

# Introducing the Trethevy Quoit, Cornwall

‘A litle howfe rayfed of mightie ftones’

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First record of the quoit by John Norden in 1610

T Tretheuie, c. 14. called in Latine *Casa gigantis*, a litle howse  
rayfed of mightie stones, standing on a litle hill within a  
feilde, the forme herevnder expressed.

Tretheaye.



Norden, John. *Speculi Britanniae Pars: A Topographical and Historical Description of Cornwall*. London: William Pearson, 1728. p.88

This monument standeth in the parish of *St Clere*. The couer being all one **stone**, is from A to B 16 foote the length, the bredth from C to D is 10 foot, the thicknes from G to H is 2 foote; E is an arteficiall holl 8 inches diameter, made thorough the rooffe very rounde, which serued as it seemeth to putt out a staffe, wherof the howse it selfe was not capable : F was the dore or Entrance.



## Trethevy Quoit – Cornwall, just outside the village of Saint Cleer





Location: +50° 29' 35.41", -4° 27' 19.40"

## ENGLISH HERITAGE \_

### TRETHEVY QUOIT

This well-preserved and impressive Neolithic 'dolmen' burial chamber stands 2.7 metres (8.9 ft) high.

There are five standing stones, surmounted by a huge capstone. Managed by the Cornwall Heritage Trust.

Please note: Dogs on leads are welcome.

‘One of England’s most impressive dolmens’

Photo by Royston Naylor



## Described by Cornwall Heritage as:

Four large overlapping granite slabs set upright form the sides of the chamber with lateral stones at front and back. The back stone is leaning inwards, and the massive capstone which is supported by these uprights rests at a crazy angle. It is not clear whether this was a feature of the original design of the monument or the result of a partial collapse or slippage. A curious round hole has been drilled through the top corner of the capstone. A small antechamber was formed at the front of the monument but only one of the two original upright stones remains. A rectangular cut-out at the side of the upright stone that forms the front of the main chamber may have been an original entrance but it could equally be a later modification - certainly, no other Cornish site has such a feature. The quoit is surrounded by a stony mound or cairn which would probably have been more impressive than it is today, though it is thought unlikely that the quoit would ever have been completely covered.

Also known as cromlechs and portal dolmens, excavations have shown that these kinds of sites were constructed in the early and middle Neolithic period between 3700-3300 BC.

The Quoit is located within a  
area of other megalithic sites



The Rillaton gold cup – found 1818  
Early Bronze Age, 1700-1500 BC  
From Rillaton, Cornwall, England

The Hurlers – one of only three sites that contain  
three circles.

The Hurlers, Stanton Drew and the Clava Cairns, Scotland.

## Setting

Trethevy Quoit is sited on a promontory overlooking the confluence of streams which flow southwards to become the River Seaton; the northern skyline is dominated by Caradon Hill and granite massif of Minions Moor.

Trethevy is considered to be the best preserved quoit in Cornwall and one of the most impressive of its type in Britain.

[http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/a2m/neolithic/chambered\\_tomb/trethevy\\_quoit/trethevy\\_quoit.htm](http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk/a2m/neolithic/chambered_tomb/trethevy_quoit/trethevy_quoit.htm)



Dymond wrote a compressive paper in 1881 giving the previous literature on the Quoit as well as his own appraisal.

Dymond concluded that the quoit was not once a enclosed burial tomb but rather was always free standing and that the roof stone and main walls were largely still in their original orientations – he based this of observing the worked stone that held the roof stone in place.

He considers the hole in the roof stone and compares it with other such holes of dolmens of Europe but points out that these are using in the sides, not in the roof.

He compares it with Zennor Quoit near St Ives in Cornwall.

Zennor Quoit

Dymond, C.W. "The Trethevy Stone." *The Journal of the British Archeological Association* 32 (1881): 112-122.



Norman Lockyer stated:

‘At Trevelth is one of the most famous cromlechs in the country, and it has not been restored, so that we need not hesitate to measure it to try to determine its meaning.’

Lockyer, Joseph Norman Sir K. C. B. *Stonehenge and Other British Stone Monuments Astronomically Considered. [with Illustrations.]*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1906. p.418.

Hencken, Hugh O'Neill. *The Archaeology of Cornwall and Scilly*. London: Methuen, 1932. Commented that it was unchanged since described in 1610 by Norden. He comments on the hole in the roof cap stone and considers in relationship to other stone's with holes that have magical quality. P. 47

Barnatt, John. *Prehistoric Cornwall: The Ceremonial Monuments*: Turnstone Press, 1982

Barnatt considers that the Quoit was once a chambered tomb, enclosed by a mound. Of the hole in the roof stone he states.

‘Many theories have been put forward, from a flagpole support to a chimney. It is not clear if the hole is natural or artificial and no functional purpose can be perceived.’  
p. 133.

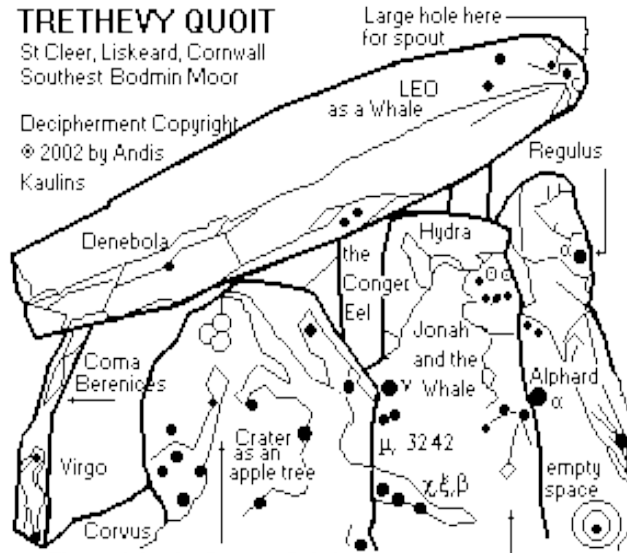
## TRETHEVY QUOIT

St Cleer, Liskeard, Cornwall  
Southwest Bodmin Moor

Decipherment Copyright

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Kaulins



The mark for the Summer Solstice

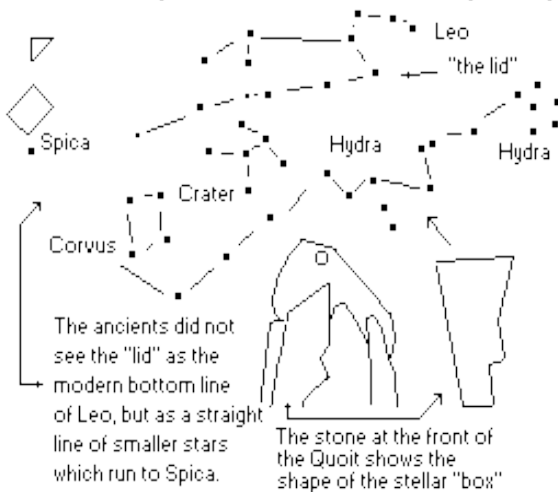
3117 BC is the diamond under the golden apples of the Hesperides.

This corresponds to the large site at Carn Brae. The stone next to it has a faint mark which would be a later marking ca. 1000 BC.

For photos see CAU "Cornwall's Archaeological Heritage"

[www.caradon.gov.uk/region/minions/trethevy.htm](http://www.caradon.gov.uk/region/minions/trethevy.htm)

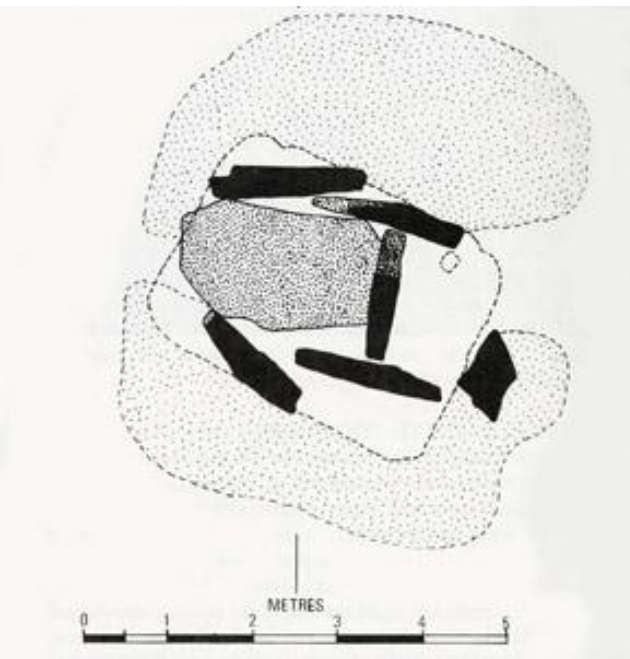
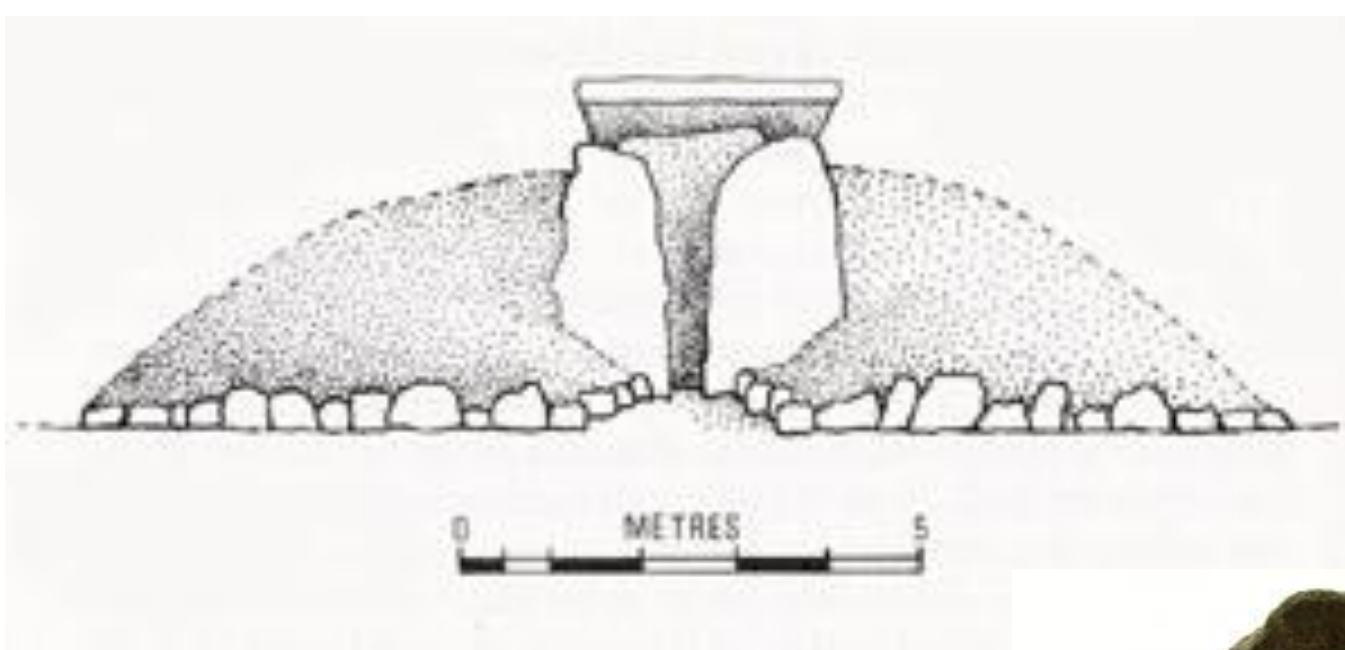
[www.westcountryviews.co.uk/bodminmoor/trethevy/trethevy05.htm](http://www.westcountryviews.co.uk/bodminmoor/trethevy/trethevy05.htm)



The Quoit is subject to a great deal of speculation.

<http://www.megaliths.net/trethevy.htm> 18

March 2013



Drawings by John Barnatt



Left to right  
Bernadette Brady  
Royston Naylor  
Dave Kane  
Peter Charlton

20 March 2013













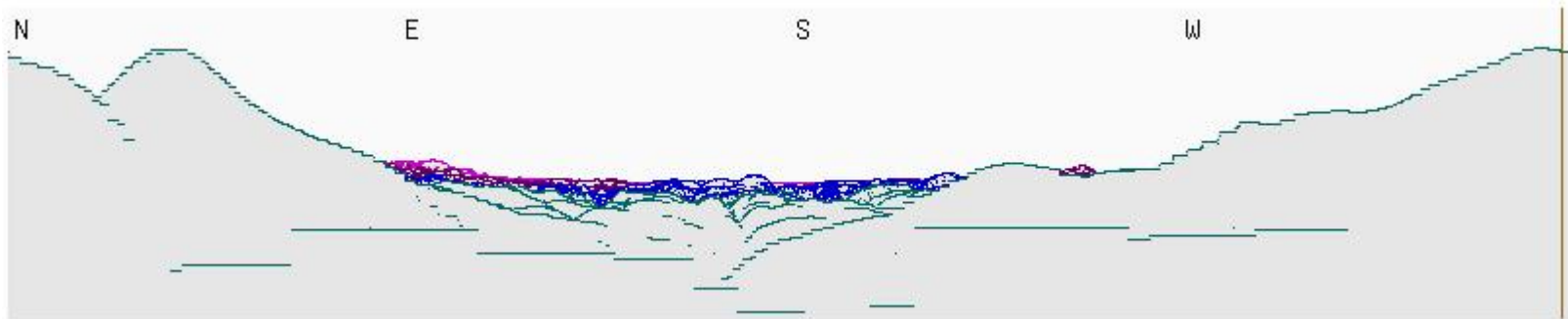




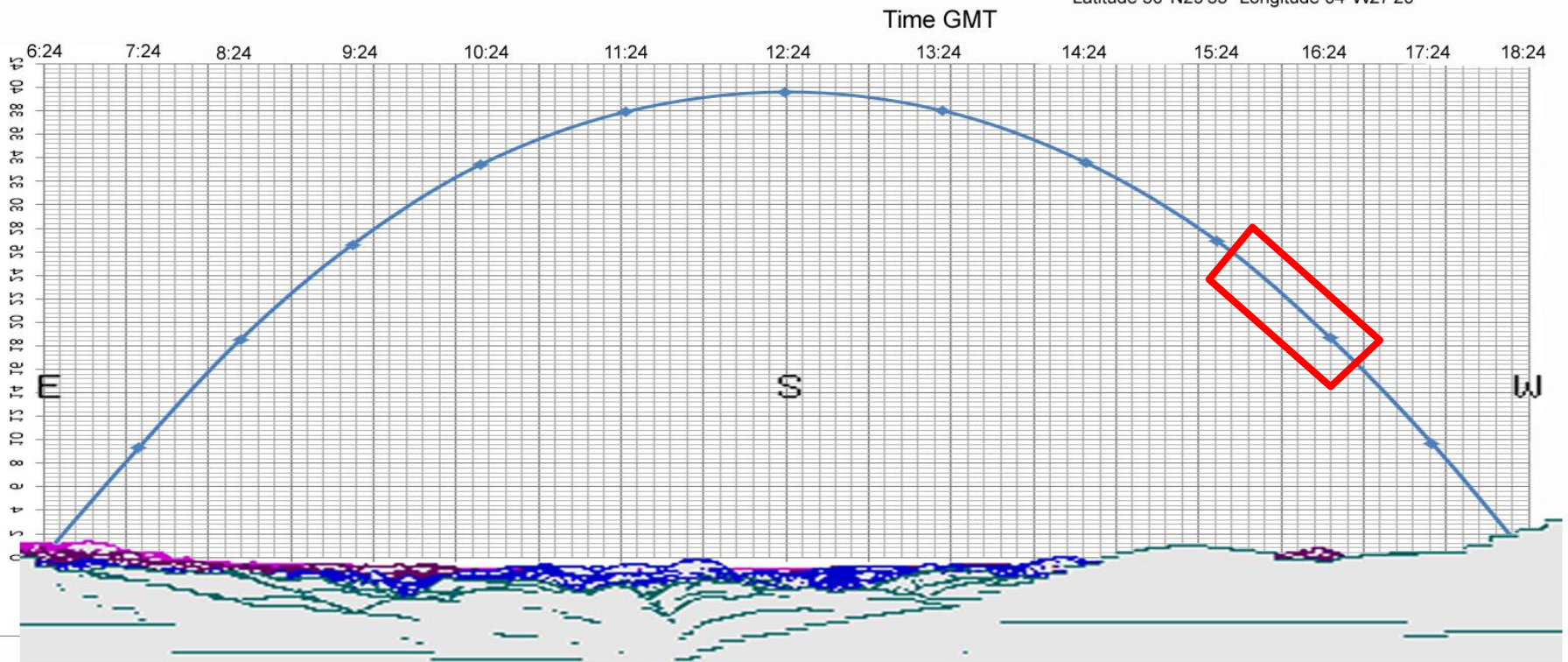


Photo Pam Armstrong

## The surrounding Landscape



20 March 2013 - Path of the Sun - declination 00.00 +/- 0.5  
Trethevy Quoit, St Cleer, Cornwall  
Latitude 50°N29'35" Longitude 04°W27'20"

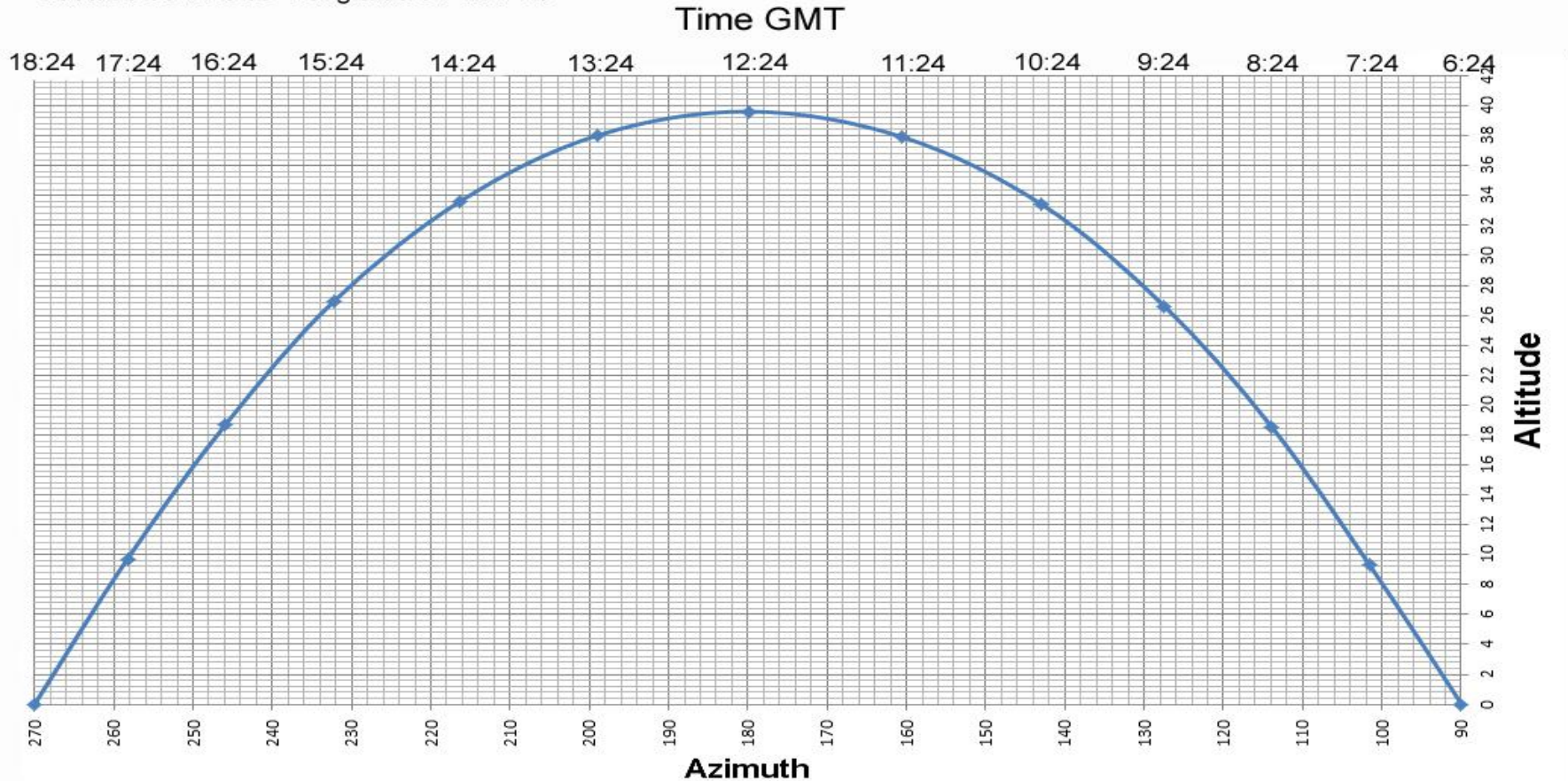


# Sun's Path over the quoit – 20 March 2013

20 March 2013 - Path of the Sun - declination 00.00 +/- 0.5

Trethevy Quoit, St Cleer, Cornwall

Latitude 50°N29'35" Longitude 04°W27'20"





According to Royston Naylor on a sunny day the quoit via its aperture caste a spot of light across the landscape.

Bennatt suggested that there is no practical reason for this hole ?

Is the hole later than the quoit?

Is it medieval?

Is it related to other bronze age stones with holes?

It sits very near to a set of three bronze age circles called the Hurlers is there a link?