



RITUALS &  

  PRACTICES

FOR CONJURING 

    THE

FOREST   

GWELLEN

Produced by Emma Smith in collaboration with artists Verity Birt, Kitty Hillier, Maya Ronchetti and Nina Royle, forager Rachel Lambert, and forester Nick Jarvis from Working Woodlands Cornwall.



RITUALS & PRACTICES FOR CONJURING THE FOREST



GWELLEN

Hidden in Mount's Bay lies Cornwall's largest submerged forest. In the time this forest established and submerged, the human brain evolved to allow us to imagine things we have not experienced before. By the time the forest had disappeared, we were able to imagine it.

Gwelen offers a series of oak sculptures along the Penzance — Marazion Coastal Path, as copse of trees, from which to rest and imagine the forest. Each sculpture has been custom made to the measurements and poses given by local residents to support the body in rest to use the imagination.

This book accompanies the artwork offering prompts for the imagination through text and action. These can be used in Mount's Bay and elsewhere for those who wish to connect to the forest remotely. Through these rituals and practices we invite you to conjure the forest!

SEEING
STICKS OR
LEANING
POSTS FROM
WHICH TO
IMAGINE

'Gwelen' is Kernewek for stick, rod or pole. Its prefix 'gwel' means view or vision and 'gweles' is to see.

Find a leaning post in Mount's Bay.

Connect to this ancient oak.

Find a point where body and wood can morph into one another.

This species is passed onto you across time and connects you to its ancestors who sit beneath your feet.

Root to the ground.

The trees are here.

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RITUALS & PRACTICES



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GWELLEN



8

EMMA SMITH

SENSING

SENSING



9

Lean and rest
Close your eyes
Open your ears
Listen to the air
It blows through trees

Seek the smallest sound
It is the grass swaying
Clock a bird
It circles to find its nest

Note a sound that moves at speed
It is an insect
Recognise a voice
A forager gathers food

Hear water
Seep into pools
A stray knock
The mud cracks

A repetition
Of butterfly wings
A call
To whom?

Feel the wind in your face
It has been here all this while



EVOKING





In this activity we will draw spirit palimpsests that we conjure from the forest with our imagination.

A palimpsest is a term used to describe something which has multiple layers or traces from different times, influences or actions. It is commonly used to describe the papers of ancient manuscripts that were reused through the scraping away of previous writing and written upon again with traces of the old writing often still visible alongside the new.

A palimpsest is any evidence communicating that something has evolved or been altered at different points. Like sediment layers in the earth, rock forms and archaeological finds. Like buildings with windows filled in, scratches or doodles on pub table tops, reworked paintings, scientific theories, compost; something that is there as a result of something prior. Could we stretch this concept to life itself? Are we all living palimpsests of previous generations and time, our features and habits as traces of others, the way we feel as an ever changing palimpsest of what happened as we grow, our spirits as sponges soaking up the traces of everything that makes us?

Cast your mind to the petrified trees of the submerged forest in Mount's Bay.

Was the forest a large expanding palimpsest of germination, decomposition and regrowth, an ever evolving expanse of land that bared witness to geological change, different animals, weather, destruction and evolution? A place where the earth carries the traces and stories of the forests' transformation. A place where the trees would have

absorbed the breath of the creatures that roamed here, leaves like wide eyes to the sunlight and roots like fungal fingertips into the ground itself.

This forest has been petrified, fostered by minerals and carbon and frozen into a forever state of being of how it once was. These relics of the forest were not honoured their right to decompose and are left for us to see, but could there be more here than archaeological analysis and discovery? The trees are still present in form but due to the nature of them being petrified, could we speculate that maybe within them the spirits and energies absorbed from the forest are petrified as well?

ACTIVITY

You will need:
Something to draw with
Paper

The activity here is a mystical memory game deep into the palimpsests of lineage, connecting imaginary threads in the web of the forest, back in time to the beings that roamed the land before it fell victim to the sea.

What mammals, birds, invertebrate, fungi, reptiles and spirits would have passed through where you walk on this journey? Did they have eyes, claws, canines, feathers, fur, tails, toes, tongues or gills? Did they fly, sing, roar, screech, squeak, or slide





silently over the forest floor? No one can be sure how the forest communicated and functioned then, or now. The connections, symbiosis and energies of forests are still a mystery but through this activity we can temporarily bring the spirits of the forest back to life.

As you meditate on these ideas and begin the activity, let yourself believe that whatever comes to you is a direct communication from the spirits of the forest. They are emerging from the petrified tree trunks into your imagination and mind, desperate to be released and brought to life on paper...

Throughout your walk along this stretch of coast, build yourself a palimpsest of the spirits that live here, add to an ever growing creature conjured from the forest and your imagination.

Draw each new idea, creature, body part, scribble, limb, feather, word or rubbing from the landscape that comes to you and see how the spirit palimpsest grows.

There is no right and wrong, good or bad representation of the spirits and forms that come to mind, everyone has their individual way of conjuring.



RACHEL LAMBERT



TASTING

BLACKBERRY & PLANTAIN SEEDED BREAD

A rustic, wild-seeded bread with a crunchy crust, a soft centre, and fruity, nutty flavour throughout. This version has a two-toned, marbled effect but you can create an even coloured bread if you prefer.

Bread has been part of the human diet for thousands of years. Grinding stones dating to up 30,000 years ago may have been used to grind wild seeds and grains for bread making.

This bread uses Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*) pulp and seeds and Ribwort plantain seeds (*Plantago lanceolata*) which have both been eaten by humans since prehistoric times. Both would have grown in the submerged forest and continue to grow in the bay today, where they can be foraged. Blackberry seeds are rich in omega 3 and 6 while plantain seeds are packed with protein. Both contain a good proportion of fibre.

*Always forage sustainably and responsibly, making sure you stay safe and within the law.

INGREDIENTS

500g blackberries
 400g bread flour (300g white, 100g wholemeal)
 1 teaspoon quick yeast
 ½ teaspoon sea salt
 Pinch of sugar
 30g plantain seeds (ribwort or greater plantain)
 250ml water

METHOD

Place the blackberries in a small to medium saucepan with a tablespoon of water and mash briefly. Bring to a simmer over a medium heat and cook for 10 minutes.

Using a jelly bag, muslin cloth or fine sieve, strain the blackberry pulp and leave to drip through the cloth or sieve into a large bowl for an hour. You may need to squeeze the bag or push the pulp through the sieve with a wooden spoon to extract the last bits of liquid. Put the liquid aside to use for drinks. You should have about 150g blackberry pulp.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the flours, yeast, salt and sugar. At this stage, if you want a marble-pattern bread, you can half the flour mix into separate bowls and add the blackberry pulp to one and the plantain





seeds to the other. Otherwise continue with one bowl and combine the ingredients well.

Gradually add the water and combine, if you've separated the mix into 2 bowls, the blackberry mix tends to require a little less water.

Knead into a workable dough for 10 minutes, adding a little extra flour or water if needed. Cover and leave in a warm place for 1 hour or until doubled in size. Knead again for 10 minutes and if you have two balls of dough, now is the time to combine them and knead them together until you're happy with the colour blend.

Lightly oil a large baking tray and shape the dough into a round, place in the middle of the tray and cover. Leave in a warm place for a further hour or until doubled in size.

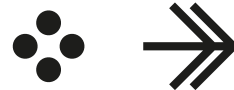
Preheat the oven to 425°F/220°C/fan 200°C and when the oven has reached the correct temperature, bake the bread for 35 minutes. Allow to cool on a cooling rack and enjoy lathered with butter or with a topping of your choice.



KITTY HILLIER



SOUNDING



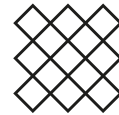


Imagine
you are the length of your little finger,
you live inside a warm, dark inviting chamber
deep within the belly of an ancient oak tree.
There is plenty of food here.
You have 80 legs, and
you can move fast when you want to.
Sometimes you climb all the way up to the top
of the tree canopy
to look at the view out to sea.
What is the sound and rhythm of
your steps echoing as
you scuttle up through and out across
the top branches...

Have a conversation with someone using only
tapping of hands and feet to communicate.



SLOWING





A memory of a sunken forest rests in the consciousness of Mount's Bay.

Petrified tree limbs entombed under a weight of saltwater.

The memory collides with a sense — a future image in the making — that the tide is on the rise once again. Rising to swallow and change the shape and nature of how this sweep of land meets the sea.

How can we think about the breadth of time that this thought encapsulates?

How can we think about the inevitability of change implicit within it?

The greatness and smallness of cause and effect?

I always think making your own ink is a good place to start, for the reason that there is a slowness to the process that prompts an engagement with materials that forces us to bear witness to their combined controllability and humbling uncontrollability. Ink floods, seeps and saturates like the sea, it is a delight to use but it has its own laws. In making your own ink you'll notice that even when using the same recipe time and time again, colour and consistency will vary.

I've been thinking about what ink recipe to share with you, that might rouse the memory of Mount's Bay's sunken trees. I've landed on Oak Apple Ink, whose recipe will follow on the subsequent pages. This is a black ink, which can be underpinned by either a purplish, green or sepia tint (depending on where the oak apples have been sourced from). The ink has been used in the British Isles for hundreds, even thousands of years, with history defining



documents, such as the Domesday Book (1086), being written in the ink. The widespread historical use and significance attributed to oak apple ink is almost certainly connected to the strength and tenacity of its colour. But I can't help thinking that a reverence of this ink also stems from its connection to the potent symbolism of the mighty oak; the king of trees. The oak tree is a tree prized for its slowness of growth and the strength of its wood, which lends itself so well to constructions for both land and sea. Oak trees arrived in the British Isles when a corridor of land still connected the islands to Europe. I'm wondering as I write this, if the belief in the oak tree being the king of trees was already present at this time? A reverence of oak trees was well established in druidic thought. Druids praised the oak not just for its strength but because of how the tree's root span that stretches into the underworld, mirrors its expansive brain-like clusters of branches above ground. This mirroring was seen as emblematic of a portal that united an earthly and spiritual realm. The name druid is tied like an umbilical cord to this thinking. Druid is a synthesis of deru, meaning oak tree and wid, meaning to know. The word deru is also thought to connect to dura or dr or dhwer — variations on past words for door. Metaphorically a door is a threshold or meeting point between realms and in its functional sense it is a structure often built in oak wood. This belief in the oak tree being a meeting point between realms, may also be a reason why oak tree's have historically been designated as sites for important gatherings, as suggested in



names like Gospel Oak. I imagine similar place names must exist forgotten in the sunken forest of Mount's Bay.

A recipe for an ink to rouse the memory of sunken trees...

INGREDIENTS

100–150g oak apples

A large jug of iron water

(instructions how to make this are on page 41)

50g Gum Arabic crystals or powder

(buy in any good art shop)

1½–2 pints of water (rain water is best)

Several drops of clove oil

EQUIPMENT

Either a stainless steel or iron saucepan

(never use the same for cooking)

Funnel

Sieve

Square of muslin cloth

Spoon

Glass jars for storing

Gas/electric hob, or even a camping stove

will do to heat ingredients

SAFETY

This ink is wonderful and deserves respect. It is a material for drawing with not for drinking!

So...

Ensure that you don't use the same equipment for cooking as you do for eating.

Store both the iron water and ink in lidded containers that can't be reached by young children.

If you can't reach oak apples from ground height, don't pick them.

Make sure that you are using scrap iron to make iron water opposed to using other potentially dangerous metals.

METHOD

First make your iron water by simply allowing iron to rust in a small amount of water. This could take two weeks to a month. You only need a tablespoon or so of iron water, so keep the quantities small. I have an iron pot that I do this in brought from a junk shop in Penzance. But you can also fill a small jar with water and drop some scrap iron into it, such as old nails. If you know how to identify iron, it can sometimes be found washed-up on the shoreline as a result of the shipping industry. If you are not confident with identifying metals, get someone who knows how to identify metals to verify what you're using, as metal rusts like lead, tin or copper can be poisonous.

Meanwhile collect your oak apples or oak galls (the name is interchangeable). This part may take as long as a walk to an oak tree, or it may take years to train your eye to spot the marble-like galls attached to branches and concealed by leaves. Sometimes by chance you'll find a tree laden with the galls but most of the time an oak tree will bear nothing for you! So be patient and sooner or later oak apples will reveal themselves. Beware! Only pick the galls if you can see a tiny hole drilled through their woody sphere. And why? What is the reason for this hole? Oak apples, contra to what many people think, are not a fruit of an oak tree, they are formed by a reaction between the larvae of a gall wasp and the bark of an oak tree. Think of them like pearls! The galls are the home

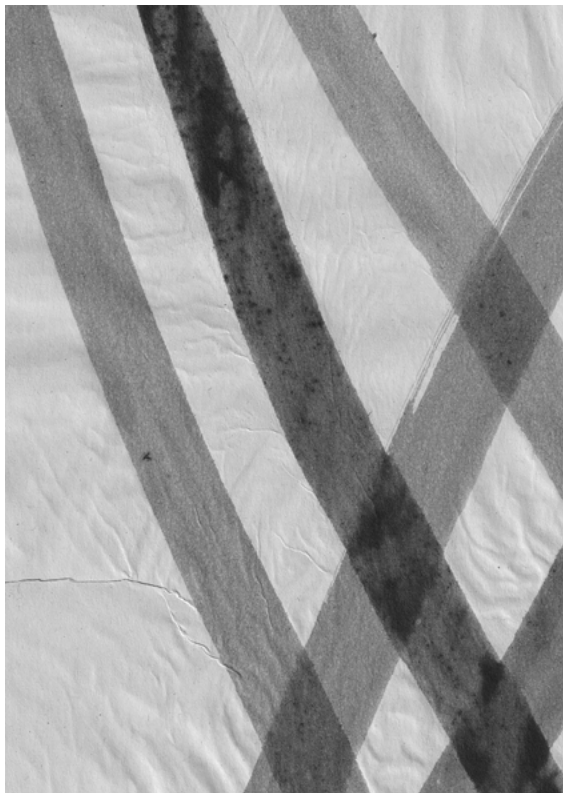
to a nascent wasp, which must first have hatched and flown away unharmed before their homes are picked. Please, please don't create a gall wasp massacre! Late summer is always a good time to look. Remember also that the oak tree is giving you a gift, so it deserves respect. Don't climb high on branches or damage them gathering the galls. Use gentle, delicate hands!

The next step is to crush the oak apples into tiny, dusty shards by enclosing them in a parcel of fabric and bashing them with a hammer, a stone, anything that's hard, (the fabric stops the flecks from flying everywhere).

Now soak the crushed oak apples in your rain (or tap) water, in a container with a lid. Recipes vary on the length of soaking. I like to let the mixture ferment for several weeks to give time for the tannin (the colour needed for ink), to leach out of the apples. But you can soak for an hour and skip to the next step.

Now add this mixture into a saucepan along with sugar-like Gum Arabic, which is a sap from a type of Acacia tree. When dissolved in water it makes a glue — this is the same glue that is used to make watercolour paints. In our recipe it adds a viscosity to the ink. Heat the ingredients to a simmer, again for a time that is difficult to quantify — ten minutes or five hours. It's up to you to experiment with; you'll see the different effects in the ink you make.





Finally add a glug of your iron water into the saucepan and watch what was a honey-brown coloured stain turn to a dark black ink. Depending on how concentrated your iron water is, this may be immediate or may take time to develop into a strong colour. This transformation results from the reaction between the iron and tannin, which gives this ink its other name 'iron gall ink.'

As a last touch, collect the oak apple debris in a sieve and dispose of it. Then filter out the remaining sediment in the ink by running the liquid through a muslin cloth draped into a funnel, standing in a jar. To increase the shelf-life of the ink, add in a few drops of clove oil (a natural preservative) and store in a lidded jar out of the reach of young children. If mould appears on the top, it can always be scraped off and the ink will be fine!



NICK JARVIS



VISIONING



Wood has historically been associated with various properties:

Oak for strength and courage

Hazel for inner guidance and divining

Yew to connect with the past and

Birch for new beginnings

Create your own seeing stick to lean on or hold while imagining the submerged forest to connect you to the trees where ever you are.

Start by selecting your wood and find a good stick. Find a tree or woodland with windfall. There are lots of amazing woodlands tucked in the valleys of West Penwith to explore. Select a stick that has already fallen to the floor and is no longer attached to a tree. Look for one that is still sturdy and does not break easily in your hand.

To decorate your stick, peel the bark to make patterns or remove the bark entirely and paint using home made blackberry paint.

BLACKBERRY PAINT

INGREDIENTS

1 cup of blackberries
1 teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of vinegar

TOOLS

Bowl
Sieve
Spoon

METHOD

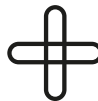
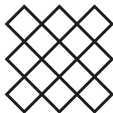
Put the blackberries in a sieve and rest over a small bowl. Press the blackberries against the sieve with the back of a spoon so that the juice drips into the bowl below. Discard the pulp.

Add a splash of vinegar and a generous pinch of salt to the blackberry juice. This will help to preserve the paint. Mix well.

Use an ordinary paintbrush to paint onto untreated wood (or paper or fabric).

Berries with a darker flesh will create a richer colour. You can also make the colour darker by applying 2-3 coats.

When painting wood, you can finish your item with a coat of linseed oil to bring out the colour. Hold your seeing stick to connect to the trees and imagine the submerged forest from where ever you are. Find and tie other windfall items to your seeing stick with string as you imagine the details of the forest: acorns, nuts, feathers, and leaves.



COMMUNING

Land's turning
 Brackish-swelling
 Release
 Our bodies
 Coalesce
 Becoming a
 Slippery hybrid
 Neither wet nor dry
 Like spume dissolving
 A soft annihilation: let's leave
 Behind what we were before

*Sink your hands into the sand
 Can you feel your ancestor?
 Put a drop of seawater on your tongue
 Commune with them*

Salt

And sweetness
 A claggy amalgamate
 Dripping brown and silty
 Limbs become roots
 Become toes
 Become claws
 Become hairs
 Become spores
 Become antennae
 Become feelers
 Become pincers
 Become tentacles
 Become sting
 Sharp, rupture of flesh
 Blood mingles with soil and sand
 Birthing something monstrous
 An indeterminate composite

*Make an offering
 Take a hair from your head or nail cutting and bury it
 Yes, they remember you*

Gush
 Gushhhhhh
 The great
 Moon
 Pulls at
 Our fluids
 Bloating
 Swelling
 Tension
 Rising
 Until
 The flood
 A deluge
 Sinking time under
 Again

We came
 From the sea
 All of us
 Crawling
 Sliding
 Between the toes of cycads
 Between Earth's membrane
 The primordial sea taken with us
 Held in our cells
 Cells like all other cells
 In all other bodies
 Sack like
 Our body bags
 Drink in and leak out
 In and out
 In and out
 Through multiple bodies
 Of scale, bark, skin and stone

*Spit onto the ground
 Mix with seawater and earth
 New life emerges*

Gush
 Gushhhhh
 Land's turning
 Brackish-swelling
 Release

 Symbiotic resonance
 A dream of recognition
 Always entangled with others
 Submerged deep
 Under hydro
 Anthrope
 Tides
 Beckoning
 An unfurling age
 Of hybridity
 We are always evolving
 All that we touch we change
 Not forward
 But sideways
 Spiralling
 Life's ecstatic playing at life
 Finding forms to become
 Fusing experimentally
 Wing, root, thumb, horn, tail, fin

We offer you
 Our gratitude
 Life
 (is)
 Emergent change
 And shapeshifting
 Never settling
 Too long
 In one form
 But becoming many
 And always moving
 From chaos to chaos

Say aloud:
I remind you, we were fish once
and may be once again
I remind you, we were apes once
and may be once again
I remind you, we were human once
and may be once again

END NOTE

The imagination is powerful. Our thoughts determine our reality. We each think about things differently. We each experience different realities. Try a thought experiment. What if we all thought about the same thing at the same time? Would it become real?

Invite as many people as you can to imagine the submerged forest at the same time. Think about what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it feels like, what it smells like. Know that everyone is there with you. The diversity of the forest is evoked in every different thought. Together, conjure the forest!

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tourismexperience.org

**EXPERIENCE
 MARAZION
 & PENZANCE**



EUROPEAN UNION

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 France (Channel
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A special thanks to the residents of West Penwith who contributed their ideas, poses and measurements and for whom the artworks are made to measure, including students of Marazion School, Gulval School, Humphry Davy School, Penwith Academy, Wild Young Parents Project, Newlyn Knitters, Tea, Cake and Art Group, Newlyn Art Gallery after school clubs and members of the public who responded through open call.

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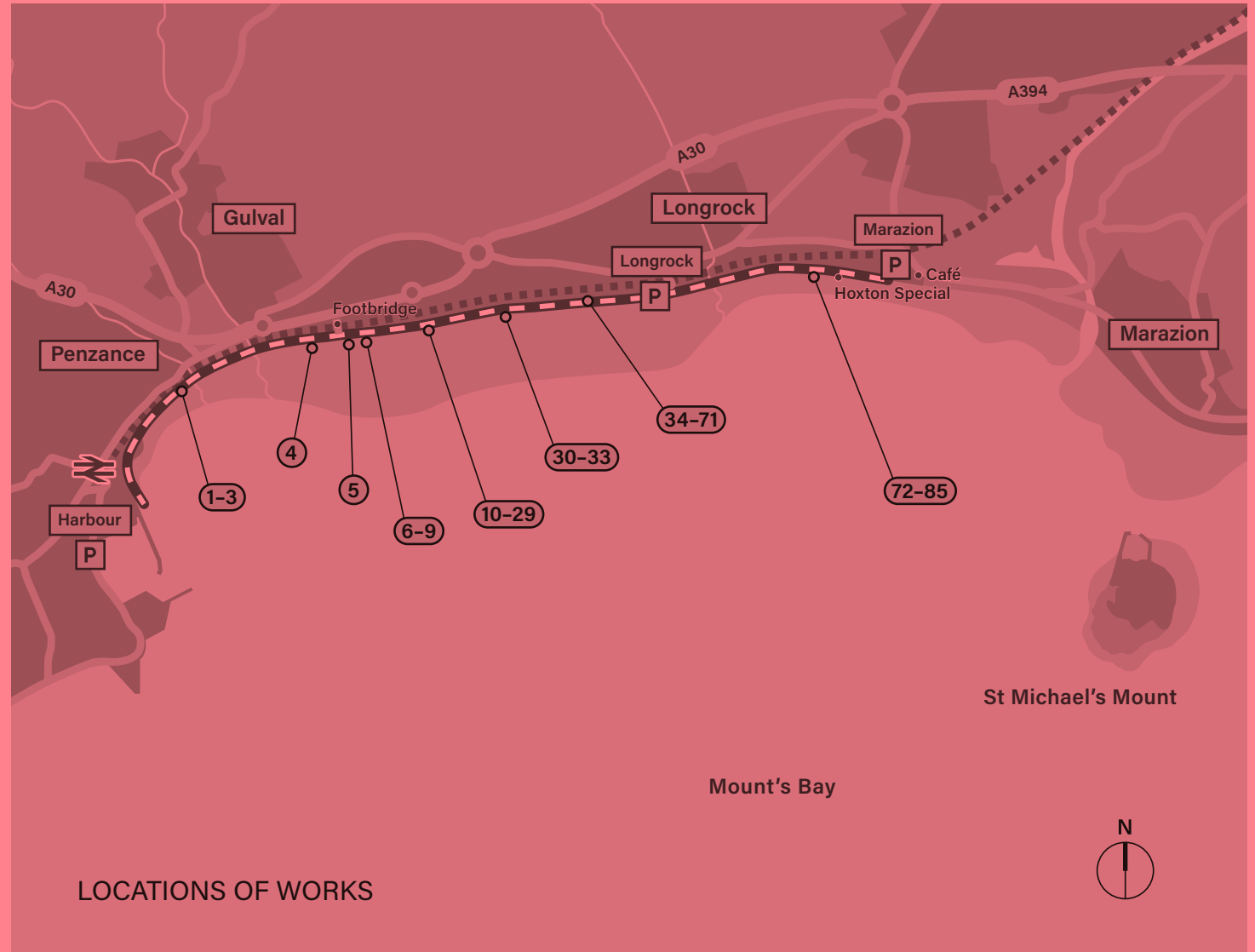
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Hidden in Mount's Bay lies Cornwall's largest submerged forest. This book accompanies Gwelen, an artwork by Emma Smith, installed along the Penzance to Marazion coastal path. Gwelen offers resting points along the path to stop and conjure the forest through the imagination.

This book includes activities for all ages, to do in Mount's Bay or at home to conjure the forest.

GWELÉN