

# STON**E**ZINE 17

THE DIGITAL COUNTERPART TO STONEXUS MAGAZINE,  
A TRIBUTE TO STONE, STONework AND STONE ART





# STONEZINE 17

THE DIGITAL COUNTERPART TO STONEXUS MAGAZINE

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Wairau Strata by Chris Booth

This, like all issues of the STONEZINE, can be printed on 8.5" X 14" or 11" X 17" paper.









# THE GREEN MAN

## ANCIENT MYTH, CELTIC GOD OR MEDIEVAL CREATION?

by Nicholas G. Fairplay

"[The Green Man/Knight] is as vivid and concrete as any image in literature. . . a living *coincidentia oppositorum*; half giant, yet wholly a 'loving knight'; as full of demoniac energy as old Karamazov, yet, in his own house, as jolly as a Dickensian Christmas host"

C.S. Lewis <sup>1</sup>

*The Green Man* is a popular motif in architectural stone carvings and other art forms. Much has been written about who he is and where he comes from but he remains one of the most evocative figures in Western art. We may not be aware of the Green Man's veritable significance yet we know that it is deep and vital.

My interest in Green Man started when I worked on English cathedrals as a young stone carver apprentice. I wondered then and wonder still about this mysterious man in green—who is he, what is his message and how has he changed over time? Tolkien said that ". . . he (the Greene Knight) is the most difficult character to interpret."<sup>2</sup>

The name 'Green Man' was coined in 1939 by Lady Raglan, a well-known folklorist, in her book *The Green Man in Church Architecture*.<sup>3</sup> Prior to that the entity was referred to as a 'foliate head.' He was known variously in popular culture as Jack O' Green, Jack in the Green, Robin Hood, Robin of Greenwood, the Garland King, King of the May, etc.—but the bestowal of the name The Green Man had the effect of consolidating the image's power.

This article will explore Green Man carvings from different places and different periods, examining the images for visual clues and comparing these with contemporary sculptures and carvings. Cultural and visual evidence suggest that the Green Man is related to the primal god of nature, to Dionysus or to Bacchus. The transformation of the Green Man from ancient times to the present day, however, remains unclear.

My aim is to elucidate certain features of the Green Man images, particularly in stone carvings, to understand his nature, his history, his function and his relationship with the Celtic God *Cernunnos*.

The Green Man is often depicted as part human and part plant. The head, the vessel of divinity and power, is often carved as if it has been severed from the Tree of Knowledge. The leaves sprouting from his mouth, ears and face are symbolic of fertility and growth. The Green Man is the message of the tree. Additionally he represents rebirth, the renewal of the spring, creative inspiration.

According to Sir James George Frazer, the Green Man could be related to sacrifice.

" . . . that a man was chosen to represent the god, and he, after conferring by the proper magical ceremonies his strength and fertility upon his people, was sacrificed (perhaps by hanging), decapitated, and his head placed in the sacred tree."<sup>4</sup>

He delivers the same message as other sacrificial Gods such as Attis, Osiris, Dionysus or Jesus—vitality, death and rebirth. Throughout the centuries the Green Man images have been associated with religious and social aspects of life. He has found his way into popular culture as well; numerous pubs throughout the UK are named *The Green Man* and Green Man embellishments abound in gardens and buildings all across America.

His is one of the most-liked images in Europe and the US. . . but he is an enigma.



figure 1

Frontispiece photo: Green Man carving, Kilpeck Church, Herefordshire, UK. photo: <http://stevenhobbsauthor.com>

<sup>1</sup> *The Anthropological Approach*, in *English and Medieval Studies Presented to J.R.R. Tolkien on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Norman Davis and C.L. Wrenn (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962): 219-30.

<sup>2</sup> Reference from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, 2nd ed. rev. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Lady Raglan. *The 'Green Man in Church Architecture*. *Folklore*, 50:1(1939), 45-57.

<sup>4</sup> Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* Macmillan and Co, UK, 1890.

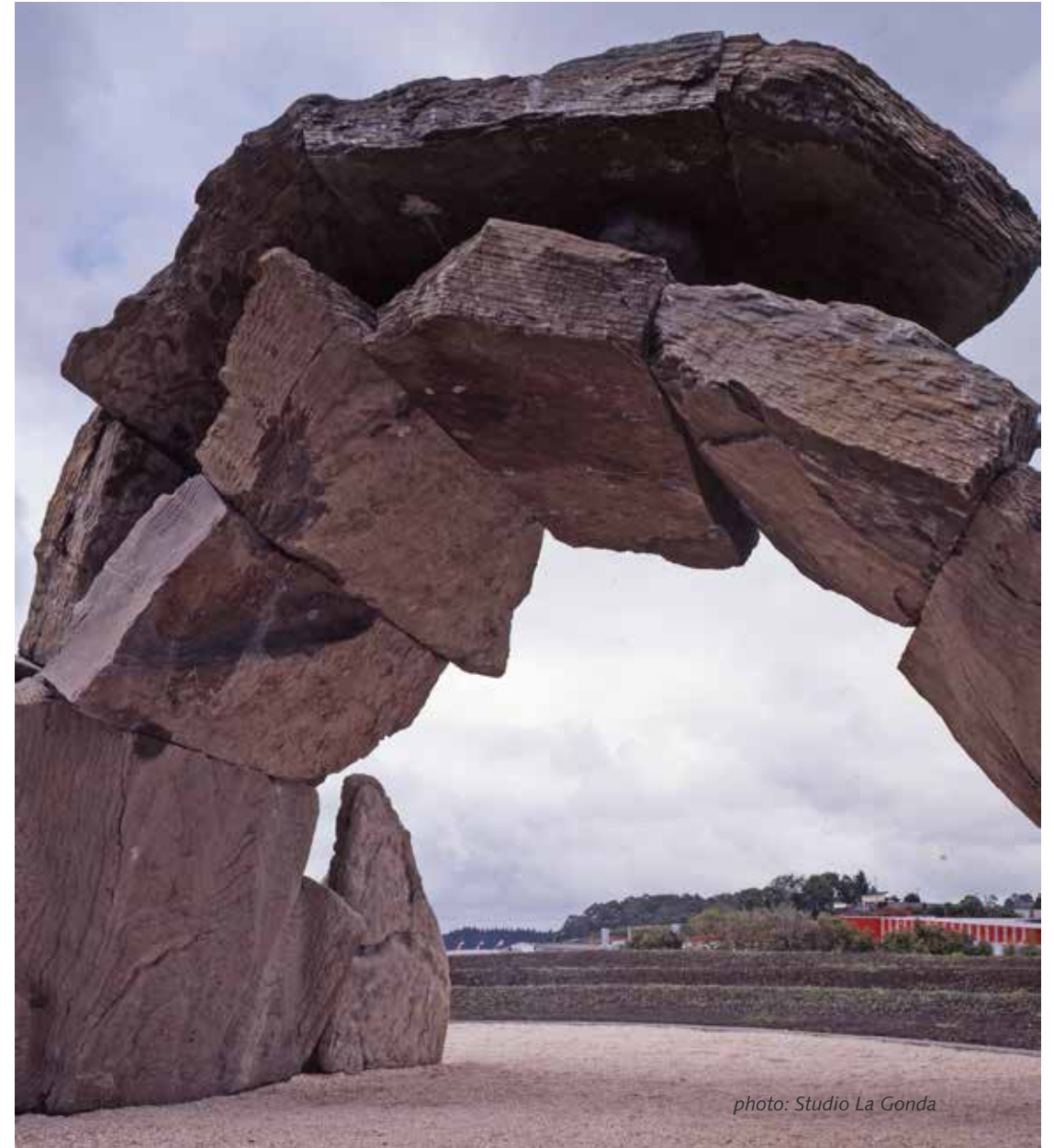
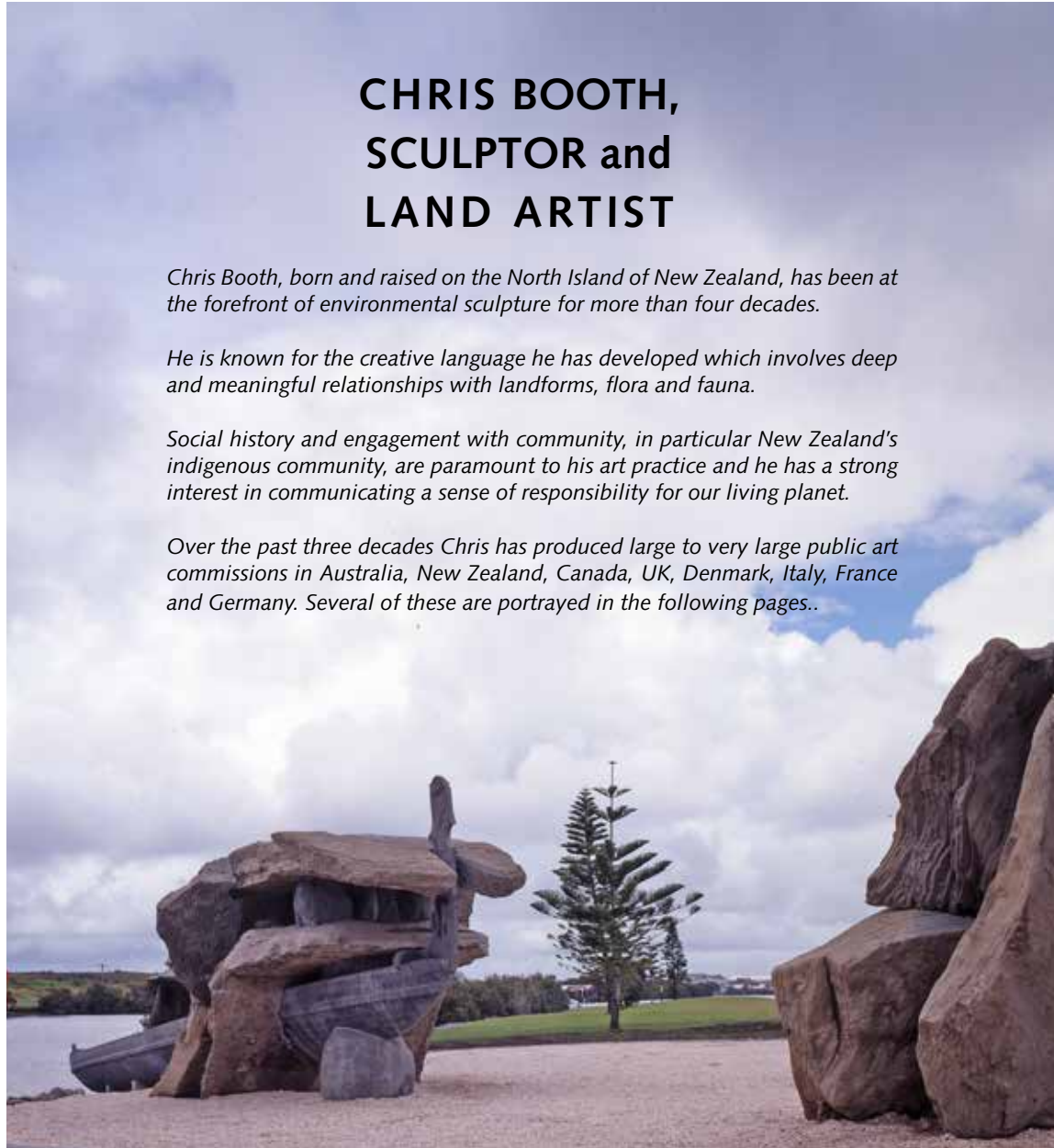
## CHRIS BOOTH, SCULPTOR and LAND ARTIST

*Chris Booth, born and raised on the North Island of New Zealand, has been at the forefront of environmental sculpture for more than four decades.*

*He is known for the creative language he has developed which involves deep and meaningful relationships with landforms, flora and fauna.*

*Social history and engagement with community, in particular New Zealand's indigenous community, are paramount to his art practice and he has a strong interest in communicating a sense of responsibility for our living planet.*

*Over the past three decades Chris has produced large to very large public art commissions in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, UK, Denmark, Italy, France and Germany. Several of these are portrayed in the following pages..*



*photo: Studio La Gonda*



CHRIS BOOTH, Sculptor, Land Artist Visit <https://www.chrisbooth.co.nz/works/> for more detailed descriptions of the pictured installations.



WAIRAU STRATA, 2000 Seresin Estate, Marlborough, NZ  
The schist slabs come from the layered ranges they overlook, a major continental plate faultline. These ranges were once part of Fiordland. The 100-ton sculpture stands on the edge of a horizontal Wairau River Valley terrace which occurred as a result of plate movement.



KAITIAKI 2010—2011  
Rotoroa Island, Hauraki Gulf, NZ  
*Kaitiaki*: Guardian.  
This sculpture was inspired by the wind-bent branches of a nearby pohutukawa tree. It celebrates the life of an old entity who had lifelong connections with the island and the Hauraki Gulf. The island has been transformed into a wildlife sanctuary to which the public are freely invited.



WAKA & WAVE, 1998—2006, Whangarei, NZ  
*Waka*: Maori watercraft, ranging in size from small, unornamented canoes (*waka tiwai*) used for fishing and river travel, to large, decorated war canoes (*waka taua*) up to 40 metres (130 ft) long.  
The sculpture is a comment on colonisation. It was done in collaboration with Te Warihi Hetaraka a Maori artist who designed the *waka*. Chris designed the stone waves which invaded the shore, partially submerging the *waka* and finally, like a tsunami wave, dispersing over the land.



ECHO VAN DE VELUWE, 2004-2005  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Netherlands  
Research into the geomorphology and social history of the sculpture park and surrounding Hoge Veluwe area became the basis for the sculpture's concept. A five man team labored for ten months in an open work site adjacent to the sculpture site, weaving 32 tons of erratic boulders—310 of them—together. When asked, Chris was kind enough to supply the work in progress photos shown on the following pages.



TE WHIRINGA O MANOKO 1978—2009, Kerikeri, NZ  
*Te Whiringa o Monoko*: The interweaving of the cultures of Kerikeri.  
This sculpture draws upon the artist's upbringing in Kerikeri, the horticultural centre of Northland, New Zealand. Its design was influenced by the town's boulder-strewn river and the tall columnar gum trees and giant Kauri trees of Puketi Forest. The shell forms are derived from shells found in the forest (*pupurangi*: kauri snail) and shells found in the bay.



TAURANGA KOTUKU, Kauri Cliffs, Northland NZ  
*Tauranga*: safe anchorage or resting place  
*Kotuku*: White Heron, a rarely seen, venerated bird.  
Located on a dramatic coastline at the entranceway to a luxury hotel and golf course high on a ridge overlooking the ocean. The sculpture was designed to honour the land it emerges from, the nearby forest and the distant Pacific Ocean. It is a balanced cantilevered structural/sculptural composition of three huge slabs of crystalline sandstone each weighing 20-25 tons and several local boulders.



WALJIN BEELA, 2017  
The Farm, Margaret River, SW Australia  
An installation designed to preserve a sinkhole, a valley's only source of pure water that was being defiled by cattle. Chris saw this valley as a female form and envisioned the sinkhole as a navel or belly-button. 19 tons of local limestone shards were used to build a spiraling dome seven meters in diameter atop 12 cubic meters of reclaimed hardwood. The wood will decompose and the stones will sink and lock in place providing lasting protection for the spring.



STEINBERGEN STRATA, 2000 Steinbergen, near Hanover, Germany  
The German place name Steinbergen derives from the German words for stone and hill. Part of the hill is in the process of being quarried; the rest is a nature reserve containing a small abandoned overgrown quarry. It was decided to reference the tilted strata of hard limestone that had been quarried out, creating a habitat for all the various creatures that were re-inhabiting the quarry. The stones on top will be blanketed by leaves over time.

NOTE: photos of installations not attributed to other photographers were taken by Chris Booth himself.



Chris Booth's *Echo van de Veluwe* project at the Kröller-Müller Museum Gardens in the Netherlands—the work in progress.



Placing rock in makeshift workshop in the KMM Gardens.



Preparations for the penultimate layer.



Fixing the top and the bottom steel frames together, preparing to lift off.



Chris Booth making calculations.



Fixing post-tension stainless steel cable into the penultimate layer.



The lift begins from the horizontal. . .



Chris Booth's *Echo van de Veluwe* project at the Kröller-Müller Museum Gardens in the Netherlands—the work in progress.



...to the vertical.

Shedding some of the weight (the stone alone weighs over 30 tonnes).



The flight over the trees to the site.



"A skin of stone that weaves its way between two oak trees like sand particles blowing in the wind."

Centre of the helically-constructed sculpture—where the stonework started.





*SEVEN OF FOURTEEN PAGES*

# LITHIKOS GALLERY

STONework  
VARIOUSITIES



*Stone wall detail, Fukian Province, China photo: T L*





*Bridges over the inner moat, Forbidden City, Beijing, People's Republic of China. photo: Ken Douglas, via Flickr*





*Conwy Castle, Gwynedd, North Wales. The lintel over the opening of this fireplace has failed, but the bonded stonework over it has formed a structural, corbeled 'relieving arch' that serves to support the mass of masonry above. photo: ?*



*A nice little retaining wall. . .*





*. . .well, maybe not so little.*



*Gavin Rose, trailwork,  
Australia. (That's him.)*





*Dry stone wall, Stone Foundation workshop project, 1986, Lama Foundation, Northern New Mexico. photo (2004): T L*





*Dry stone wall, Stone Foundation workshop project, 1986, Lama Foundation, Northern New Mexico. photo (2004): T L*





*Dry stone wall, Stone Foundation workshop project, 1986, Lama Foundation, Northern New Mexico. photo (2004): T L*