

January/February - 424 - mis Genver/mis Hwevrer 2016

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N e w s l e t t e r

L y t h e r - n o w o d h o w

Bledhen Nowyth Da - Happy New Year

It seems a bit late to be talking about the New Year but I can be forgiven - this is the first newsletter of 2016

Stories coming out of Cornwall recently have had a distinctly nautical theme with a quirky mix of present day news, history and the downright odd.

In our thoughts

Just as this newsletter is about to go to press news of the magnitude 5.7 Valentine's Day earthquake near Christchurch is breaking. Our thoughts go to all members in the area and how it must have felt for them to have all those memories brought back from 2010 and 2011.

Strange flotsam

A story hit the TVNZ news on 6 January that thousands of pink plastic bottles were being washed up on Cornish beaches. The bottles are believed to come from a container washed from the deck of a ship in the busy international shipping lanes that pass close to Cornish shores. The MV Blue Ocean lost a container containing bottles of 'Vanish' but the link has not been officially confirmed. Some were leaking and posed a potential threat to marine wildlife, not to mention children and pets on shore.



The bottles first appeared at Poldhu Cove which is owned by the National Trust and volunteers have been collecting the flotsam in an attempt to reduce the environmental impact.

The bottles were not the first unusual items delivered by the sea. In 1997 another goods container filled with millions of Lego pieces fell off a ship and into the sea. Hundreds of pieces washed up on the beaches of Cornwall in 2014. By chance many of the lost toys were ocean themed, so locals started finding miniature life jackets and octopuses on the beach.

In November last year a large chunk of an

American space rocket was found off the coast of Bryher in the Isles of Scilly. Although not officially confirmed, it appears that it was part of a SpaceX Falcon 9 unmanned spacecraft that was intended to deliver supplies to the International Space Station but exploded shortly after take-off from Cape Canaveral in June. The large chunk of debris took several months to cover the 6,500 kilometres from its source.



Old wreck uncovered

With such a long coastline, Cornwall has become famous for its wrecks and maritime disasters. The remains of one shoreline mishap have endured for over a century.

The French brigantine Jeune Hortense ran aground at Long Rock in Mounts Bay in May 1888. It was carrying a crew of four, a cargo of 450 head of live cattle and the body of a Fowey man who had died in France. Rough weather drove the small ship onto the beach but they had to wait while the Penzance lifeboat, Dora with a crew of 13, was drawn overland by horse and cart to be launched nearby. Meanwhile the ship got so firmly grounded that, even after the crew and most of the cattle had been saved, it proved impossible to refloat it.



The keel and some timbers remain on Long Rock beach and are usually covered by sand.

Every few years, when weather conditions are sufficiently rough, the sand is temporarily scoured away and the wreck is revealed only to be covered again when currents return to normal. The recent storms uncovered the hulk in early January, for the first time since July 2010.

Search and rescue

Whilst on a coastal theme, there have been two significant developments in Cornish coastal search and rescue.

In November a new lifeboat began service at St. Ives. It is the first Shannon class lifeboat to go on service in Cornwall. The Shannon class is an all-weather lifeboat powered by water-jets rather than traditional propellers, making it the most agile and manoeuvrable lifeboat in the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) fleet. The jet boat propulsion provides an NZ link back to the inventor of jet boats, Sir Bill Hamilton.

The lifeboat crew, led by Coxswain Rob Cocking, collected the new boat from the RNLI headquarters in Poole, Dorset. At the end of their four day voyage they brought the lifeboat just outside St. Ives harbour and demonstrated her capabilities to hundreds of spectators. The lifeboat is launched across the sands of the harbour using a dedicated Shannon Launch and Recovery System (SLARS) which, to the uninitiated, looks like a large very high-tech caterpillar tractor and trailer. At the end of a deployment, it collects the vessel from the sea and delivers it back to the boathouse.

The cost of the £2.1 million lifeboat was bequeathed by a long-time RNLI supporter who left the whole of her residuary estate to the RNLI for the provision of a lifeboat. The boat is to be named after her, Nora Stachura. The SLARS was part funded by £100,000



donations from the local community and arrived at the station a few weeks ahead of the lifeboat.

Capable of 25 knots, the new lifeboat is 50% faster than the vessel she will replace. New technology on board will enable the crew to control the vessel from the safety of their seats which include shock absorbers to significantly reduce the impact of the loadings on the crew

Coxswain Rob Cocking said "The Shannon is a fantastic boat. It is faster and more manoeuvrable which means that we'll be able to reach casualties more quickly. The new equipment on board will also make shouts safer for our volunteer crew."

More news on the search and rescue front came with the announcement that the Royal Navy 771 Squadron, based at Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose near Helston, ceased to provide coastal search and rescue support for the RNLI around the coasts of Cornwall on 31 December 2015.

771 Squadron had operated since 1974 saving countless lives flying Sea King helicopters which had been in service years before.



A private firm, Bristow Helicopters Ltd., will take over search and rescue functions using two Sikorsky S-92 helicopters equipped with the latest search and

rescue technology including night vision, mission management and increased on-board medical capabilities. Based on its creditable history of carrying out civilian search and rescue since 1971, Bristow has been awarded the national contract for search and rescue operations throughout the UK working in conjunction with HM Coastguard. Ten bases are being phased in over four years with the Cornwall base operating from a new £7 million purpose-built facility at Aerohub at Newquay airport.

Add a little Cornish to your kitchen

Rather than provide a recipe in this newsletter, here are some words in Kernewek to name common ingredients used in baking.

Kernewek	Sounds like	English
Bleus	<i>blew sss</i>	flour
Sugra	<i>soo grah</i>	sugar
Holan	<i>hoe lan</i>	salt
Amanyn	<i>amm an in</i>	butter
Dehen	<i>deh hen</i>	cream
Oy/oyow	<i>oi/oi ow</i>	egg/eggs
Frooth syghys	<i>froo th see heese</i>	dried fruit
Margerin	<i>margarine</i>	margarine

The list demonstrates two things. To make a noun plural, add -ow at the end of the word so 'oy' becomes oyow – eggs. The second is that Kernewek can 'borrow' words from English like margerin and koffi (no prizes for guessing what that means!).

Titanium

Titanium is a metal we hear about quite often being used for high tech purposes in spacecraft, aircraft, submarines and other military applications. If you play golf you may have clubs that contain titanium, it may lurk in the depths of your car. The wide range of uses stem from its high strength-to-weight ratio, low density, corrosion resistance and electrical and thermal conductivity.

The metal was discovered in Cornwall which as we all know, is renowned for its mineral riches. William Gregor was born in Trewarthenick Estate near Tregony on Christmas Day 1761. Educated

at Bath Grammar School, he became interested in chemistry and then, after two years with a private tutor, entered St John's College, Cambridge. After graduating he was ordained and got his first living in Devon but in 1873 took the opportunity of transferring to the parish of Creed in Cornwall where he lived with his wife, Charlotte, for the rest of his days; in fact until he died of tuberculosis in 1817.

He is described as having been "a man of singular charm of character and possessed of the highest intellectual qualities, though of a most modest disposition". Whilst being dedicated to his parish duties, he painted landscapes, was an etcher of considerable merit, a musician and a scientist. He helped to introduce vaccine inoculations to Cornwall and performed accurate analyses of Cornish minerals. In the process he recorded the discovery of a new metallic element.

In 1790 whilst analysing black sand, which he called manaccanite because he first found it in a stream in Manaccan, he noticed it was attracted by a magnet. He soon identified that this was due to the presence of iron closely mixed with another ore which he purified into a white lustrous metal that he also named manaccanite. He published his findings in a number of European mineralogical journals.

In 1791 a German scientist named Klaproth isolated the same element and named it titanium after the Titans of Greek mythology. Klaproth later acknowledged that Gregor had been the first to discover the metal. Gregor had confused the naming of the ore and the metal so Klaproth's name of titanium stuck.

Gregor (pictured) continued with a successful scientific career. Not only was he made an honorary member of the Geological Society of London but he was also a founding member of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall.



William's older brother, Francis, was High Sheriff of Cornwall in 1788-89 and MP for Cornwall from 1790 to 1806. Francis inherited the family home at Trewarthenick Estate but died without children in 1815 so the estate passed to William. When William's daughter died in 1825 the estate passed to a female cousin and eventually the Gregor family lost ownership.

It is a rather grand house set in grounds occupying about 5 hectares that were landscaped by Humphry Repton with 4 km of frontage onto the River Fal and 70 hectares of agricultural land. The estate changed hands for £9 million in 2008. The buyer, English businessman Marcus Evans, is restoring the estate to its former glory for use as



his family home but he is also reinvesting in the farm businesses. The emphasis is on doing everything sympathetically and the plans have been welcomed by

the National Trust, the Wildlife Trust and the Georgian Society.

Marcus Evans, listed at 397th on the Sunday Times Rich List, owns other houses in London and Bermuda. He also owns 87.5% of Ipswich Town football club.

Celebrity connections

Another item to add to the list of unexpected links to Cornwall or to your list of topics to start a conversation with "Did you know...?"

Dame Kristin Scott Thomas, the actress who appeared in *The English Patient*, *Nowhere Boy* and *Gosford Park* among other notable roles, was born in Redruth,



Cornwall on 24 May 1960. Her father was a pilot and lieutenant commander in the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm which has a base at Culdrose (see above). It does not take a stretch of the imagination to assume that he was serving there and that Kristin was born at Redruth Hospital which was possibly the closest maternity unit to the base.

The family did not live in Cornwall for long. While based in Yeovil, Lt Cdr Scott Thomas was tragically killed while flying an exercise over the English Channel near Portland. Kristin was only 5 years old. Her mother later married another Fleet Air Arm lieutenant commander who was himself killed after ejecting from his aircraft off Trevoze Head, Cornwall in January 1972.

Dame Kristin was educated at private schools including the elegantly named Cheltenham Ladies College and, after completing her secondary schooling, started training as a drama teacher in London. She did not excel but after working as an au pair in Paris and speaking fluent French she later completed her theatrical training at the national school in Paris.

She married a French gynaecologist and had 3 children but is now divorced. She continues to call France her home.

She received the OBE in 2003 and the DBE for services to drama in the 2015 New Year's Honours list. She has also been awarded the

French Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

Rowing the Pacific

Four very brave young women have just completed rowing across the Pacific Ocean from San Francisco, California, to Cairns Australia in a bright pink 29ft boat they named Doris. They were the first all-female team to make the 8,447 nautical mile journey in three legs, stopping in Hawaii and Samoa to re-stock and maintain the boat.



The women, calling themselves the Coxless Crew, were raising money to be split between Breast Cancer Care and Walking with the Wounded, a charity which helps women who have been injured in war.

Inspirational leader of the crew, Laura Penhaul, was brought up in Cambrose between Portreath and Redruth and attended Redruth School before heading to Bath University. She gained her master's degree at Oxford Brookes University and then worked at the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. Immediately prior to beginning the preparations for the marathon voyage she was lead physiotherapist for Paralympics GB. She is a keen marathon runner and triathlete.

The West Briton newspaper quotes Laura as saying "Through my job I have worked with a lot of people who have faced and overcome adverse situations and it has always made me think and inspired me to push myself to my physical limits." What's more, she dedicated her row to a close friend's wife who was diagnosed with cancer when 3 months pregnant with her first baby. She died only months after giving birth.

Overdue?

A number of members have not yet paid their 2015/2016 subscriptions. If you are one, you will have received a notice with this newsletter. We would hate to lose you but, to be fair on those who have paid, this is your last chance or we will stop sending newsletters.

Wellington meeting

A group of members and their other halves, eight in all, gathered at Nick Bartle's home on 16 January to watch the film, Tin, that featured in the last newsletter. Despite its low budget production, everyone appreciated its humour, the plot and the chance to reminisce about Cornwall.

The evening was also a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and have a yarn over a cup of tea.

Christchurch branch

The Christchurch branch held a meeting on Saturday 12 December 2015. The President welcomed 33 members 1 guest from Australia, and 5 guest artists. Apologies were received from 14 more.

The President expressed condolences to Judy Wright whose mother had died in Cornwall and wished her a safe trip when she left for Cornwall on the following day.

Bruce Moore spoke of his connection with Cornwall starting when he met our President Val and was taken back to meet his new in-laws in Bideford North Devon. Bruce went on to say that if he didn't live in New Zealand, Cornwall would be his next choice.

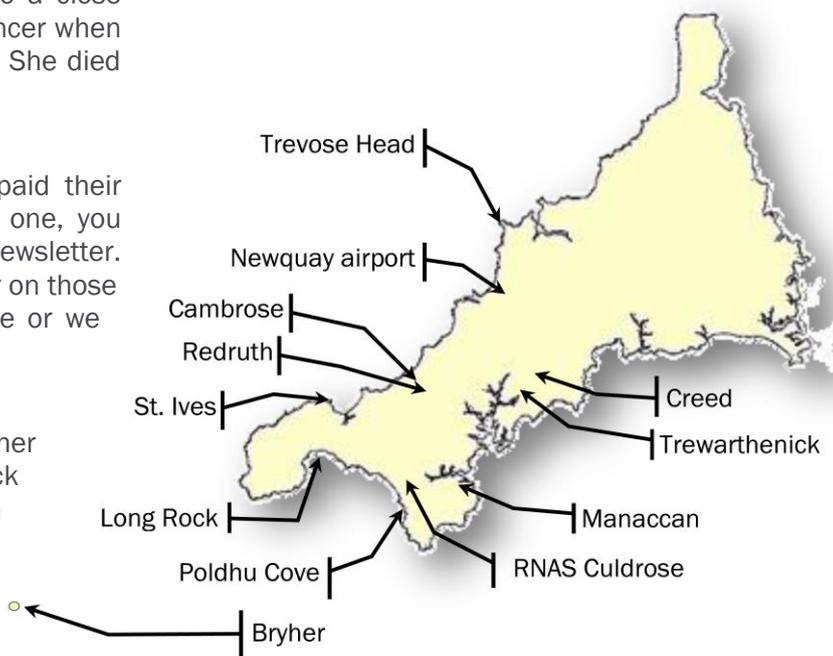
Entertainment took the form of a selection of seasonal music and amusing stories.

The Traditional committee panto this year was "The Tortoise and the Hare and a rather cunning Rat" Dorothy was the narrator, the cast, Frieda, Val and Mac.

Les told us of things happening in Cornwall over Christmas.

Community carols followed, accompanied by Heather on her accordion. The day finished with the raffle and afternoon tea full of Christmas goodies.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



That's it for this newsletter. All the best, my 'ansomes!

Nick