**Resources:**

Higginbottom, Gail and Roger Clay. ‘Origins of Standing Stone Astronomy in Britain: New quantitative techniques for the study of archaeoastronomy,’ [Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/2352409X) Volume 9, October 2016, Pages 249–258

Carolyne Larrington, *The Land of the Green Man*: *A Journey through the Supernatural Landscapes of the British Isles*, I.B Tauris & Co, 2015

Mann, Nicholas R, *Avebury Cosmos: The Neolithic World of Avebury henge, Silbury Hill, West Kennet long barrow, the Sanctuary and the Longstones Cove.* Kindle Edition, 2011

Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends, from Spring-heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys*, Penguin, 2005

[www.mysteriousbritian.co.uk](http://www.mysteriousbritian.co.uk), ‘West Kennet long barrow’ Peter Knight, accessed 1/10/2016

[www.scotland-inverness.co.uk](http://www.scotland-inverness.co.uk), accessed 1/10/2016

**Inspirations & Approaches**

The sense of mystery and ancientness and spiritual ‘otherness’ evoked by prehistoric sites - my interest in this was sparked by two sources….

The first was a short story by 19th century writer Grant Allen, particularly the opening:

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| --- |
| ‘RUDOLPH REEVE sat by himself on the Old Long Barrow on Pallinghurst Common... He was just going to rise, however, dreading the lasting wrath of Mrs. Bouverie-Barton, when of a sudden a very weird yet definite feeling caused him for one moment to pause and hesitate. Why he felt it he knew not; but even as he sat there on the grassy tumulus, covered close with short sward of subterranean clover, that curious, cunning plant that buries its own seeds by automatic action, he was aware, through an external sense, but by pure internal consciousness, of something or other living and moving within the barrow...In spite of sight and sound, however he was still deeply thrilled by this strange consciousness as of something living and moving in the barrow underneath; something living and moving — or was it moving and dead? Something crawling and creeping, as the long arms of the sundews crawled and crept around the helpless flies, whose juices they sucked out. A weird and awful feeling, yet strangely fascinating! He hated the vulgar necessity for going back to dinner. Why do people dine at all? So material! so commonplace!’  This, combined with the following statement from ‘Land of the Green Man’ inspired me to focus on standing stones and barrows as wyrd sites:  ‘...Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Wessex seem to have identified Stonehenge (the *henge* element comes from Old English *hengen* ‘to hang’ and means *‘stone gallows*’) as a strange and marginal place.’  Once my interest was sparked, I found the topic to be an infinitely rich one, largely because of the convergence of ancient history, folk belief, anthropology and archeoastronomy that it entails. Though to some extent conjectural, I couldn’t resist the firing of the imagination that occurred when I stumbled upon ‘Avebury Cosmos’ (details above), a fascinating attempt to combine insights from anthropology, ancient history and archeology to reconstruct the possible neolithic world-view that guided the erection of standing stones etc. The idea that Aboriginal beliefs in the heavens being populated by glowing ancestors could perhaps give insight into those neolithic beliefs fires the imagination, for sure. So when I then discovered the story of the ‘Shining One,’ a strange glowing being that walks down the northern avenue of Callendish Standing Stones in Scotland on the morn of Midsummer’s Eve, it felt as if another world had been opened up to me - a world view of beauty and immensity. |

Lastly, I also have the privilege of living in the south of England, with easy access to a number of these prehistoric sites. Recently, I organised an outing with a group of friends to visit the Avebury complex - and it was satisfying to explain my research and passion to them whilst wandering these ancient sites.

**Suggested reading and viewing**

**Neil Oliver's Sacred Wonders of Britain series (available on Youtube)**

[**http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/home/**](http://www.themodernantiquarian.com/home/)

[**http://m.megalithic.co.uk/index.php**](http://m.megalithic.co.uk/index.php) **(there’s also an app you can download to help you find interesting places to visit)**

[**http://standingwithstones.com/**](http://standingwithstones.com/) **- a feature length documentary**

**Pallinghurst Barrow, Grant Allen (1892), short story**

And…..just for a bit of fun….. ‘Stonehenge’ by Spinal Tap <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAXzzHM8zLw>