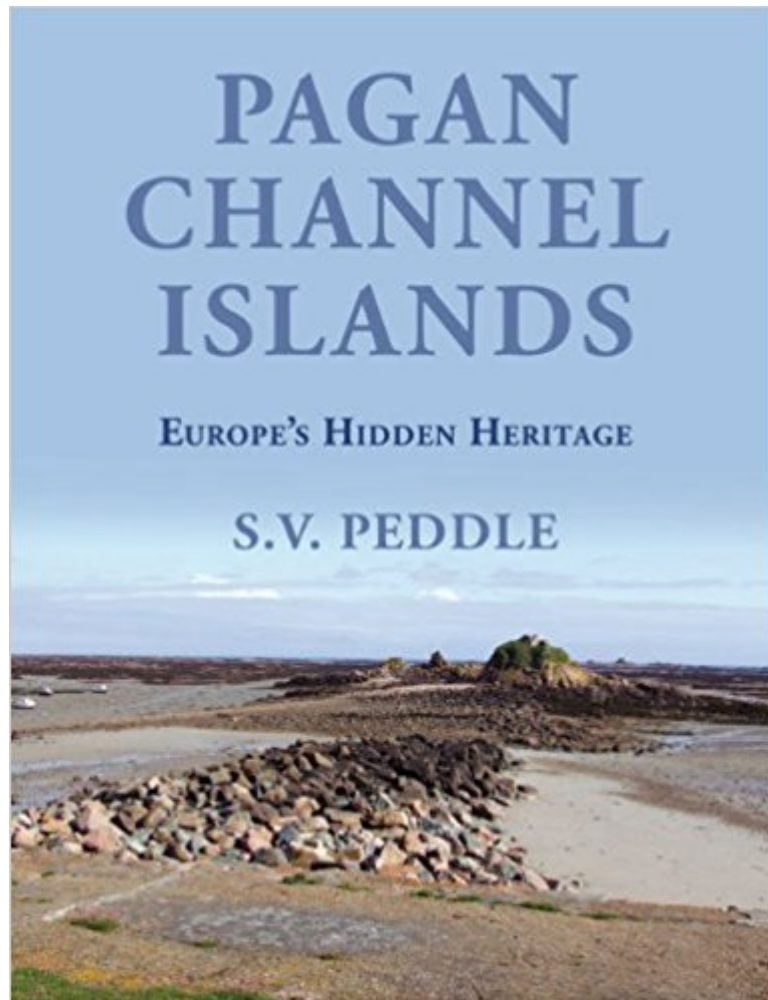




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Pagan Channel Islands: Europe's Hidden Heritage



Synopsis

This is not a guidebook to the stone monuments of the Channel Islands, nor is it a study of their archaeology. It is not even a book about contemporary paganism or Wicca on the Channel Islands. It started out by trying to answer two simple but very puzzling questions: why were the ancient monuments built and why are they known locally as Pouquelayes - a Norman-French word that means Puck stones, or fairy stones. What possible link could there be between these solid and permanent lumps of rock and the elusive fantasy world of fairies, pixies and mischevous sprites? The answers to these questions have proved fascinating and have linked into the legacy and traditions of fairy tales, legends, early religions and ancient earth rituals. Much of this wonderful heritage has been forgotten in recent centuries. But as we show, it only requires a little imagination and respect for the landscape and ancient tradition to bring the monsters, fairies and ghosts of our legendary past to life, and allow us to relive the magical originals of all art and religion. Welcome to the miraculous domain of the Channel Islands.

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Customer Reviews

Around three to five thousand years ago, an ancient people began building stone sites and monuments on the Channel Islands, creating a landscape as rich in mythology as any archaeological site in Greece or Egypt. Since early Christian times, the dolmens (stone chambers) and menhirs (single standing stones) have been reviled as the domain of witches, ghosts, and dragons. They were thought to bring bad luck and sudden death to all who came near. Yet they

have also been cherished as sources of healing, female fertility, good harvests, and buried treasure, as well as the dwelling place of friendly fairies. Despite the fact that these structures were seen as a threat by the Christian Church, which was determined to erase the Paganism of the past, a good number of them remain. The superstitions surrounding the dolmens and menhirs, in particular the dire consequences said to ensue following their destruction, have preserved many of them to this day. The authors recount the terrible fates which have befallen several Channel Islanders who have dared to disturb or destroy these ancient sites. Channel Island mythology is alive and well today, and surviving in local superstition, customs, poetry, art, and folklore. This guide uncovers and explores this mythology, relating it to the ancient wisdom of the stones and demonstrating that, with a little imagination and respect for our environment, we can bring the near-forgotten monsters, fairies, and ghosts of the legendary past to life.

S.V. Peddle is the pseudonym of Sandra and Vince Peddle. Both keen travellers, they have - between them - lived in such far-flung places as the USA, South Africa, Germany, Greece and Turkey - as well as Portsmouth, Manchester, Wellingborough and Watford (where for some years they owned and ran a large second-hand bookshop in the high street). They were born (respectively) in High Wycombe and Leicester and met in Crete in 1986 when they were both working as teachers. Sandra and Vince Peddle now live on the island of Jersey, British Channel Islands. ã ã The Moon Maiden, their novel set in Crete, was published in 2003.

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