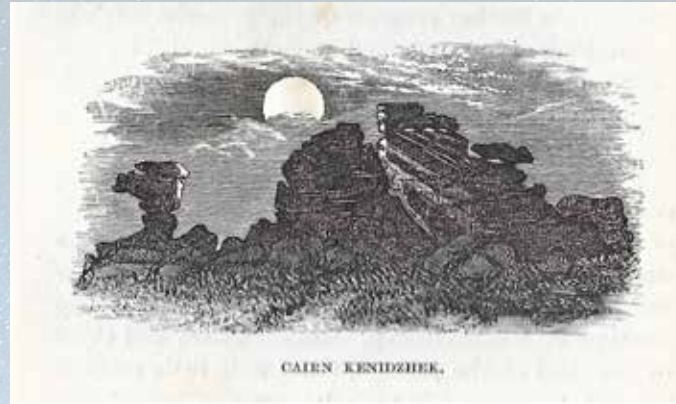


ANCIENT MONUMENTS

The people from prehistory built a wide range of ancient monuments and the remaining ones can be seen across the length and breadth of Cornwall. Many of these have links to the celestial objects in the sky. The purpose and meaning behind these connections may have been lost with time, but we can try and make sense of what they left behind. A picture of the practices and beliefs can be built up when the disciplines of astronomy and archaeology are combined into archaeoastronomy. Monuments may have marked seasonal changes, been used as a calendar or created a spiritual place with connections to the afterlife. This leaflet will take you on a tour of a selection of sites around Cornwall with these exciting links to the night sky.



WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY Carolyn Kennett (FRAS)
with **Mayes Creative** as part of the **Measuring the Univers** programme, which explores the ways we have tried to make sense of distances in the Universe and the part Cornwall played in making these measurements

Carolyn Kennett is a writer and astronomer who lives in Cornwall and researches the links between ancient people and the stars.

www.archaeoastronomycornwall.com

Please be responsible when visiting ancient sites, take nothing but photos, leave only footprints.

Text and Images by Carolyn Kennett (FRAS)
JT Blight Week at Landsend



www.mayescreative.com



HOW DID THE ANCIENTS TRY TO MAKE SENSE OF THE UNIVERSE?

ANCIENT SITES WITH LINKS TO THE SKY

CAROLYN KENNETT (FRAS)

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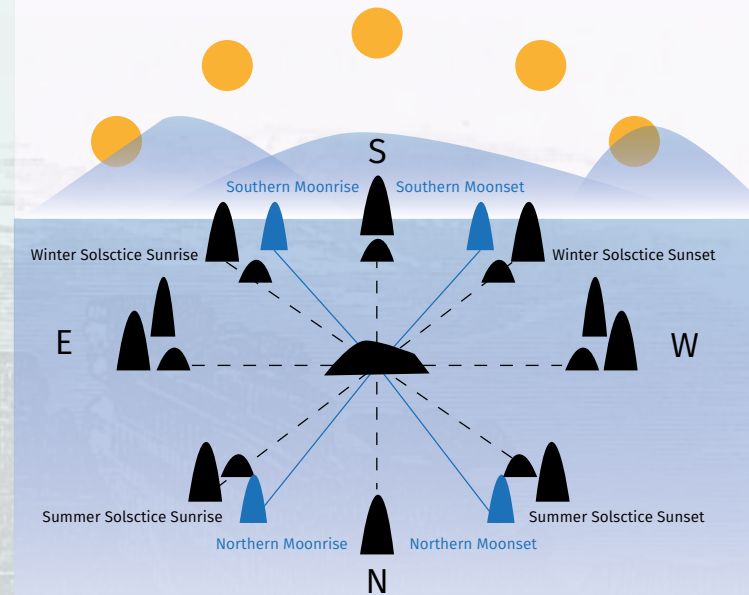
ARCHAEOASTRONOMY

Just as we do today, though, without the technology, the people of the Neolithic and Bronze age would try to make sense of the motions in the sky. The stone monuments in our landscape leave us clues as to how they did this. Many, we know, have been aligned to indicate positions of objects in the sky. The most common being stones that are aligned with the solar cycle, such as the Heel Stone at Stonehenge marking a solstice point. Other stones are linked to the lunar cycle and some are suggested to have links with other celestial objects such as planets and stars. Archaeoastronomy attempts to understand the secrets that have been locked into the stones by studying the position and design of the monuments and linking them to the sky and landscape around them.



LINKS TO THE SUN

The Sun is an ever present object in our life. It provides us with daylight, heat, and ultimately, it is essential to our survival. Earth orbits around the Sun each year, it does this with a 23.5 degree tilt, this gives us seasons and also means that here in Cornwall the Sun will have a different rising and setting point each day. It will rise in the east and set in the west at equinox. Nearest the summer solstice it will rise in the northeast and set in the northwest. At the winter solstice it will rise in the southeast in the set in the southwest. Many sites in Cornwall have alignments with the Solar cycle.

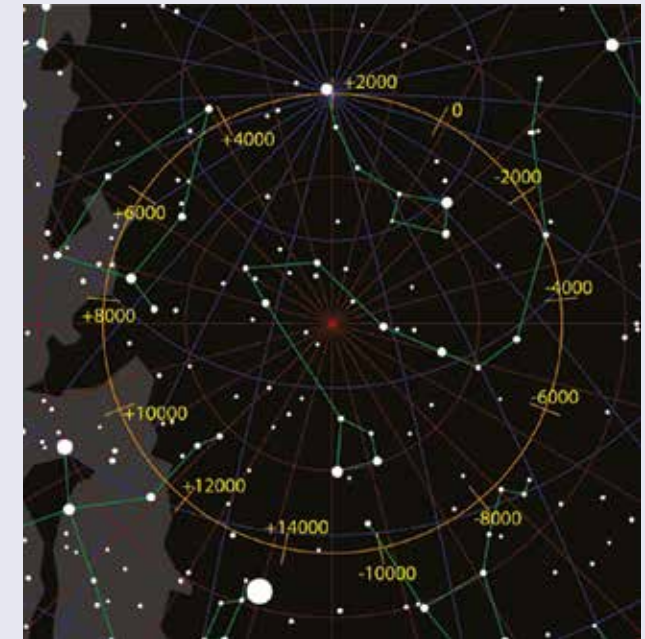


LINKS TO THE MOON

The Moon like the Sun rises in the east and sets in the west, but its motion through the sky is a little more complex than the solar cycle. It also has a cycle just like the Sun, but instead of it taking a whole year to move through its most northerly to its most southerly setting points and back again, it does this over the course of a lunar month. At the end of each lunar month its rising and setting position will be slightly different to the last month. It reaches its most northerly and most southerly rising and setting points every 18.6 years and these are known as standstill positions.

LINKS TO STARS

Stars are the most wonderful celestial objects to watch in the sky. Depending on age and size they have different colours, with some being blue and some red. It is suggested that ancient monuments may have been aligned to red stars such as Arcturus and Betelgeuse, but it is difficult to say this without accurate dating of ancient sites. This is because the stars have moved since ancient times due to precession.



LINKS TO THE MILKY WAY

The Milky Way has been lost to many of us with all the light pollution. But in ancient times this dusty lane of gas and stars would have arched overhead and been an important night time object. The position of the Milky Way in the sky changes during the course of the year. In springtime as it gets dark it hugs the eastern horizon, appearing as a pathway to the heavens.

MEASURING THE UNIVERSE



ANCIENT SITES WITH LINKS TO THE SKY
CAROLYN KENNETT (FRAS)



1 CHUN QUOIT AND CARN KENIDJACK

Chun Quoit is a Neolithic dolmen, located on Woon Gumpas common just outside Pendeen, Chun Quoit sits on a ridgeway with extensive views of moorland. To the West is the large rocky outcrop Carn Kenidjack. Standing here on the Winter Solstice you will see the Sun set behind this rocky outcrop.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W



2 WINTER SOLSTICE SUNSET AND TREGESAL

Tregeseal was once a multiple circle site, currently we can only see the one remaining. It sits at the base of the impressive Carn Kenidjack. There is a sea gap towards the south-west. On a clear day and within the sea gap you can see the Isles of Scilly, a small set of islands located 26 miles off the coast. In the Bronze Age the Winter Solstice the Sun will set directly over the centre of the islands.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W



3 WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE AND BOSCAWEN-ÛN

Standing in Boscawen-ûn stone circle the winter solstice sunrise would emerge from over the sea, this time from the Lamorna Gap. There is only a glimpse of the sea itself from the circle, but a number of standing stones called the Trelew line lead off in this direction, suggesting a possible processional way.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W



4 BOSILIACK SCILLONIAN BARROW

This barrow has been deliberately orientated so that on the Winter Solstice Sunrise the Sun will shine into the central chamber, illuminating what would have been a dark space inside.

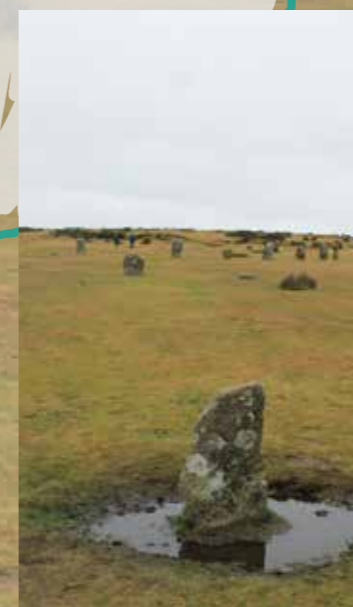
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5 BOSKEDNAN STONE CIRCLE AND NORTHERN MOST LUNAR STANDSTILL POSITION.

The rocky outcrop, Carn Galva, dominates the skyline when you stand within Boskednan (Nine Maidens) stone circle. The circle itself has been positioned on a flat ridgeway which forms a processional route via a number of barrows to this ancient revered outcrop. Standing in the circle itself on the date of the northern most lunar standstill, you would see the Moon set over this outcrop. This only comes around every 18.6 years and the next opportunity to see it will be in 2025.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W



6 THE HURLERS AND THE MILKY WAY

The Triple stone circle complex on Bodmin Moor has a very unique feature, a 'pathway' between the northern and central circles. Not only is this pavement spatial representative of the Milky Way in the sky it leads in the direction of a large barrow on the NE horizon. The Milky Way is often interpreted as a pathway for the dead and a link between the Earth and the Heavens. The Milky Way will emerge from barrow in the Spring time. The ribbon of light in the sky connects the length of the eastern horizon before disappearing in the south, connecting Earth with the Heavens and life and death together.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W



8 FERNACRE STONE CIRCLE AND THE CARDINAL POINTS

Fernacre on Bodmin Moor is surrounded by impressive hills, including Brown Willy the largest hill in Cornwall and Rough Tor. Located in a bowl in the valley this stone circle has been positioned with care as each cardinal point N, S, E and W all have a corresponding rocky outcrop.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W

7 THE MOON & HENDRABURNICK QUOIT

Hendraburnick Quoit is the most decorated stone in southern Britain. The Neolithic monument is heavily inscribed with cup marks and grooves. What is interesting is that only under low light conditions such as under a Full Moon does the extent of the decorations become apparent. Was this stone meant to be viewed in Moonlit ceremonies? That is the suggestion that has been made by archaeologists.

SW 7075 2494
50°04'46.5"N 5°12'22.1"W

