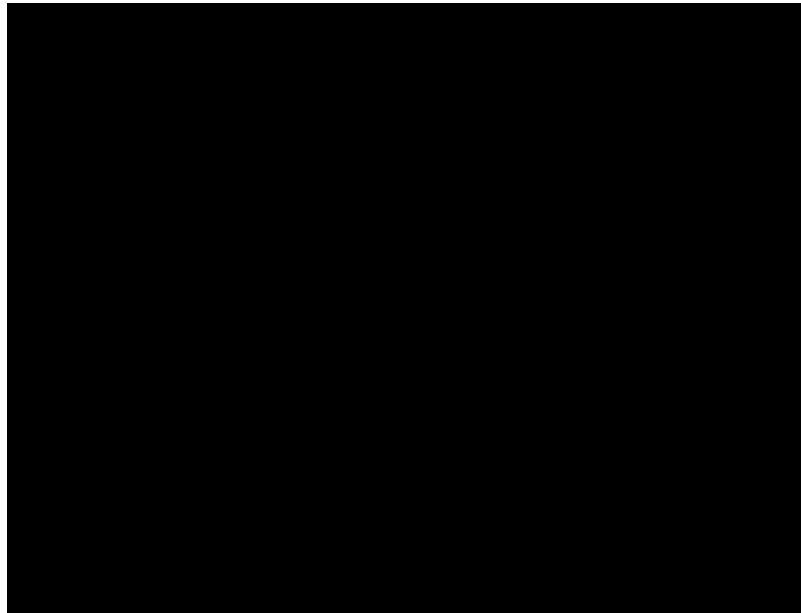


Figure 5.30 [above right]: **Triptych Window [Dark], date unknown**

Figure 5.31 [below]: **Triptych Windows [Light], date unknown**



of the Arts and Crafts Movement in stained glass, whose finest work is still to be seen in the Chapter House at Gloucester Cathedral (Whitaker 1990; Hutchinson et al, no date). Born in 1887, Veronica studied the art of stained glass under her father – helping him in his workshop in Hammersmith, London, during the First World War – as well as under William Morris. In 1920, father and daughter undertook the joint commission of the east window at Leicester Cathedral, becoming formal business partners in Whall and Whall Ltd. in 1922. Christopher Whall died in 1924, whereupon Veronica’s elder brother, who was also named Christopher, joined the company in his father’s stead. Glasscock was so pleased with the triptychs that he commissioned Whall to design and build a further 67 windows, 49 for the gallery and 18 for the Hall of Chivalry itself. According to the guidebook (Hutchinson et al, no date), Glasscock attempted to renege on the commission, refusing to pay Whall in full for her work. The case was even due to be heard before the High Court, but it was settled before any court appearances were made.

In contrast to Whitaker’s assessment of Hatherall’s oil paintings as ‘Undistinguished in colour and technique,’ the stained glass windows are, for her, the redeeming feature of King Arthur’s Great Halls when considered as a work of art. The colour schemes of the windows match those of the stonework of the Hall of Chivalry, being based on a symbolic movement from darkness into light and, correspondingly, from the worldly into the spiritual: the end of the Hall of Chivalry nearest to the original building is the dark end, while that end occupied by the granite throne is the light. ‘At the dark, secular south end,’ writes Whitaker (1990: 314-5),

‘the left light shows Arthur in purple hose and gown withdrawing Excalibur<sup>51</sup>. Dark cypresses, buff towers, tombstones, cliffs and a pale sky are landscape elements that seem to prophesy the ultimate failure of worldly glory. The central light’s theme is the struggle between good and evil. From his cave Merlin (Wisdom) surveys the land, seeing on his right the Lady of the Lake whose gown symbolises Faith. With her feet in purifying water, she

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<sup>51</sup> In some versions of the Arthurian legends, the sword that the young Arthur pulled from the stone, thereby proving himself to be the rightful King of Britain, does not actually have a name. When this sword later broke in battle, Arthur obtained – and, mortally wounded, ordered the return of – Excalibur

flourishes the cross-shaped Excalibur. On the left Morgause in blood-coloured gown and purple cloak cradles the infant Mordred, child of incest and Arthur's nemesis. The right hand light depicts the knights' departure on the Grail Quest. Launcelot's azure shield and the Queen's blue gown imply amorous fidelity. We recall Malory's verdict on the Queen – she was a true lover and therefore she had a good end.'

'At the opposite end,' she continues (Whitaker 1990: 315),

'the windows create an apocalyptic effect with their "gold pink" glass. Here the Grail Quest is pursued and completed. On the left Galahad and Dindrane, Perceval's sister, board the Ship of Solomon under a fiery sky. The central scene shows the Grail hovering above Galahad while Perceval and the Damsel mime adoration and joy. Shimmering pink, bright green and white contribute a radiance which is enhanced by the "fiery tongues" effect about the knight's head. Pools of light glisten on the Romanesque chapel's stone steps. The final window is both retrospective and prophetic. Arthur, robed in scarlet, magenta and gold, knights Launcelot but Guinevere, whose champion he is to be, turns aside her head in an act that foreshadows her eventual rejection of physical love. Roundels contain the bleeding spear and blood-red poppies, a symbol of the Great War.'

The 18 windows in the Hall of Chivalry, nine along each of the two long sides of the hall, represent one of the principal knightly virtues. They are arranged so that the more worldly virtues – Obedience, Perseverance, Strength, Justice, Mercy – are at the dark end of the Hall, and the more spiritual virtues – Love, Purity, Faith, Loyalty, Chivalry, Truth – are at the light end; the colours gradually move from blue, green and silver to red and gold, both within each window and from one window to the next (Whitaker 1990; Hutchinson et al, no date; *Sword in the Stone* Ltd., no date). The 49 gallery windows, meanwhile, each depict an heraldic device of one of the Knights of the Round Table, or a symbol of one of their chivalric ideals.

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from the Lady in the Lake. In other versions, the sword in the stone is Excalibur, which Arthur later breaks and casts away, before Merlin sends him to retrieve it, miraculously remade, from the Lake.

The Hall of Chivalry opened to the public on Monday 5 June 1933, the feast of Pentecost. According to the guidebook, the day ‘dawned fine and clear with hundreds of people descending on Tintagel to witness and participate in the grand opening ceremony of the Hall’ (Hutchinson et al, no date: 10). It goes on to describe the day thus:

‘Amidst hymns and Bible readings, the robed founder pronounced that his Hall had been built to “perpetuate the immortal memory of Arthur, King of Britain, and to enable the Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur to make better known the ideals of chivalry which had always been associated with the name of Arthur. There are many evil things in the world today – the old order changeth, yielding to the new, and God fulfils Himself in many ways”.’

The Henry Jenner collection, at the RIC, includes an invitation card to the opening ceremony, along with a covering letter signed by Miss Y. N. Birch, Glasscock’s secretary, *per pro* a ‘J. T.’, Registrar of the Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur, and dated 11 November 1932. In the letter, Jenner is invited, ‘as an official of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies,’ to attend the opening ceremony of ‘a memorial for all time to King Arthur, whom all Cornish people delight to honour,’ in order that he might ‘possibly give an official recognition to the effort we are making’<sup>52</sup>. The letter reveals something of the power relationships of mid-twentieth century Cornwall that, for Glasscock, the FOCS as a society, and Jenner as an individual, could thus lend cultural legitimacy to his project, and normalise it.

In the above description of the grand opening ceremony, one can also find the answer to the question of why Glasscock undertook to have King Arthur’s Great Halls built. Glasscock, it emerges, was ‘an ardent Freemason, being a member of three Lodges in the London area before coming to Cornwall. Here he joined the Lodge at Launceston,’ where ‘he was a co-Founder of a Chapter’ (Hutchinson et al, no date: 7). Furthermore, Glasscock’s library – which is now on display in glass-fronted cabinets at the dark end

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<sup>52</sup> J. T. (1932) unpublished letter to Henry Jenner, 11 November, in Jenner Collection (Courtney Library, Royal Institution of Cornwall) box 9: packet 10: bundle 8



of the Hall of Chivalry – includes not only editions of the most important Arthurian texts by the likes of Chrétien de Troyes, Sir Thomas Malory and Wolfram von Eszenbach, but also works on historical secret societies such as the Knights Templar, the Rosicrucians and the Freemasons themselves. While Freemasonry is not a religion – indeed, Freemasonry forbids the discussion of religious matters at meetings – yet its members are required to believe in a Supreme Being, and the Bible [known, in Freemasonry, as ‘the Volume of the Sacred Law’] stands open at every meeting. Hutton (1999: 54) argues that Freemasonry was thus concerned with the reproduction of a certain version of social order through ‘a preoccupation with constitutions, laws, and governance, and a cast of thought very clearly associated with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment.’ This preoccupation, he continues (Hutton 1999: 54), ‘pitted Freemasonry against all religious “enthusiasm” and any identification of the state with a particular denomination.’ In turn, then, it emerges that the Halls were intended to be the headquarters of an international Arthurian society based on supposedly universal moral principles, rituals and structures similar to those of Freemasonry.

The Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table of King Arthur was founded in 1927, with membership having reached some 17,000 by the early 1930s (Hutchinson et al, no date). Glasscock worked hard at the Fellowship, creating chapters and branches both in the UK and abroad, in New South Wales, Australia, in Boston, Massachusetts, and in eastern Canada. ‘One very telling sign of the way in which Masonic forms had taken hold of the imagination of British males,’ for Hutton (1999: 58), ‘was the way in which they were reproduced in other sorts of association and confraternity from the late eighteenth century onward.’ Hutton cites the example of the chapter-and-branch structure of early trades unions; the example of the Fellowship – and, indeed, of the FOCS – suggests that these structures continued into the mid-twentieth century. Four women were employed at the Halls to process membership applications, and to attend to the day-to-day administration of the Fellowship. The Morrab Library, in Penzance, holds a copy of the Fellowship handbook – a gift, intriguingly, of one ‘R. Morton Nance Esq.’ in 1940. After a probationary period of one year at the level of ‘Pilgrim’, a member of the Fellowship could ask to be made a Knight of the Round Table, an

existing Knight having to vouch for them as being worthy of Knighthood. During the knighting ceremony, the would-be Knight had to promise, among other things, to ‘love God and men and noble deeds, and to preserve the honour and purity of all,’ to ‘be loyal to the King,’ to ‘protect the poor and distressed, and to exert his strength and power to the service of others, especially for those who are weak and oppressed, and therefore cannot help or defend themselves,’ and to ‘live in Fellowship with all.’ Younger members were admitted as a ‘Searcher’, being told that, as a condition of their membership, ‘they must search for that which is good, and that they must try to find God,’ and that ‘they will never find God unless they are good, and they must never do anything that they think He would not like them to do.’

In 1934, the year after the grand opening ceremony of King Arthur’s Great Halls, Glasscock left Tintagel with his wife and his secretary, sailing to the USA on a lecture tour and recruitment drive. The three set sail from Boston on the return journey in mid-July, aboard *Scythia*, the Cunard liner (Hutchinson et al, no date). On 26 July 1934, still some days west of Britain, Glasscock died of a heart attack, aged 63, and was buried at sea. His death was kept secret for a month; it was not until late August that his wife and secretary returned to Tintagel, just a week in advance of the RCPS’s annual excursion, and in some doubt as to the future of both the Halls and the Fellowship. The RCPS suggested a future for the Halls as a tourist attraction, with visitors being attracted both by the Arthuriana and by the cult of personality around Glasscock himself: ‘This Hall should provide a fitting memorial to its founder and designer,’ read the annual report (RCPS 1934: 38), ‘and will probably be visited in the future by many thousands of those interested in the Arthurian Romances.’ But on 21 November 1936, at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Fellowship, the Council disassociated itself from the President, an unnamed gentleman, and voted to bring an end to the Fellowship and to hand ownership of the Halls, library, regalia and all artefacts back to Mrs Glasscock, who would take over on 1 January 1937 (Hutchinson et al, no date). For the next 15 years, the Halls were only open for public viewing by prior appointment; in 1952, Mrs Glasscock sold the Halls to the Freemasons of Tintagel, who still own and continue to use them as their meeting hall to this day.

## 5.4 'Brethren of the Common Table': Anglo-Catholicism and Christian Socialism

Early in 1933, Bernard Walke [see figure 5.32] was committed to the sanatorium at Tehidy, near Redruth, with tuberculosis. Fearing the worst, he decided to write a memoir of his years as vicar of St Hilary [see figure 5.33]. This memoir was published, under the title of *Twenty Years at St Hilary*, in 1935, by which time Walke had recovered sufficiently to be able to return to his pastoral duties. In one particularly interesting passage in the book, Walke discusses his understanding of the religious history of Cornwall: 'I had been brought up in the Catholic tradition,' he wrote (Walke 2002 [1935]: 34),

'my grandfather and father being among the first of the Tractarians to adopt a Catholic form of worship, and was convinced that the Catholic movement in the Church of England, which began in the rediscovery of the Church as a divine institution, could have no other end but a corporate union with the Apostolic See of Rome. Outside that unity there could be no assurance of the preservation of the faith and morals of the Christian revelation. I was also persuaded that the religious instinct of the Cornish people would never find satisfaction apart from the teaching and worship of the Catholic Faith; as the last of the English people to forsake the old religion they would be the first to the old ways.'

'The religious revolution of the sixteenth century had robbed them of their ancient faith,' he continued (Walke 2002: 34),

'broken down their images, scattered their relics and left them as a people destitute of religion. The new Prayer Book, which was intended to take the place of the Missal and their book of prayers, was in an unknown tongue. They could "tell" their Pater Noster, Ave Maria and Credo and were familiar with the Latin of the Mass, but, seeing their native tongue was Cornish, the sonorous language of Cranmer's prayers had no meaning for them. In the

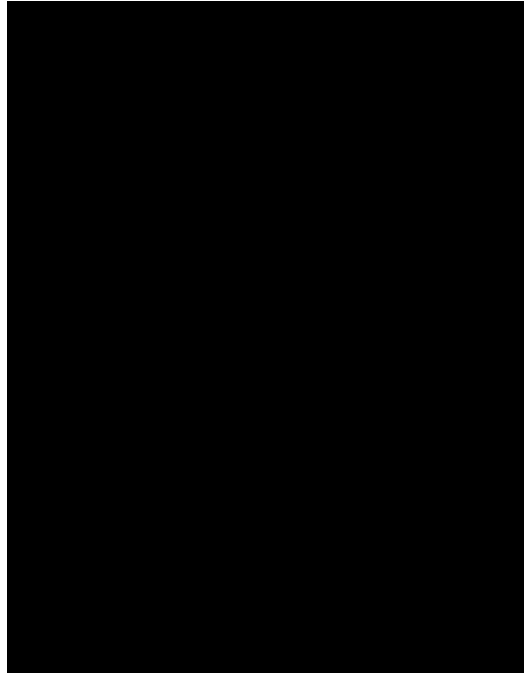


Figure 5.32 [above]: **Bernard Walke, Vicar of St Hilary 1912-1936**  
from *Twenty Years at St Hilary*, 2002

Figure 5.33 [below]: **St Hilary Church, before the Protestant attacks of 1932**



petition for the restoration of the Faith they pleaded for “the return of the simplest service of the Mass” on the grounds that the new service of Morning Prayer was like a Christmas Play.’

Walke also believed in sensory religious experience. ‘The Catholic Church,’ he wrote (Walke 2002: 17), ‘has always taught that the world apprehended by our senses is capable of bringing us into relationship with another world,’ without recourse to the extrasensory. Despite mid-twentieth century attempts to pursue a more inclusive version of the mystical, Walke’s years at St Hilary provide evidence of continuing tensions between a syncretic Anglo-Catholicism and other versions of the mystical.

On John Wesley and Methodism, meanwhile, Walke (2002: 34-5) wrote:

‘When John Wesley came to visit this county nearly two hundred years later, he found the people wild and uncouth, given to drunkenness and fighting, but with a hunger for God. On his first visit he was stoned and driven out of their villages; but he came again and again until he won them for God, and Cornwall was once more, if not a land of saints, a land where the people were in deadly earnest in their search for God. The moorland chapels bear witness how widespread was this religious revival in Cornwall, and many family journals are records of its reality. But by its very nature it was incapable of permanence; like a moorland fire it must burn itself out by its intensity. Nonconformity in Cornwall no longer produced the elements which were responsible for the fervour of its early days; social activity and pulpit oratory had taken the place of conversion and personal experience of the love of Jesus. The preachers themselves, versed in modern psychology, had learnt to distrust many of the old methods of conversion; class meetings and revivals had given way to Wesley guilds and tea drinkings. As a religious factor Nonconformity no longer supplied the needs of a naturally religious people, nor could it be claimed that the Church of England had taken its place.’

The Oxford Movement, for Walke (2002: 35), ‘had resulted in a quickening of the life of the Church,’ but

‘Morning Prayer remained installed as the chief act of Sunday worship. Now Morning Prayer, however devoutly rendered, is not the type of service to kindle the faith or stir the emotions of a Celtic people who have known Catholicism and have passed through the fire of revivalism. The band of the Salvation Army and the ritual of the Mass demand attention, but Morning Prayer, lacking the violence of the one and the mystery of the other, makes no appeal either to the emotions or to the intelligence.’

To this end, Walke introduced some very self-consciously Catholic religious practices into Anglican life in the parish of St Hilary – not only the replacement of Morning Prayer with Mass, but also the hearing of confessions, the service of Benediction, and the veneration of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Indeed, finding the two side chapels of St Hilary Church used only for storage, Walke cleared them out and rededicated them – the one to the Sacred Heart, and the other to Our Lady – and added altar-pieces to the church including depicting, among other scenes, the Visitation, and the figures of St Francis and St Joan.

Walke was also close friends with Dod and Ernest Procter, A. J. Munnings, and Laura and Harold Knight, all of whom were central figures in the Lamorna artists’ colony. Indeed, at Walke’s request, the Procters contributed paintings of religious scenes to St Hilary Church. ‘Being a painter was, and arguably never is, only about putting brush to canvas. It also,’ as Lübbren (2001: 17) acknowledges,

‘involves social networks which reinforce and support the individual’s sense of purpose as well as the activities and routines associated with cultural production. Artists’ colonies served as mutual support groups and social enclaves in places that were unused to artists, and they facilitated communication and negotiation with rural communities’

including, apparently, with the local clergy. Further evidence of Walke’s social networks is to be found in his decision, in 1918, to stage a Christmas play at St Hilary. ‘At the time,’ Walke (2002: 159) recalled, ‘I could find no play suitable to the place and

the people who were to perform it. I wanted an act of worship rather than a performance, a return to the old miracle play which was performed either in the church or in some open space.’ However, for Walke, the old Cornish miracle plays were ‘too archaic and lacking in dramatic form for my purpose; and finding nothing among the more modern plays that corresponded to my conception, I determined that if there was to be one at St. Hilary it must be written by myself’ (Walke 2002: 159). This he did, writing and staging *Bethlehem* later that year, a subsequent year’s performance of which was attended by George Bernard Shaw. Furthermore, in 1921, a chance meeting with Filson Young, the writer, led to Walke’s play being broadcast on BBC radio.

Despite Walke’s overt Catholicism, he also worked to build bridges with Christians of all denominations. One particularly notable cause through which Walke found a cross-denominational common ground was that of conscientious objection and pacifism. In 1918, he wrote (Walke 2002: 122), he had been wondering

‘whether it might not be possible to find a way in which men could escape from the secrecy and fear on which our social life was built. As pacifists we had rejected war as altogether evil and yet we were content to live in a society which was built largely on fear and distrust of our neighbour.’

For Walke (2002: 122), the answer lay in cross-denominational Christian worship:

‘At the moment of His farewell, when the Son of God was to leave the friends that He had gathered round Him, He had set up a Common Table where men might meet, and in sharing His gifts of bread and wine, find Him present with them. For those who share in the gift of the “Corpus Domini – the body of God”, there must be a way, I thought, in which they could share more completely in the daily things of life.’

To this end, Walke invited fellow pacifists from across the country to come to St Hilary, ‘so that together we might try and discover how, whilst living under ordinary conditions of society, we might escape one of its worst evils’ (Walke 2002: 122-3), receiving replies from ‘priests, Presbyterians, Nonconformist ministers, workers from the Clyde, people from our own village, and a man who walked from London begging his way and sleeping in casual wards’ (Walke 2002: 123).

At first, cross-denominational worship was not considered as a means to the creation of a more socially just society. However, overcoming the competing philosophies of the invitees proved to be somewhat problematic. As Walke (2002: 124-5) recalled:

‘It seemed hopeless – we had not learnt even to tolerate each other and our different systems – until we decided to spend a whole day together in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. So wonderful was the power of this silence that after a day spent in the church we met that evening as men and women who were more than friends, since we could now speak to each other with the certainty of being understood. The fear that prompts men to set up barriers and to hide themselves and their affairs from the fellows had gone.

I have a vivid recollection of that moment. I can recall where we were all sitting in the dining-room, and the look of exaltation on the faces of those round the table as we drew up a simple rule embodying our experience. To any one who was not there, what happened that evening must appear a matter of little importance, but it seemed to us that we had made a great discovery. We had learnt how in the love of Jesus a way could be found for men and women differing as completely as ourselves, to speak the truth to one another without fear or embarrassment.’

For Walke and his fellow pacifists, this collective religious experience provided the blueprint for a formal nation-wide network of similar societies:

‘We realized at the time that if we were to set up other Chapters, as we planned, there would be many who would find in so much simplicity an opportunity to exercise their talent for living on others... Such was our state of mind when we separated that night after having made plans for the setting up of Chapters of “The Brethren of the Common Table” wherever it was possible’ (Walke 2002: 125).

Despite Walke’s best of intentions, his scheme lacked the support of his own bishop. Winfrid Oldfield Burrows, the fifth Bishop of Truro [from 1912 until 1919], believed World War I to be just. ‘This might be not unexpected of a cleric appointed by State



means to a State Church,' said Miles Brown (1976: 75), 'but Burrows was no mere mouthpiece of jingoism.' Taking up Walke's story, Miles Brown (1976: 75-6) continued: 'Looking forward to the peace he spent a week with the conscientious objectors in Dartmoor Prison, but found among them mere fanaticism and no material from which a new world might be created. He returned despondent from this experience.' Some Chapters were formed in London but, by the time of Walke's writing of his memoir in 1935, they had all – including Walke's own Chapter – ceased to exist.

'If I had been a person other than I am,' Walke (2002: 125-6) wrote,

'or even if at this time I had not been immersed in so many troubles in connexion with the church and its services, together with the daily expectation of being arrested on account of my peace activities, I might have been successful in preserving this venture. As I write, after years of disappointment and failure in many affairs I have undertaken, the way of the "Brethren of the Common Table" still seems to offer a solution for some of the difficulties of our modern society.'

The Brethren of the Common Table was not Walke's only scheme to overcome what he identified as social injustice; nor was it his only such scheme to fail. Walke and a group of like-minded associates, including Frank Fincham, a Congregational Minister, Russell Hoare, a Professor at Cambridge University, and Thomas Attlee, brother of the deputy leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee – and with the written support of Frederic Sumpter Guy Warman, the sixth Bishop of Truro [from 1919 to 1923], Herbert Rider, Chairman of the Wesleyans in Cornwall, Rhys Harris, Secretary of the Congregational Union in Cornwall, J. R. Green, a Baptist Minister, E. C. Lark, a United Methodist Minister, William Bryant, a Primitive Methodist Minister, and Arthur Jenkins, of the Society of Friends – acquired and prepared to reopen a mine near Scorrier, which had been abandoned for 50 years, with the profits to be paid into a local community fund (Walke 2002; Miles Brown 1976). However, having raised the money to acquire the site, the scheme needed a further capital investment to make the mine operational. This, too, had been privately raised, the benefactors promising the money on the condition of their receiving three letters of support for the scheme, including one from Warman.

Warman's letter, and one of the others, was received but, ultimately, Warman had to write to Walke, explaining why the third letter would not be forthcoming: 'The Government,' it had been decided (Walke 2002: 176), 'is preparing a scheme for road-making to relieve unemployment, and any rival scheme would be most inopportune.'

It was not for Walke's Christian co-operative schemes that St Hilary Church made national newspapers in August 1932, though. The church, as Miles Brown (1976: 98) wrote, 'had been gradually enriched with painted choir stalls, pictures, statues, and several altars of stone.' Walke had ignored the rulings of the Consistory Court that he was to remove certain objects and end certain practices, refusing to recognise the right of a secular court to rule upon theological matters (Miles Brown 1976; Walke 2002). 'Protestant action was decided upon,' Miles Brown (1976: 99) continued, by local parishioners and outsiders led by John Kensit [1881-1957], a London-based militant Protestant protester and son of the founder of the Protestant Truth Society (Wellings 2004), 'and on 8th August, 1932 a party of Kensit supporters came in cars and a coach from Plymouth and elsewhere outside the county.' Walke, at the time, was saddling up one of his horses, preparing for a morning ride up on to Tregonning Hill, when one of his parishioners rushed up to him and exclaimed, 'They've come, Father' (Walke 2002: 240). Walke and his parishioner hurried across to the church, meeting one of the bell-ringers on the way, where the three of them found the south door to be locked. At Walke's suggestion, they then tried knocking on the priest's door, which led into the Chapel of Our Lady; Walke demanded entry, as vicar of the parish, whereupon the three were allowed in and, in Walke's words, 'imprisoned' (Walke 2002: 240). 'I attempted to withdraw into myself,' Walke (2002: 240-1) recalled,

'to say my prayers and to say as much of the offices of the breviary as I knew by heart... But however much I tried, I could not escape from what was going on round me. I might shut my eyes, but I still saw men standing on the holy altar, hacking at the reredos or carrying away the image of Our Lady. I could not close my ears to the sounds of hammering which now filled the church.'

After some protestation, Walke managed to convince the intruders to allow him to remove the Sacrament. He returned to his house, where he changed into his vestments and collected the key to the tabernacle, carrying the Sacrament from the church and along the path which was now lined with sympathetic parishioners, kneeling and holding candles (Walke 2002; see also Miles Brown 1976; Winter 1991; Payton 1996a).

In 1936, Walke resigned from his position as Vicar of St Hilary; but, according to Winter (1991: 158-60), Protestant protests continued,

‘with attempts to block the appointment of Walke’s successor, a moderate catholic churchman, by the expedient of manipulating the membership of the electoral roll, so as to influence the election of a new church council. Sadly a number of Methodists allowed their names to be used in this way.’

Such protests were one reason for the appointment of Joseph Wellington Hunkin – a low churchman and former Methodist – to succeed Frere as the eighth Bishop of Truro, from 1935 to 1951 (Payton 1996). ‘But over most of the diocese,’ Winter (1991: 160) continues,

‘the more extreme forms of catholicism and Protestant reaction were foreign. For many priests describing themselves as “prayer-book catholics” the core of their ministry centred on a renewed emphasis upon the sacraments, especially that of holy communion, a quiet dignity in worship with due attention to the details of liturgy, and deep pastoral concern. It was this quiet Catholicism, more in the tradition of Puseyite Tractarianism than Romanising Anglo-papalism, which led Cornish Anglicanism out of its nadir of the nineteenth century.’

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the cultural and historical formation of the mystical that was associated with the mid-twentieth century Old Cornwall movement – a continuation of late nineteenth and early twentieth century sacramental Anglo-Catholic religiosity – was characterised by an engagement with other, potentially contradictory versions of the

mystical – in particular, the more evangelical Christian denominations, Arthurianism, folk ritual and neo-Paganism. Furthermore, the broader and more inclusive version of the mystical that was pursued by the Old Cornwall movement was associated with a broader version of the Cornish landscape, into which were incorporated the spaces of prehistoric Pagan religion and of folk ritual, the sites of mythological Arthurianism, and the industrial landscapes of china clay mining areas. All of these inclusions were, however, carefully controlled through an Anglo-Catholic sacramentalism so that holy wells were rededicated to their patron saints, the Gorsedd ceremony incorporated explicitly Christian hymns and prayers, Crying the Neck became a local Cornish variation on the harvest festival [itself, as discussed in the previous chapter, of possible Cornish provenance], and the lighting of Midsummer bonfires was overseen and blessed by an Anglican clergyman. The Old Cornwall movement, in association with the WCFC and the CPRE, also attempted to engage with, and to exert a measure of control over, the body of the tourist, based on correct pronunciation of Cornish place names, and the privileging of certain ways of both coming to and being at those sites.

However, this new and more inclusive version of the mystical was not without its own set of internal and external tensions. Hamilton Jenkin argued that the strongly Anglo-Catholic religious associations of the Old Cornwall movement marginalised the largely Methodist Cornish working-class, precisely the same people that the Old Cornwall movement sought to mobilise and include; Hambly Rowe continued to evoke the spirit of the Victorian folklorists and a more disordered version of the Cornish landscape based on the rambling eye rather than on the plan view; and the WCFC attempted to privilege its evocation of field archaeology, rather than the Old Cornwall movement's evocation of folk custom and ritual, as the true expression of Cornish folk. Despite – or perhaps because of – the increasing institutionalisation of scientific archaeology as a professional academic discipline since the mid-twentieth century, some amateur archaeologists 'have continued to develop tangential answers to questions which the nature of archaeological evidence and technical interpretation often leaves open' (Lowerson 1992: 163). In particular, those questions [and answers] relating to the spiritual significance of the pre-Christian landscape raise an important set of debates

around the relationships between academic, amateur and 'alternative' archaeology and, in respect of the latter, around the spatialities and historicities of mystical knowledge. In chapter six, these debates are investigated through a detailed analysis of cultures of the mystical in late twentieth century Cornwall.

## **‘The Archaeology of Consciousness’: Mystical Geographies of Late Twentieth Century Cornwall**

### **6.1 Introduction**

During the summer of 1914, a 22-year-old J. R. R. Tolkien spent a holiday staying on the Lizard peninsula, in Cornwall, with Father Vincent Reade of the Birmingham Oratory (Carpenter 1977). “‘We walked over the moor-land on top of the cliffs to Kynance Cove”,’ wrote Tolkien (quoted in Carpenter 1977: 70) [see figure 6.1].

“‘Nothing I could say in a dull old letter would describe it to you. The sun beats down on you and a huge Atlantic swell smashes and spouts over the snags and reefs. The sea has carved weird wind-holes and spouts into the cliffs which blow with trumpety noises or sprout foam like a whale, and everywhere you see black and red rock and white foam against violet and transparent seagreen”.’

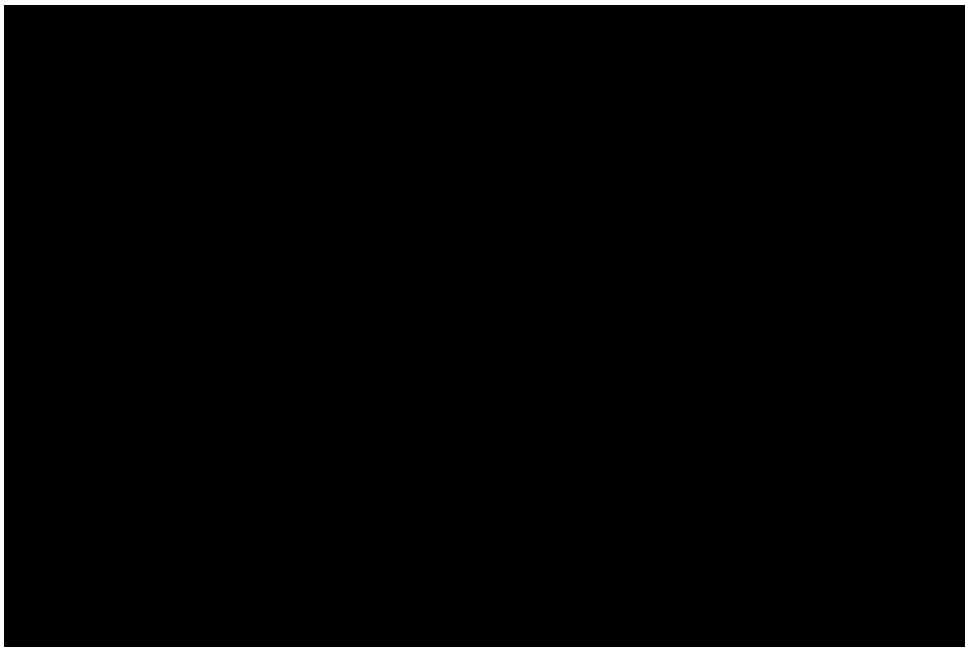
It became, Carpenter continues, an ideal landscape for Tolkien. Indeed, it is likely that Tolkien drew from his holiday more than a little inspiration for his creation of the coastlines of Middle-Earth and, especially, those of Númenor, the setting for Tolkien’s retelling of the Atlantis myth [see figure 6.2].

In 1965, Ace Books published an unauthorised edition of *The Lord of the Rings* in the USA, forcing Ballantine Books into the hurried publication of their authorised edition later that same year. The publicity surrounding the rival publications served to promote Tolkien’s work as a focus for a nascent ‘campus cult’ in American [and, subsequently, British] universities. This cult – ‘my deplorable cultus’ as Tolkien



Figure 6.1 [above]: **Kynance Cove, 2004**

Figure 6.2 [below]: **John Howe, *The Drowning of Anedûné*, 1994**



(quoted in Carpenter 1977: 231) himself once described it – coalesced around a recognisable set of social and environmental issues, which mobilised a series of cultural oppositions: spiritual versus prosaic, rural versus urban, natural versus industrial, harmony versus exploitation, peace versus war and, perhaps most powerful of all, alternative versus established. Tolkien's work thus serves to highlight some of the dimensions of the mystical during and since the 1960s which are the subject of this chapter.

'The later twentieth century,' writes Lowerson (1992: 162),

'has seen a much more widespread appearance of views of the spiritual significance of landscape in which the Christian presence may be treated as either a relatively recent addition or even a barrier to discovering the essential mystical significance of the English countryside.'

Despite – or perhaps, for reasons that will be discussed below, because of – the increasing institutionalisation of scientific archaeology as a professional academic discipline, some amateur archaeologists 'have continued to develop tangential answers to questions,' relating to the spiritual significance of the pre-Christian landscape, 'which the nature of archaeological evidence and technical interpretation often leaves open' (Lowerson 1992: 163). Section 6.2 focuses on the work of Ithell Colquhoun, a surrealist artist and writer who lived and worked in Cornwall, and who can be argued to have anticipated particular aspects of late twentieth century alternative archaeology which, in turn, is discussed in detail in section 6.3. The alternative archaeological formation of the Cornish landscape is the subject of section 6.3.1 and the attendant culture of fieldwork is the subject of section 6.3.2, while the ways in which alternative archaeology relates to political cultures and to academic archaeology are discussed in sections 6.3.3 and 6.3.4, respectively. Section 6.4 develops this discussion to investigate the complex and sometimes contradictory relationships between the latter-day Cornish and pan-Celtic movements – in particular, the continuing Cornish language revival and the development of Cornish Studies as an academic discipline – and different versions of the mystical, drawing on ancient and modern religion, folklore, myth and legend, while cutting across academic, amateur and 'alternative' archaeology, language and visual culture, the economics of tourism, and local, national and international politics.



## 6.2 'Land-Under-Wave': The Mystical Geographies of Ithell Colquhoun's Cornwall

Margaret Ithell Colquhoun was born on 9 October 1906 at Shillong, Assam, India; her father, Henry Archibald Colebrooke Colquhoun, worked for the colonial government in Manipur (Ratcliffe 2003; Remy 2004) [see figure 6.3]. She was educated at Thornlow School in Rodwell, near Weymouth, and afterwards at Cheltenham Ladies' College and the Slade School of Fine Art, in London. During a visit to Paris with fellow students in 1931, Colquhoun became acquainted with André Breton's *Surrealist Manifesto* and visited exhibitions of the work of Salvador Dalí, and began to work in a surrealist style herself. In 1936 she held her first one-woman exhibition, at Cheltenham Municipal Art Galleries and, in June of that same year, visited the International Surrealist Exhibition at the New Burlington Galleries in London. Her formal association with the London Surrealist Group began in 1938, and ended in 1940 when she was expelled from the group by its leader, E. L. T. Mesens, for refusing to conform to his expectations that members refuse to participate in exhibitions held in an 'artistic bourgeois spirit' (Ratcliffe 2003: 2), commit to the cause of proletarian revolution and, most pertinently, withdraw any memberships of secret societies and abandon any esoteric and occult research.

In 1943, Colquhoun married Toni del Renzio, a fellow surrealist artist, critic and art historian. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, she continued to use a wide range of artistic experiments to explore the subconscious and the roots of consciousness, including various forms of automatism and collage. In her paintings, poetry and prose, the organic and the inorganic, the masculine and the feminine, the earthly and the spiritual join in often strongly erotic, if not outspokenly sexual, encounters, in an attempt to fuse with the forces of the beyond. One of Colquhoun's most famous works, *Scylla* [1938; see figure 6.4], depicts a rock arch, into whose feminine opening appears the sharp phallic point of the prow of a boat. Colquhoun said that the title refers to the female sea-monster who, according to Greek myth, inhabited narrow straits and devoured passing sailors. However, this reference to mythology



Figure 6.3: **Ithell Colquhoun [1906-1988], date unknown**

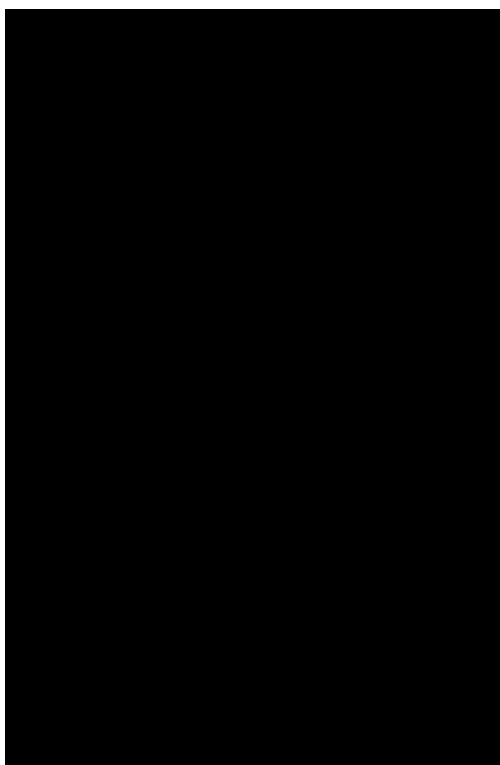
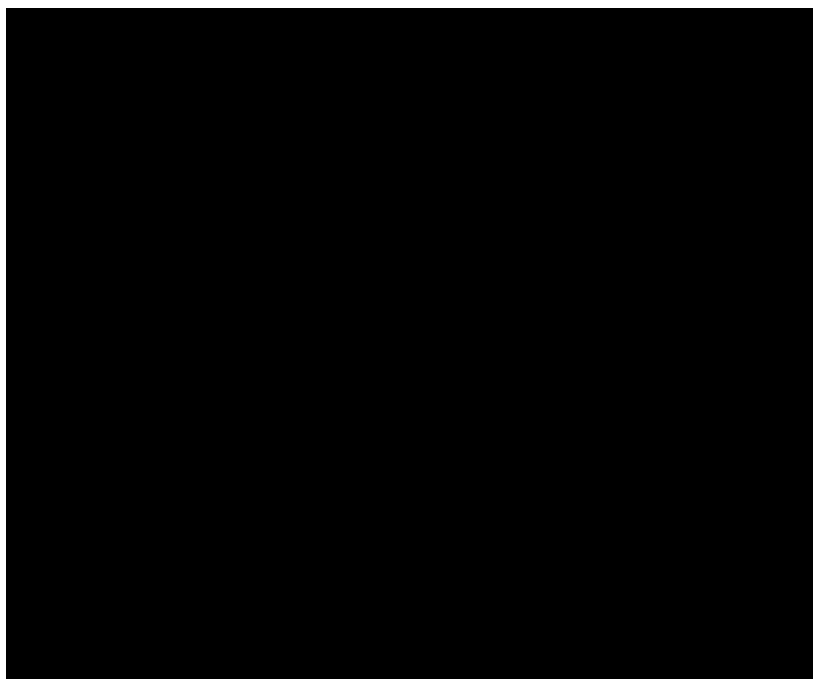


Figure 6.4 [above] **Ithell Colquhoun, *Scylla*, 1938**

Figure 6.5 [below] **Ithell Colquhoun, *The Judgement of Paris*, 1930**



was provoked by an unexpected recognition of one form in another, as Colquhoun explained: ‘It was suggested by what I could see of myself in a bath ... it is thus a pictorial pun, or double-image’ (Remy 2004). In an earlier work, also based on Greek myth, *The Judgement of Paris* [1930; see figure 6.5], the three aggressively sexualised goddesses – Athena, Hera and Aphrodite [from left to right] – appear before the cowering Trojan prince, who is dressed as a shepherd and almost invisible against a bleak yet strangely organic landscape of rocky pinnacles and sparsely tree-topped hills.

Remy (2004) argues that, by the terms of the international surrealist movement in the 1950s, Colquhoun was less a surrealist than a ‘fantasmagiste’ – an unorthodox surrealist who was criticised by Breton for being so passionately attracted to the esoteric and the occult that these were no longer seen as means to an end, but as ends in themselves. In 1946 Colquhoun bought a studio hut called Vow Cave in the Lamorna valley, but continued to live at Windmill Hill, in London, until, suffering from asthma, she moved to Paul, just outside Penzance, on doctor’s advice in 1957. While continuing to paint, Colquhoun (1955) also wrote *The Crying of the Wind: Ireland*, a book about ‘a trip she took with friends, travelling from Dublin up to the north-west coast of Ireland and back, taking in various detours *en route*’ (Ratcliffe 2003: 1). In *The Crying of the Wind*, Ratcliffe (2003: 1) continues, the travel writing ‘was secondary to a descriptive feast of Irish lore and habits, ancient wells, fairy traditions and legends... The *Times Literary Supplement*, on 30 September 1955, referred to it as “a rare and beautiful travel book” and mentioned the air of mystery that it exuded: “Here is the authentic touch of the Gothic novelist, and one wishes that Miss Colquhoun had both the canvas large enough and the unrestricted scope to introduce the mysterious figures that should flit across this darkling landscape”.’

Two years later, in 1957, Peter Owen published *The Living Stones: Cornwall*. For Remy (2004), like *The Crying of the Wind*, it led the reader ‘through a highly detailed description of places along a gradual descent into the secret life of land and water, pebbles, stones, plants, flowers, and insects.’ Ratcliffe (2003: 1-2) agrees: ‘It is with *The Living Stones*,’ he writes,

‘that we fully comprehend that Ithell Colquhoun regarded nature as she found it in the valley and on the cliffs beyond as a part of her, she as one with the flowers and birds – the long-tailed tits, the whistle of the goldcrest, the bluebells and the campion, the sea pinks along the cliffs: “I am identified with every leaf and pebble, and any threatened hurt to the wilderness of the valley seems to me like a rape.”

Ithell Colquhoun’s psychic sensitivity to nature cannot be overemphasized. She was not simply romanticizing about her feeling of being magnetically attracted to the wonders she found in standing stones, circles, wells, the old saints and nature’s life. It was a living landscape, not simply a backdrop for tourists or a means to an end for those who made their living from the land.’

Indeed, in the two books, writes Remy (2004), ‘the borderline between a precise, sensitive rendering of reality and a plunge into the fantastic becomes imperceptible.’

Colquhoun’s attraction to Cornwall began with her desire to find, and put down roots in, a place in Britain that corresponded to her childhood memories of India: ‘It was the place of deluge,’ she remembered (Colquhoun 1957: 11).

‘It was in that place of mountains, jungle and six-months-long torrents where the people, at nodal points of the solar and lunar year, still sustain their stone-rites by wreathing pillar and circle. My origin was there and there I would return, other than in dreams.’

Furthermore, ‘it had to be by the sea. I believed in the Gulf-Stream, which is supposed to temper the bitterness of this air, bringing palms and fuchsias to western shores. And the sea ought to lie southward: sea to the north puts me off my bearings’ (Colquhoun 1957: 11). She felt a strong attraction to the Celtic Fringe: ‘The poignancy of Gaelic melodies called to me,’ she wrote (Colquhoun 1957: 12), ‘their scale identical with that of Peru... Their common ancestry is Atlantean; Atlantis’ wisdom in their strains, they bring a message not otherwise to be expressed.’ For Colquhoun (1957: 12), Atlantis, the ‘land-under-wave,’ was the ‘perfect symbol of the unconscious; but, daunted by ‘the length and cost of the journey to the nearest of Gaeldom,’ she found somewhere more accessible in the Lamorna valley. Colquhoun’s attraction to Cornwall was thus based on the ‘so-near-yet-so-far’ trope, on a perception of spatial proximity yet of cultural distance, that attracted so many

artists to rural artists' colonies across Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Lübbren 2001) and, in the case of Colquhoun, continued to do so into the mid-twentieth century.

The first few chapters of *The Living Stones* are personal observations on the seasonal variations in the flora and fauna of the Lamorna valley, invested with a certain animistic creed:

‘Valley of streams and moon-leaves, wet scents and all that cries with the owl’s voice, all that flies with a bat’s wing, peace! Influences, essences, presences, whatever is here – in my name of a stream in a valley, I salute you; I share this place with you. Stirrings of life, expanding sores, limbo of germination, for all you give me, I offer thanks. O rooted here without time, I bathe in you; genius of the fern-loved gully, do not molest me; and may you remain for ever unmolested’ (Colquhoun 1957: 14).

This theme is developed in Colquhoun’s (1973) collection of poetry, *Grimoire of the Entangled Thicket*, in which the poems are named and ordered after the thirteen months – each of which corresponds to one of the thirteen consonants in the Ogham alphabet – and eight seasonal festivals of the ancient Celtic calendar. In ‘Imbolc’ [February 2], for example,

‘The celandines’ array of chryolite  
Calls out with vibrant tongue St. Brigid’s praise  
And oyster-catchers, where her grown lambs graze  
Along the strand, proclaim her earliest light  
With covens of sharp cries. Bride-shepherdess  
Revealed in them and in the celandines  
Their zig-zag wing your territory defines  
Who wear the yellow flowers like a dress’ (Colquhoun 1973: 4).

St Brigid was an Irish saint who, for Colquhoun (1957), was a Christianisation of Bridget, the Celtic triple-goddess of writing and inspiration, healing and herbology, and blacksmiths and the hearth. Through her evocation, and through similar evocations in the other poems in the collection, Colquhoun aimed ‘at re-establishing contact with the primitive energy which links letters, numbers, and vegetal cycles of life and death’ (Remy 2004).

It was not only the flora and fauna that were invested with this animistic creed, though: ‘to this day,’ Colquhoun (1957: 47) continued,

‘the granite masses that crown the hills of Devon and Cornwall have rather the look of constructions than chance formations of nature. In Cornwall, the “Cheesewring” near Liskeard is perhaps the most striking of these, though many others, like Row Tor and Brown Willy, are scattered over the Bodmin Moors. Penwith, too, can show Trencrom and the moors above the coast from St. Ives to Zennor, not forgetting the sinister Kenijack inland from St. Just. Structures they once were, but all that now remains are a few stumps, the abraded foundations of a powerhouse where Sarron and Samoths, royal colonists from Atlantis, stored their subtle force. To the sensitive, these truncated towers still emanate the residue of a powerful radiation. A *carrek sans* or “holy rock” is one that was anciently magnetised; and until a few years ago if not more recently, many of these, whether Tors or not, were the scene of stone-worshipping rites. It may be that granite more than another rock retains for aeons such psychic forces.’

In later chapters, Colquhoun elaborates upon this ancient magnetism. One passage is particularly apposite: she writes of ‘the Michael-force’ (Colquhoun 1957: 93), an energy field associated with the Archangel Michael, which ‘has been sensed in Cornwall – indeed, all over Europe, from Iceland to the toe of Italy and beyond.’ Michael, for Colquhoun, can be associated with various Pagan sun- and war-gods, corresponding – in a system of Platonic correspondences – with the elemental fire and with the archetypal south. ‘The operation of this force,’ she continues (Colquhoun 1957: 93), ‘may be traced through church-dedications, the sites of whose buildings are magnetically linked. Michael is associated with steep islands and high places, and many of his dedications are hilltop shrines.’ In particular, Colquhoun (Colquhoun 1957: 189) identified ‘a morphologic connection between the three hill-top shrines – islands or almost islands – which constitute the main triangle of Michael-force for this region – Mont St. Michel, St. Michael’s Mount and Glastonbury Tor.’ Colquhoun died on 11 April 1988, in a fire at her studio in the Lamorna valley. However, these passages, in which Christianity becomes a means to a much older truth, one of archetypal earth energies connected by principles of

sacred geometry, anticipate many of the defining features of late twentieth century cultures of the mystical.

### **6.3 ‘The Geography of the Unseen World’: Alternative Archaeology in Late Twentieth-Century Cornwall**

In *Ley Lines in Question*, Tom Williamson and Liz Bellamy (1983) limit their engagement with alternative archaeology to ley lines. The field of alternative archaeology – or ‘earth mysteries’ – is, however, far broader. Cheryl Traffon (1998 [1992]: 2), a practising Pagan and the co-founder of the Cornwall Earth Mysteries Group [CEMG], describes alternative archaeology as ‘an umbrella term’ beneath which is grouped

‘research into the meaning and purpose of the sites as built by ancient peoples, and can include investigations into the dowsable qualities of sites, their alignment in the landscape, their anomalous magnetic and radioactive qualities, their astronomical orientations, and the psychic and spiritual phenomena experienced at them.’

Alternative archaeology gained an initial impetus from the questioning of established knowledge. As is commonly retold in alternative archaeological literature, O. G. S. Crawford, a trained geographer and an employee of the Ordnance Survey, refused to print an advertisement in *Antiquity*, the journal of which he was editor, for Alfred Watkins’ (1970 [1925]) *The Old Straight Track*, about whom more is said in section 6.3.1, below. Matless (1998: 82), however, suggests that Crawford’s refusal reflects the fact that Watkins was ‘less his anti-rationalist opposite than an eccentric mirror-image of field archaeology.’

Indeed, while alternative archaeology continues to gain impetus from its questioning of established knowledge, the relationship between academic and alternative archaeology is by no means oppositional. ‘The two approaches to the past,’ write Williamson and Bellamy (1983: 25), ‘the conventional and the “fringe”, are certainly not divided by the kind of gulf which many academics would like to believe exists.’ On the one hand, alternative archaeologists freely draw upon academic archaeological knowledge in order to inform and support their theories; on the other,



for Straffon (1995a [1993]: 2), the two ‘have in many ways come closer together in recent years’ so that ‘archaeologists are now freely talking about ritual sites, ceremonial monuments, and patterns in the landscape.’ The fields of academic and alternative archaeology are complementary: academic archaeology involves the ‘research and re-interpretation of the processes of the past’ (Straffon 1999 [1995]: 2), providing the framework for knowledge of prehistory, while alternative archaeology provides ‘an insight into the mindset and belief systems of the people who built the sites.’

In 1967, Oxford University Press published Alexander Thom’s *Megalithic Sites in Britain* (Michell 1974, 2001 [1983]; Williamson and Bellamy 1983). Thom, Emeritus Professor of Engineering Science at Oxford University, ‘suggested that the inhabitants of early prehistoric Britain had detailed knowledge of mathematics, geometry, surveying and astronomy’ (Michell 2001: 18). Based on detailed surveys of megalithic sites, particularly stone circles, in Britain and northern France, he argued that they were all laid out using a common unit of measurement, 2.72 feet, which he called the ‘megalithic yard’. The builders of these sites then used integral Pythagorean right-angled triangles to construct stone circles and ellipses so that they could express both the diameter and the circumference of the monuments as multiples of the megalithic yard. ‘At the same time,’ Michell (2001: 46) continues, ‘the ratio between the diameter and perimeter of the distorted circles was contrived as 3:1, so that the incommensurate number represented by  $\pi$  should be exactly 3.’ Figure 6.6 shows Thom’s demonstration of how two circles, centred at A and B so that the centre of one lay on the circumference of the other, could have been used in the construction of Boscawen-Ûn. ‘Thus is formed the figure known as the *vesica piscis*,’ says Michell (1974: 22) [see figure 6.7], ‘regarded in the ancient, masonic and early Christian schools of architecture as the basic figure of sacred geometry.’

Furthermore, Thom suggested that megalithic sites were used to observe the movements of heavenly bodies, particularly those of the sun – which, at the summer solstice, rises in alignment with the Avenue at Stonehenge – and the moon (Williamson and Bellamy 1983). The lines that builders used to construct their stone circles, when extended beyond the circles to mark points on the horizon – a hilltop or



Figure 6.6 [above] **Construction Diagram of Boscawen-Ûn,**  
**from *Megalithic Sites in Britain*, 1967**

Figure 6.7 [below] **Vesica Piscis**  
**from *The Old Stones of Land's End*, 1974**



a notch cut into a high a ridge, or a standing stone or cairn – aligned with the extreme positions of the solar or lunar cycle as observable from Earth (Michell 2001). By this argument, the stone circles of Britain and northern France become complex repositories of numerological, geometric and astronomical knowledge. ‘The hermetic and masonic tradition of a synthetic system,’ for Michell (1974: 112) ‘combining architecture with astronomy, geometry and number,’ could thus be traced back to the esoteric knowledge base of megalithic science, wherein laid the essence of the true spiritual human condition. This, in turn, was connected to a particular mystical formation of landscape that Michell (2001) developed by means of a rereading of the work of Alfred Watkins. This alternative archaeological formation of landscape, and the associated culture of fieldwork, is the subject of this section.

### **6.3.1 Sacred Geometry: Lines in the Landscape**

Alfred Watkins [1855-1935] was a Liberal councillor, a magistrate, a photographer, a beekeeper and an advocate of octaval coinage against post-war decimalisation proposals, as well as being an amateur antiquarian (Shoesmith 1990; Matless 1998) [see figure 6.8]. One hot summer’s day in 1921 – as Michell (2001: 22-3), in *The New View over Atlantis* – tells the story, Watkins was in the Bredwardine hills of his native Herefordshire when he experienced a moment of visionary revelation:

‘On a high hilltop he stopped and looked at his map before meditating on the view below him. Suddenly, in a flash, he saw something which no one in England had seen for perhaps thousands of years.

Watkins saw straight through the surface of the landscape to a layer deposited in some remote prehistoric age. The barrier of time melted and, spread across the county, he saw a web of lines linking the holy places and sites of antiquity. Mounds, old stones, crosses and old moats and holy wells stood in exact alignments that ran over beacon hills to cairns and mountain peaks. In one moment of transcendental perception Watkins entered a magic world of prehistoric Britain, a world whose very existence had been forgotten.’



Figure 6.8 [above] **Alfred Watkins [1855-1935], date unknown**

Figure 6.9 [below] **John Michell, 2003**



For Watkins (1970 [1925]), these alignments – or, as he called them, ‘leys’ – were prehistoric trackways, and the various sites that studded their length were navigational aids. According to Michell’s (2001) reworking of Watkins’ ley theory, ancient sacred sites and centres of spiritual power were originally positioned with reference to the principles of ‘geomancy’, a once-universal system of knowledge that combined science, astrology and intuition. Geomancers, he argues, recognised that invisible currents of magnetic energy ran across the surface of the Earth. Some energy lines took on a male [solar] aspect, following higher routes over steep mountains; others took on a female [lunar] aspect, following more gently undulating country. For the geomancer, who could detect and identify these energy lines by dowsing, the most favourable sites were those where lines of opposing aspects met. Williamson and Bellamy (1983) question the extent to which Watkins’ ley theory originated in a moment of visionary revelation, finding alternative versions of the story that have Watkins in Bredwardine and in Blackwardine, on horseback and in his car, looking at the countryside and looking at a map. Indeed, the mystical was a minor theme in Watkins’ original formulation of ley theory, within which leys were primarily prehistoric trackways; although he did suggest that, over the course of prehistoric time, ‘magic, religion, and superstition blended with the system’ (Watkins 1970, quoted in Matless 1998: 82).

Michell’s version of events thus builds upon this aspect of Watkins’ work, not only substantially developing the mystical dimensions of ley theory, but also ascribing a certain mystical experience to fieldwork itself. This, in turn, raises the questions of why and how it was archaeology [‘alternative’ or otherwise] that came to be aligned with the mystical during the late twentieth century. Born in 1933, and educated at Eton College and at Cambridge University, Michell’s background is in neither archaeology nor theology, but in modern languages: he wrote his second book, *The View Over Atlantis* [1969], while working as a Russian interpreter (interview 14 April 2005) [see figure 6.9]. His first book, *The Flying Saucer Vision* [1967], explores the connections made, in Aimé Michel’s [1958] *Flying Saucers and the Straight Line Mystery* and Tony Wedd’s [1961] *Skyways and Landmarks*, between UFO sightings and geological fault lines or other landscape alignments [or ‘orthotemies’]; ‘for it is a curious fact,’ Michell (2001: 9; see also Williamson and Bellamy 1983) writes, ‘that quite a number of the most active students of leys,

geomancy and associated subjects, the present author included, were led to them through an earlier interest in UFO research.’ Michell (2001: 209-10) understands UFOs not as alien spacecraft but as ‘inhabitants of other elements or dimensions’ that, if seen in their own element, would appear as ‘points of concentrated energy.’ They have ‘not only a physical form,’ he continues (Michell 2001: 211), ‘but also some further existence as an object already familiar and encountered in dreams,’ in the ‘world of the unconscious mind.’

With Wedd’s encouragement, the Ley Hunter’s Club had been formed by a group of UFOlogists in 1962 and, by 1965, the first few editions of *The Ley Hunter* journal were being printed; however, as Williamson and Bellamy (1983: 15) acknowledge, this was ‘something of a false start... The real revival was not to come until 1969.’ Through Michell’s work, UFOlogy became bound up with a certain version of landscape and of human psychology: Watkins’ network of prehistoric trackways became, for Michell (2001: 211), revelatory of ‘the geography of the unseen world.’ His psychologising of the connection between UFOlogy and ley theory helped to revitalise the faltering revival of the field of ley hunting. At the same time, however, he began to attach progressively less value to UFOlogy as a route to the ancient knowledge that he believed lay behind leys. Paul Screeton (1970: 7), who assumed editorship of *The Ley Hunter* in 1969, reviewed *The View over Atlantis* for his journal: ‘UFOs are discussed in only a fraction of the book’s 218 pages,’ he wrote,

‘and for all the hypotheses forwarded for the possible purpose of leys, orthoteny receives only fleeting mention. Michell does not seem to have found the approach to leys via UFOs a fruitful one, and this must be noted in the light of this being a far more thoughtful and better researched book – with fewer pyrotechnics – than his previous one. This is without doubt,’

he concluded, ‘the most important book of 1969.’ *The Ley Hunter* remained in continuous publication until 1999 (Devereux 2005).

Michell, in keeping with this tendency towards ‘more thoughtful and better researched’ work, became concerned to gather and test primary evidence in support of ley theory (interview 14 April 2005). Being of Cornish descent on his father’s side, Michell had been a regular visitor to Cornwall from an early age and, as such,

knew something of the extent of surviving megalithic monuments in the Cornish landscape. Consequently, Michell chose the West Penwith peninsula as his fieldwork site; he carried out a survey of alignments of standing stones, stone circles and burial chambers in West Penwith, the results of which were published as *The Old Stones of Land's End* (Michell 1974). 'The district of West Penwith,' for Michell (1974: 111), 'is the most suitable for the study of megalithic alignments, being almost an island, relatively undisturbed and containing more ancient stones than any other district of comparable size.' Limiting his survey to 44 megalithic sites that, in his own words, were 'generally admitted' to have been 'set up in approximately the same period 4,000 or more years ago,' Michell (1974: 14) argued that,

'since virtually every one stands on one or more alignment with at least two others, since these alignments are always perfectly accurate and in some cases have an astronomical significance, there can be no question but that they were deliberately planned.'

For example, Michell found Boscawen-Ûn stone circle [OS 41182734] to align with a stone cross near Trenuggo [OS 42812764] and the Tresvannack Pillar standing stone [OS 44182788], all of which mark the direction of the May Day sunrise [see figure 6.10]. This, the first of seven leys passing through Boscawen-Ûn that Michell identified, reveals something of the variety of sites that might mark a ley. At the core of ley theory are standing stones, stone circles and cairns, but Michell (1974: 14) considers 'Celtic sites, stretches of track and boundary line and prominent natural features' as supporting evidence. His inclusion of the stone cross as a mark point is interesting. Early and pre-twentieth century interpretations of the stone crosses had understood them to be either relics of Dark Age Christianity, or else Christianised reshapings of Pagan monuments. However, for Michell (1974: 99), there is

'nothing that connects the old stone crosses of Cornwall specifically with the Christian religion. The symbol of the cross, the myth of the crucified god, even the Chi-Rho cipher of the name Christos are all known to the religious systems that preceded Christianity.'

In the above example, a stretch of old walled track and the Church of St Piran, in Perranuthnoe, were also noted to lie on the ley. Other leys that pass through Boscawen-Ûn were noted to be marked by an Iron Age courtyard house, and by St Clement's Isle, off Mousehole.



Figure 6.10: Boscawen-Ūn Leys,  
from *The Old Stones of Land's End*, 1974  
[stone circle half-way down left edge of map,  
Trenuggo stone cross in centre, Tresvannack pillar towards top right]



*The New View Over Atlantis* makes further allusions to the reuse of significant Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in later period of [pre-]history. ‘Through its policy of occupying and reconsecrating the old places of inherent sanctity,’ says Michell (2001: 50),

‘the Christian Church quickly assumed the spiritual control of Britain. With the help of those native priests and magicians who understood the secret of the old alignments, the first missionaries founded their churches at those places where the celestial forces asserted their strongest and most beneficial influence, providing thereby to the local population their knowledge of these forces and their ability to maintain the fertility and prosperity of the district by their invocation. The Druid priests recognized in the new creed a revived expression of their own tradition, now degenerate.’

This raises the question as to the criteria by which the Druids originally deemed a site to be significant. The answer, for Michell, lies not in ancient Britain, but in ancient China.

Ancient sacred sites and centres of spiritual power, Michell (2001) continues, were located through a once-universal system of knowledge that combined science, astrology and intuition, one continuation of this system of knowledge, or ‘geomancy’, being *feng shui*. Chinese geomancers, he argues, recognised that invisible lines of magnetic energy – *lung mei*, or the ‘dragon current’ – ran across the surface of the Earth. The yang, or male [solar] aspect of the dragon current, follows higher routes over steep mountains; the yin, or female [lunar] aspect, follows more gently undulating country. For the geomancer, the most favourable sites were those where the yin and yang lines meet; the surrounding landscape should display both yin and yang features, in an ideal ratio of three yang to two yin, but ‘both yin and yang lines should display certain characteristics of their opposites in the country they cross’ (Michell 2001: 60). Furthermore, besides their yin [lunar] or yang [solar] characteristics, energy lines were related to one of five planets – Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury or Saturn – which in turn corresponded to one of the five materials [wood, fire, metal, water, earth] and one of five colours [yellow, red, blue, white, black]. Steep mountains with sharp sides and peaks corresponded to Mars, those

with their tops broken off to Jupiter, hills with a flat summit to Saturn, those that were low and dome-shaped to Mercury, those that were high and rounded to Venus. Certain correspondences were harmonious: wood-fire-earth-metal-water-wood, certain others were not: wood-earth-water-fire-metal-wood. Geomancers would identify the specific characteristics of the dragon current by dowsing.

Guy Underwood's [1969] *The Pattern of the Past* found, on the basis of his own dowsing, that every prehistoric stone circle in Britain was located over a source of earth energy, or a 'blind spring', and that individual standing stones marked the routes of these energy lines across the landscape (Michell 2001). Where early Christian churches had been built on significant Neolithic and Bronze Age sites, evidence was to be found in the churches' dedication to one of the principal dragon-slaying saints: St George, St Michael, St Catherine and St Margaret. Their dragon slaying, Michell (2001; see also Miller and Broadhurst 1998 [1989]) argues, is an allegory for the early Church's co-option of geomantic principles in its siting of church buildings on favourable locations along the lines of the dragon current. St Michael, furthermore, is argued to correspond to Apollo, the ancient Greek sun-god and, on the evidence of the dedications of Cornish hilltop churches to St Michael at St Michael's Mount and at Brentor, on the edge of Dartmoor, to the yang [male] aspect of the earth energy lines. Indeed, a straight alignment of churches dedicated to the dragon-killing saints extends from St Michael's Mount, via St Michael's Tor, Glastonbury, to the ruined St Margaret's Church at Hopton-on-Sea, Norfolk, in the direction of the May Day sunrise (Michell 2001; Miller and Broadhurst 1998; see also McKay 1996, 2000) [see figure 6.11].

'Humans, animals and plants possess their own energy fields whose harmonious state is essential to good health,' Hamish Miller and Paul Broadhurst (1998: 27), both of whom live in Cornwall, explain [see figure 6.12]. 'Rocks, water and other "inorganic" material also have their own associated fields, each unique in its own right.' Dowsing, therefore, involves the finding and the following of these energy fields across the landscape. Experienced dowzers, like Miller, have spent years

'in refining and understanding precisely what is being indicated by the dowsing rods or pendulum. The questions asked and the concepts sought must be defined and held in the mind with rigid precision. The

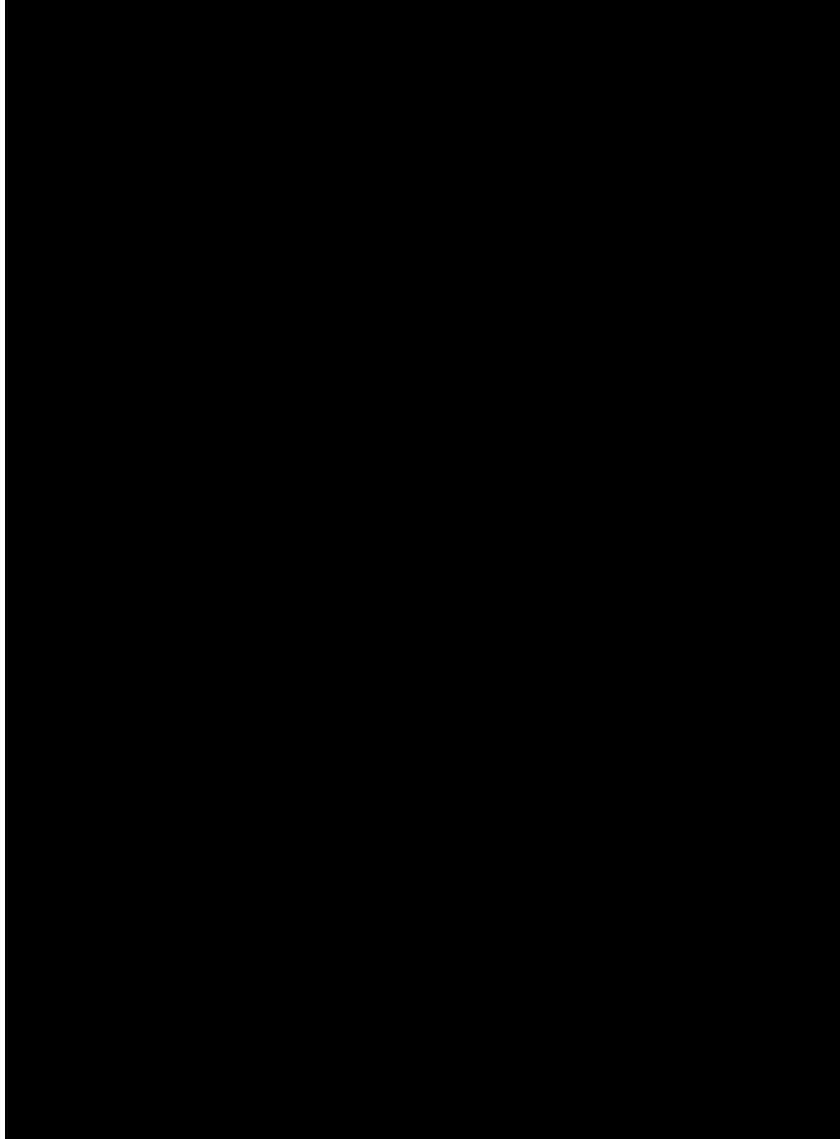


Figure 6.11: **The Michael and Mary Lines,**  
from *The Sun and the Serpent*, 1998

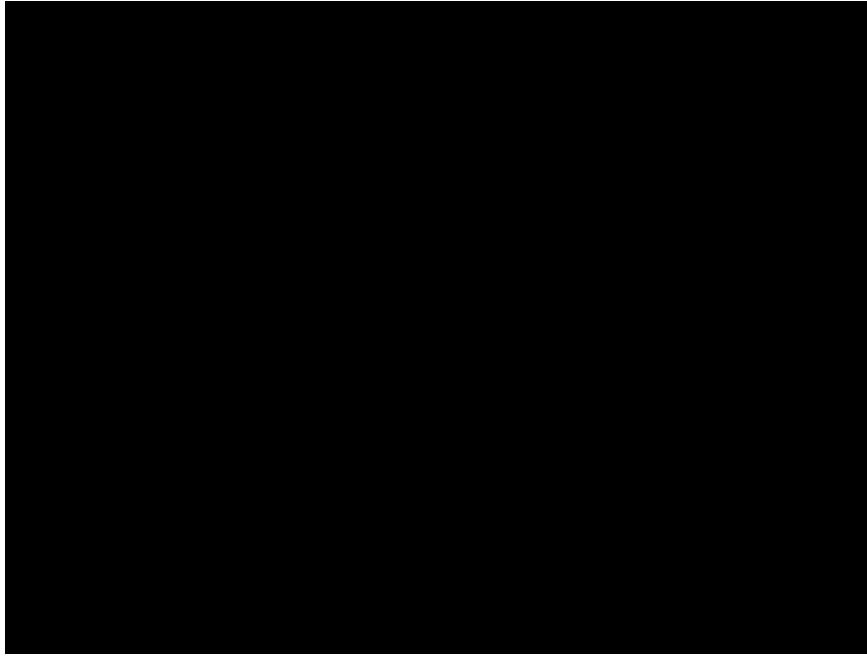


Figure 6.12 [above]: **Hamish Miller [left] and Paul Broadhurst [right], with partners, from *The Dance of the Dragon*, 2003**

Figure 6.13 [below]: **The Mary Line at Boscawen-Ûn, from *The Sun and the Serpent*, 1998**



description of the right mental approach is at first perplexing and contradictory – relaxed concentration. If you concentrate too much you get nothing, and if you relax too much you get spurious results. In essence it is a matter of reaching an almost meditative state with one razor-sharp part of the mind inflexibly focused on the precise thing that is being sought’ (Miller and Broadhurst 1998: 27-8, see also Miller 1998, 2002).

Miller drew upon his years of experience to dowse the so-called St Michael Line across southern England, the results of which were published as *The Sun and the Serpent* (Miller and Broadhurst 1998), for it quickly became apparent that the earth energy line, marked by the various dedicated sites, was very much not straight. Instead, it meandered about the alignment and, at Avebury stone circle, crossed another, ‘more feminine’ energy line (Miller and Broadhurst 1998: 108), which Miller and Broadhurst named the ‘Mary’ line after what they understood to be the Christianised version of the Pagan Earth Goddess. Returning to Cornwall, they then proceeded to locate and to follow the twin ‘Michael’ and ‘Mary’ energy lines as they meandered about the straight St Michael alignment, the latter being noted to pass through Alsia Holy Well, the moonlit waters of which are said to possess healing properties, and Boscawen-Ûn [see figure 6.13], the lunar associations of which are discussed above. The authors suggest that the way the twin energy lines meander about the straight alignment corresponds to the Caduceus, the ancient Egyptian staff of Thoth, ‘a magical rod crowned with the Sun-disk and encircled by two writhing serpents’ (Miller and Broadhurst 1998: 117), and a potent symbol of hermetic knowledge. ‘The serpent wand,’ they continue, ‘derives its power from its symbolism of energies operating in balance, the basic energies of existence mutually interacting.’

A further series of dowsing expeditions along a straight alignment of sites dedicated to St Michael and Apollo – from Skellig Michael [a former Celtic monastery, eight miles off the coast of Ireland] via St Michael’s Mount, Mont St Michel, Sacra di San Michele and San Michele di Monte Gargano in Italy, Delphi, Athens and the islands of Delos and Rhodes, to Mount Carmel in Israel – found the similar pattern of the twin ‘Apollo’ and ‘Athena’ energy lines meandering about a 2500 mile long axis

(Broadhurst and Miller 2003 [2000]) [see figure 6.14]. More pertinently, Broadhurst (1999 [1992]) identified an alignment of Tintagel Castle, Roughtor [with the foundations of a mediaeval chapel dedicated to St Michael] and Stowes Hill [with its sizeable former Neolithic settlement] with the winter solstice sunrise and the summer solstice sunset, accompanied by the twin 'Merlin' and 'Morgana' energy lines. He also identified a 'Round Table' of Cornish power centres, falling on concentric rings at 8¾miles [Launceston Castle, Old Cardinham Castle, Roughtor], 11¾miles [Restormel Castle at Lostwithiel, Castle Canyke at Bodmin, the prehistoric hill-fort of Helsbury Castle at Michaelstow, with a ruined chapel to St Michael, and the long barrow and earthwork at Warbstow Bury] and 16½miles [Tintagel Castle, St Catherine's Castle at Fowey] radius from Stowe's Hill [see figure 6.15]. His conclusion was that at least part of the Arthurian mythos derives from the existence of a royal centre at Stowe's Hill, which maintained power and legitimacy as a knowledge centre of geomancy.

There is, however, some disagreement as to the precise nature of leys. Michell (2001: 9) names Paul Devereux as one of 'the most active students of leys, geomancy and associated subjects' who, like Michell, was 'led to them through an earlier interest in UFO research' [see figure 6.16]. Watkins' theory of leys as ancient trackways, for Devereux (1994 [1979, 1987]: 5), released 'a flood of ancestral memory' for later generations of ley hunters. However, Devereux introduced a caveat to Michell's work by suggesting that not all leys were of specifically Neolithic ancestry. They might also have been ritual landscapes of more recent origins: church ways, straight or near-straight pathways marked by stone crosses from isolated farmsteads to churches, and from churches along the route by which coffins would be carried to graveyards, similar to the *Geisterwege* of Germanic north-western Europe. He did, however, agree with Michell in that 'West Penwith, the westernmost tip of the Cornish peninsula and England's most southwesterly corner, is a very ancient landscape, and,' for Devereux (1994 [1979, 1987]: 99) 'an ideal one in which to study old church ways.' Gabrielle Hawkes and Tom Henderson-Smith (1992), two artists based St Just, reconstructed a St Just-to-St Buryan coffin line in the pages of *The Ley Hunter*. However, Devereux (1994: 99) did admit that the church ways might have been 'fragmentarily based on older ways



Figure 6.14 [above]: **The Apollo and Athena Lines,**  
**from *The Dance of the Dragon*, 2003**

Figure 6.15 [below]: **The Merlin and Morgana Lines and the ‘Round Table’,**  
**from *Tintagel and the Arthurian Mythos*, 1999**



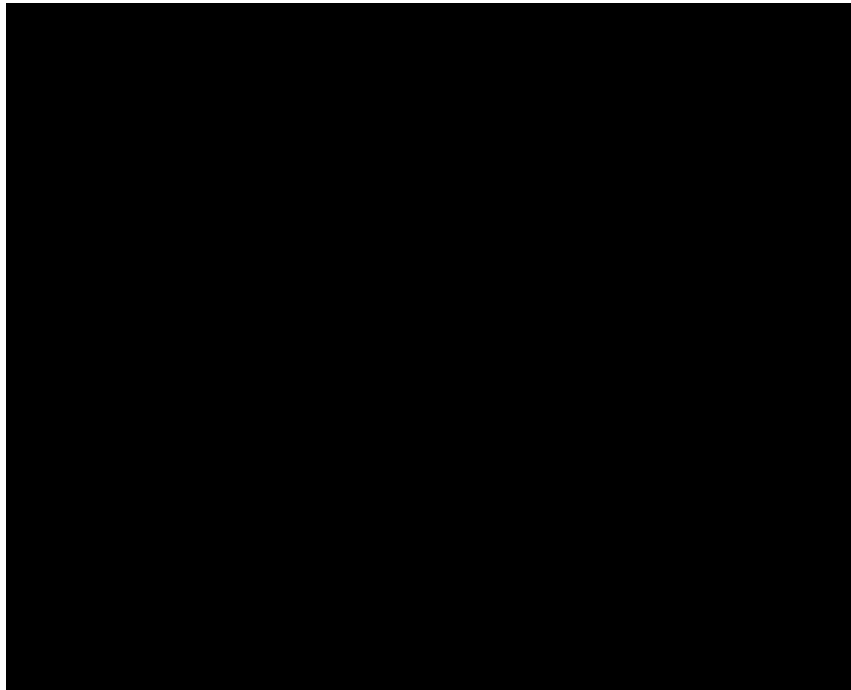
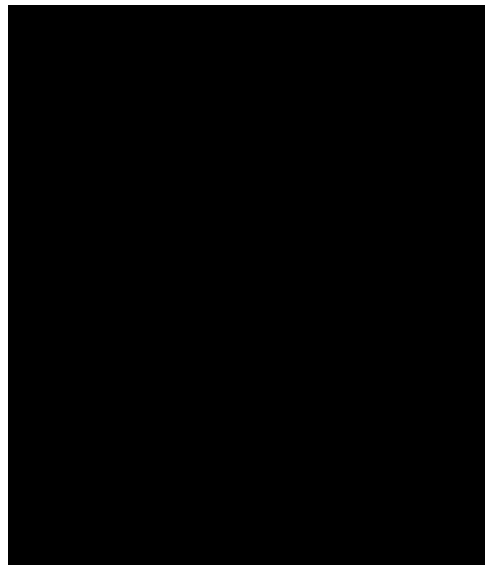
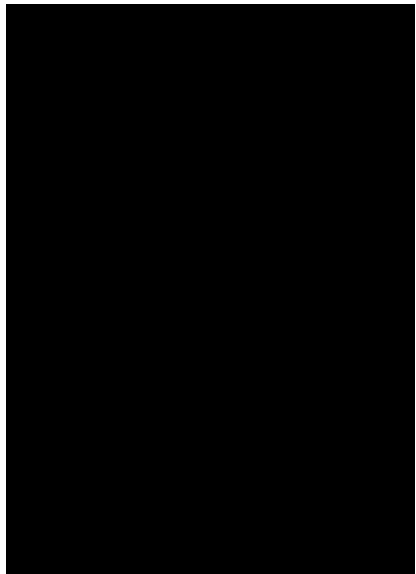


Figure 6.16 [above]: **Paul Devereux, date unknown**

Figure 6.17 [below left] **Cheryl Traffon, 2003**

Figure 6.18 [below right] **Andy Norfolk, date unknown**





through the landscape’. Craig Weatherhill (1993), on whom more later, wrote in *The Ley Hunter* of having found oral folk legends that referred to the use of part of the Zennor Churchway by witches, which Devereux (1994: 100) suggested were ‘echoes of it being a mythic route.’

Having assumed editorship of *The Ley Hunter* in 1976 – a position in which he remained for twenty years, for at least part of the duration of which he was based in Penzance – Devereux ‘attempted to fashion the subject into one worthy of serious study. Examples of leys were submitted to *The Ley Hunter*, examined and put to the statistical test.’ So wrote Danny Sullivan (1997: 45), Devereux’s successor as editor, in *3rd Stone*, another alternative archaeology magazine:

‘Devereux, uncomfortable with the energy lines ideas and fed up with being shunned by the archaeological and scientific communities (who saw the modern ley concept for the farrago of nonsense that it is), decided to instigate a research programme in which he would apply the scientific method to test whether the earth energy claims held water. This was the Dragon Project (now a charitable trust) which for 10 years, at the Rollright Stones and other sites, employed scientific monitoring instruments, dowsers, psychics and even magnetically sensitive shrimps! The conclusion was that apart from variable and rare anomalous features in the earth’s geomagnetic field, natural background radioactivity and ultrasound there was no evidence at all for an unknown “earth force” (Sullivan 1997: 46).

Devereux also began to encourage the formation of regional branches of the Ley Hunter’s Club. With Devereux’s encouragement, Cheryl Traffon (interview 9 April 2005) and Andy Norfolk (interview 11 April 2005), both of whom were [and, indeed, still are] variously active in the field of alternative archaeology at a national level, co-founded the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group [CEMG] in 1988 [see figures 6.17 and 6.18]. Born in Cornwall, Traffon read English with Comparative Religion at King’s College, University of London, while maintaining an outside interest in archaeology. She returned to Cornwall, editing the first edition of *Meyn Mamvro* [‘Stones of the Motherland’], a thrice-yearly Cornish-oriented alternative archaeology journal, in 1986, and taking up employment as a librarian at St Just

Library in 1987. Norfolk, meanwhile, read Landscape Design and Architecture at what was then Leeds Polytechnic, maintaining an outside interest in comparative religion, before gaining a Masters degree in Landscape Ecology at Wye College, now part of Imperial College, University of London. In terms of their active involvement in the field of alternative archaeology, both recall their reading *The View over Atlantis* and, in the Cornish context, *The Old Stones of Land's End* as particularly formative experiences (Straffon, interview 9 April 2005; Norfolk, interview 11 April 2005). Having been born outside Cornwall but to Cornish parents, who returned to live in Cornwall when he was still of pre-school age, Norfolk also returned to Cornwall as a self-employed Chartered Landscape Architect. Alternative archaeology in late twentieth century Cornwall thus begins to emerge sociologically, through university education and professional employment, and disciplinarily, through comparative religion and an archaeological and ecological attachment to landscape.

### **6.3.2 'Some sort of sympathetic interchange': Fieldwork as Pilgrimage**

Ley hunting, of course, is one of the most attractively open aspects of alternative archaeology. 'A ley,' as Williamson and Bellamy (1983: 202) acknowledge, 'can easily be found and confirmed in a weekend, so the ley hunters can feel themselves to be pushing forward the boundaries of knowledge without giving up an enormous amount of time.' A standard ley, for Devereux (1994), is less than 25 miles long and includes at least four or five aligned prehistoric sites – shorter, narrower alignments of as many sites as possible are preferred. The ley hunter will begin with a 1:50,000 scale OS map and a hard H pencil, moving to 1:25,000 for confirmation once a possible ley has been identified. Assuming that the ley passes this first confirmation, fieldwork ensues. 'The two most essential items for the ley hunter when out on fieldwork,' he continues (Devereux 1994: 49), 'are map and compass', along with other equipment such as binoculars and a camera:

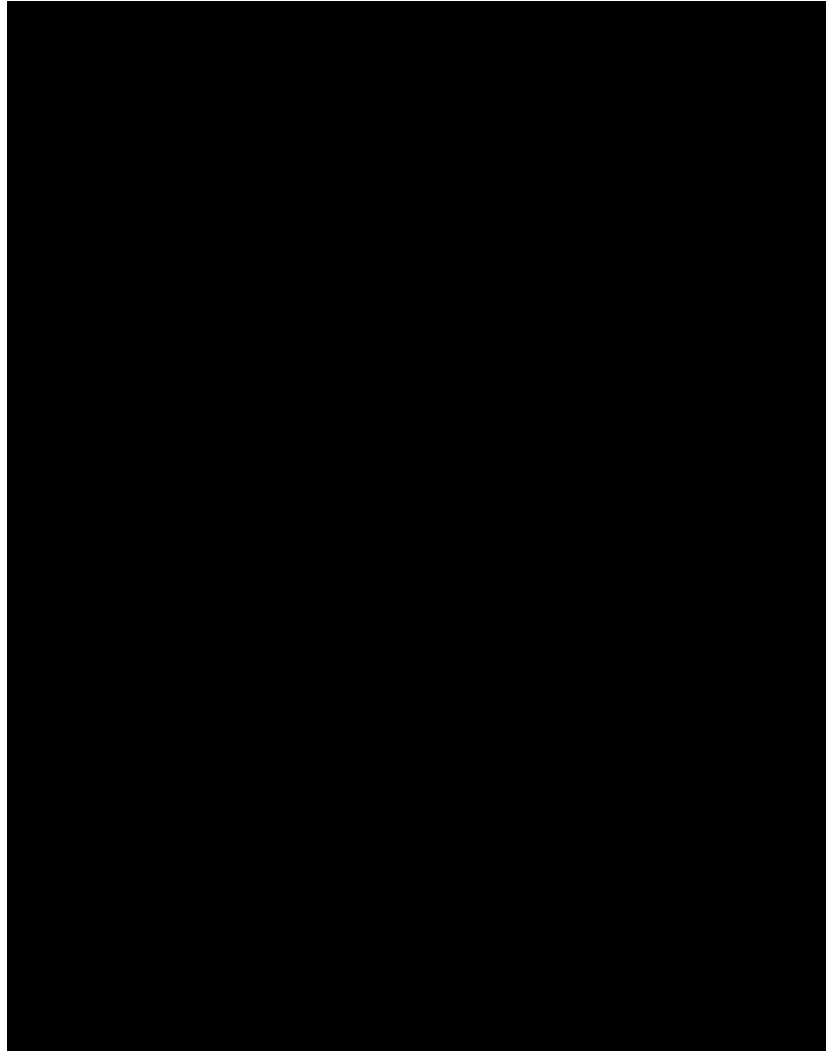
'It is a good idea to make a photographic record of each ley that is travelled. Watkins, a leading photographer in his day, recommended winter as the best season for ley photography, because then foliage is much reduced, allowing better visibility at certain sites, and because the

winter sun casts long shadows revealing the form of earthworks more clearly' (Devereux 1994: 51).

It is interesting to consider the nature of the evidence that Michell (1974) gathered in support of ley theory. The megalithic sites are located by means of an eight-figure Ordnance Survey grid reference, with accompanying photographs; the leys themselves are also reproduced in map form though rarely photographically, 'for a stone was often placed at the extreme limit of visibility so that only its tip showed above the horizon' (Michell 1974: 112). This, as illustrated by the photograph of an unrecorded stone in a hedge at Chyangwens [OS 41862709; see figure 6.19] from the Tresvannack Pillar, means that intervisibility is restricted to no more than one site in either direction on any one alignment. Photographic evidence of alignments is therefore rendered somewhat meaningless, although it does provide evidence of having visited each of the sites in the survey and, hence, time spent in the field. He also incorporates sketches and plan diagrams of the sites from the work of Cornish antiquarians, including Reverend William Borlase and J. T. Blight, and tables of astronomical alignments from the work of Sir Joseph Norman Lockyer. The cultural authority upon which Michell builds his argument for ley theory thus derives from detailed, time-consuming first-hand surveying techniques and apparent weight of primary evidence, combined with the authority drawn from his reading and referencing of certain key authoritative second-hand sources from the fields of Cornish antiquarianism and archaeo-astronomy.

The openness of alternative archaeology extends to the ability of the newcomer to participate in field research at the sites themselves. At the most subjective level, one might engage in what Devereux (1997) calls 'monumenteeing' – deliberately mobilising as many of the five bodily senses as possible, so as to give a personal and unique experience of a site, from which one might then abstract tentative conclusions regarding the site's effects on human consciousness. 'These sites,' as Straffon (1994: 20) suggests, 'are best visited in ones and twos and threes, places to deeply connect with the earth spirit, to perhaps sit and meditate awhile, perhaps even in an altered state of consciousness.' 'For me,' says Devereux (1997: 527),

'the lost knowledge and wisdom of the ancient world does not relate to



**Figure 6.19: Stone in Hedge at Chyangwens,  
from *The Old Stones of Land's End*, 1974**

how the ancient people built certain monuments, whether or not they could levitate stones, had help from ancient astronauts or whatever other notions might occupy our 20th-century minds. Rather, I feel what was known in some societies in the remote past *was an intimate knowledge of the mind, of consciousness*. These archaic peoples knew how to navigate mental space, and had a deep working knowledge of altered mind states.’

Archaeology thus becomes aligned with psychology in what Devereux, in the title of the essay quoted above, calls ‘the archaeology of consciousness’.

While alternative archaeologists are able to mobilise, to varying degrees, a working knowledge of ‘etymology, astronomy, geometry, prehistory, history, mathematics and the analysis of folklore’ (Williamson and Bellamy 1983: 11), one of the most remarkable aspects of the field is its openness to contributions from any newcomer at any level. In the first instance, this amounts to making sites of interest, often difficult to find, as open and accessible as possible by writing OS grid references into archaeological guidebooks (Weatherhill 2000a, b), if not by structuring the books around a series of guided walks (Cooke 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997; Straffon 1998b) [see figure 6.20]. The ‘beauty and power’ of West Penwith, for Straffon (1998a: 51), is that most of the sites of archaeological interest are ‘free and open... You have to walk to find them, across the wild moors, through boggy farms, down overgrown lanes,’ she concedes, but finding them ‘is part of the joy; it is a spiritual pilgrimage; and discovering some of their hidden meaning is part of the reward.’ Cooke (1996a: 5) also valorises walking beyond practical necessity: ‘it is only by experiencing the local landscape on foot,’ he argues, ‘that a deep and intimate acquaintance with this unique peninsula can be attained.’

The holy wells of Cornwall are singled out as particularly powerful sites as a result of their isolated situation in the landscape. ‘Half-hidden at the end of secret pathways, stumbled upon near old streams, nestling at the bottom of remote valleys far from modern-day roads and cottages,’ writes Straffon (1997 [1993]: 39; see also Straffon 1998b),

‘Cornwall’s holy wells are places of healing and contemplation, and refuges from the strains and pressures of 20th century “civilisation”. They

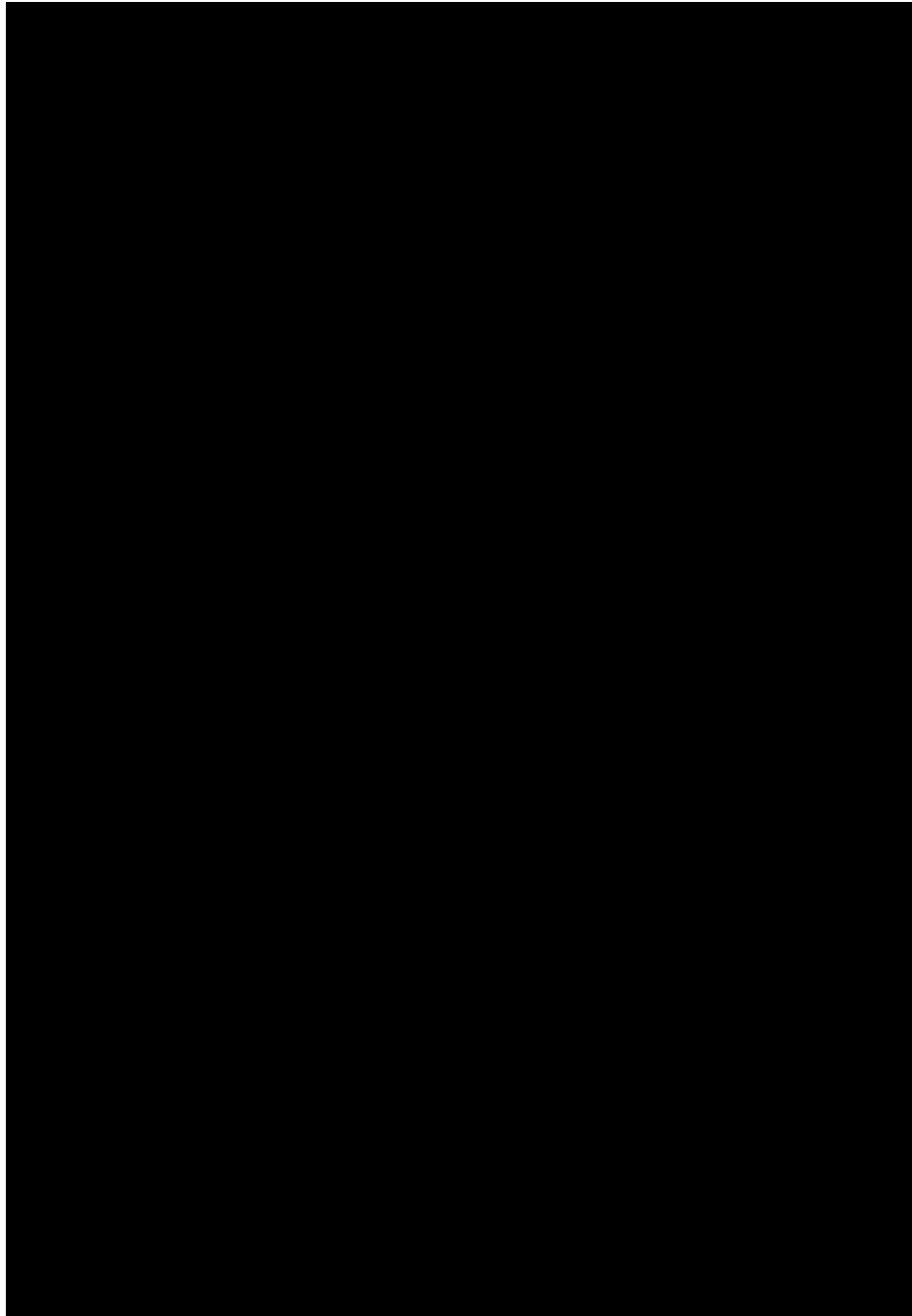


Figure 6.20: **Mên-an-Tol Circular Walks,**  
from *Antiquities of West Cornwall – Guide One, 1997*

link us back to a more mysterious, more spiritual past, back to the early days of the Celtic saints, and back before even then, for doubtless they were pagan places of veneration long before they became Christianised.’

This question of site evolution recurs in the alternative archaeological literature. For Traffon, the ‘Lan-’ component in a Cornish place name is evidence of the evolution of a Christian church on a Pagan burial sites, or *lan*. Williamson and Bellamy (1983), while not denying that such evolution might have occurred, doubt that it might have been widespread given that, as late as the ninth and tenth centuries, Christianity in Britain depended more on peripatetic priests than parish churches, by which time contemporary Paganism was largely of invasive Anglo-Saxon, rather than native Celtic, origins.

When Paul Broadhurst (1997 [1988]: 8) began the field research for *Secret Shrines*, his own book on the holy wells of Cornwall, he ‘took advantage of modern technology and set off with cameras and tripod, maps and Wellington boots,’ and an understanding of the holy wells as ‘little more than a collection of interesting, if obscure, antiquities.’ His original intention ‘was to photograph them in a sympathetic manner which may give a glimpse into the mysterious qualities of these sacred springs, once worshipped by our remote ancestors, and now only haunted by their ghosts.’ However, he ‘soon became captivated by the magical atmosphere that seemed to hang like a cloud around some of the old remains... Slowly,’ he continues,

‘I began to “tune in” to the wells until some sort of sympathetic interchange seemed to take place. I would become lost in wondering about the vast ages of time that they had witnessed, and their intimate connections with countless generations of humanity,’

and his fieldwork came to take on a sense of pilgrimage. Alsia Holy Well [see figure 6.21] emerges from ‘a small, dark, cavern’ in a hollow down in the corner of a field in the hamlet of the same name, between St Buryan and Land’s End, ‘with no trace of any building to detract from its delicate charm’ (Broadhurst 1997: 184). This dual sense of isolation, from the built environment and from the surface world, for Broadhurst (1997: 186), leaves ‘the impression that the guardian of the well is standing somewhere nearby, looking on kindly as the pilgrimage draws to a close.’

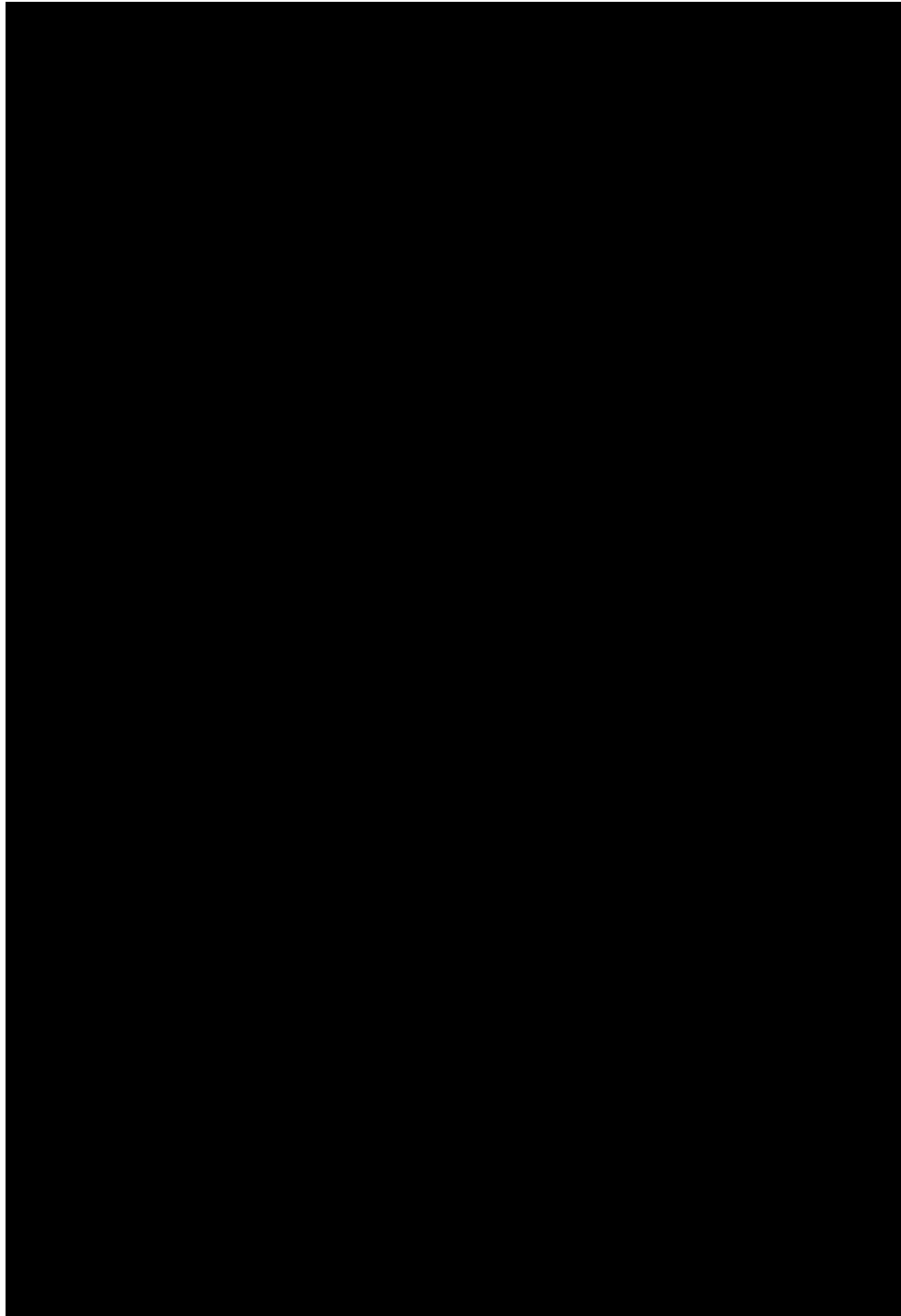


Figure 6.21: **Alsia Holy Well,**  
**from *Secret Shrines*, 1997**



Thus spiritual pilgrimage becomes aligned with a certain version of anti-modern protest, but also with the fieldwork techniques of modern archaeology. Despite its interest in prehistoric religion, alternative archaeology is not inherently anti-scientific. Indeed, it represents an ambivalent relationship between science and the mystical, bringing research methodologies to bear upon the archaeological past that range from the 'scientific, or quasi-scientific' to the 'much more intuitive and personal' (Straffon 2004: 1). One area in which methodologies from either end of the spectrum are most notably juxtaposed is that of dowsing; for those alternative archaeologists who argue the existence of earth energy currents, which might be found to meander about identifiable leys, an additional item of equipment is the dowsing rod (see Broadhurst 1997, 1999; Broadhurst and Miller 2003; Miller 1998, 2002; Miller and Broadhurst 1998).

As discussed above, there is some controversy within alternative archaeology regarding dowsing: 'I have no doubt that some dowsers can detect subtle forms of magnetism and radiation in the environment,' Devereux (1994: 74-5) begins, but 'our planet teems with a myriad energies, natural and artificial... So anyone setting forth with their rods to dowse simply "energy" will be inundated with a random array of energy input, even supposing they are any good at dowsing at all.' Again, scientific knowledge is used to argue the case for a particular understanding of a field that has, in turn, often argued against a particular understanding of scientific knowledge. 'If the ley hunter wants to develop dowsing skills, then fine,' he continues (Devereux 1994: 75-6),

'but it is important to at least start by dowsing tangible, accountable targets such as lost objects or water. That is what dowsing truly is, and in that way one learns the limits of any dowsing skill, and also how not to mistake dowsing stimuli in the environment for something they are not. "Energy dowsing" in the sense it is employed in New Age geomancy is not only not ley hunting, it is not true dowsing either. In the end, it harms both fields of valid endeavour.'

Meanwhile, John Michell, in his foreword to *The Sun and the Serpent*, appeals to a particular understanding of scientific method so as to support its authors' findings. Pointing out, first of all, that Miller has staked his experience and his status within the dowsing community upon the findings, Michell (1989: 14) adds:

‘Science likes experiments to be repeatable, and if the phenomenon here described is to have scientific standing, other people also must find it. With that in mind, and to facilitate detailed investigation of their claims, the authors offer to provide interested readers with local maps, marked with the lines of current which they have found.’

However, in an appeal to ideas of verification and the peer review process in scientific [and, more broadly, academic] literature, it emerges that

‘in many cases different dowzers find different lines and patterns, and sometimes these are contradictory in nature. So, despite what some dowzers might like to claim, tapping into energy lines is not an exact science, and is often a very personal and individual response to what is there... It does become more interesting, and sometimes more verifiable, when a group of dowzers come together at a site to see what they can collectively find’ (Straffon 2004: 10).

Rather more objectively [for want of a less loaded term], in the 1990s, Devereux was involved in raising funding for, and conducting and supervising research on, the Dragon Project, part of the remit of which was the measuring of electromagnetic radiation and ultrasound at various sites of [alternative] archaeological interest, including the Rollright Stones in Oxfordshire. Even this apparently costly and highly technical approach is rendered potentially accessible to all: ‘It is actually not difficult to build a device that can measure radioactive emissions as counts-per-minute (cpm),’ writes Straffon (2004: 17), ‘and the CEMG [Cornwall Earth Mysteries Group] had such a device built for them by someone from Cambridge University.’ Andy Norfolk, co-founder [with Cheryl Straffon] of the CEMG, also designed a computer program into which were entered the Ordnance Survey grid references of all of the sites of interest in a given area, and which would then calculate any and all alignments of three or more of the sites along a line of ten metres’ width (see Straffon 1994, 1995a, 1999). In the Bodmin Moor area, for example, the program identified 108 alignments of megalithic sites [cairns, standing stones and stone

circles], of which four were seven-point leys, two were eight-point leys, one was a nine-point ley and one was a ten-point ley (Straffon 1995a) [see figure 6.22].

The example of ley hunting also reveals the variety of sites that come within the compass of alternative archaeology. Those at the core are Neolithic and Bronze Age megalithic monuments: stone circles, standing stones [menhirs], burial chambers [quoits], souterrains [fogous], holy wells and stone crosses, the latter being surmised to be Christianised standing stones that were formerly Pagan solar or phallic symbols. Ian McNeil Cooke (1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997) – an amateur archaeologist, and owner of the Mên-an-Tol Studio, whose work often crosses over to draw upon and to propound alternative archaeological ideas – centres his *Antiquities of West Cornwall* guides on three sites: Mên-an-Tol, the Merry Maidens stone circle, and Carn Euny settlement and fogou. However, part of the power of these sites comes from their situation in the exposed upland moorland landscapes of Cornwall. Straffon (1998a: 51) writes of ‘the ancient landscape [of West Penwith], wild and elemental in places,’ which ‘is intermingled with the hand of early man and woman, until you are never sure what is natural and what has been built.’ As will be discussed in more detail below, alternative archaeologists make an important distinction between the harmonious human-nature relations of prehistoric life and the exploitative human-nature relations of modern civilisation.

There is a distinct regional geography to the landscape geometry of Cornwall. As might be surmised from the above discussion, much of the attention of ley hunters – and alternative archaeologists more generally – in Cornwall is directed towards West Penwith, the Land’s End peninsula (see, for example, Michell 1974; Weatherhill 2000a; Straffon 1998a; Cooke 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997). In addition, other regional foci include the Isles of Scilly, Bodmin Moor, and ‘clusters of sites around granitic uplands like Carn Brea, Carnmenellis, St. Austell Downs, St. Breock Downs, Kit Hill etc, and isolated stones, crosses, and wells in what are often remote and secluded places’ (Straffon 1994: 2). ‘Unlike the concentration of sites in particular areas in the rest of Cornwall,’ she continues (Straffon 1994: 20), ‘the Lizard has few obvious centres of antiquity, but rather a scattering of individual places of sanctity.’ In addition, Straffon – borrowing a concept from ancient Greece – locates the sacred

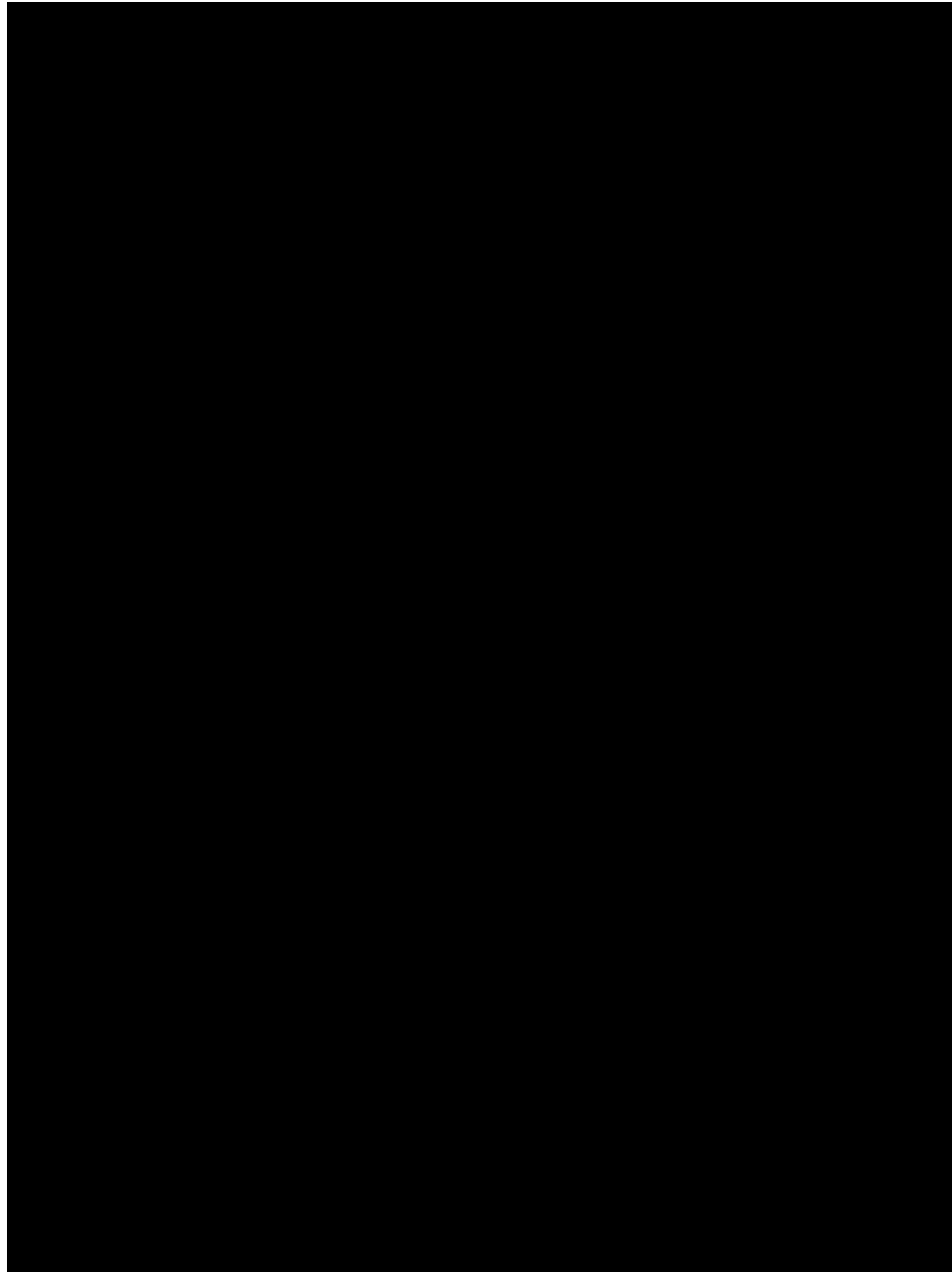


Figure 6.22: **Bodmin Moor Alignments,**  
from *Earth Mysteries Guide to Bodmin Moor and North Cornwall*, 1995

centre, or *omphalos* [Greek = ‘navel’], of Cornwall at Lanivet. ‘There is an old saying,’ she writes (Straffon 1994: 25),

‘that the spot is “in the middle of the county, north and south, east and west.” It is the mid-point on the Saint’s Way, the route across Cornwall taken by the early Christian saints and travellers from Ireland to Brittany and back... It is also about 50 miles from Land’s End and 40 from the Tamar, making it symbolically “the geographical centre of Cornwall”.’

Alternative archaeology, of course, *is* not exclusive to Cornwall: Devereux (1994) includes a ley gazetteer that has examples from Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Dorset, Hereford and Worcester, Cheshire and North Yorkshire. It is also interesting to note how Cornwall works in relation to the international spatialities of alternative archaeology, with landscape alignments in Britain having geomantic parallels not only in *feng shui*, but also in the urban architecture and planning of the Aztecs and the Mayans of Central America, in the Native American oral landscape traditions and Aboriginal Australian songlines, and the famous Nazca lines of Peru. Returning to the above example of the *omphalos*, this particular aspect of sacred geometry has, says Straffon (1994: 25),

‘occurred to many different cultures in different places, from Greece (Delphi), to Mecca, to England, which has several candidates. Every Celtic land also had its own centre: in Ireland it was the holy hill of Tara; in the Scottish Hebrides the sacred isle of Iona; on the Isle of Man Keeil Abban, a spot that stood right in the centre of a line between the most northerly and southerly points of the island crossed by the east-west axis.’

It might be noted from these international spatialities that the golden age of the mystical is commonly located at some unspecified period of prehistory, to which Michell (2001) refers, allegorically, as ‘Atlantis’. Devereux (1994: 3), for example, contrasts modern urban consciousness and ‘a remote time when people’s lives were closely in step with elemental and spiritual realities, when the landscape, the heavens and the human mind were understood as one deeply interdependent whole.’ Similarly, for Straffon (1998a: 21), the peoples of prehistory recognised ‘no division between the physical and the spiritual.’ The restoration of this prehistoric consciousness is centrally important to the restoration of the harmonious human-

nature relations of prehistory; dowsing is one of the ways in which we might regain such a consciousness:

‘Our prehistoric ancestors were probably much more in tune with the earth and its place in the cosmos than we are today, surrounded as we are by so much artificial electricity, light and other energies. They could probably sense or dowse minute changes in the patterns of power and energy that flow through this earth. They were aware of changes in the radiation, the electromagnetic fields, the light anomalies, and the strange sounds that sometimes can be found in certain rocks and stones, and manifest in particular places. At these places they built their monuments’ (Straffon 2004: 82).

Through the inclusion of holy wells and stone crosses alongside stone circles, burial chambers and souterrains as sites of alternative archaeological interest, the historicities of alternative archaeology are not exclusively of the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, but also include Dark Age Cornwall. The doctrines of Celtic Christianity, writes Michell (1974: 10),

‘were entirely in accordance with those of the Druids, who provided some of its early ministers; the old sacred places by rocks, springs and holy wells were reconsecrated to the saints of the new religion, and the feasts and festivals continued as before, but under new patrons.’

Straffon (1995a: 31) agrees: ‘For the ordinary folk,’ she writes,

‘life went on much as before. The focus of their lives was the wheel of the year, the turning of the season’s round, and although by now nominally Christian, their beliefs and customs linked back to their ancestors who had built the megalithic monuments that were still scattered over the landscape.’

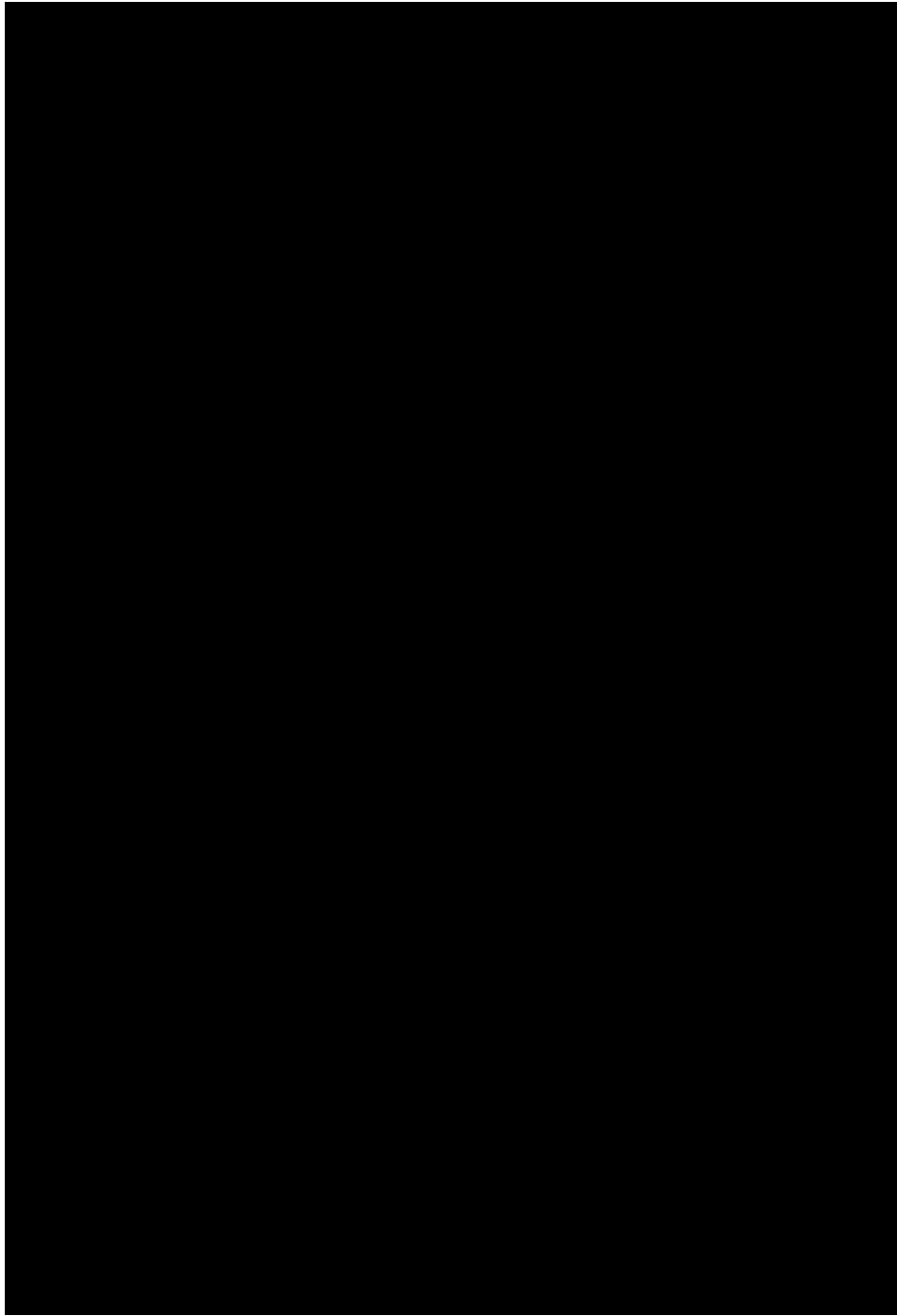
In this way, oral legends of Cornwall as the land of the giants were able to survive among the Cornish folk ‘until the rise of Methodism and the March of Intellect stopped their tongues and diverted their imagination to more profitable objects’ (Michell 1974: 10).

Alternative archaeology, as with any cultural movement, draws its historical self-understanding, in part, from a set of pioneer figures who are claimed as predecessors

of the movement. For alternative archaeologists in Cornwall, these predecessors include the empirical descriptions and illustrations of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century antiquarians [William Borlase, J. T. Blight and Hugh O'Neill Hencken as general authorities; Mabel and Lillian Quiller-Couch on holy wells, Arthur G. Langdon, and T. and H. Dexter on stone crosses] and nineteenth century folklorists [William Bottrell, Robert Hunt]. Notable omissions from this canon are the more language-oriented Celtic-Cornish Revivalists [Henry Jenner, Robert Morton Nance], whose omission is indicative of a shift from a linguistic Celticism to a new internationalism based more on the archaeological landscape. Sir J. Norman Lockyer, whose work on the astronomical alignments of ancient sites was based on studies of the Egyptian pyramids and extended to the stone circles at Avebury and Stonehenge, was a figure who appeared on the very fringes of the early Revivalist movement, but whose work reappears at the centre of alternative archaeology. Archaeoastronomy 'was pioneered by the Earth Mysteries researchers from the 1970s onwards, and dismissed by archaeologists as the "lunatic fringe",' writes Traffon (2004: 2). 'Of course, needless to say, the new generation of archaeologists are now discovering this material for themselves, even if they do not always acknowledge their debt to the early pioneers!' Last, but by no means least, was the founder of ley hunting, Alfred Watkins, whose theory of leys as ancient trackways released, for later generations of ley hunters, 'a flood of ancestral memory' (Devereux 1994: 5).

### **6.3.3 'A Higher Orthodoxy': Land Ownership, Rights of Access and the Mystical Geographies of late twentieth century Cornwall**

*The Old Stones of Land's End* (Michell 1974) carries a fascinating full-page dedication. Beneath the Royal badge and motto, Michell dedicates the book – by permission, through a friend of his, whose house stands on Duchy land – to Prince Charles, Duke of Cornwall [see figure 6.23]. On the facing page, beneath the badge and motto of Cornwall, is an untitled poem in which Michell (1974: vi) declaims the 'Scorn for the Law,' the 'consequent contempt for human kind / Its ways, its marks, its native cast of mind,' and the 'impious hand that felled the antique stone' [referring to the Men Amber, a logan stone that was toppled, circa 1650, by Governor Shruballsall of Pendennis Castle] that, for him, characterise Protectorate



**Figure 6.23: The Old Stones of Land's End – Dedication,  
from The Old Stones of Land's End, 1974**



England. He goes on to appeal to Prince Charles – ‘Heir to a throne restored’ – to ‘See how in Cornish stones a sign remains / Of ancient, mystic rule, by none abhorred / Save by the godless tyrant, ’gainst whose hand / Our cross, our Crown, our customs rock-like stand.’ Partly, says Michell (interview 14 April 2005), this dedication was made as a tribute to J. T. Blight, whose *Ancient Crosses and other Antiquities in the East of Cornwall* [1858] was also dedicated – through his patron, Parson Hawker of Morwenstow, and with a similar accompanying poem – to the Duke of Cornwall, later King Edward VII.

And partly, it was a political statement: ‘Due to the prevalence of neo-Darwinian and Marxist social theory among its recent professors,’ writes Michell (1974: 108),

‘archaeology has contributed virtually nothing to the study of megalithic science, nor has it been much inclined to take the matter seriously, regarding prehistoric structures as necessarily the work of men inferior to ourselves in intellect and knowledge, and of interest only as relics of their primitive culture.’

Recognising that his work was ‘going against the orthodoxy of the time’ – a social evolutionary orthodoxy in which the prehistoric past was teleologically subordinate to the present (Greene 2002) – Michell (interview 14 April 2005), ‘tried to claim a higher orthodoxy.’ Michell’s work is not unorthodox in an absolute sense; rather, his aim is to help bring about the restoration of one orthodoxy – a once-universal system of knowledge to which he refers as geomancy – to replace another, that of

‘the modern European with his materialistic philosophy and science as the highest product of an evolutionary process, in the course of which the human race has supposedly been led through stages of bestiality, unreason and superstition to modern enlightenment’ (Michell 1974: 107).

It is the argument here that Michell’s work does not represent the orthodox aligned with and/or set against the unorthodox; rather, it represents his intervention in a debate between complex rival sets of alignments of certain cultural, historical, political and intellectual orthodoxies.

That said, Michell (interview 14 April 2005) describes *The View over Atlantis* as ‘a product of its time – the middle ’60s,’ a time during which the boundaries of thought and experience were being challenged – for Michell, at least – by ‘new music, new

drugs' (see also McKay 1996). There thus remains a spirit of counter-cultural protest in Michell's work, although not so much related to 1960s drop-out culture and a refusal to participate in political discourse as to an active political opposition to modern progressive orthodoxies. Furthermore, hallucinogenic drugs might also be useful research tools: Straffon (1994: 20) recommends visiting sites 'in ones and twos and threes... to perhaps sit and meditate awhile, perhaps even in an altered state of consciousness.' Elsewhere, she suggests several different ways of attaining an altered state of consciousness, including dreaming, meditation, ritual drumming and the ingestion of narcotic plants (Straffon 2004). Moreover, the years since the 1960s have been characterised, for Straffon (interview 9 April 2005), by the increasing visibility of ethnic, sexual and religious minority groups – the latter including Pagans. For those, like Straffon, for whom reading *The View over Atlantis* was a particularly formative experience, this spirit of counter-cultural protest has contributed to the engagement of alternative archaeology and paganism with various identity politics movements and with contemporary environmental issues, all arguably occupying a broad left-of-centre common political ground.

Cooke (1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997, interview 19 April 2005), indeed, frames his understanding of the Cornish prehistoric landscape in terms of an historical narrative from commune to kingdom that, in turn, he derives from Friedrich Engels' (1972 [1884]) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* – a derivation that is in marked contrast to Michell's anti-Marxism, thereby illustrating the different and often contradictory opinions within alternative archaeology that draw upon the same basic ideas. During the Neolithic and early Bronze Age, Cooke argues, society was communal; intra-tribal marriages were loose and easily dissolved, and lineage was established through the mother as the only authenticable parent. However, as inter-tribal population pressures increased, so society became more defensively property-oriented and patriarchal, as men rose in social prominence through the increasing need to wage war. It is through such historical narratives that alternative archaeology also connects to eco-feminist Paganism and the revival of the prehistoric cult of the Mother-Goddess or Earth-Mother, based on the evidence of archaeology, prehistory, legend and folklore (Lowerson 1992; Straffon 1997, 2004). The Goddess is 'a spiritual essence... the life-giving and sustaining force of the universe' (Straffon 1997: 4) through whom Neolithic society, and the Neolithic landscape, are gendered.

On archaeological evidence from the Neolithic hillfort on Carn Brea, near Redruth, along with that from other sites in the south of England, though, Cooke (1996a: 22) is forced to concede that ‘Neolithic society, despite its probable matriarchal organisation, was not averse to warfare when the occasion demanded.’

Alternative archaeologists make an important distinction between the perceived harmonious human-nature relations of prehistoric life, often allied to ideas of the Celtic, and the exploitative human-nature relations of modern civilisation. ‘Immigrants [to Cornwall] who related to green, anti-metropolitan alternative sentiments,’ writes Kent (2000: 243; see also Hale 2002), ‘believed that Celticity was also their birthright as the Celts were the original Britons. This was a reaction to perceived Anglo-Saxon linked traits of materialism, rationality and development.’ Such ideas of the Celtic are in notable contrast to what Kent (2000: 282) identifies as a more authentically Cornish version of Celticity: ‘Unlike other Celtic territories, Cornwall was the first to industrialize, and thus a growing sense of difference has been based on the Cornish conceptualization of itself as the... “industrial Celt”.’ Hale (2002) goes on to discuss consequent attempts by some alternative archaeologists to synthesise industrialism and Celtic Paganism, including Cooke’s (1993) interpretation of the Cornish fogou as an expiatory offering to the Earth Goddess by prehistoric tin miners.

The ‘beauty and power’ of West Penwith, for Straffon (1998: 51), also derives from the fact that most of the sites of alternative archaeological interest are ‘free and open, not fenced in with special opening hours, nor given tarmaced access and tourist shops.’ Given that one can reach many sites of interest only on foot, ‘across the wild moors, through boggy farms, down overgrown lanes,’ alternative archaeologists will often engage with the politics of land ownership and rights of access. ‘I felt it was important to publicise the remaining footpaths because a lot of them were left hardly used,’ says Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) of *Journey to the Stones*, ‘and I had a job finding them.’ The sites themselves, meanwhile,

‘are always under pressure, from those pressure groups who wish to exploit and develop them for tourism, from those official bodies who wish to alter and “interpret” them for the general public, and from those

indifferent or antagonistic landowners (thankfully the minority) who would like to get rid of them!’ (Straffon 1998: 2).

Partly for this reason, both Straffon (interview 5 July 2002) and Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) wrote their respective [alternative] archaeological guide books so as to spread visitor pressure across as many sites as possible.

Paradoxically, this kind of pressure is both a problem and a solution. By publicising the existence and the location of the sites, and the ways by which one might best visit them, Cooke (1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997) also aims to help maintain a critical mass of walkers on public footpaths and customary rights of way that might otherwise be lost to landowners and encroaching vegetation. In respect of contemporary debates over public rights of access to private land, however, alternative archaeologists – perhaps recognising that the discipline depends upon maintaining amiable relations with landowners on whose land are located certain of the sites – remain notably cautious. ‘People have wildly diverging opinions on land ownership,’ writes Devereux (1994: 51).

‘Some contend that it is virtually immoral for an individual or a family to possess great tracts of land, country estates and the like, while others argue that this is one way to preserve areas of the countryside and to prevent the chaotic encroachments of housing and industrial developments. There are certainly two sides to the argument, and we keep well out of it. We do urge, however, that respect be accorded to landowners, whatever personal opinions may be held.’

There is also a close connection between alternative archaeology and the various strands of modern Paganism. Straffon (1997), in *Pagan Cornwall*, attempted to reinterpret existing archaeological research so as to write ‘a different history’ to existing histories of ‘warfare, and tribes, and hierarchy’ (interview 9 April 2005). Based on her own such work, and on that of others from the field of Goddess Studies, Straffon argues that societies around the Aegean – in particular, Crete – were ‘peace-loving’ and ‘Goddess-celebrating,’ and that ‘we knew that Cornwall had a very direct link with places like Crete.’ The Pagan Federation, formed in 1971, defines Paganism as any ‘polytheistic or pantheistic nature-worshipping religion.’ While this encompasses a variety of Pagan traditions, including witchcraft, Druidism,

goddess worship and shamanism, the Pagan Federation constitution includes three central principles of Paganism:

‘1. Love for and Kinship with Nature. Reverence for the life force and its ever-renewing cycles of life and death.

‘2. A positive morality, in which the individual is responsible for the discovery and development of their true nature in harmony with the outer world and community. This is often expressed as “Do what you will, as long as it harms none”.

‘3. Recognition of the Divine, which transcends gender, acknowledging both the female and male aspect of Deity.’

However, it also includes a disclaimer to the effect that some Pagans might not feel able to agree to one, two or even all three of these principles.

For Norfolk (interview 11 April 2005), this diversity is one of the strengths of modern Paganism: ‘There is not supposed to be any kind of hierarchy,’ he says, ‘there isn’t money, there aren’t temples.’ However, this diversity can also be a weakness. Sarah Vivian (interview 21 April 2005) [see figure 6.24], an artist and member of the Penwith Pagan Moot, suggests that tensions are far more likely to arise between different Pagan groups, particularly between Cornish Pagan groups and those from outside of Cornwall, than between Pagans and Christians. She recalls one incident in which she had gone to spend some time alone at the Carfury standing stone, near Madron [see figure 6.25],

‘and these people turned up in very occult looking garments, and they had a chicken with them, and I thought, “Oh no, I don’t believe it. Are they really going to? Oh no.” And I kind of didn’t know what to do, carry on being there or just get out of the way for my own sake, ’cause there were a lot more of them than there was of the one of me... ...They came from one of the London boroughs, they came from London somewhere, ok, and they’d come from London to do a blood ritual. And they were totally up-front about it: they’d come from London to do a blood ritual. And when I tried to protest that I didn’t think that people round here would like that sort of thing taking place, I was told to mind my effing business. So, yes, there can be tensions, but it is much, much, much more likely to come from without than from the local community.’



Figure 6.24 [above]: **Sarah Vivian, date unknown**

Figure 6.25 [below]: **Carfury Standing Stone, 2004**



By contrast, the history of Paganism in late twentieth century Cornwall has been one of ever-improving relations with Christian groups. While Straffon (interview 9 April 2005) understands the relationship between Pagans and Christians in Cornwall as one of mutual tolerance, rather than of active co-operation, she stresses the difference that this represents to the misunderstanding and consequent mistrust that has caused some tensions between Pagans and Christians:

‘a few years ago, the Pagan group that I was part of went up to Sancreed well to celebrate one of the festivals, and we made an offering of flowers at the well, which we left actually at the well, and the next thing I picked *The Cornishman* up and there was our offering of flowers being held up high by the church warden with the heading: “Black Magic Rites at Sancreed Well,” but it wouldn’t happen now... It would not happen any more. There have been huge changes, and I think that there’s more of that to come.’

Moreover, ‘in the absence of any Countryside or Conservation Officer posts on Penwith District Council’ (Straffon 2005: 1), CEMG, *Meyn Mamvro*, the Penwith Pagan Moot, the Pagan Federation and the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids [OBOD] are all represented on the Cornish Ancient Sites Protection Network, which also consists of representatives of the National Trust, English Heritage, Penwith District Council and Madron Community Forum. The latter, significantly, includes representatives of local Methodist groups.

Furthermore, Norfolk (interview 11 April 2005) agrees with Ronald Hutton’s assessment that Paganism became associated with the politics of feminism and nuclear disarmament through the Greenham Common protests of the 1980s. Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) says that he ‘used to be involved in sit down protests’ over similar issues. There is also a politics of alternative archaeology where road travel is necessary, with public transport valorised above private transport. In his *Antiquities of West Cornwall* guides, Cooke provides information on how best to come to the start of each walk by means of public transport from the nearest sizeable town. Alternative archaeology can thus be understood as a series of interventions in debates between complex rival sets of alignments of certain cultural, historical, political and intellectual orthodoxies. One further important set of debates in any

discussion of late twentieth century Cornwall is that around the Cornish political nationalist movement, to which the discussion turns in the next section. Traffon (interview 5 July 2002), for example, admits a cautious sympathy towards Cornish political nationalism, her caution being because of the possible right-wing connotations of any nationalist movement. Therefore, the section 6.3.4 discusses the relationship between academic and alternative archaeology, before section 6.4 moves on to discuss the complex and contested interrelationships between the mystical and the different senses of Cornwall as a geographical entity that have both produced, and been produced by, changes in Cornish political culture since the 1960s.

#### **6.3.4 'The Past and the Post-Modern Challenge': Academic and Alternative Archaeology in late twentieth century Cornwall**

A particular association of vision and the visionary is to be found in the work of Ian McNeil Cooke [see figure 6.26], who came to be involved in Cornish archaeology through his work as an artist and printmaker. He moved to Cornwall in 1970 – following in a long line of artists who have sought inspiration in the Cornish landscape (Payton 1996a; Vernon 1998; Crouch and Toogood 1999) – and established the Mên-an-Tol Studio in 1979. 'It was after drawing many antiquities,' says Cooke (e-mail 20 July 2002), 'that I began to get interested in who put them there and why.' His interpretation of the Mên-an-Tol [see figure 6.27] is based on established archaeological knowledge that the site has very much not always been in its present-day configuration. He reproduces plans of the site by Reverend William Borlase, dating from 1769 and showing the holed stone and its two accompanying standing stones arranged in a triangle [see figure 6.28], and by Reverend William Cotton, dating from 1820 and showing the stones arranged in a line with the Mên-an-Tol set at a slight angle [see figure 6.29] (Cooke 1993, 1996a). Furthermore, he openly questions the interpretation that was proposed in *Meyn Mamvro*, in which it was suggested that the Mên-an-Tol was originally either an entrance portal or a capstone for a burial chamber of which all other evidence has since disappeared. As Cooke (1996a) points out, such a monument would be unique in the Cornish archaeological record.



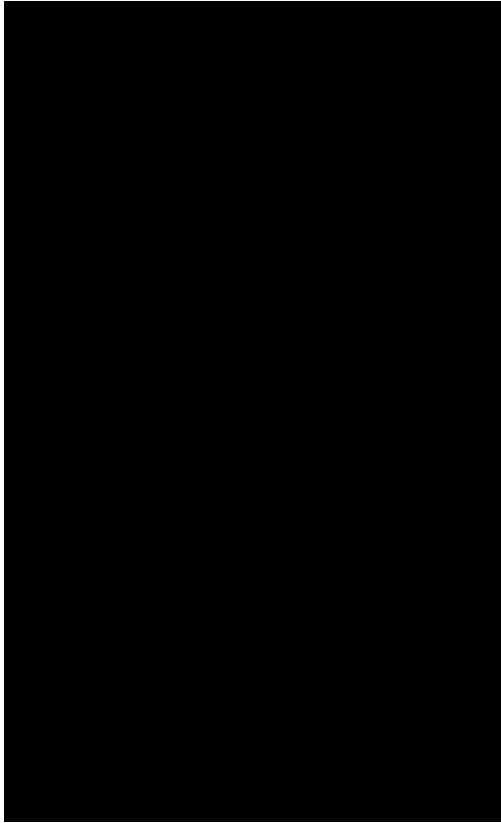


Figure 6.26 [above]: **Ian McNeil Cooke**  
from *Mother and Sun*, 1993

Figure 6.27 [below]: **Mên-an-Tol Holed Stone**, 2002



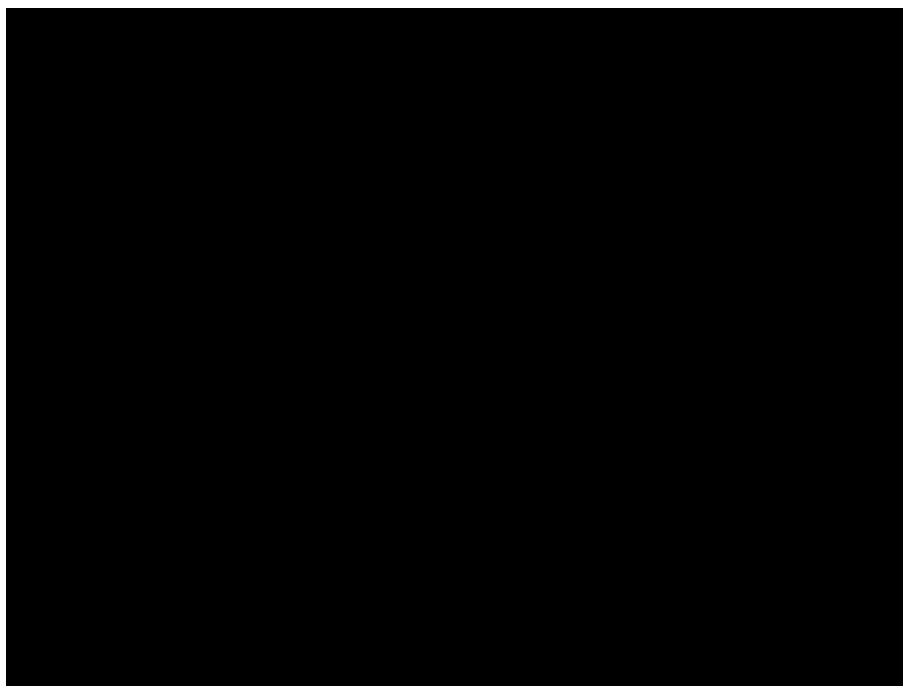
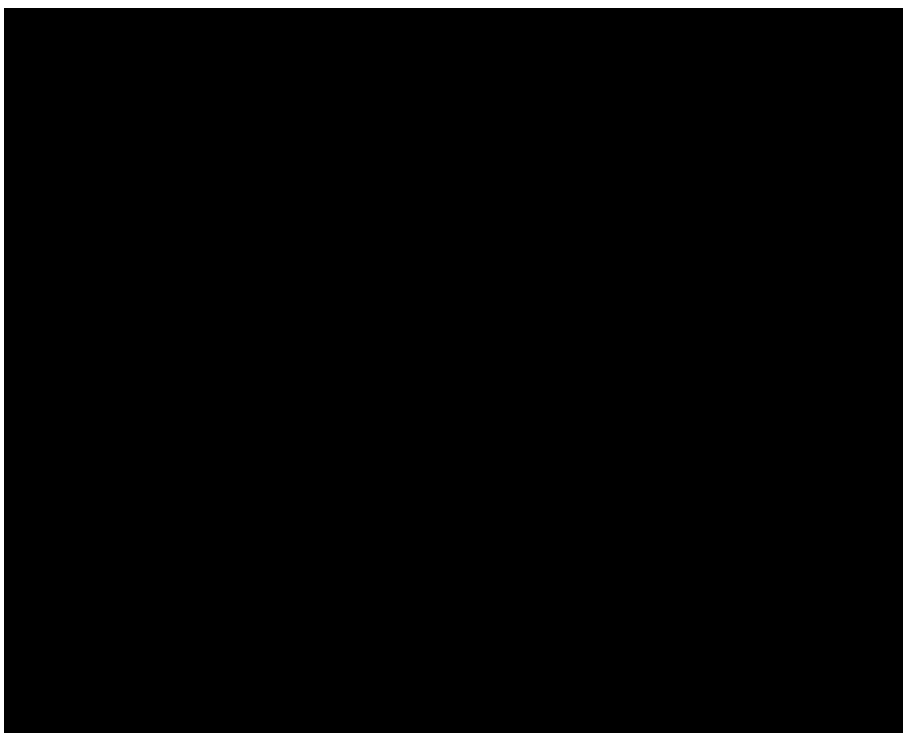


Figure 6.28 [above]: **Revd. Borlase's Mên-an-Tol,**  
from *Antiquities of West Cornwall – Guide One, 1997*

Figure 6.29 [below]: **Revd. Cotton's Mên-an-Tol,**  
from *Antiquities of West Cornwall – Guide One, 1997*



Cooke also refers to recent work by the Cornwall Archaeological Unit in which the site was cleared of gorse and examined for evidence of additional standing stones, based on a nineteenth century plan showing the Mên-an-Tol on the perimeter of an arc of upright, fallen and buried stones. Four such stones were discovered. ‘An impressive plan with a lengthy report was drawn up to support the thesis of a circle having about twenty stones in its original state,’ writes Cooke (1996a: 82). ‘Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, the small amount of extra work required to excavate these “new stones”, to verify whether they are simply bits of rough moorstone, was not undertaken,’ nor was the interior of the circle examined for stones that could have supported an entirely different thesis. A member of the CAS, and of the RIC, Cooke claims a more privileged knowledge – based on accumulated secondary evidence, first-hand fieldwork, and a more self-consciously cautious line of reasoning – than the Earth Mysteries researcher who proposed the more speculative entrance portal/capstone thesis. He also argues that the stone circle thesis remains suspect, that it was based on insufficient primary evidence and a more speculative line of reasoning, despite its having been proposed by professional archaeologists.

This questioning of these theories, from both professional and alternative archaeology, raises the broader issue of the nature of archaeological evidence. Cooke (1996a: 5) believes ‘that it is only by experiencing this unique local landscape on foot that a deep and intimate acquaintance with this unique peninsula can be attained.’ This belief is reflected by his membership of the Penwith/Kerrier Ramblers, and of the West Cornwall Footpaths Preservation Society. Footpaths thus become as much a part of the landscape heritage as the prehistoric sites themselves, hence his idea of structuring *Journey to the Stones* and the *Antiquities of West Cornwall* series (Cooke 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997) around a series of walks. ‘Although other books had been written on both walks and antiquities before,’ he continues (e-mail 20 July 2002), ‘no one had previously combined the two and it was often difficult to find the sites.’ Thus detailed first-hand field knowledge is privileged as a source of evidence. In this respect, there is little to distinguish between the methodological and philosophical bases of Cooke’s archaeological work and that of professional scientific archaeologists; indeed, in arguing that the stone

circle thesis is based on insufficient primary evidence, Cooke is effectively claiming to be more professional and scientific than the professional scientific archaeologists.

All of which makes Cooke's own interpretation of the Mên-an-Tol all the more interesting. His linoprint, 'The Mên-an-Tol Healing Ring' [see figure 6.30], incorporates numerological and astronomical associations of the stone with Pagan ritual, effectively visualising a somewhat visionary interpretation of the Mên-an-Tol for which – paradoxically, given his privileging of primary evidence – he claims 'no "inside information"' (Cooke 1996a: 84). He observes that the western face of the holed stone is flat, while the eastern face is more rounded – evidence, he suggests, that the stone once lay flat atop a natural stack of granite slabs, and that the hole was worn through by natural processes of weathering and erosion (Cooke 1996a, 1997). For Cooke (1996a: 83), the Mên-an-Tol was more likely 'to have originally "sat" horizontally, with its rounded side skywards, as the uppermost stone in a stack of natural granite slabs of the type so often to be seen on local hilltops,' with the hole being 'worn through by the action of weather over many thousands of years' and then conceivably 'inserted into a much earlier ruinous sacred circular site as a specific "fertility" stone, possibly even during medieval times... As three times three, the trinity of the trinity,' Cooke (1996a: 84) continues, on the subject of the healing ritual of passing nine times anti-clockwise through the stone, 'Nine is held to be a number sacred to the moon and emphasises the link between lunar phase and ritual.' Meanwhile, he continues, the directionality of the ritual 'has its origins in the movement of the moon and its perceived decline as the bright portion gets "eaten away" little by little as it wanes towards the eastern horizon.' Thus, 'to destroy disease you should move anti-clockwise but to get better again you must move "with the sun".' The relationship between visual and visionary archaeology can be summarised by the fact that Patricia Christie, Director of Excavations at the Iron Age settlement of Carn Euny from 1964 until 1972, contributed a foreword to *Mother and Sun: The Cornish Fogou* (Cooke 1993), as did John Michell.

Christie (1996: 18), in her foreword, wrote that the book

'breaks new ground, making the important distinction between Cornish fogous and souterrains elsewhere, and presenting for the first time some well researched information concerning orientation and solar connections

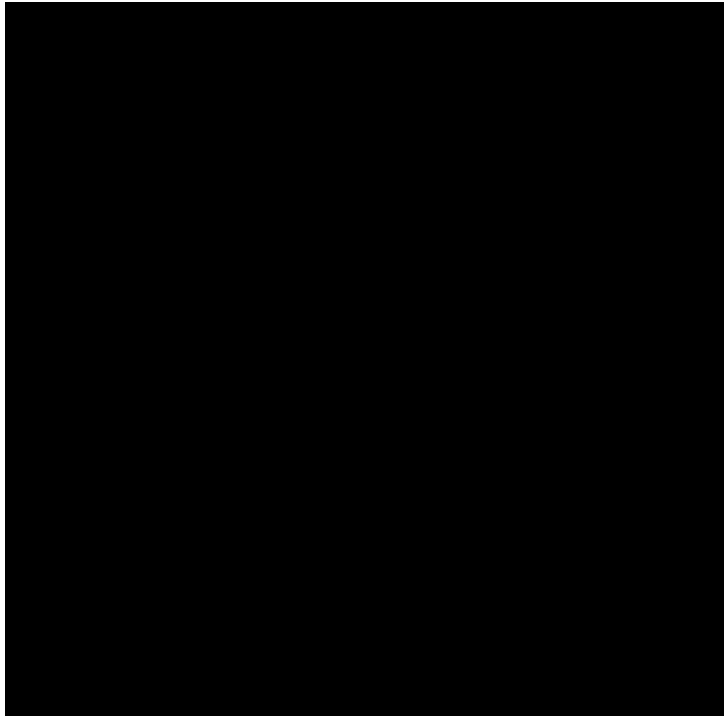
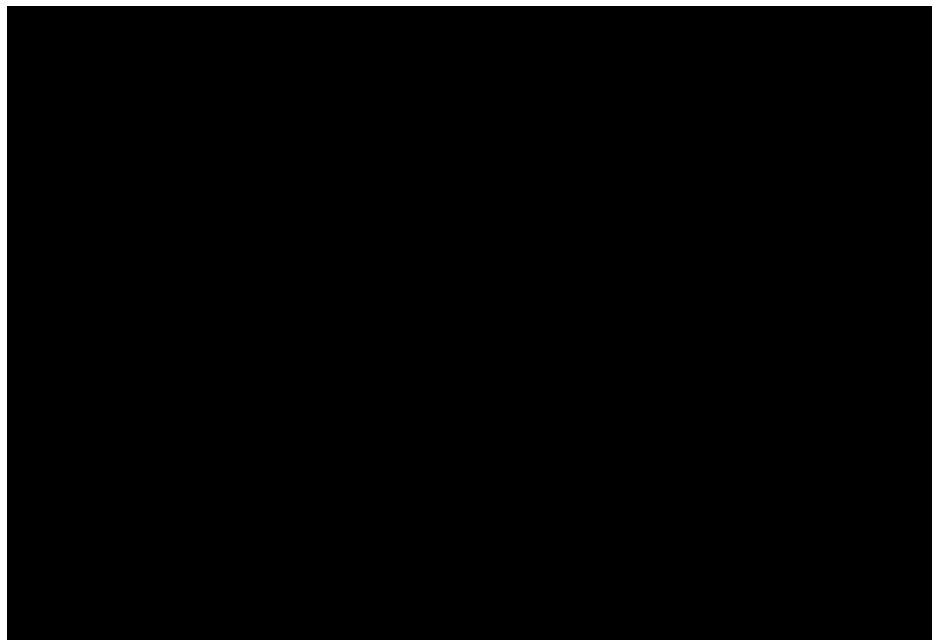


Figure 6.30 [above]: **Ian Cooke, *The Mên-an-Tol Healing Ring***  
**from *Antiquities of West Cornwall – Guide One*, 1997**

Figure 6.31 [below]: **Solar Orientation of Fogous,**  
**from *Mother and Sun*, 1993**



[see figure 6.31], the role of tin and dowsing and even radiation levels.’ She praised Cooke’s ‘holistic approach to the problem’ – which was based, in Christie’s words, on an ‘objective approach to both conventional archaeological thinking and to “alternative” (including religious) explanations for these monuments’ (Christie 1996: 18) – and the way that it ‘allowed him to research with equal care into links between fogous and folklore, and to examine and assess aspects of “alternative” suggestions brought to bear on these structures.’ Overall, Christie (1996: 18) believed that *Mother and Sun* made ‘a notable contribution to fogou studies’, in which Cooke ‘bravely attempted to reconcile the various differing viewpoints’ and presented ‘a well thought-out case for his own conclusions.’ Similarly, Michell (1996: 19) praised Cooke’s balanced approach of, in Michell’s words, ‘fairly examining theories of refuge or storage as conventional explanations for fogous’ before presenting ‘the statistically proved solar orientations of fogous, providing a more suggestive clue to their original purpose than any previous evidence.’ Beyond this balanced approach, though, Michell (1996: 18-9) ascribed further cultural authority to Cooke for his writing ‘as an “insider”, with the authority of one who has often risen before dawn to observe sunrise through the mouth of a fogou.’ He continued: ‘One can easily understand his irritation with the succession of uninformed opinions which constitute the most previous literature on his subject.’ Furthermore, where Christie fell short of explicitly aligning herself with Cooke’s argument, Michell (1996: 19) agreed with Cooke ‘that fogous and large-scale tin mining began and ended together and were therefore likely to have been part of the same social development,’ and that the answers to the questions raised by fogous were likely to remain ‘rooted in the mysteries of Celtic religion and ritual as a response to the circumstances of the time, when the west of Cornwall was being mined, deforested and polluted by the tin industry.’

Cooke also submitted a copy of *Mother and Sun* to *Cornish Archaeology* magazine for review [for more on *Cornish Archaeology*, see section 6.4, below]. Peter Herring (1994), the reviewer, remarked upon the predominant though previously unnoticed passage orientation of fogous towards the south-west. However, he also questioned Cooke’s apparently circular argument, in which he overprioritises some debatable fogou sites that fit into his orientation theory, while underprioritising other and less debatable fogou sites that oriented in other directions. ‘Recent investigations – the

recording of radiation or “energy” anomalies at three fogous, and recurring images in dreams by different people in Carn Euny fogou – are certainly intriguing.’ Herring (1994: 249) continues, ‘but need not be related to the original purpose of the fogous themselves.’ He also criticised Cooke’s ‘modern pre-occupations (eg “Humankind is a womb-haunted species”)’ (Herring 1994: 250) in interpreting fogous as votive offerings to an eco-feminist Earth-Goddess who was being harmed by the early subsurface mining industry. In his defence, Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) argues that ‘You can’t consider them [i.e. sites of (alternative) archaeological interest] just from an archaeological perspective and you can’t consider them just from a mystical alternative side because we don’t actually know what’s actually gone on at the sites.’ While, for Herring (1994), those alternative archaeologists who consciously position themselves as working outside and against the epistemological boundaries of professional archaeologists merely reinforce the internal disciplinary divisions which they seek to dismantle, though, Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) prefers to be able to work without the perceived compromises that, he believes, would be necessary in an academic situation to gain the favourable intellectual assessments of professional academic colleagues.

Another episode of some tension and negotiation was played out in the pages of *The Ley Hunter* in the mid-1990s. The Society of Ley Hunters scheduled Ronald Hutton, then a Reader [now a Professor] of History at Bristol University, as the first speaker at the Lincoln Moot in 1994. Danny Sullivan (1994/5: 5), who would take over from Paul Devereux as editor of the magazine in 1996, introduced Hutton in a subsequent report on the Moot, thus:

‘Two years ago his *History of Pagan Religions in the British Isles* had put the skids under a lot of received wisdom with regard to the “Old Religion”, witchcraft and the Goddess, in particular. Much of what many neo-Pagans hold to be the basis of their religious revival has little foundation in historical fact (or documented fact, anyway).’

This prompted an angry letter in response from Cheryl Straffon (1995b: 28), who argued that Sullivan’s comment was one that ‘is increasingly being stated as if it were an unassailable fact, rather than an opinion of Hutton’s, which we need to put into perspective... Much of what Hutton argues in his book is just that – an argument that can be equally counter-argued.’

Straffon (1995b: 28) continued:

‘There has been masses of evidence from the archaeologist Marija Gimbutas<sup>53</sup> (and to some extent from the prehistorian Anne Ross<sup>54</sup>) and other researchers to show that ancient peoples world-wide were originally matrifocal in their societies. Are we to dismiss all this research on the basis of one man’s reactionary opinion that there is no historical basis to the Old Faith/Goddess religion? The truth is that none of us can be certain, but the weight of evidence lies in favour of the Goddess interpretation.’

She pointed readers who were ‘inclined to accept Hutton at face value’ in the direction of ‘Ian Cooke’s elegant rebuttal of his fogou material in *Mother and Sun – the Cornish Fogou*’ (Straffon 1995b: 28), in which Cooke (1996a: 276) pointed out that the lack of material evidence of the ritual function – or, indeed, of any function – in fogous could also have resulted from later site clearances, ‘a possibility Hutton considered plausible for earlier types of monument’ such as burial chambers. Straffon suggested that the acceptance of Hutton’s argument betrayed ‘both lack of knowledge of the large amount of women’s research in area of Goddess studies, and a rather uninformed readiness to believe what one man is encouraging them too believe.’

Hutton (1995: 28) was offered, and accepted, the opportunity to write a letter in reply to defend himself and his book: ‘Far from being the personal statement of one man,’ he wrote, ‘it was a survey of what the majority of professional archaeologists and historians believed (in 1991) about the different aspects of this huge subject, undertaken in most instances with no strong opinions or vested interest upon my own part.’ In researching *The Pagan Religions...*, he had been persuaded by other archaeologists and historians who questioned the existence and the pan-European extent of a Neolithic Earth-Goddess religion ‘simply because they seem to have the best arguments and evidence to date’ (Hutton 1995: 28); and he professed himself to be

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<sup>53</sup> A Lithuanian-born archaeologist, Professor of Archaeology at UCLA from 1963 until 1989.

<sup>54</sup> Formerly Research Fellow in Archaeology at the University of Southampton and Professor of Archaeology at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth.



‘impatient with any doctrines badly founded upon fact, no matter the politics or religion behind them. What distinguishes me from them is that my work has managed to make an impression upon earth mystics and pagans, largely because I have more affection for, and interest in the latter. Conversely, I am perfectly prepared to alter my own views in the face of counter-argument, and would pay tribute to work published since 1990 by Paul Devereux, Nigel Pennick and Jeremy Harte, rooted in earth mysteries research and deserving the respect of any academic. I would be equally willing to be persuaded by Ms Straffon if only she could present her case with more precision and better data.’

In response to this defence, Monica Sjöo (1995/6: 29), a Swedish-born eco-feminist artist and practising Pagan, wrote of Hutton:

‘I consider Ronald a clever man and a brilliant and charismatic speaker with a dramatic flair. He is a practising Pagan, what’s more. But when he puts on his academic hat (he is a historian and not an archaeologist by the way) he most definitely has an axe to grind and he uses the sort of information from archaeological research that will fit in with his theme. I consider that Ronald advocates a thoroughly cynical and negative worldview in his book *Pagan Religions of the British Isles*.’

Marija Gimbutas was one of the strongest supporters of archaeological arguments towards a pan-European pre-Christian religious cult of the Goddess; for Sjöo (1995/6: 29), Gimbutas

‘was a visionary and her work has broken new ground and has given many women and also men hope... that a future is possible. That warmongering, life-denying and destructive patriarchal societies where power is usurped by gangs of violent men who ravage the Earth and mother-created life, are neither evolutionary nor inevitable.’

Gimbutas, Sjöo (1995/6: 30) continues, was ‘a courageous woman’ who

‘knew full well that once she embarked on this work of the Goddess in the Neolithic late in life and based in her own discoveries of Goddess figurines during digs in the Balkans and in Greece, she would lose all credibility in the male dominated (white privileged male) academic archaeological establishment which almost pathologically attempts to

deny women's power and creativity and desires to hang on to and justify the present status quo,'

an establishment 'who once had been privileged public school boys in a culture that holds a pornography view of women and our sexuality and who are mortified at the sight of women's blood.'

This prompted Hutton to write a four-page article in sustained defence, not so much of *The Pagan Religions...* – from which he has since somewhat distanced himself – than of himself and of late twentieth century academic archaeology. Hutton (1996: 5) began by asking readers to note that, although an historian by profession, he also trained as an archaeologist during the 1960s on field excavations in Britain and in Malta, and has 'the unusual honour of being elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries as well as a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society,' meaning that he 'had become recognised as contributing significantly to archaeological as well as historical knowledge.' He did so not in order to argue from a position of authority, but to argue that his work 'is regarded with unusually high respect by his colleagues; it does not, of course,' he conceded, 'mean that my opinions are necessarily correct.' Hutton (1996: 5) goes on to associate himself with those prehistorians for whom archaeology is 'incapable of establishing absolute truths' and who argue, instead, for 'a plurality of interpretations of particular sites and issues, each based firmly upon the available data and all co-existing as plausible alternatives'. These prehistorians, Hutton (1996: 5-6) continues,

'question the whole concept of the past as an established fount of wisdom and authority. In contrast, they attach value in their own right to the very different ways in which people have perceived or discovered the past (some say constructed or invented it) across time and space.'

To these prehistorians, with whom Hutton associates himself, he attached the loose label of post-modern.

Having placed himself and his work within this disciplinary context, Hutton (1996: 6) moved on to engage with some of the specific criticisms that were made of him and his work in the aforementioned letters. He began by agreeing with Sjöö that *The Pagan Religions...* was 'essentially a pessimistic work,' not 'because of its suggestion that we would never know the objective truth about large areas of the

subject' but because he 'doubted whether our culture was capable of taking advantage of the opportunities for freedom of imagination and for pluralism that this situation presented' – doubts which subsequent experience in academia, alternative archaeology and the British Pagan community had proved, to some extent, unfounded. Of his supposed dismissal of the work of Marija Gimbutas, Hutton (1996: 6) wrote that her true significance 'was that she was not the first but the last of a long list of distinguished scholars who have argued for a woman-centred Neolithic Europe,' dating back over 130 years of radical feminist history. However, Hutton (1996: 7) continued, the discovery of

'Neolithic fortresses, sometimes with evidence of savage fighting, in many parts of Europe, has been one of the most significant developments in archaeology since the 1970s. This, for professionals, took a lot of the urgency out of the gender question. If a woman-centred society is necessarily a peaceful one, then the European Neolithic was not woman-centred. If it was woman-centred, then a woman-centred society is not necessarily opposed to warfare.'

What, then, Hutton asks, are the political implications of a post-modern approach to prehistory? He wrote of remaining convinced 'that nothing short of a world war will induce the modern British people to elect a truly radical government,' and of remaining 'committed to the democratic process' which, for Hutton (1996: 7), 'means that the sort of rhetoric derived from groups working to overthrow despotic and unpopular regimes is wholly inappropriate to this country.' For Hutton (1996: 7), 'a process by which either or both government policy and public opinion have been altered by the campaigns of particular lobbies which began as small reformist groups' is more appropriate; he lists campaigns for equal opportunities for women in higher education, for free festivals, for greater public access to Stonehenge and similar ancient monuments, and against the war in Vietnam, against the deployment of Cruise and Trident missiles, against greater restrictions upon the availability of contraception and abortion, against racism, and against specific large-scale construction and quarrying programmes as those with which he has personally and practically engaged since his mid-teenage years. Such campaigns, he writes,

'reinforce my faith in the potential of alternative viewpoints to produce change in a democratic state, even if its society is a very conservative

one. The significance of the new academic attitudes to the past is that they enhance the status of alternative viewpoints and thereby make them potentially more effective... In such a world professional prehistorians and historians retain their central place, as the main agents of research and analysis, but they are liable to be much more ready than before to listen to others and to take account of their ideas' (Hutton 1996: 8).

The potential of the mystical to produce change in a democratic state is discussed further in the next section, in the context of the complex and contested interrelationships between the mystical and the different senses of Cornwall as a geographical entity that have both produced, and been produced by, changes in Cornish political culture since the 1960s.

#### **6.4 Cornish Studies and the Reterritorialisation of Cornwall**

This section begins by considering different formations of Cornishness – the ways in which the Cornish and the Celtic are variously mobilised by and through language, archaeology and politics – so as to contextualise the discussion material later in this section. Section 6.4.1 goes on to discuss the involvement of Nevan Henaff, a Breton nationalist, in the late twentieth century Celtic movement. In particular, it focuses on his advancement of a certain version of the mystical as a way of understanding the relationship between the Celtic movement and the British and French states, and the moves that were made in response to distance the Celtic and the Cornish from the mystical and to align themselves with a secular political culture. Section 6.4.2 investigates the ways in which such attempts to distance the Celtic and the Cornish from the mystical were rendered somewhat problematic through the work of Craig Weatherhill, a writer and Cornish language teacher, in his position as a figure whose version of the mystical, drawing as it does upon ancient and modern religion, folklore, myth and legend, crosses the notional divides between academic, amateur and 'alternative' archaeology and cuts across language and visual culture, the economics of tourism, and local, national and international politics.

#### **6.4.1 ‘A “Gospel” of Defeat’?: Cornish Studies, Political Nationalism and Celtic Mythology**

Language – as Charles Thomas (1986), Emeritus Professor of Cornish Studies at the University of Exeter, argues – lies, necessarily, at the heart of any cultural and historical formation of Celtic Cornwall. In a paper that Thomas (1963: 196), then in the position as President and Chairman of the Cornish National Branch of the Celtic Congress, delivered to the Congress at Carbis Bay in April 1963, he said:

‘in the last sixty years, from 1903 until today, we have to deal with nothing less than the deliberate and conscious attempt to fan this flickering candle-flame into a bonfire: to codify and present the Cornish language in an intelligible form, with its grammar, syntax, vocabulary and literature; to collect as much as possible of the place-names, dialect (whether Cornish or Middle English), folk-lore and traditional songs of the county; in short, the entire apparatus of linguistic and literary nationhood.’

However, Thomas (1963: 203) cites Professor C. L. Wrenn’s O’Donnell lecture at Oxford University in 1958, in which he opined that Robert Morton Nance’s Cornish-English Dictionary, while ‘having access to a fairly up-to-date linguistic apparatus, though much condensed through lack of space, displays that scarcely scientific revivalist local patriotism which is still so commonly associated with Cornish studies’ – this latter disciplinary designation referring to studies of the Cornish language.

Consequently, Thomas (1963) called for three separate though interrelated projects: a comparative dictionary of the Cornish language in its Old [c.800-1250], Middle [c.1250-1550] and Late [c.1550-C19th] phases, giving all variant forms with sources and dates; complete and authoritative editions of the *Ordinalia*, a cycle of three Middle Cornish miracle plays that incorporates the Creation, the Passion and the Resurrection; and a series of analytical studies of Cornish grammar and syntax to complement the unified spelling system that was the goal of the other two projects. The situation, today, is that there is some debate over which of four current versions of the Cornish language should be deemed to be the authoritative spelling system and placed at the centre of the Celtic-Cornish revival (Berresford-Ellis 1990;

Penglas 1994; Deacon 1996; Weatherhill 2000c, interview 5 July 2002). Morton Nance based Unified Cornish on the *Ordinalia* (Berresford-Ellis 1990; Weatherhill 2000c, interview 5 July 2002) while incorporating much Old and Late Cornish, and yet still finding it necessary to draw upon Welsh, Breton and even Middle English. Nonetheless, Unified the authoritative spelling system from the 1920s until the 1980s, after when Common [or Phonemic] Cornish, Modern [or revived Late] Cornish and, most recently, Unified Cornish Revised [UCR] all emerged to address its inherent deficiencies.

The Cornish Language Board was formed in 1967, with Peter Pool as its first General Secretary, to promote Unified Cornish (Berresford-Ellis 1990; Weatherhill 2000c) but, in response to academic criticism over the fact that Unified was a hybrid language, it was persuaded to adopt Common Cornish as an alternative. This was the outcome of a computer-based doctoral thesis by Dr Ken George – an oceanographer by training, and currently Principal Lecturer in Ocean Science at the University of Plymouth – which he presented to l'Université de Bretagne Occidentale in 1984. In his thesis, he identified certain spelling and grammatical rules from surviving examples of written Cornish and then used a computer to extrapolate these rules to words for which there was no surviving Cornish equivalent, or for which several different spellings existed. Also based on Middle Cornish, this has since attracted perhaps more criticism than Unified, for being too restrictive and for its use of historically unprecedented spellings – suggesting, for example, that the Cornish *wheal* [mine] be replaced by *hweal*, phonetically correct but, for Weatherhill (2000c, interview 5 July 2002) also less authentically Cornish and more Anglo-Saxon. Modern Cornish came as something of a counter-response to Unified and Common Cornish. It was originally the work of Richard Gendall, who followed Henry Jenner in attempting to revive the most recent recorded version of Cornish (Berresford-Ellis 1990; Weatherhill 2000c, interview 5 July 2002). Supporters of Modern Cornish formed the Cornish Language Council in 1986 to promote the further study and development of this version of the language.

As well as calling for a definitive spelling and grammatical system for the modern Cornish language, Thomas was also concerned to extend Wrenn's definition of the field of Cornish Studies beyond the study of the Cornish language. The Institute of

Cornish Studies was established in 1970, under the aegis of the University of Exeter but located in Cornwall and part-funded by Cornwall County Council, with Thomas as its first director and editor of the annual *Cornish Studies* journal. In his first editorial, Thomas (1973) observed that journals existed to cover the subjects of the arts, archaeology, Methodist and industrial history, local history, pure and applied geology and mining, but argued that one or more journals were required to cover the uncovered subjects of natural history, social and military history, the philology of the Cornish language, dialect studies and a range of studies in various dimensions of the physical and human geographies of Cornwall. Thus the first issue of the journal was divided into three sections, by subject: the first three articles were grouped under the heading of 'Natural Sciences', the following four under 'Language and Dialect' and the final three under 'Social and Military History'. The second issue showed a marked shift towards the former section, the numbers of articles in each of the three sections being six, two and one, respectively; while the third issue included only four longer articles, one each under the former two subject headings, a third under 'Cornish History' and a fourth under 'Social History'. Moreover, in 1983, a special issue reviewed recent work on the archaeology of the Isles of Scilly; and in 1988, a special issue consisted solely of a series of interim reports on the ongoing archaeological excavations at Tintagel.

Cornwall County Council had established the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, the professional field section of the Historic Environment Service, in 1975. Prior to then, the preservation and development of the archaeological record had depended, to a large degree, upon the voluntary works of the Cornwall Archaeological Society [CAS], which succeeded the West Cornwall Field Club [WCFC] in 1961. The following year, the CAS began to publish its annual journal, *Cornish Archaeology*, of which Thomas, then of the Department of Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh, was the first editor. In his first editorial, Thomas (1962) outlined two principal reasons for the society's change of name from the WCFC to the CAS: firstly, the former society's name implied a geographical limitation of its field of interest to the west of Cornwall, a limitation that was perceived as needing to be broadened to encompass all of Cornwall; and, secondly, the former society's name implied a broader intellectual brief that might also include natural history and geology, a broadness that was perceived, in the context of increasingly professional

status of the various natural and social sciences as separate academic disciplines, as needing to be limited to archaeology. Interestingly enough, the front cover of the journal bore – and continues to bear – its title both in English and, as *Hendhyscans Kernow*, in Cornish.

Thomas' dual concern, of aspiring to notionally 'higher' epistemological standards in Cornish archaeology and Cornish language studies while, at the same time, seeking to [re-]define and broaden the field of Cornish Studies beyond Cornish archaeology and the Cornish language, were aspects of a wider reterritorialisation of Cornwall that took place during the late twentieth century, and that was also connected to contemporaneous changes in Cornish politics. Mebyon Kernow ['Sons of Cornwall'], according to Thomas (1963: 199) in his aforementioned address to the Celtic Congress in 1963,

‘came into being at Redruth in 1950, and its position a year or so later, though not necessarily still today, is best defined by a press statement, of which the following is an extract: “For two years a growing group of Cornish people have been concerned with the problem of how to preserve the Cornishness of Cornwall, in other words, to prevent the disappearance of the Cornish by emigration and by assimilation into other peoples. While they recognise the value of much that is done by the Old Cornwall Societies, the Gorsedd and the Celtic Congress, they came into being because they felt that a passive and antiquarian attitude is useless as a means of preserving the very existence of Cornish people and their way of life. Social and economic matters are not less important than archaeology. And so *Mebyon Kernow* set out to try and foster Cornish national characteristics, to give Cornishmen a square deal, and use Cornish resources for the benefit of Cornish people.” In its early phase, *Mebyon Kernow's* chairman was also the editor of *New Cornwall*<sup>55</sup>, and the latter really served as a platform for the former body. From this, too, sprang an interesting involvement with the twin concepts of federalism as a form of government, and the representation of the many ethnic minority groups in Europe. One of the declared aims of *Mebyon Kernow* was

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<sup>55</sup> A Cornish language revival and current affairs magazine that ran from 1952 until 1973



indeed “the recognition of the Celtic character of Cornwall, and its right to self-government in domestic affairs in a federated United Kingdom”.’

In fact, fifty years on, Mebyon Kernow’s central political position – that of devolved Cornish self-government – remains unchanged (Berresford-Ellis 1990; Payton 1996; Deacon, Cole and Tregidga 2003). Recent policy documents have aligned the party with other recognisably left-of-centre causes such as the campaigns for devolved national governments in Scotland and Wales and for regional assemblies in England, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and calls for increased Third World aid (Mebyon Kernow, 1994, 1997, undated). They have also looked to supranational [i.e., European] government for justification of their campaigns for sub-national government, drawing encouragement from Cornwall’s recent gaining of a degree of European regional recognition whereby the Archaeology and Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council received Objective One funding for two separate archaeological projects (Cornwall County Council 2002). Where the party’s central political position has changed, perhaps partly consequent upon this regional recognition at the European level, is in its shift from seeking devolved government within a federated UK to seeking devolved government within a federated European Union (Teasdale 1999). While Mebyon Kernow has never won any seats in Westminster, members of Plaid Cymru have raised Cornish issues in Parliament (Teasdale 1999), and their decentralism has influenced the recent thinking of the Liberal Democrats. Thus the late twentieth century reterritorialisation of Cornwall has been connected to a new and overt politicisation of Cornishness, such that some delegates at the Celtic Congress in Penzance in 1975, frustrated by the exclusion of political content from the proceedings, were told: “Go to the Celtic League. This is the Celtic Congress” (Huws 1975: 19).

The Celtic League was formed in 1962 as a dissenting organisation from the Celtic Congress, the latter having had allowed cultural nationalism to become separated from political nationalism, keeping cultural nationalism fixed firmly upon its agenda while gradually marginalising and, ultimately, excluding political nationalism. In contrast, the Celtic League sought political independence for the six Celtic nations, and a formal pan-Celtic political association once two or more nations had achieved independent statehood. There was also a distinct, though not uncontested, mystical

strand of political thought within the late twentieth century Celtic movement, in Cornwall and beyond. James Whetter (1972: 20), reviewing Anne Ross' *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* in *Cornish Nation*, the magazine of Mebyon Kernow, wrote of the need to rediscover the 'unity and harmony with nature' of the Pagan Celts. 'Loyalty to the family, the tribe, respect for their ancestors' were to be encouraged but, in an overtly selective approach to historical revivalism, their 'savagery and brutalities' were 'not to be imitated.' Similarly, Philip Payton (1972: 62) – also writing in *Cornish Nation*, some 19 years before he went on to succeed Charles Thomas as director of the Institute of Cornish Studies [for more on Payton and the ICS, see section 2.4.1] – argued that 'Celtic Kernow is the true Romantic Kernow. The Celtic peoples have always been at one with Nature, living in harmony with the countryside and using its resources in the most beneficial ways.' The rest of this section discusses in detail the contestation – by, on one side, a member of Mebyon Kernow – over a certain version of the mystical and its place within the Celtic League as an organisation, and the Celtic movement as a whole.

Neven Henaff was born as Célestin Lainé in Nantes in 1908, and raised at Ploudalmézeau, Finistère, where he began to develop strong sympathies with the Breton nationalist movement before going on to study chemical engineering at the *École Centrale* in Paris (Heusaff 1984). In 1929, the same year as he began his studies at the *École Centrale*, Henaff formed a militant Breton nationalist organisation, Gwenn-ha-Du – 'White and Black', after the colours of the Breton flag. Henaff even claimed to have fashioned a home-made bomb from nitroglycerin in a milk carton, with a detonator provided by a forestry worker; but it was another member of Gwenn-ha-Du, André Geffroy, who, on 7 August 1932, planted the bomb that destroyed the statue of Duchess Anne of Brittany, on her knees before King Charles VIII of France – whom she was obliged to marry, under the terms of a treaty that was signed by her father, the last Duke of Brittany, in the wake of the defeat of his Breton army by that of the French in 1488 – in front of the town hall in Rennes (Heusaff 1984). In 1936, Henaff formed the Kadervenn, a Breton nationalist paramilitary organisation which he modelled on the IRA and, in 1939, he travelled to Nazi Germany to co-ordinate a shipment of arms for use by the Kadervenn.

‘From 1936 onwards,’ continues Alan Heusaff (1984: 11), in his obituary of Henaff in *Carn*, the magazine of the Celtic League,

‘the leaders of the Breton National Party took the stand that Brittany had no quarrel with Germany and should therefore stay out of the war that was looming. They would not submit to what they saw as a propaganda designed to prepare Bretons to die again for France.’

For Henaff, however, such a strategy of passive resistance was insufficient. He argued that Bretons should actively collaborate with Nazi Germany in order to ensure their status as an independent nation-state in a post-war Europe. In 1943, Henaff obtained official agreement from Colonel Hartmut Pulmer of the *Sicherheitsdienst* – the intelligence service of the SS – to his establishing of *Bezen Perrot*, a guerrilla-style combat unit which took its name from the Abbé Perrot, a parish priest and ardent defender of the Breton language who, it is suspected, was killed that same year by French nationalists. According to the terms of the agreement, as quoted by Heusaff (1984: 11), *Bezen Perrot* was ‘a Breton unit, to be engaged in Brittany in conjunction with the German forces, against the common enemies of Brittany and Germany.’ Heusaff himself was Henaff’s deputy, and the group recruited around 100 members. However, by August 1944, *Bezen Perrot* were forced into retreat alongside the German army. Some members were arrested and sentenced to death; others managed, clandestinely, to escape across the borders of neighbouring countries. Henaff reached Ireland in 1947, where he took Irish citizenship and changed his name from Célestin Lainé to Neven Henaff, a more overtly Breton name, from where he continued to support Celtic nationalist movements until his death in Dublin in 1983.

Besides his militant Breton nationalism, Henaff also ‘became interested in the Celtic mythology and found much in the ancient Irish sagas that was congenial to his way of thinking’ (Heusaff 1984: 11). On the basis of this mythology, and the fact that ‘Caesar and other writers from Antiquity testify that “the druids teach that winter and night have precedence over summer and day”,’ Henaff (1973: 13) developed ‘a non-aristotelian philosophy’ that he named using old Celtic words for winter [*giam*] and summer [*sam*], and presented in the second issue of *Carn*. This *Giam-Sam* philosophy, he wrote, had ‘wide-ranging applications in science, from physics to sociology, medicine [*sic*] and dietetics, in fact in everything. Its use,’ he continued,

was to provide ‘general guidelines as to the effects of and expectations from any kind of initiative.’ Using upper-case italics to denote Giam and lower-case italics to denote Sam, Henaff (1973: 13) argued that

‘With us [i.e. the latter-day Celts], from Scots to Bretons, things Celtic are very *OLD*. They are our *ROOTS*, and rooted *FAST* in the far-away *PAST*. Things English and French are relatively *recent* and *superficial*. Furthermore, we are in *UNISON* with our Celtic roots after such a long time, whereas the recent Anglofrench graft often shocks us in its novelty: it still possesses a considerable degree of *dissonance* within us.

‘All this, and more, makes it clear that, in us, things Celtic are *giam* and things Anglofrench are *sam*.’

For Henaff, three corollaries followed from this argument. First,

‘*Brilliance* – including financial success, democratic popularity with attendant V.I.P. status, Nobel Prizes, regional prefectorships, T.V. appearances, mass meetings, flags, medals and decorations, - is to be expected over-whelmingly in the *Anglofrench* field and not in the *CELTIC* one. All those who want to *show off* will generally do well to look for satisfaction to the former. They are likely to find disappointment in the latter’ (Henaff 1973: 13).

Second, despite ‘their *LACK OF APPEARANCE*, *SMALLNESS*, *DULLNESS*, etc., things *CELTIC* are still very *STABLE* inside us, whereas the *brilliant* and *bloated* things *Anglofrench* are in a still very *unstable* position’ (Henaff 1973: 13). Consequently, he argued, the ‘anglofrenchification’ of the Celtic peoples would be ‘a much more *CONSIDERABLE* and *LONG* enterprise than the Anglo-French expected, ‘whereas the job of de-anglofrenchifying (dis-anglofrenchifying) will be found to be surprisingly *easy* and *rapid*.’ And thirdly,

‘It is in the nature of *GIAM* to *CONTRACT* and *SINK*, and in the nature of *sam* to *expand* and *cover*. Therefore it is a profound mistake to expect an eventual reversal of the present anti-Celtic trend from the evolutive peaceful development of the present situation’ (Henaff 1973: 13)

‘There is practically no prospect for us in the proposition of *besting* the *Anglofrench* in their line of *Progress-Civilisation-Consumer Society*, etc.,’ Henaff (1973: 13)

concluded. ‘How then could a *GIAM* situation, which is necessary for *CELTIC* things to prevail, ever appear? Never, so long as this system endures. But it can appear with the BEGINNING of a new set of things implying an end abruptly put to the existing system.’ Therefore, by extension of this argument, Henaff (1973: 13) wrote that

‘we can expect our opportunity to arise from some occurrence not in the nature of political evolutive progress (or decay, as you may name it as well) but of a catastrophic nature bringing in the beginning of a new set of things.

This could be, for example, an external military crushing of the anglofrench power (improbable at the moment and for some time to come). It could be an internal sudden foundering of a “revolutionary” nature, with much destruction appended. It could also be a biological catastrophe affecting preferably the most *sam* individuals and relatively sparing the most *GIAM* ones (they are *STABLE*, *SOLID*, *INERT*, *RESISTANT* to disease, accidents and all kinds of *changes* including *fashions* and *emotional rushes*, etc.

Three issues later, R. C. Boyd, of Mebyon Kernow, responded to Henaff’s philosophy: ‘Some say as early as 5074 years ago,’ he began (Boyd 1974: 14)<sup>56</sup>,

‘intellectuals seeking for the meaning of life developed the theory that it was controlled by the interaction of two opposing forces.

‘Different people had different ideas about what these forces were and so gave them different names. The Hindus had Rajas (energy) and Tamas (inertia), the Chinese had Yang and Yin (the male and female principles), the Religionists had Good & Evil and the Magicians had Force and Form.’

Boyd (1974: 14) continued:

‘So long as it is realised that these two different forces (whatever one may call them) are united in opposition within every creature the theory can be a help to understanding, but if they are regarded as different

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<sup>56</sup> The reference is to the historical theory that 3100BC marks the transition from the Pre-Dynastic to the Early Dynastic Period in ancient Egypt and, as such, that it marks the start of the first of the world’s great civilisations

categories into which people can be separated, the theory becomes dangerous and misleading and this is exactly what I consider Mr Henaff has done.’

Into the category of Giam which he considers to represent dullness as well as permanence, he... crams the whole of the ebullient Celtic race and into Sam (brilliance and impermanence) he bundles the whole of dim, plodding Saxonry, and then out of the misinformation acquired from this jugglery he proceeds to prophesy our future.’

Boyd did not entirely disagree with Henaff’s philosophy. ‘It is true,’ he conceded (1974: 14), ‘that the Celts have a quality of survival but so have other races for example the Greeks and the Chinese and there is as yet no evidence that the French and the Saxons haven’t got it too.’ Furthermore, runs Boyd’s (1974: 14) counter-argument, ‘every race sooner or later has been struck by some catastrophe [sic],’ so ‘it does not require any prophetic insight to foretell that this will ultimately happen to the Saxons and the French.’ Ultimately, Boyd (1974: 15) concluded, the various Celtic nationalist causes would be better served by a philosophy based on specific socio-economic questions rather than on a contestable system of abstract correspondences – that is, by opposing material reality to Henaff’s pseudo-religious version of the mystical: ‘If we let our leaning towards occultism lure our minds into the ghostly mists of Celtic mythology we will indeed get lost, we must keep them firmly fixed on earthly reality the laws of which we are equipped to understand’ – equipped, that is, by a particular re-reading of revolutionary Marxism in which it is not the working class but the Celts who will achieve self-consciousness and effect a communist society in Britain (see Berresford-Ellis 1985). ‘It may well be that we can be set free only by some upheaval,’ Boyd (1974: 15) wrote, ‘but to tell us to sit idly by and wait for it, as he seems to do, is a “gospel” of defeat which if followed will not bring us freedom but only a different master, and if there is no upheaval then we will have wasted valuable time and sunk deeper into subjection.’

#### **6.4.2 ‘The Legendary Heritage of Cornwall’: Local Government, Landscape Management and Cornish Folklore**

As discussed above, Cornwall County Council established the professional Cornwall Archaeological Unit in 1975; prior to 1975, the preservation and development of the archaeological record largely depended upon the voluntary works of the CAS, to which the WCFC changed its name in 1961. Such works included *The Principal Antiquities of the Land’s End District* (Thomas 1954) and *West Penwith Survey* (Russell 1971), both of which followed a simple catalogue checklist format: antiquities were classified by historical time period; individual entries gave names and pronunciation guides, short descriptions of a site’s size and structure, Ordnance Survey [OS] grid references and brief directions for the would-be visitor. The format must have proved popular enough, or else the print runs were small enough, for *The Principal Antiquities...* – which was discussed in more detail in chapter five – to run to 14 reprints in 15 years. Its author, then of Corpus Christi College, Oxford and now Emeritus Professor of Cornish Studies at the University of Exeter, had to research and write what was originally a WCFC field guide in holiday breaks back to his native Cornwall. In this way, Cornish archaeology proceeded through the voluntary archaeology of the professional archaeologist.

*West Penwith Survey*, meanwhile, inspired Craig Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) [see figure 6.32] to develop his early interest in Cornish folklore. He recalls that his interest in Cornish archaeology dates back to when, as a child growing up in St Just, an elderly woman gave him a first edition copy of Hunt’s (1865, 1866) *Popular Romances of the West of England*. Finding that a number of the folk tales contained therein were associated with archaeological sites in the St Just area, but unable to garner any further information regarding such sites at school, Weatherhill resolved to read around the subject of Cornish archaeology in local libraries and to visit as many of the sites as possible in his spare time. ‘I thought, well, the catalogue list is great,’ says Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) of *West Penwith Survey*, written and published under the aegis of the voluntary CAS, ‘but without having plans, sections, elevations, you don’t know what the hell is there to be preserved.’ With a

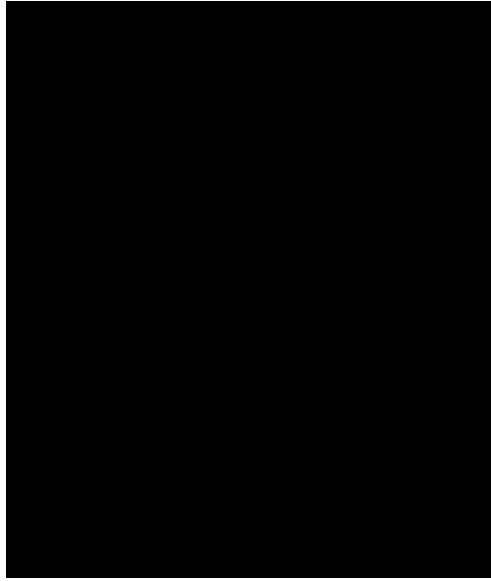
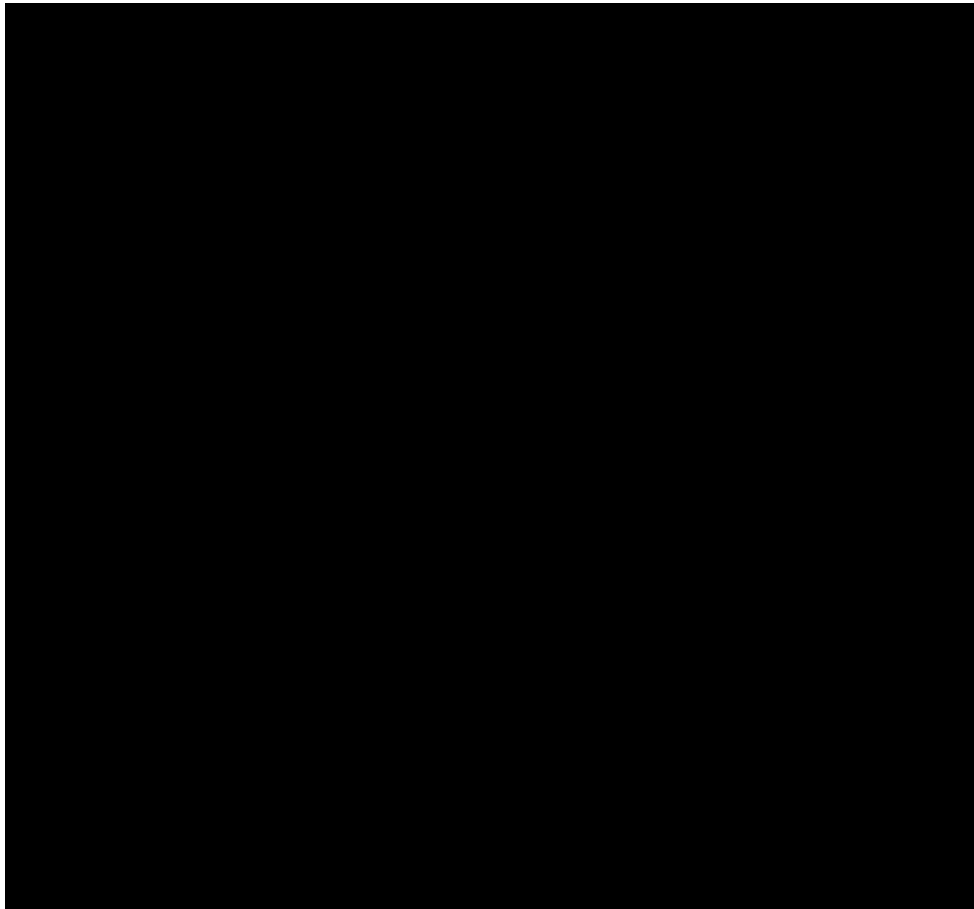


Figure 6.32 [above]: **Craig Weatherhill at Mên Scryfa,**  
**from *The Lyonesse Stone*, 1991**

Figure 6.33 [below]: **Iron Age Sites in West Penwith,**  
**from *Belerion*, 2000**





professional background in draughtsmanship, architecture and surveying, he took it upon himself to fill in this gap in the archaeological record, surveying as many of the listed sites as possible, adding plans, sections and elevations to their catalogue entries in *Belerion*<sup>57</sup> (Weatherhill 2000a [1981]) [see figure 6.33] and *Cornovia*<sup>58</sup> (Weatherhill 2000b [1985]).

Peter Pool, a local archaeologist and historian, eventually found out about Weatherhill's project. 'I learned a lot from him', continues Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002). 'He was very much a mentor... Of course, through him I got to meet others, learned a lot more from them.' For Pool (1985 [1973], 1990), the names of Cornwall's prehistoric landscape antiquities, and of the fields in which they were or are located, could give a more complete understanding of prehistoric Cornwall. The study of Cornish place names was thus as valuable as field archaeology itself. Weatherhill's early interest in archaeology and folklore soon diversified, through his work with Pool, into an interest in Cornish place names and the Cornish language. In subsequent work, one can trace the origins of an ongoing and somewhat ambitious personal project: to assemble an archive of every recorded historical spelling of every place name in Cornwall (Weatherhill 2000c, interview 5 July 2002). Furthermore, Weatherhill is a member of Agan Tavas ['Our Language'], a Cornish language organisation which aims to raise general public awareness of Cornish in its spoken and written forms and, in particular, to reintroduce the Cornish language into primary and secondary schools in Cornwall by lobbying at both local and national levels of government. That it has achieved some degree of success is demonstrated by the fact that Weatherhill has taught Cornish, not only in adult classes but also to secondary school students, initially at a school in Hayle followed by others in Penzance, St Ives, Truro and elsewhere across the western half of Cornwall (Weatherhill interview 5 July 2002).

Before his death in 1996, Pool (1986) would also go on to write a biography of William Borlase. In between times, though, Weatherhill and Pool joined forces with Thomas to update *The Principal Antiquities...* (Thomas, Pool and Weatherhill 1980),

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<sup>57</sup> Belerion was the name that ancient Greek tin traders gave to West Penwith. Meaning 'The Shining One', it refers to the colour of the tin seams that were then visible against the dark granite cliffs

<sup>58</sup> Cornovia was the Roman name for the semi-independent kingdom of Cornwall that existed under the Imperial Roman occupation of Britain

to which Weatherhill initially contributed the results of his site plans and surveys before going on to publish them as his own work. The plan actually operated in the dual sense of the long and venerable history of the plan view in the Cornish archaeological record, and planning laws through Weatherhill's position as Conservation Officer at Penwith District Council – a position that Weatherhill lost in rather curious circumstances, after a series of disputes with English Heritage, at the end of 1998. In 1984, Michael Hampden-Smith bought Carnequidden Farm, adjacent to the Iron Age village of Chysauster [see figure 6.34]. Pool conducted him on a tour of the prehistoric landscape features on his new land – stone hedges, field systems and Iron Age round houses, the latter being Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Cornish Heritage undated a, b, d). English Heritage, the owners of Chysauster, failed to oppose his subsequent extensive programme of land clearance, though, which destroyed many of the surviving stone hedges within the contemporary field system to the north and west of the site (Cornish Heritage undated d; Weatherhill 2000a; Cooke 2000).

Subsequently, in the late 1980s, one of the roofing stones of the fogou at Chysauster became unstable, and was shored up with sandbags [see figure 6.35]. However, English Heritage then claimed that the cost of repairing the monument was far too expensive. It quoted a five-figure sum for a job that, according to Cornish Heritage (undated c) – a politically-oriented pressure group that was formed in 1984 to advance the argument that Cornwall was culturally and historically different to that of England, so responsibility for the management of Cornwall's historical environment should not belong to English Heritage – local archaeologists knew merely required 'a block and tackle to raise one end of the stone, a competent local stone hedger to consolidate the wall beneath and careful re-lowering of the stone'. English Heritage counter-claimed that labour costs would account for most of the quoted five-figure sum, 'to which one local archaeologist replied that labour costs could be eradicated by using volunteers from the Cornwall Archaeology Society and the West Cornwall Conservation Volunteers' (Cornish Heritage undated c). A London spokesman for English Heritage allegedly did not even know the meaning of the word, fogou. For English Heritage, the preferred alternative was temporarily to bury the fogou. Weatherhill and Pool, on hearing of these plans, mounted a public



Figure 6.34 [above]: **Chysauster Iron Age Village, 2002**

Figure 6.35 [below]: **Fogou, Chysauster, 2002**



outcry, but English Heritage duly proceeded with the burial. Some 18 years later, it remained in the same temporary state. Weatherhill's ensuing decade-long period of public criticism of English Heritage culminated at Christmas 1998, when he 'received a letter from his employers accepting a resignation he had never tendered' (Cornish Heritage undated c). His involvement in Cornish archaeology thus works through a particular politicisation of the local, based on a perceived undervaluing of the local by non-Cornish – local culture, in the case of the absence, until recently, of Cornish language teaching in Cornish schools, and local knowledge and skills, in the case of Chysauster.

Weatherhill did not only add plans, sections and elevations to the catalogue checklists of earlier archaeological guides but also, interestingly, wrote accounts of associated folklore into the descriptions of the sites. His photograph and accompanying plan of the Mên-an-Tol, for example, present a very straightforward micro-scale view of the site in itself (Weatherhill 2000a) [see figure 6.36], while a wider archaeological and geographical context is provided in the text, which locates the Mên-an-Tol, like other holed stones in West Penwith, within sight of round barrows, a stone circle [the Nine Maidens, Boskednan] and two standing stones [the Boswens Stone, and one on the summit of Watch Croft]. Weatherhill does not provide visual evidence, neither photographic nor cartographic, or any interpretation for such intervisibility, thereby positioning his work in a cautious alignment with the more speculative theories and more involved mystical practices within other elements of amateur archaeology. In some respects, Weatherhill's presentation style is in marked contrast to alternative archaeological visual culture, making an interesting comparison with, for example, Cooke's visionary artistic responses to the Mên-an-Tol. For Weatherhill, though, the challenge is to ensure the preservation not only of sites of archaeological interest, but also of associated folklore, which thus becomes part of the sites themselves. Continuing the above example, Weatherhill offers the following, from Cornish folklore:

'The Mên-an-tol is sometimes called the Crick Stone, for the ritual of crawling through the hole nine times widdershins was said to cure rickets and scrofula. It was also believed that if two brass pins were placed crosswise on the stone, questions would be answered by a mysterious movement of the pins' (Weatherhill 2000a: 24).



Figure 6.36: Weatherhill's Mên-an-Tol,  
from *Belerion*, 2000

Weatherhill took the opportunity to give a slightly more detailed version of the folklore associated with the Mên-an-tol, and with other places in Cornwall, in *Cornish Myths and Legends*, which he wrote in collaboration with Paul Devereux (Weatherhill and Devereux 2001 [1994]). Children with scrofula or rickets were to be passed through the hole in the stone three times widdershins [anti-clockwise, against the direction of the sun], while adults with back and limb pains were to pass through nine times. Meanwhile, two brass pins placed clockwise on top of the stone were said to move apart of their own accord if the answer to the question were affirmative. For the authors, the originators of the Cornish legendary tradition, if not specific legends themselves, were the Celtic bards, who would commit such tales to memory and retell them to a gathered host. This tradition, they continue, ‘lasted in Cornwall well into the 19th century. By this time, the accompaniment of the harp had gone and the bard – or, in Cornwall, the “droll” – had become the man who told tales by the fireside in return for a meal’ (Weatherhill and Devereux 2001: iii). With the demise of this tradition in the nineteenth century, according to this narrative, the Cornish legends might have been lost forever, were it not for the salvage archaeology of Victorian folklorists like Robert Hunt that ensured their survival. Weatherhill and Devereux, therefore, both perpetuate and – in their addition of OS grid references where the myths and legends are associated with specific sites – enhance the folklorists’ legacy. Through the work of Weatherhill, then, archaeology and folklore become intrinsically connected to one another: the preservation of one calls for the preservation of the other, so that the archaeological and the folkloric become inseparable.

Weatherhill and Devereux (2001; see also Weatherhill 1991, 1997, 2000a, b; Cooke 1993, 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997; Straffon 1997, 1998b) use ‘myth’ and ‘legend’ interchangeably, referring to the body of traditional Cornish story-telling, without reference to the factuality or fictionality of the stories themselves, while simultaneously arguing that, beneath the stories of giants and the races of faerie, a folkloric approach to archaeology may find evidence of the ways in which the [pre-] Celtic tribes of Cornwall related to each other and to the Cornish landscape. Folklore, like place names, could give a more complete understanding of Cornwall’s cultural history:

‘Study of Cornish legends show that some of the tales and traditions are extremely ancient in origin and that behind the giants, small people, faerie folk, demons and witches are shadows of ancient Celtic gods and goddesses, or heroes from a time before writing’ (Weatherhill and Devereux 2001: iv).

Thus it seeks to interweave vision and the visionary, to ensure ‘that the veil between our technological world and the other world remains as tenuously thin as it has always been’ (Weatherhill and Devereux 2001: v). In a recent edition of *Mamvro*, Michell (2005: 24) asks:

‘From the testimony of honest people throughout the west of Cornwall it is impossible to doubt that at one time giants were a reality. But on what level? In dreams or visions or actual daily experience? Were they natural, spontaneous denizens of a former age and perception, or were they creatures of enchantment, conjured up in megalithic rituals?’

Weatherhill (interview 21 April 2005), on the other hand, has a more prosaic suggestion. In Cornish folklore, the giants are often figures of ridicule, and are associated with hills upon which were built prehistoric earthworks. Therefore, he suggests, the stories of the giants might have been satirical stories of Celtic tribal chiefs.

Archaeology and folklore are also intertwined in Weatherhill’s locally-published children’s fantasy novel, *The Lyonesse Stone* (Weatherhill 1991), which he illustrated himself. The story centres on John and Penny Trevelyan, brother and sister, who go to spend a three-week holiday with their uncle, Ben Trevelyan, on his farm, Trehelya Vean, near St Buryan. John and Penny ‘had both been born in West Cornwall, but had left at an early age when their father, Ben’s younger brother, had taken a position up-country’ (Weatherhill 1991: 2). The early chapters thus fulfil the narrative function of allowing Ben to educate his nephew and niece in a certain version of Cornish history. He drives them back from Penzance to Trehelya Vean along the B3315 coast road via the Merry Maidens stone circle then, the following day, suggests that they take his ponies and ride to Boscawen-Ûn where, he tells them, the Gorsedd of Cornwall has been held on several occasions. John asks Ben what the Gorsedd is, and Ben explains:

‘A gathering o’ bards. People who’ve done a lot for Cornwall in some way are made bards. You see, in spite o’ what some people d’think, Cornwall edn no more a part of England than Wales or Scotland are. Tes a Celtic land an’ we’re Celtic people, who’ve been in Britain thousands o’ years longer than the English. We even had our own kings once, an’ lots o’ the old traditions. We’ve even got our own language, as I’ve told ’ee. It near died out a century or so back, but tes growing again. Quite a few people can speak ’en’ (Weatherhill 1991: 24).

The main plot arc of the story begins with Ben’s accidental discovery of the Crown of the Lords of Lyonesse, the last of whom was the Lord Trevelyan, while attempting to rescue the captain of a Breton fishing trawler who has been washed overboard during a storm from the sea at Porthcurno. Lyonesse, as was discussed in the previous chapter, is the legendary lost land that was said to exist between Land’s End and the Isles of Scilly. According to the legend, the only survivor of the flood was the Lord Trevelyan, who fled the capital city for the mainland on the back of a white horse, the flood waters sweeping him up and on to the sands at Sennen. Weatherhill (1991: 15) describes the crown itself as ‘a thin circlet of reddish-yellow metal, about two inches deep... At one point, it widened into a diamond shape and set into the centre of this was a single large jewel, multi-faceted and as green as the ocean depths from which it had come.’ Ben’s first thought is the crown belongs on public display in a museum, ‘maybe the County one in Truro [i.e. the Royal Cornwall Museum]. The British Museum may want ’en, but I’ll put my foot down if they do. It shouldn’t be allowed to leave Cornwall, it b’longs here, not up there in London’ (Weatherhill 1991: 17). However, the crown promptly dissolves, leaving only ‘a ring of ochre dust’ (Weatherhill 1991: 18) and the stone of the book’s title. A friend of Ben’s fashions it into a necklace for Penny, which she is wearing when she and John visit Boscawen-Ûn.

“‘There’s a sort of... a feeling about this place,’” says Penny of Boscawen-Ûn (Weatherhill 1991: 26). John, too, senses ‘the peculiar silence and sanctity of the place’ (Weatherhill 1991: 26). When Penny touches the central stone, the jewel in her necklace begins to pulse with a bright green light, and a loud throbbing hum fills the air. There is ‘a sudden, ear-splitting crack’ (Weatherhill 1991: 27) and a flash of



light, and a brilliant blue cap of light appears atop each of the 19 outer stones, from which light arcs around the circle and into a similar cap of light atop the central stone. Fleeing the circle, they encounter Gawen, one of the ‘Small People’ of Cornish folklore, who is described and depicted as a Tolkien-esque dwarf, and who explains the effect of the jewel upon the stone circle:

‘Within that pretty bauble lies a hefty power placed there long ago by the greatest magicians of the Lyonesse. Many were its uses, most now forgotten, but among them was the protection of the Lords of Lyonesse.

Another ancient power, older, greater and beyond all mortal wizardry, was locked within this circle. The Crownstone has released it, whether for good or ill I cannot tell. Probably both. We call it the Breath of the Dragon and it is a secret of the Earth Mother herself. Good and ill have no meaning for it; it does not distinguish one from the other’ (Weatherhill 1991: 30).

Gawen takes John and Penny to meet Corantyn, another of the Small People, who is described and depicted as a Tolkien-esque elf, and who becomes the mouthpiece for an expression of Weatherhill’s environmentalist concern, thereby connecting folklore and contemporary Green politics:

‘my people have little cause to love humankind. As they have poisoned the fields and the rivers and the very air we breathe, so they have caused the decline of my people. Mine is a dying race. So few and scattered are we that men have dubbed us the Small People and today they even forget the meaning of that name and imagine us to be of tiny stature. We willingly withdrew from their sight, so that they now hold our memory in contempt and disbelief; a tale for children to marvel at’ (Weatherhill 1991: 45).

Corantyn warns John and Penny about Marek, the centuries-old Lord of Pengersek Castle, the ruins of which overlook Praa Sands, a few miles to the east of Marazion. Marek, it transpires,

‘fled Cornwall, travelling across the seas to the land of the Saracens, There he heard of sages who dwelt on a distant mountain; men who were masters of the arts of magic. For many years he studied under them and

so thoroughly did he absorb their teachings that even they began to fear his powers' (Weatherhill 1991: 47).

Returning to Pengersek Castle, Marek 'wrestled and fought in his tower to gain mastery over the demons he conjured from the pit, and as he strove to unlock the secrets of alchemy,' one of which was the discovery of the elixir of life.

Pengersek Castle was destroyed in a mysterious fire one night, and Marek presumed dead, but Corantyn warns John and Penny that he has returned to Cornwall once again in the guise of Henry Milliton, to await the prophesied rediscovery of the Crownstone. However, Marek manages to kidnap Penny and carries her back through time to sixth century Cornwall, where he plans to use the natural magic of Midsummer's Eve – one of the four turning points of the year, along with Midwinter's Eve and the eves of the two equinoxes – to bind the power of the Crownstone to himself, giving him immortal life beyond even the need for elixir. In order to find Penny, Corantyn and Gawen enlist the help of Jack of the Hammer, a Cornish folk hero whose character, taking his cue from the work of Robert Hunt, Weatherhill combines with that of Weland the Smith, a Norse god. They locate her by placing two brass pins crosswise atop the Mên-an-Tol [see figure 6.37], whereupon they move into the shape of a V that points them towards Marek's lair – the hill-fort of Chûn Castle, a mile and a half to the west. Before they can rescue Penny, though, John must attend the midsummer Gorsedd, where he is told that he must retrieve Damogran, the Sword of Tears – the only weapon that can destroy the Tolkien-esque Night Hunters who are guarding Chûn Castle – from the no-longer inundated land of Lyonesse.

Ultimately, the Crownstone destroys itself, torn between Marek's sorcery and its binding to protect the descendents of the Lords of Lyonesse. In the climax of the novel, Satan appears – in the form of a coppery-skinned, dark-haired young man – to claim Marek for himself. "Should Marek have succeeded this night", he tells Jack of the Hammer (Weatherhill 1991: 175), "he would have posed much more than a threat. Not only would I have been in peril; your own clan of Asgard would never more have risen. Even the Christos and His Father would have been sorely threatened". He goes on to explain that the Universe



Figure 6.37: **‘Jack placed the pins crosswise on top of the holed stone’,**  
from *The Lyonesse Stone*, 1991

“is subject to laws of its own making, which we must observe, or perish. There must be balance. Good and evil must co-exist, and be equal.

Marek would have swayed that balance. A new power such as his would surely have upset the equilibrium, and the Universe itself might finally have collapsed” (Weatherhill 1991: 176).

In this passage, Weatherhill offers a syncretic vision of a heavenly realm in which the Christian figures of God, Jesus and Satan co-exist with an Asgard populated by the gods and goddesses of Norse myth and legend. In *Seat of Storms* (Weatherhill 1997), the sequel to *The Lyonesse Stone*, Jack/Weland returns as Cernunnos, the antlered Celtic god of fertility, life and the animal world, adding a further layer of syncretism to this vision – a vision that is entirely in keeping with the Pagan revivalism, associated with alternative archaeology, that was discussed in section 6.3.3.

In his preface to *The Lyonesse Stone*, Weatherhill (1991: ix) writes that he intended his novel ‘to demonstrate that the legendary heritage of Cornwall is an entity of tremendous quality and power which has not deserved the distortion and trivialisation it has suffered at the hands of the tourist trade.’ Likewise, for Weatherhill and Devereux (2001: v), *Myths and Legends of Cornwall* ‘appears at a time when the commercial forces of tourism seeks to alter, trivialise and deface that legendary heritage for its own advantage.’ Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) and Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) reserve particular criticism for Peter de Savary, and his 1987 purchase and subsequent development of Land’s End. Weatherhill remembers how, less than 20 years ago, Land’s End consisted of no more than the Land’s End Hotel and the First and Last House. A view beyond the hotel to Longships Lighthouse, the Isles of Scilly, and the Atlantic Ocean then heralded one’s arrival at Land’s End. However, the year after his acquisition of Land’s End, de Savary opened the visitors’ centre, including the ‘Legendary Last Labyrinth’ special effects show. This single development, for Cooke (interview 19 April 2005) has since been responsible for bringing ‘a different kind of tourist’ to the Land’s End peninsula, a tourist who rarely, if ever, strays from established tourist traps and the beaten trails between them. Such an alignment of the local with the authentic, in opposition to a certain version of tourism, was partly the inspiration for Cooke’s

series of walking guides to sites of archaeological interest, as discussed above (Cooke 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997).

Weatherhill's Cornishness is not, however, an unproblematic championing of all things Cornish. He was initiated as a bard of the Gorsedd of Cornwall, for services to Cornish archaeology, in 1981 (Weatherhill interview 5 July 2002), choosing *Delynyer Hendhyscans* – Draughtsman of Archaeology – as his bardic name. Furthermore, in *The Lyonesse Stone*, he described the Gorsedd, through Ben Trevelyan, as 'a sight to see. All the bards in long blue robes, p'raps a couple o' hundred of 'en, all in a big circle. There's harp music, an' a huge sword which represents King Arthur's sword. The whole thing's conducted in the language' (Weatherhill 1991: 25) and, through Gawen, as 'a high and ancient gathering' (Weatherhill 1991: 110). In recent years, though, Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) has become somewhat dissatisfied with the Gorsedd – especially, ironically enough, with what he sees as an over-privileging of the speaking of the Cornish language as sufficient grounds for initiation. This dissatisfaction is doubly ironic when one considers that the Gorsedd of Cornwall initiates only bards because, Weatherhill (1991) believes, of a fear that the initiation of druids and ovates might introduce a sense of hierarchy into the Gorsedd. He also finds grounds for dissatisfaction with the Gorsedd of Cornwall in its claims that it is neither political nor religious, and has 'no connection whatsoever with Druidism nor with any pagan practice' (Shaw undated). Although not a practising Pagan, Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) sympathises with Paganism, and points out the obvious Pagan elements in the Gorsedd ceremony – the forming of a circle, and the Offering of the Fruits of the Earth – which were discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) also distances himself from his description, by Cornish Heritage (undated c), as the inheritor of the tradition of Joseph Michael and Thomas Flamank, both of whom were hanged, drawn and quartered for their part in the Cornish uprising of 1497 (Payton 1996a), although he does draw attention to the fact that many Cornish rose to defend the Cornish language from the forcible nationwide introduction of the English Book of Common Prayer in 1549, alongside other protests originating in Devon, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and East Anglia

(Weatherhill, interview 5 July 2002; see also Payton 1996). For Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002), the Gorsedd should be more explicitly non-Anglican:

‘I would rather they say that they don’t have any connection whatsoever with the English state religion which slaughtered 11% of the Cornish population in 1549 under the orders of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. But they’re not going to say that, are they? They’re being apologists again for the majority state’.

But, despite his criticisms of the Gorsedd of Cornwall, Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002) is more critical of Druid revivalist groups that do not ally themselves with Celtic revivalism. ‘Let’s face it, you know, all these guys who go to Stonehenge, it’s no good chatting away in English,’ he says. ‘If you’re going to be a true Druid, speak Celtic.’

*Seat of Storms* (Weatherhill 1997) also gives Weatherhill the opportunity, through Ben Trevelyan, to voice his criticism of the impact of European politics upon the Cornish economy. In the novel, John and Penny Trevelyan must rescue the captured Corantyn from Madge Figgy, a witch from Cornish folklore, and Ezekiel Grosse, a corrupt lawyer who lends Cornish farmers money at low interest rates, only to take possession of their land if they are so much as a day late on a repayment. Ben Trevelyan meets Harry Thomas, a fellow farmer who has recently lost his land to Grosse, in a pub in Penzance. “‘You know how it’s been in farming over the last few years”,’ says Thomas (Weatherhill 1997: 13).

“‘We’re all struggling, even you, but most of us have managed to keep our heads above water. But this Common Market has killed farming in this country, Ben. We’ve never over-produced, but suddenly we find ourselves cut back, bound and tied under red tape because of wasteful farming elsewhere. Milk quotas, beef quotas, you name it, imposed by politicians who wouldn’t know one end of a harvester from the other if it ran over them. What subsidies we had are cut back as well and we find ourselves on the edge of extinction through no fault of our own. It’s the same for the fishermen as well. You ask the boys down in Newlyn how they feel when they’re ordered to tie their boats up while the French and Spaniards rifle their fishing grounds. It’s all wrong”.’

Weatherhill (interview 5 July 2002), though, is careful to distinguish between the Council of Europe, whence the 1998 European Convention on Human Rights [under which the more politically-minded revivalists might seek to define the Cornish as a national minority], and the European Parliament, whence the Common Agricultural Policy. For Dick Cole, Chairman of Mebyon Kernow, the party's long-term aim is self-government in Europe (Teasdale 1999). Cornwall has, as aforementioned, recently gained a degree of European regional recognition, with the Archaeology and Historic Environment Service of Cornwall County Council receiving Objective One regional funding for archaeological projects (Cornwall County Council 2002). Similarly, E. R. Nute and Dr N. J. Hicks gained the support of the Federal Union of European Nationalities [FUEN] for its campaign to convince the British government to recognise the Cornish as a national minority, at the FUEN Congress in Subotica, Yugoslavia, in May 2002. Weatherhill's career is interesting in that it highlights his position as a figure whose version of the mystical, drawing as it does upon ancient and modern religion, folklore, myth and legend, crosses the notional divides between academic, amateur and 'alternative' archaeology and cuts across language and visual culture, the economics of tourism, and local, national and international politics.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that, following mid-twentieth century attempts by the Old Cornwall movement to pursue a new and more inclusive cultural formation of the mystical by incorporating other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, and by grounding itself in an avowedly more decentralised and populist institutional context, the later twentieth century is marked by a loss of this sense of control. To an extent, this loss of control was presaged by tensions that became evident during the 1930s between the Old Cornwall movement and the West Cornwall Field Club, over their respective mobilisations of folk culture and field archaeology as the authentic expression of the Cornish folk. With the increasing professionalisation and institutionalisation of the academic field of archaeology into the later twentieth century came a different kind of claim to the scientificity of archaeological knowledge, one that, as Lowerson (1992) observes, required certain questions to be left open. The very openness of these unanswered questions allowed – indeed, even invited – the proposal of a range of alternative answers by amateur

and alternative archaeologists, all with their own claims to scientific status, which academic archaeology – both within and beyond Cornwall – has struggled to control.

At the same time, this loss of control was related to wider issues than the professionalisation and institutionalisation of academic archaeology. The civil rights movements of the 1960s saw the rise in prominence and [albeit less rapidly] acceptance of new social movements, of which feminism and Green politics, in particular, can be seen to have coalesced and merged earlier twentieth century witchcraft into neo-Paganism. Alternative archaeology is associated with a particular gendered version of landscape based on the supposed revival of a prehistoric pan-European cult of the Earth-Mother or Mother Goddess from a peaceful time that was characterised by a harmonious relationship between mind, body and environment. Furthermore, the emergence of Cornish Studies as an academic discipline has encouraged the reclamation of alternative and forgotten Cornish cultural and historical narratives, including those of alternative archaeology. Thus, while the Cornish and pan-Celtic political movements have often been associated with a certain set of centre-left political standpoints [as well as the arguably more right-wing standpoint of political nationalism] to which one might collectively refer as Green politics, they have struggled to disconnect their own associations with Green politics from those of alternative archaeology and neo-Paganism.



## Conclusion

At this stage, it is worth highlighting the key empirical findings of this thesis by reflecting upon particular dimensions of the mystical as a cultural category and the ways in which they cut across the empirical research material that was presented and discussed in chapters four, five and six. In the first instance, it is worth reflecting upon the changing understandings of the mystical during the time period that is covered by this thesis. During the years around the separation of the Diocese of Truro from that of Exeter, in 1876, the mystical was connected to a particular version of Christianity; specifically, to an historical narrative of Anglicanism as identical and continuous with early Celtic Christianity. Such understandings also informed the Celtic-Cornish Revivalist movement; though the Revivalists struggled to contain the mystical within discourses of Celtic Christianity due to the complex and often contradictory position of the possibly pagan elements of Cornwall's Celtic past within their understandings of the mystical, as typified by Jenner's lending of his support to Evans-Wentz' (2002 [1911]) *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries* and its extended eulogy of pre-Christian folk culture. The mid-twentieth century was characterised by a series of strategies – most notably, the establishment of the modern Gorsedd of Cornwall – to engage with, and actively incorporate, other and potentially contradictory versions of the mystical, including other Christian denominations, Arthurianism and Paganism. In contrast, the later twentieth century was marked by a loss of this sense of control over understandings of the mystical, and by the emergence of Paganism, among other new social and religious movements, and the associated rediscovery of a much earlier prehistoric mysticism based upon the supposed principles of megalithic science – sacred geometry, archaeo-astronomy, earth energies and their effects on human consciousness.

These different versions of the mystical, in turn, operated at different geographical scales and connected to different geographical registers. The historical narrative of Anglicanism as identical and continuous with early Celtic Christianity informed and underpinned the Revivalist version of the Cornish landscape, based on surveys of holy wells and stone crosses (Quiller-Couch and Quiller-Couch 1994 [1894]; Langdon 1896) with a consequent regional focus on mid-Cornwall, where the greatest concentration of such sites was to be found. It also connected to the other five Celtic nations through the associated campaign for Cornwall's membership of the Celtic Association, and to a certain idea of Great Britain through the Revivalists' support for the restoration of the legitimate heirs of the Stuarts to the British throne. As was discussed in chapter four, the Revivalists aligned themselves, apparently quite unproblematically, with a Celtic cultural nationalism and a Unionist political nationalism. In addition, the parish was an important geographical unit in the Diocese of Truro, as evidenced by publication of the *Cornish Church Kalendar* (Taylor et al 1933) which included lists of the Cornish parish saints and their feast days; while RIC members advocated the use of the parish as a systematic geographical basis for a scheme for the collection of rural lore. The regional geography of the mystical in mid-twentieth century Cornwall was also characterised by a particular geographical focus of cultures of Arthurianism upon Tintagel. In the later twentieth century, the regional geography of the mystical in Cornwall was marked more by a paradoxical regional focus upon West Penwith, where the greatest concentration of sites of alternative archaeological interest is to be found (see Cooke 1994a, b, 1996a, b, 1997; Weatherhill 2000a), and yet a concern to spread alternative archaeological attention across the rest of Cornwall (see Straffon 1994, 1995a, 1998a, b, 1999; Weatherhill 2000b). Alternative archaeology also connected Cornwall to a new set of international spatialities based on parallels drawn with other examples of megalithic science – including Aztec and Mayan urban architecture and planning, and the Aboriginal Australian songlines – and the international trajectories of ley lines; which, in turn, cut across, and were cut across by, the emerging Cornish political nationalist movement.

Different versions of the mystical also connect to different sets of geographical practices – in particular, to different ways of interrogating the field. The Celtic-Cornish Revivalist version of the Cornish landscape was based upon surveys of holy

wells and stone crosses, and the oral historical methodologies of the nineteenth century folklorists and early anthropologists. For Jenner, as Saunders (2004) argues, the speaking of the Cornish language was a kind of sacrament; so that Jenner's interest in the toponymy of the antiquarian landscape meant that the field became a kind of scriptural space. However, there remained some tension between the valuation of 'a closer and corporeal education' (Naylor 2003: 326) and a reluctance over certain kinds of bodily encounters with the Cornish landscape. Such tension became less apparent in the mid-twentieth century, with the controlled ritual spaces and spatialities of the Old Cornwall movement – the Gorsedd of Cornwall, the lighting of midsummer bonfires, Crying the Neck, and the restoration and rededication of holy wells – that were, in turn, positioned in opposition to the rapidly changing built landscapes and environmental geographies of the burgeoning Cornish tourist industry (Thomas 1954). Moreover, the FOCS established an annual summer pilgrimage, thereby marking out not only such spaces themselves but the act of going to the sites as being in some way mystical. This cult of the pilgrim has certain parallels with late twentieth century alternative archaeology, in which a premium is placed upon first-hand fieldwork and direct encounters with prehistoric sites, and which mobilises an often openly confessional style of writing based on accounts of personal experiences of the Cornish landscape – including experiences in altered states of consciousness – alongside typically more prosaic descriptions of the sites themselves, though also often accompanied by rather impressionistic styles of artwork.

At a more methodological level, it is also worth reflecting upon the consequences of bringing together the mystical, the regional and the Cornish in the context of this thesis. The obvious point to register is that it makes sense to speak of the mystical geographies of Cornwall for, while there is clearly also a regional geography to the mystical in Cornwall, this thesis has explored the complex, multiple and often contested ways in which different cultural and historical formations of the mystical have mobilised Cornwall as a region in its own right. It makes sense to speak of the mystical geographies of Cornwall, then, in the way that it perhaps would not make sense to speak of the mystical geographies of, say, Devon, or Somerset, or Dorset, which are typically either packaged together – frequently with Cornwall – as 'the South-West', or else mobilised at a more localised scale – through Glastonbury, or

Stonehenge and the Wiltshire Plain – that does not coincide with the respective English administrative counties. The point is not, however, to argue that Cornwall is somehow intrinsically mystical, but to problematise the mystical as a cultural category, to investigate the ways in which different versions of the mystical become active in different versions of Cornwall and, in turn, to investigate the ways in which they are cut across by – indeed, to insist on their very inseparability from – not only different versions of the state and the economy but also the arts and entertainment, literary and visual culture, education and academia, sociological categories and, above all, by their very condition of being geographical.

Furthermore, as was discussed in chapter two, the politics to the understanding of Cornwall as a region in this thesis is not the politics of ‘the picturing of an order’ but, rather, that of ‘a figure of the possible’ (Crang 1997: 162). However, such an understanding has enabled this thesis to investigate the complex, multiple and often contested interconnections between different cultures of the mystical in Cornwall since the mid- to late nineteenth century and the corresponding picturing of a socio-spatial order. Another obvious point to register here is that the mystical is not always and inherently opposed to a certain sense of order; indeed, this thesis offers some pointers, however tentative, towards the frequent inseparability of the mystical and the ordered. By decentring and problematising the mystical, and by approaching the mystical not in its transcendent empty sameness but, instead, as a culturally and historically contingent set of practises and presuppositions, it is hoped that this thesis has made some contribution towards the opening up of a figure of the possible – both in terms of possible directions for future research in the fields of geography and, indeed, of Cornish Studies, and in terms of what we allow to inform our judgements, as culturally- and historically-bound human beings, in the constant [re-]making of the moral geographies of our everyday lives.

In terms of possible directions for future research in geography, Paul Harrison (2004) – in the recent discussion on the geographies of religion at the online Critical Geography Forum that was cited at the start of chapter three – posted the following observation:

‘it seems to me that – and of course with exceptions – most of what passes for the “geography of religion” seems to be identity politics by

another name, where the fact that these are putatively religious or spiritual phenomena makes little or no difference to their study.’

Adrian Bailey, David Harvey and Catherine Brace (2005), discussing their respective [a]theisms and agnosticisms in relation to an ongoing research project into the role of Methodism in Cornish cultures, wondered whether geography possesses or lacks the epistemological and methodological framework to engage with the spatialities of divinity; indeed, whether or not geography is inherently irreconcilable to God. This echoes the question that Harrison (2004) posed, further to his aforementioned observation on the geographies of religion:

‘is it possible within the epistemological and methodological terms of social science to actually study such phenomena as religious experience without explaining it away as ideology or identity, or are the two “language games” completely antithetical to each other?’

This thesis has argued that it is possible for the social sciences to study religious experience without needing to answer Harrison’s question, by attempting to understand religious experience without necessarily needing to explain it.

As discussed in section 2.2, Dewsbury (2003: 1907) claims that ‘immaterial matters of spirit, belief, and faith’ are epistemologically and methodologically beyond geographical and social scientific concerns with representation and discursive idealism, and that non-representational theoretical approaches based on witnessing space are better placed to achieve a more complete understanding of such matters. Partly there is a politics to such a claim, in that it represents, for Dewsbury (2003: 1928, original italics),

‘a genuine and important shift away from thinking life solely in terms of *power knowledge*, that which orchestrates meaning and purpose in life through the orientation of the self constructed to serve the state and the economy, towards apprehending *life knowledge*, that which speaks to the affirmation of life itself, to our feelings, desires, and beliefs that give us investments in the world and which make us feel that we belong.’

The argument here, in conclusion, is that the mystical, as one aspect of the ‘feelings, desires, and beliefs’ that Dewsbury terms ‘life knowledge’, is always and inherently inseparable from ‘power knowledge’. Indeed, one of the central themes of this thesis, running throughout chapters four, five and six – from the geopolitical aspirations and

spiritualist associations of the Celtic Association, through the Anglo-Catholicism and Jacobite Royalism of the Celtic-Cornish Society and the anti-modern religious and educationalist views of Evans-Wentz, to the Pagan religious connections and Green political associations of alternative archaeology and earth mysteries – is that of the complex, multiple and contested inter-relationships between different cultural and historical formations of the mystical and different versions of the state and the economy.

While Thrift has argued the efficacy of non-representational approaches to both the mystical (Thrift 2000) and the region (Thrift 1997), the subtitle of Dewsbury's aforementioned paper on witnessing space – 'Knowledge without Contemplation' – problematises claims that non-representational theoretical approaches based on witnessing space are better placed to achieve a more complete understanding of 'immaterial matters of spirit, belief, and faith' (Dewsbury 2003: 1907) for, as Jantzen (1995; see also Underhill 1930 [1911]; Inge 1948 [1899]; James 2002 [1902]) observes, there is a centuries-old tradition of contemplative techniques within Christian mysticism. As discussed in section 2.2.3, such a privileging of precognitive thought above its often cognitive and social origins could be misinterpreted as a restatement of 'a classically neo-Romantic desire for a return to an unmediated, authentic relationship to the world, to be like "primitive" others who are unburdened by thought' (Nash 2000: 657), and as a theoretical [re]turn to the individualistic, universalising sovereign subject. 'If the strength of cultural geography,' says Nash (2000: 654), 'has been its tradition of attending to the intersections between 'the material *and* symbolic,' between 'practices *and* images,' and between 'the economies and politics of places, cultural practices, discourses and products,' then epistemological and methodological distinctions between representation and non-representational theory – and political distinctions between 'power knowledge' and 'life knowledge' – risk making mutual opponents of approaches that should instead be mutually informative. The closing argument of this thesis is that such a tradition – the tradition within which this thesis itself was written – is at least as well-placed as non-representational theoretical approaches to work towards wider cultural and historical geographical understandings of the mystical.

## Archival Sources

The following is a list of the principal archival sources that were used in researching this thesis, along with a brief summary of the contents of each archival collection. In addition, extensive use was made of the Cornish Studies Library in Redruth, which holds the largest collection of unpublished pamphlets, newsletters, newspapers, magazines and journals in Cornwall including, in particular, the *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, and *Celtia* and *Carn*, the magazines of the Celtic Association and the Celtic League, respectively.

### **Cornwall Record Office, Truro**

Gorsedd of Cornwall collection, X1104:

- *Minute Book of Gorsedd Kernow: Aug 1928 – Jul 1962*, X1104/1
- Assorted correspondence and newspaper cuttings

Henry Jenner collection, X1141:

- *Four Score Years and Four: The Memories of Henry Jenner, M.A., F.S.A.*, unpublished autobiography manuscript, uncatalogued
- *Short Synopsis of the Reminiscences of Henry Jenner, M.A., F.S.A.*, unpublished manuscript notes, uncatalogued
- Assorted letters and other correspondence

### **Morrab Library, Penzance**

Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society collection, MOR/NAT:

- *Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society Minute Book 1880-1898*, MOR/NAT/1
- *Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society Minute Book 1898-undated* MOR/NAT/2

### **Royal Institution of Cornwall (Courtney Library), Truro**

Henry Jenner collection, uncatalogued:

- Letters from W. Y. Evans-Wentz to Henry Jenner, 1910-11, box 9: packet 8: bundle 1
- Assorted leaflets and newspaper cuttings, letters and other correspondence on Legitimism, box 13: various
- Other assorted leaflets and newspaper cuttings, letters and other correspondence

## Interviews

The following is a list of the names of people with whom interviews were undertaken while researching this thesis, along with dates and locations of the interviews. Two of these – those with Cheryl Traffon and Craig Weatherhill – were follow-up interviews to ones that were undertaken while researching my Masters dissertation, while a third – that with Ian McNeil Cooke- was a follow-up interview to a brief exchange of e-mail correspondence that similarly comprised part of the research for my Masters dissertation.

Paul Broadhurst – The Cobweb Inn, Boscastle, Friday 22 April 2005  
Alternative archaeology writer; shop-owner of The Other World, Boscastle

Ian McNeil Cooke – Mên-an-Tol Studio, Bosulow, Penzance, Tuesday 19 April 2005  
Alternative archaeology writer; artist and owner of the Mên-an-Tol Studio

John Michell – Michell's home, North Kensington, London, Thursday 14 April 2005  
Alternative archaeology writer

Andy Norfolk – Norfolk's home, Crowan, Camborne, Monday 11 April 2005  
Landscape architect; co-founder of the Cornwall Earth Mysteries Group; national representative of the Pagan Federation

Cheryl Traffon – St Just Library, Saturday 9 April 2005  
Senior Librarian, St Just Library; co-founder of the Cornish Earth Mysteries Group; alternative archaeology writer and editress of Meyn Mamvro, the Cornish earth mysteries journal

Sarah Vivian – Mariner's Gallery, St Ives, Thursday 21 April 2005  
Artist and co-owner of the Mariner's Gallery; founder member of the Penwith Pagan Moot

Craig Weatherhill – The Fountain Inn, Newbridge, Penzance, Thursday 21 April 2005  
Writer and Cornish language teacher



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