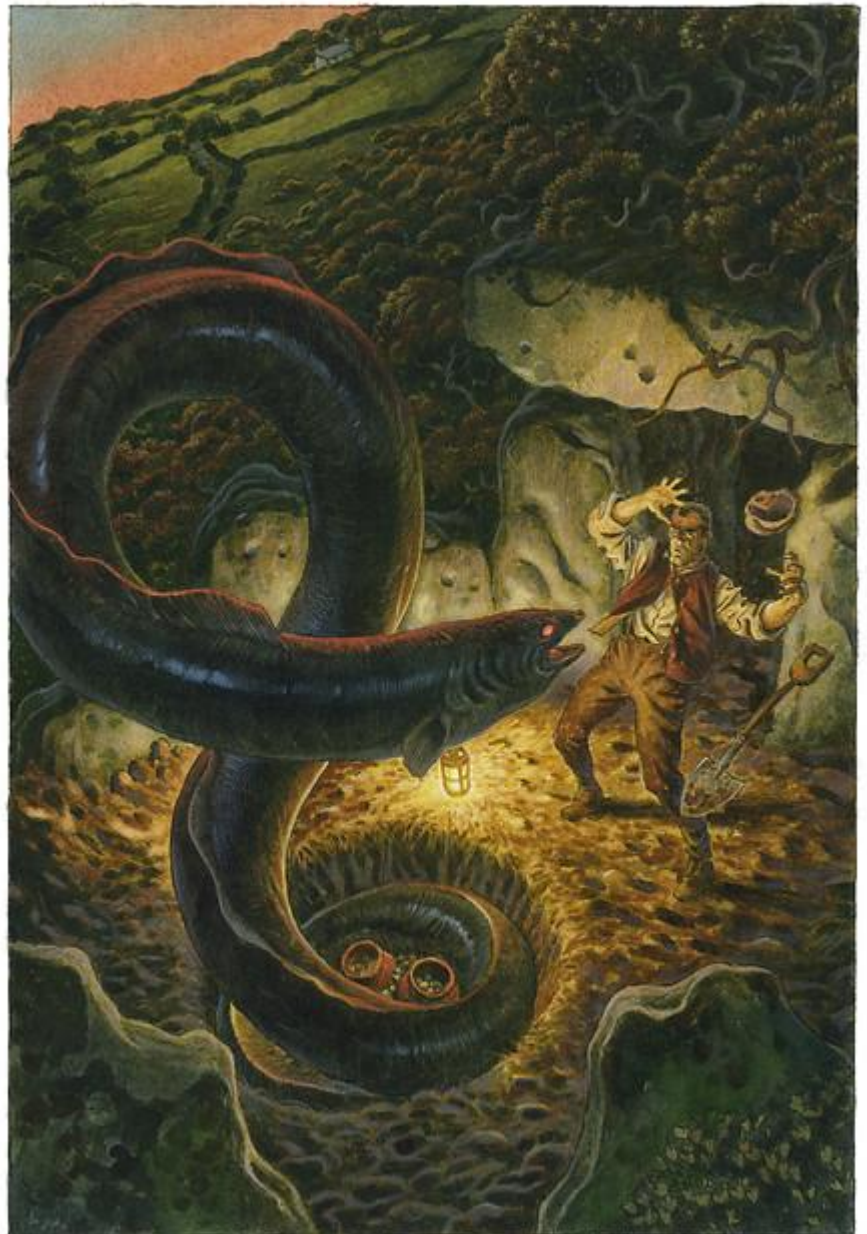


## ***Spirits of the Long-Dead***

In local Folklore, places like dolmens, standing stones and other ancient sites were said to hold a supernatural power. It was even believed that the spirits of the ancient dead acted as guardians of these sites. These guardians could appear in different forms, and could rise from the earth to enchant the sites and protect them from disturbance or destruction.

Objects left by ancient people were sometimes found buried in and around these stone structures, and this led to the belief that 'treasure' could be found. For islanders whose lives were hard and for whom money was scarce this could be an irresistible temptation.

So it was for one man who lived on the west coast. He had heard rumour that there was treasure buried at the foot of a dolmen which stood near Rocquaine Bay. Driven by desperation, one night he took his spade and began to dig. After much digging and searching, it was in the early hours of the morning that he finally discovered the treasure. A hoard of ancient pots sat exposed in the bottom of his final hole, and coins glinted within them. However, no sooner had the man taken a breath when the coins transformed into worthless limpet shells before his eyes. Worse still, a huge, black conger eel appeared in the hole. Its muscular body encircled the pots, and its massive head reared from the hole, snapping its jaws and fixing the man with glaring red eyes.



The terrified man ran for his life, and the 'treasure' of the dolmen remained safe in the ground.

Artwork by David Wyatt. © Guernsey Museums & Art Gallery

Story by Guernsey Museums, adapted from Marie de Garis' *Folklore of Guernsey*