

CELTIC CORNWALL

NATION • TRADITION • INVENTION

Alan M. Kent
with photography by Jan Beare

In his introduction to *Celtic Cornwall*, the author writes:

"Observers have tried to debunk Cornish Celticity over the years, claiming that after the Anglo-Saxon invasions and the Norman Conquest then, in effect, Cornwall ceased to be truly Celtic. This assertion is wrong on several levels because fundamentally it seems to lack recognition of the resistance of Cornish people over time to reconfigure and re-negotiate their Celtic identity. It also assumes a kind of assimilation and integration into England which has clearly not fully occurred. Resistance has been there in many different ways across the centuries, and it is still there in the twenty-first century. The entries in this book confirm this. They also deny the sceptics."

The Celtic peoples of Europe, despite subjugation by more powerful nations, have retained their essential 'difference', a remarkable tribute to their resilience and a phenomenon celebrated in what today is known as the Celtic Revival. Nowhere is this feeling stronger than in Cornwall which, in spite of (or perhaps because of?) losing its native language and parts of its distinctive identity, marches at the head of this revivalism.

But who were the 'real' Celts and what actually remains of their legacy in Cornwall? It is these questions that Alan Kent sets out to answer in this book. Exploring the sites associated with the Celts, both in ancient and in more modern times, he provides the reader with a fascinating insight into the landscape, life and traditions that have made Cornwall and its people 'different'.

The contemporary photography of Jan Beare, combined with many historic images, adds immensely to the visual impact of the book and provides for the reader a ready-made guide to sites they can visit and explore for themselves.

Alan M. Kent was born in St Austell, Cornwall. He now lectures in Literature for the Open University in South-West Britain. He is a prize-winning poet, novelist and dramatist. His most recent titles include *Proper Job*, *Charlie Curnow!* (2005), *Stannary Parliament* (2006), *Nativitas Christi* (2006) and *Oogly es Sin* (2007) and *Electric Pastyland* (2007) and *Voodoo Pilchard* (2010). He has written extensively on the literary and cultural history of Cornwall and further titles include *Cousin Jack's Mouth-organ: Travels in Cornish America* (2004), *The Dreamt Sea: An Anthology of Anglo-Cornish Poetry 1928-2004* (2004), *Assassin of Grammar* (2005) and a new verse translation of the trilogy of Cornish mystery plays known as *Ordinalia* (2005).

Jan Beare is a Cornishman who, following a career in teaching, devoted much of his time to photography. His love of the Cornish landscape and his impeccable eye and patience in waiting for the best shot add up to a portfolio of exceptional images, each with his individual stamp. He provided many of the photographs in Craig Weatherhill's award winning study of Cornwall's archaeological sites, *Cornovia*, also published by Halsgrove.

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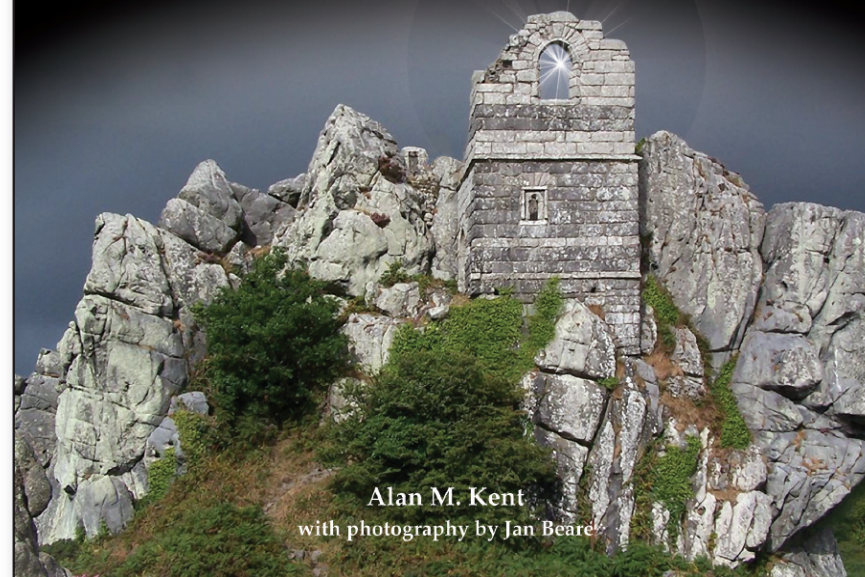
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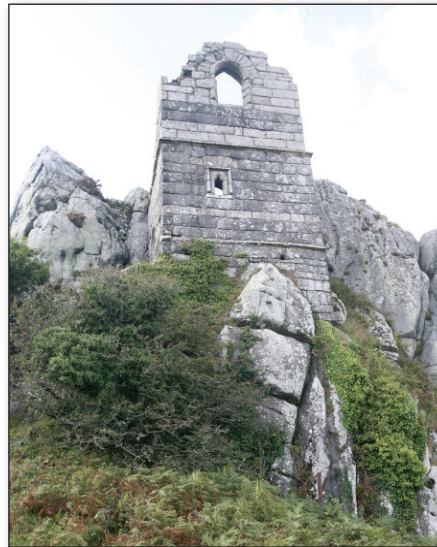


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The Chapel of St Michael, Roche Rock.

King Arthur pulling the sword from the anvil in the stone, as depicted in the stained glass windows at King Arthur's Hall, Tintagel.

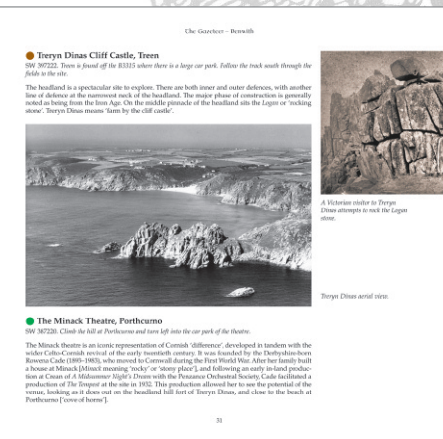
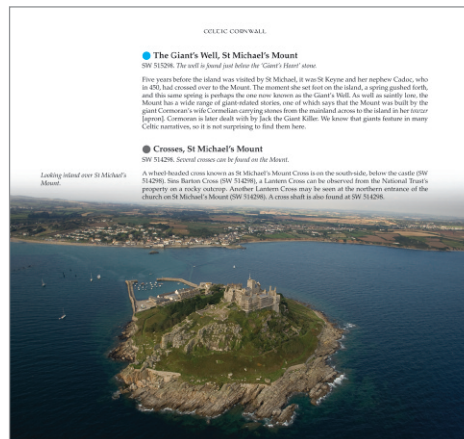


Keigwin House, Mousehole 1880s

Boscawen-Ūn stone circle.



Example of a double-page spread.



The Minack Theatre, Porthcurno. The Minack theatre is an iconic representation of Cornish 'differance', developed in tandem with the wider Celtic Revival revival of the early twentieth century. It was founded by the playwright, actress, and writer, Rosemary Cade (1893-1983), who moved to Cornwall during the First World War. After her family built a house at Minack (Minack meaning 'rock' or 'stone place'), and following an early theatrical production at Minack, Cade's Minack Theatre was founded. The Minack Theatre is a production of 'The Tempest' at the site in 1912. This production allowed her to use the potential of the venue, looking on it does not on the headland but on the beach at Porthcurno ('several houses').