



# Cowethas Kernewek Loundres

## London Cornish Association Newsletter



[www.londoncornish.co.uk](http://www.londoncornish.co.uk)

Autumn 2016

What an exciting summer it has been!

The Queen's birthday honours have, once again, recognised the contribution of some of the many Cornish people who work so hard for their communities. Their achievements range from defence to drama and from music to charity – reminding us what a diverse, talented and generous group of people the Cornish are.

On the sporting front, we can be very proud of Cornish rower Helen Glover and her partner who brought gold back from Rio and closer to home, we acknowledge with pride, the excellent playing which enabled the London Cornish Rugby Football Club to triumph in the 2016 County Championship.

But this is not all there was to celebrate over the summer months. It is now ten years since the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape was added to the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites and several events were held in Cornwall to mark this. The one which has most captured the imagination is the Man Machine. You can read Ben Gilbys account of him in this newsletter – but if you want to see a film of his 'awaking' go to the following link. Quite impressive!

<http://www.westbriton.co.uk/all-you-need-to-know-about-giant-man-engine-tour->

[through-cornwall/story-29548083-detail/story.html](http://through-cornwall/story-29548083-detail/story.html)

After such an exciting summer, we now focus on what lies ahead in the coming months. At the LCA, we look forward to another excellent Family History Day in October and have our Annual Lunch lined up for March 2017. Before that, in January, we will hold another of our very popular New Year's lunches. The date will be confirmed in the next newsletter and on the website.

This year, we hope to make history by holding a special event to celebrate St Piran's Day. Council has come up with a few ideas but we are hoping that our members will have some suggestions for something informal that we could do together to celebrate our patron saint. Please contact us if you have ideas. Contact details are on the back page.

Before ending, I would like to thank the people who have kindly responded to my request for newsletter items or leads. I am very grateful to them and hope that others will follow their lead in coming months!

We look forward to hearing from with your St Piran's Day suggestions and to seeing you at our forthcoming events.

*Kernow bys vyken*

### Gorsedh Kernow Awards 2016 London Cornish Association Shield

Congratulations to LCA member, Lorna Leadbetter, who has been awarded the London Cornish Association Shield for *Outstanding Services to Cornwall and Cornish People*. This award recognises the incredible contribution she has made to both the LCA and the Cornwall Family History Society for many years. At the LCA, she was, for a long time, a hard working member of Council and was a key player in the organising and running of the Association's popular Family History Days. Through her links with the CFHS, she was actively involved in the Masters and Mates project and even after the bulk of the work on this project was completed, continued as a point of contact for family historians from around the world who are researching their sea-going ancestors.



*Lorna has regularly helped man stalls at the Royal Cornwall Show and Family History events.*

### Dates for your diary ...

**Family History Day  
15th October 2016**

**PLEASE NOTE  
CHANGE OF VENUE  
FOR THIS EVENT.**

**Possible St Piran's  
Day Event  
4th March 2017**

**Annual Lunch  
18th March 2017**

**Family History Day  
with AGM and  
Trelawny Lecture  
22nd April 2017**

**Family History Day  
14th October 2017**

*Further details of these  
events can be found on  
page 2*

**Deadline for  
the Winter  
Newsletter  
is**

**5th November**

**Please send all  
contributions to  
The Editor at the  
address on the  
back page**

# Forthcoming events

***A warm welcome is extended to non-members who would like to attend any of the London Cornish Association events.***

## LONDON CORNISH ASSOCIATION

### FAMILY HISTORY DAY

Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016

#### **Speakers:**

**Samuel Drake**

***'Cornwall and the Capital'***

Sam Drake, from Cornwall but currently studying for a PhD at the University of London, will talk about his research which focuses on 14th and early 15th century Cornwall, exploring subjects such as lordship and lawlessness, King Arthur and the Black Prince, piracy and the Hundred Years War. He will consider the social and economic interactions between Cornwall and London in this period.

**Dr Jolanta Jagiello**

***'History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission'***

Dr Jolanta Jagiello is an academic, artist and independent curator. She is currently the arts curator at Nunhead Cemetery and, in association with Friends of Nunhead Cemetery (FONC), is organizing a five year programme of public art exhibitions commemorating the 100th anniversary of the First World War (1914-1918). Her talk celebrates the huge achievement of Sir Fabian Ware who founded the Graves Registration Commission in WW1. Renamed the Imperial War Graves Commission in 1917, by 1918 some 587,000 graves had been identified and a further 559,000 casualties were registered as having no known grave. It continued its work in WW2. Another name change in the 1960s gave birth to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) as we know it today.

#### **Exhibition:**

**Gill Rifaat**

***'Exhibition of materials relating to The Cornish Community in Mexico'***

Gill Rifaat has made a considerable study of the Cornish Community in Mexico. She will bring along photos, books, etc. relating to the Community there. They will be available to view and Gill will be happy to answer members' questions during the lunch hour.

#### **Venue:**

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust

17 Stukeley Street

LONDON WC2B 5LT

*(nearest underground station is Holborn)*

**PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE FOR THIS EVENT**

#### **Time:**

10am to 4.30pm

#### **Fee:**

**Fee:** £15 for members (including LCA-affiliated societies and Cornwall Family History Society). £20 for non-members.

This includes coffee on arrival, lunch with saffron cake, and a cream tea

#### **Contact:**

For booking or further information:

Gill Penny ([g.n.penny@btinternet.com](mailto:g.n.penny@btinternet.com); Tel: 01908 316317)

Carol Goodwin ([Chynoweth@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Chynoweth@hotmail.co.uk))



## **(Possible) St Piran's Day Celebration Saturday 4th March 2017**

Historically, the LCA has not marked St Piran's Day with any special event, mainly because of its proximity to the Annual Dinner (now Lunch). Council thinks that the time may now have come to hold an event where *One and All* can celebrate this important Cornish day together.

We are keen to hear your ideas for marking this day. If you have any suggestions, please email them to [lca@londoncornish.co.uk](mailto:lca@londoncornish.co.uk). Or, if you attend the Family History Day, you could speak to any Council member. Meanwhile, make sure you save the date. We will publish details as they become available.

## **Annual Lunch Saturday 18th March 2017**

This event will be held at Amba Hotel, Marble Arch. It will begin with a reception in the Marylebone Room at 12.00 with lunch following at 13.00 in the Bond Street Room

Tickets will cost £37.50

More information and booking details will be given in the Winter newsletter.

## **Family History Day and AGM/Trelawny Lecture**

**Saturday 22nd April 2017**

Details to follow

## **Family History Day Saturday 14th October 2017**

Details to follow

## ***The following events might be of interest to our members:***

### ***Annual Dinner of the Bournemouth Cornish Association***

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

This will be followed by a Pasty Lunch on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>. More details can be obtained from the Dinner Secretary, Aubrey Lane - Tel: 01202 632297 or Email: [aubslizlane@btinternet.com](mailto:aubslizlane@btinternet.com).

### ***London Museum of Water and Steam***

*Jonathan Henwood has let us know of the following Cornish-flavoured events to be held at the London Museum of Water and Steam over the next couple of months.*

*Saturday 24th September. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*Sunday 25th September. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*Friday 28th October 7.30pm. Trevithick! A biographical comedy.*

*Saturday 29th October. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*Sunday 30th October. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*Saturday 26th November. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*Sunday 27th November. Cornish, Rotative Engines & Railway in Steam.*

*The London Museum of Water & Steam is located at: Green Dragon Lane, Brentford, London TW8 0EN  
T: 020 8568 4757*

The new Stokers café is situated at the entrance of the museum and is open every day from 11am – 4pm. It serves a selection of hot and cold drinks and a range of snacks.

### *Getting there:*

Bus: The museum is on several bus routes (alight at Kew Bridge Station)

Main Line Rail: South West Trains from Waterloo via Clapham Junction stop at Kew Bridge

Tube: Get off at Gunnersbury or Kew Gardens on the District Line and catch a bus to the museum.

Parking: There is free car parking for 20 cars. One is a dedicated space for orange or blue badge holders. This may be reserved in advance by contacting the museum.

Further information: [www.waterandsteam.org.uk](http://www.waterandsteam.org.uk)

### ***Wreckers Wednesdays***

What: Evenings of 'proper Cornish Pasties, Cornish beer, live music and more'

When: The First Wednesday of each month - 7pm to late.

Where: The Sun & 13 Cantons in Soho

Find out more at:

<https://www.facebook.com/wreckerswednesday/>

---

## **News of Past Events**

### **Midsummer Lunch**

A lovely lunch, good company, good surroundings and sunshine (although some light rain!) What more would you want ?

Well on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 London Cornish arranged the annual Midsummer Lunch. The chosen venue was 'The Waterman's Arms' in Richmond, close to the River Thames. This pub was chosen as somewhere different to our usual haunts.

Eleven members came: Our Chairman, Dr Francis Dunstan, Lorna Leadbetter, Barbara McKeown, Mary and Ray Timmins, Ed and Valerie Harris, Jackie and Yvonne Trembath, James Cocks and Carol Goodwin.

The pub food was very good and service good too. After the lunch, those who wanted to walk along to the Richmond Rowing Club did so as the Club was having a 'Cornish' day. St Piran's flags were flying high on the Gigs and small boats. Also in the Club's area were pasties and refreshments which were available to buy - and of course, cream teas!

Peter Chalkley, Secretary of the London Cornish Pilot Gig Racing Club was also coming along but unfortunately he had another appointment so only arrived later in the day. We met Mark Edwards who is Cornish and the boat builder who helped to build 'Gloriana'. This boat carried the Queen along the Thames during the celebrations to mark her 60 years on the Throne. He mentioned that he spent his early life in Cornwall. We also met Mark of the Wreckers. The Wreckers meet once a month to celebrate 'Cornishness'. We are trying to set up a meeting with him and the Wreckers later in the year.

A group of musicians played throughout the afternoon and the surroundings along the River were just beautiful. I think everyone enjoyed the day and left with very happy memories.

*Carol Goodwin*

*And a note from Lorna Leadbetter...*

I enjoyed the day too. I had a chat with Mark about someone I used to work with and then, even more amazing, met a 'maid' who was born in the same parish and married in the same church as me! She goes to the Wreckers evenings in Covent Garden and I gather that, among other attractions, they have raffles of Cornish meat (steaks, poultry, etc) as well as sing-songs and quizzes



*Lorna Leadbetter*



*Relaxing in the boathouse at Richmond Bridge  
(Carol Goodwin)*

## **Lunch and Rosyer Lecture June 2016**

On Saturday June 2nd, eight LCA members: Carol, Jackie, John (Carbis) Graham G Norton, Eddie and Val, Lorna and I attended a special Lunch at Penderel's Oak Pub in Holborn. We had a most enjoyable time with good food at reasonable prices. We were building up strength before attending the 27th Rosyer Lecture at the City Lit in Keeley Street, close by.

Our LCA Member Hilary Padden, welcomed us to hear all about Cornish 'Plen and Gwarri', amphitheatres where the mediaeval Miracle plays used to be presented, in the Cornish Language of course. The lecture was given by Mr Will Coleman, who is an expert on the subject and for further information he referred to his book, copies of which were available.

Two of these Plen and Gwarri are easy to find and are well documented, at Perran Round near Perranporth, and at St Just (in Penwith). Many others are the subject of conjecture. It is said that all Cornish Parishes had one, circular or elliptical in shape, and of various sizes. Equally spaced places around the circle were given special names, as in stage directions.

Finding the others is a real detective story: clues are often seen as a semi-circular part of a field hedge which otherwise follows a straight line. In tracing them the problem is the march of time and the lack of much literature on them. Will's map shows 32 places where a P & G might exist, including Ruan Minor, Sancreed (Beacon Crescent), St Stephen in Brannel, Tresawsen, Gwithian, Kernick, Cubert near Newquay, (a road runs right through the middle of where the playing place once stood.) and Bodmin. In Cadgwith you can see the circular shape, but it's completely overgrown

The name (in various spellings and forms, occur as current place names i.e. Plain and Gwarry in Redruth, and just South of Truro at Playing Place. St Hilary parish has 'Plain and Gwarry' Lane.

That ole King Henry the Eighth has a lot to answer for as among his many dissolutions was Glasney College in Penryn, which dates from 1265. In 1549, during the Cornish Rebellion, the Cornish Language was linked to it, a quarter of the population were killed, including 900 in 10 minutes. In Elizabeth the First's time the P & G plays were seen as a Catholic event, (Popery) and the miracle plays were banned. This event really signalled the end of the Cornish Language,

I hope I've given a flavour of Will Coleman's enthusiastic Lecture and have encouraged you to look for the signs of the Plen and Gwari in Cornwall.

*Francis Dunstan*

---

## **Cornish flag continues to fly high!**

We congratulate the following Cornish people who have recently had their hard work and achievements acknowledged:

### **Queens Birthday Honours 2016**

#### **Members of the Order of the British Empire**

*Sally-Jane, Coode* - For services to charity and the community in Cornwall.

*Commander Peter Marshall Flutter* - Retired Officer, Ministry of Defence. For services in Support of Maritime Helicopter capability.

#### **Medallist of the Order of the British Empire**

*Dr Geoffrey Norman Gibbons* - For services to Church Music in St Tudy, Cornwall.

*Graham Jane* - For services to the community in Fowey, Cornwall.

*Mary Phillips* - For services to charity particularly the Devon and Cornwall Air Ambulances.

*Sally Robinson* - Founder of *The Young Generation Theatre Group*. For services to Community Arts.

*Robert Trethewey* - For services to the community in St Erme, Cornwall.

## And, at the Olympic Games...

Cornish rower *Helen Glover*, and her partner Heather Stanning won a gold medal in the coxless women's pairs – repeating their success of London 2012.

Having achieved this incredible result, Helen is now able to focus on the next major event in her life – her forthcoming wedding to Steve Backshall.

## Cornish Man Engine marches around Cornwall\*

Alan M.Kent recently observed: *'Despite globalization and the encroachment of English culture and media, the fragments (of Cornish culture) exist...we are able to collect and identify them and understand how they fit into Cornwall's unique history...there may be a few cracks, but the original culture stands proudly before us'*. There is a chance that a project put together this summer by Cornish-based Golden Tree Productions with the inspirational Will Coleman driving it forward could, just possibly, be the beginning of a major reassembling of these fragments, delivering them to the wider world so it can appreciate Cornwall's unique status.

Set up to celebrate the tenth (or, as they put it, the *tinth*) anniversary of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, the *Man Engine* is described as *'the largest mechanical puppet ever to be built in Britain: a colossal metal Cornish Miner, part man, part machine. When he crawls down the road, the height of the Man Engine is 4.5m (about the same as a double-decker bus) but when he 'transforms' he stands at over 10m tall (two-and-a-half double-deckers!)*' (<https://medium.com/balweyth-cornish-mining/the-man-engine-3ad03eff55fb#.9kvgeov6> ). It was originally scheduled to be seen by 7,000 people on its tour of twenty-two locations but well over 130,000 people turned out to see it! If the transformation of the Man Engine was not impressive enough, the overall ceremony of which it was part, made very clear the important role mining played in Cornwall – and the integral part it played in Cornish culture and in its transportation around the world as Cousin Jack and Jennies travelled to South Australia, South Africa, the USA and beyond in order to work the Mines.

With huge media interest in the event, not just across the UK, but around the world, including China and Australia – the word has spread far and wide. Will Coleman has already announced embryonic plans to take the Man Engine to some of the sites around the world which were previously mined by large numbers of Cornish people who established Cornish cultural groups in such locations. Let's hope that the hard work of Golden Tree bears even more fruit – with those not just on the other side of the Tamar, but around the world so that the word can spread that Cornish Culture is very different from English Culture!

Ben Gilby,  
Postgraduate Geography Research Student, Royal Holloway, University of London.  
Postgraduate Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society  
Communications Manager, Penryn R.F.C.  
Vice-President of the Cornwall R.F.U.

*\*This item was originally published on Ben's blog - [Cornish Culture Blog](#). Check the blog for further items of Cornish interest.*



## Cornish historian dies

Elizabeth Sparrow, who will be particularly remembered for her fascination with spies - and being the author of the book *Secret Service: British Agents in France, 1792-1815* - passed away in July.

Her fascination with secret agents began while she was doing some research into Cornish history: she discovered evidence of an international secret agent network which operated in the late 18th and early 19th century. This led to a passion for the subject which became her life's work. During her research, she uncovered the story of an agent who was thought to be the inspiration for the Scarlet Pimpernel.

Despite a lack of academic credentials, she was acknowledged in her field and managed to obtain funding from the Leverhulme Trust and the British Academy in order to do research in Britain, Switzerland, Germany and France. She became particularly adept at finding links from the smallest bits of evidence and developed a good understanding of the underworld in Europe.

Elizabeth Sparrow was born Elizabeth Mary Wykes-Sneyd on September 14 1926 at Locrenton Vean, St Keyne Well, Cornwall. Her father was Vice-Admiral Ralph Wykes-Sneyd, who was awarded a DSO in 1914 for his bravery during the capture of Cameroon, a German colony in West Africa.

She married Captain Ben Sparrow in 1953 and had a son and daughter.

# The Jacks of Diamonds: the hole story of the Cornish in Kimberley

They say that at the bottom of any hole, anywhere in the world, you are as likely as not to find a Cornishman. This is true of the hole which features in this article – thought to be the biggest manmade hole in the world – where in the second half of the nineteenth century, you would have found Cornishmen at the top, the middle and the bottom. The hole being discussed is the *Big Hole* in Kimberley, in the Northern Cape region of South Africa.

## Discovery of diamonds

The story begins with the discovery of diamonds in 1866 which led, ultimately to a great 'rush' of hopefuls from all over the world coming to seek their fortune, to the establishment of the city of Kimberley and the start of De Beers, the largest diamond producer for many years and still a key player in the diamond industry.

It started when, in 1866, a 15 year old boy called Erasmus Jacobs found a pretty white pebble on the banks of the Orange River. A neighbour, Schalk van Niekerk, saw him playing with it and, thinking it might be worth something, offered to buy it. The boy's mother, however, dismissed it as a 'worthless pebble' and refused to take any money. Van Niekerk sent it away for analysis – in an ordinary envelope, by ordinary mail! It turned out to be a diamond of close to 22 carats worth £500 (over £40 000 today). This diamond became known as the *Eureka*.

Incredibly, this news attracted little attention. What really got things going was another discovery in the area. On this occasion, Schalk van Niekerk purchased a superb white diamond from an African shepherd. He bought this gem of 83.25 carats with 500 sheep, 10 oxen and a horse and sold it on for £11 200 (£1m today). This stone, which became known as the *Star of South Africa* prompted Sir Richard Southey, the Colonial Secretary at the Cape, to make the prophetic declaration: '*Gentlemen, this is the rock on which the future success of South Africa will be built.*'

Unlike the *Eureka* diamond which had been transported in the ordinary mail, the *Star of South Africa's* journey to England was far more secure. It was accompanied by armed guards and there was a decoy ship to fox potential thieves!

## Mining Begins

Following this second discovery, diggers came pouring in from all over the world and from all walks of life to search for their fortune. By the end of 1869, there were more than 10 000 claims in the alluvial deposits along the banks of the Orange and Vaal Rivers.

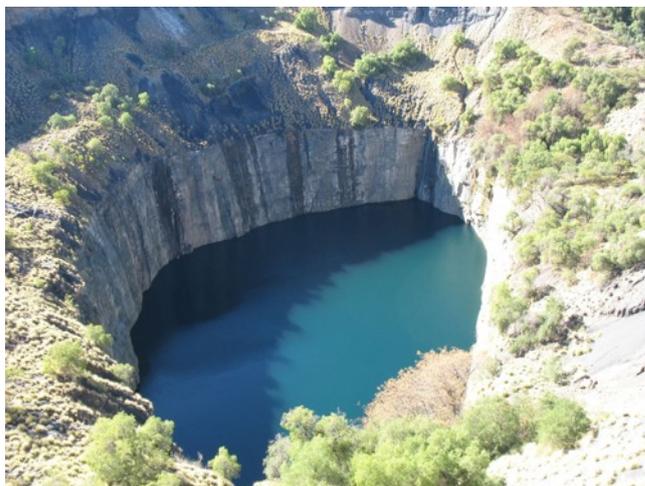
Digging in these beds had all but ceased when, in 1870-1, there was a new discovery which was to prove a turning point in the history of the diamond industry and of South Africa and really put the country on the map. This was the discovery of diamonds on nearby Colesberg Koppie.

Colesberg Koppie turned out to be the top of an extinct volcanic pipe. Volcanic pipes are tube-shaped tunnels that once carried molten rock from the interior of the earth to the surface. In this area, these pipes often contained diamonds.

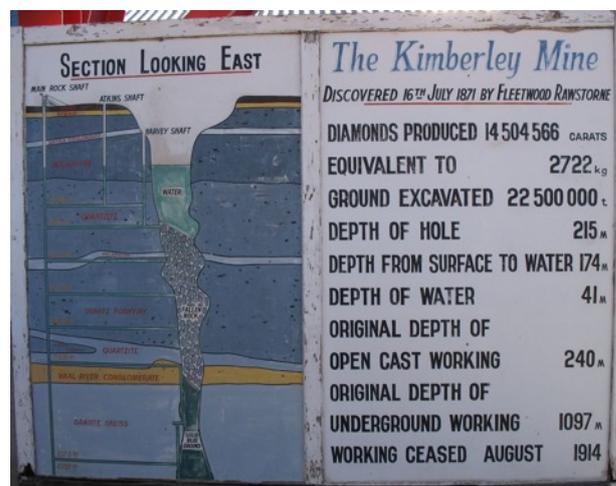
Shortly after this discovery, several other volcanic pipes were found nearby. News travelled fast and within a month there were 800 claims which were being worked by two to

three thousand men. In a letter to his mother, Cecil John Rhodes who was newly arrived in the area, said that it looked as though there were thousands of ants crawling all over the hill.

The digging was frenetic and the hill soon disappeared – but the volcanic pipe continued deeper and so the miners carried on with their excavations, eventually creating the now-famous *Big Hole*. These mining operations became the Kimberley Mine.



*The hand dug Big Hole, the result of mining operations*



## Why were Cornishmen involved?

Large numbers of Cornish men came out to the Kimberley diamond fields in the latter part of the 19th century.

It is a well known fact that the Cornish economy in the 19th century was heavily dependent on mining, fishing and farming, all industries which were vulnerable to the vagaries of weather and market conditions.

Although the mining industry had been a key feature of the Cornish economy for a very long time, it was badly hit by foreign competition at the end of the 19th century. This led to a drop in the prices of copper and tin and, in some cases, led to the closure of mines. Without the prospect of work at home, Cornish miners headed off to mining operations in other parts of the world – and the numbers were large. In the first half of 1875, for instance, more than

10 000 miners headed for South Africa, Australia and North America. You don't need much imagination to guess what this mass exodus did to the economy back home.

A large number of Cornish people went to Kimberley, where their special hard rock mining skills proved invaluable as the diggings became deeper. According to one source, many of them had followed Francis Oats, miner and mining entrepreneur whom they would have got to know through his mining activities in the St Just area. He was known for his compassion towards miners, originally at St Just and later, when De Beers was founded, by ensuring that the company paid for an annual home visit for each ex-pat miner.

### ***Mining Conditions in the early mines of Kimberley***

Only the hardy and really determined would consider looking for diamonds in the Northern Cape in the latter part of the 19th century. Conditions were both unpleasant and dangerous – and even if you were prepared to put up with them, there was no guarantee that you could get hold of a claim.

Claims were hard to acquire because some speculators went about buying them up. Those that remained were very expensive and so this left the prospector with two choices - pay a very high price for a claim or pay a large percentage to the claim owner. In the case of the Colesberg Koppie, this was often as high as 50%. Many diggers had African labour to help them and they too would have to be paid, reducing the digger's profits even further.

The work was physically demanding and the tools very basic in the early days – picks, shovels and buckets for digging, rope for getting the buckets up to the top and sieves to help with the sorting once the ore was at the top.

But it was not just the hard work that made conditions unpleasant. It was also very dangerous. At one point, there was a rather ineffective attempt to introduce a few safety measures to try and prevent the sort of accidents which had been occurring in other areas, but these were not adhered to. Operations remained disorganised, chaotic and dangerous.

There were hundreds of claims in the area which came to be known as the Kimberley Mine, each measuring 30ft by 30ft. Many were divided and subdivided, resulting in an incredibly crowded and busy place. Logistically, getting the ore out was one of the biggest problems facing miners. In an attempt to solve this, parallel roads were put between each double row of claims. This should have helped improve both the safety and the efficiency of the mining operations but in fact, made things worse because as the diggings became deeper, the roads ended up perched precariously on top of narrow causeways. These were constantly collapsing as they were undercut. Ox-carts and mule carts frequently fell off the roads and many people were injured and killed as rocks and earth fell on them.

When it became apparent that roads could no longer be used on the diggings, a system of ropeways was installed to haul the buckets of diamond-bearing ground to the surface. At first these were worked by hand, but in 1874 horse whims were introduced, followed by steam engines a year later.

As with so many mines in Cornwall, flooding became a problem as the digging went deeper. Initially, this was dealt with using pumps driven by horse whims. In 1876,

however, these were replaced by three beam engines from Harvey's of Hayle.

Collapses, landslides and floods were not the only dangers faced by the miners. Many were injured or killed in accidents with tools, or in explosions and fires. In a fire at De Beers mine in 1888, 24 whites died, 7 of them Cornishmen. The real hero of that tragedy was Harry Paull from Scorrier who, with a rescue party of Cornishmen managed to save many lives.

It was not only the miners who had to endure terrible working conditions. Life was also very uncomfortable for the sorters on the surface. They spent hours in harsh conditions outdoors, frazzling in the summer heat or freezing in the harsh winter – and always living with dust.

### ***Amalgamation: The need for stability***

By the late 1880s, there were 3 600 mining claims in the Kimberley area. There was no control over output and so, inevitably, the time arrived when supply exceeded demand which resulted in a slump in prices in 1883-5.

The fall in prices wasn't the only thing affecting the profitability of the claims. Apart from the frequent and increasingly dangerous ground falls and the flooding, a new problem arose – boundary disputes which could be expensive to resolve and often became very unpleasant. All this meant that at a time when prices were depressed, costs were increasing so that for many miners, the returns just did not warrant continuing.

The only long-term solution seemed to be to amalgamate claims, which is what started to happen. By 1885, the original 3600 claims in the area had been reduced to 98, close to half being owned by companies. Although this did alleviate the problems to some extent, production was still not fully controlled and so severe price fluctuations continued. Cecil Rhodes believed that the only way to stabilise the market was through central control and that could only be achieved with full amalgamation. He began buying up individual claims as well as a few small mining companies. This resulted in the formation of the De Beers Mining Company in 1880. One of the last mines to surrender to Rhodes was Victoria Mine which was managed by Cornishman Francis Oats. He did, however, finally agree to join the De Beers Mining Company in 1887.

Many of the amalgamation negotiations would have taken place in the De Beers Board Room which is a museum today and which served as Head Office from 1886 to 1889.



By 1888, all the claims had been amalgamated and the name of the company was changed to De Beers Consoli-

dated Mines. It controlled 90% of the world's diamond production.

Oats was appointed to the Board of this new company. There is a tenuous Cornish connection to another of the Board members - Sir Leander Starr Jameson who, delivered my Cornish grandmother in Kimberley! Although he trained as a doctor, he also became involved in political events which included leading an unsuccessful attempt to overthrow Paul Kruger, the then leader of the Transvaal Republic.

The amalgamation brought more stability to the diamond industry as well as to the little town of Kimberley. This encouraged entrepreneurs to start a variety of enterprises, particularly those which supported the mining industry – and of course this brought more spending money in to the town.

The controls did not, however, eliminate market fluctuations and De Beers faced another slump in the price of diamonds towards the end of 1907 following a drop in the demand from America. In response, the directors of De Beers cut production at two of its mines, including Kimberley Mine and many workers lost their jobs. Some of the Cornishmen returned to Cornwall while others moved on to the goldfields of the Witwatersrand or further afield to Australia. It was in this year that Francis Oats became Chairman of De Beers, a position he held until his death in 1918.

The shut-down did not last long as by 1910, demand for diamonds was starting to pick up and the mines were able to open again.

### **Daily life in Kimberley**

As with mining conditions, living conditions in *New Rush*, as Kimberley was first called, were harsh. By 1872, more than 50 000 miners had arrived and were living in an enormous, sprawling tent town in the middle of the veld. A contemporary writer described it as *a chaos of tents and rubbish heaps seen through a haze of dust...the whole place was a heterogeneous collection of tents, waggons, native kraals and debris heaps, each set down with cheerful irresponsibility and indifference to order.*'

It must have been pretty tough living in tents as they would have provided little protection from the hot summer sun or the extremely cold winter nights and this, combined with the somewhat unsanitary conditions meant that diseases were prevalent and many died of illnesses such as pneumonia and smallpox while others would have succumbed to conditions such as dysentery, sunburn etc. The area has low rainfall and so water was scarce, making it difficult to maintain reasonable standards of cleanliness and general hygiene, not to mention keeping hydrated in the heat.

It was not very long before more permanent structures of wood and iron started to replace the tents which had previously accommodated the residents. One of these structures was a Wesleyan church which was erected in 1872. This would have been very important to the many Cornish people living in the area. Also springing up were bars and hotels while buyers from the diamond houses of Europe opened offices, and smart carriages began to mix with the wagons in the market place.

In the early days, the town was a typical frontier mining town with pretty lax authority and minimum security. This, together with the rapid growth in the number of people arriving meant that it was not a very nice place to stay. It

was rowdy and wild. Shootings were common, gambling rife, prostitutes in abundance, suicides frequent and drunkenness a regular part of life. All in all, this was not the sort of place a Cornishman might want to bring his wife and family to. Over time, however, as the town became more settled, law and order was established and the place was more pleasant to live in.

The Kimberley authorities were very partial to the Cornish as, unlike miners from many other places who usually came just to make a quick buck, many of the Cornish chose to stay for a while and this, together with the sober habits which accompanied their Methodism seemed to have a positive influence on the town.

Kimberley was, however not a cheap place to live in. Food in particular was expensive as its scarcity meant that it was a sellers' market. One description from about 1872 lists the following prices (in today's money):

Bacon - £7.97lb

Sugar - £3 - £3.35lb

Tea – £21.93

The choice of food was limited, especially when it came to fresh fruit and vegetables, largely because of the lack of water.

As the town became more stable, it began to flourish with new buildings going up and new businesses starting. One of these was a retail outlet called Stuttafords which is still in existence. It was originally established in Cape Town by Sampson Rickard Stuttaford who arrived from Helston in 1854 at the age of 21. By 24 had set up his first store.

Something else which would have made life more pleasant was the improvement in local transport. Whereas before, people would have had to rely on carts, horses or shank's pony to get around, a tram system was introduced in the town and for those wanting to travel further afield, rail links from Kimberley to the ports in Natal and the Cape were improved.

In 1873, the name of the town was changed from *New Rush* to Kimberley in honour of the British Secretary for the Colonies, the Earl of Kimberley.

### **Social life**

Once things became more hygienic and more comfortable and the standard of living began to improve, residents were able to begin thinking about taking part in recreational activities.

For more wealthy people, particularly the mining high flyers, the most important social venue was the Kimberley Club. One visitor described it as a place which had *more millionaires to the square foot than any other place in the world.*

The Club was founded in 1881 to meet the desire of the leading men in the town to have a social club which was similar to the London clubs, where they could enjoy good food, drink and company, away from the dust and grime of the diggings.

I feel a particular affinity towards this club because, not only have I been treated to a superb lunch there, but my great grandfather, Francis Oats and the doctor who delivered my grandmother – Dr Leander Starr Jameson – were both regular visitors. Cornishman Francis Oats was Chairman in 1913-14.

Those who did not go to the Kimberley Club might catch a tram to the model village on the outskirts of Kimberley

which had been set up by Rhodes. Here they could wander in public gardens, play sport or swim.

### **Kimberley Cornish Association**

As they became more settled, the Cornish miners wanted to spend time relaxing with like-minded people. Many of them joined the Kimberley Cornish Association which was founded in 1889. Like other Cornish Associations, its aim was to provide a 'home from home' for Cornish people living in Kimberley. I am proud of the fact that the President of the Kimberley Cornish Association was, at one time, my Great Grandfather.

The first event to be organized by the Association was a Cornish dinner in a local hotel on New Year's Eve, 1880. It was such a success that it became an annual event. At the 1937 dinner, the guest speaker was the Minister of Mines, JH Hofmeyer. In his address, he expressed the gratitude of South Africa to the men of Cornwall who came out to work on the mines saying: *...we should never forget the price which many Cornishmen have paid for the building up of our mining industry.*

Hofmeyer himself had been trained at Camborne School of Mines.

The Association also arranged many other social events such as picnics on the Modder River at which wrestling competitions became a regular feature.

### **Boer War**

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a turbulent period in South African history and saw 3 years of fighting between the British and the Afrikaners.

The so-called Boer War affected many parts of the country and it was inevitable that the Boers would, at some point, target Kimberley because of its importance to the economy. The moment came in October 1899 when the town was surrounded and placed under siege for 4 months.

During the siege, Rhodes put the resources of De Beers at the disposal of the military. The headgear was used as a conning tower and the workshops were used to manufacture shells. The Kimberley guard, which included many Cornishmen, was set up to provide some protection for the residents and Cornish carpenter, Walter Tredea from Gulval, was responsible for the hasty erection of food storage sheds to protect supplies.

During a period of particularly bad shelling, Rhodes offered to provide shelter for women and children in the mines at night. About 3000 were lowered down the shafts, taking with them their bedding rolls. Here they would be safe and away from the sound of the guns.



*Francis Oats in the uniform of the Kimberley Town Guard*

### **What was in this for Cornwall?**

Through its use of Cornish labour and technology, South African mining (not only diamonds) made a valuable contribution to the Cornish economy. In 1910 William Hosken described the close relationship between the two countries when he said:

*The greatest market ever opened in the world for things manufactured in Camborne was South Africa ... Two thirds of the rock drills that came to the Transvaal came from that immediate neighbourhood... Three fifths of the fuse used in the Transvaal comes from Camborne... there were 23 000 white people employed in the mines and it was estimated that 7000 of that number were Cornish.*

Miners might send money home, or take it back on their return. My great grandfather built his house at Cape Cornwall using money earned on the diamond fields. Others would have done likewise. The legacy of that period can be seen if you do a quick google search. It reveals several places in Cornwall which have Kimberley in their name – from parks to streets and estate agents.



### **And what did they leave in turn?**

Undoubtedly, the biggest contribution of the Cornish was to the developing mining industry of South Africa. And it was not only as miners. Several left their mark on Kimberley's mining activity in other ways:

*Francis Oats*, who came from St Just was invited to go to Kimberley to manage several mines. After the amalgamation of the mines, he was appointed a director of De Beers and served as Chairman from 1908 to 1918.

*Thomas Quentrall*, who was from Wendron, became Inspector of Mines in Kimberley and Barkley West and was one of the most influential people in Kimberley.

*James Gunson Lawn* – Became the first Principal of the Kimberley School of Mines.

*Thomas Rogers* – Arrived from Camborne in 1896 to lecture at the newly opened Kimberley School of Mines

In 1903, the Kimberley School of Mines merged with the Transvaal Technical Institute in Johannesburg. In 1922 this became the University of the Witwatersrand which is still highly regarded as a trainer of mining engineers, and is where my own father trained.

*James Trembath* - Came from Penzance and St Ives. He got involved with Trades Unions and became the Secretary of the Kimberley Trades and Labour Council.

*Llewellyn May* – arrived in Cape Town in 1880. After working on the Cape Town docks for a while, he went to Kimberley where he became a security guard on trains carrying diamonds.



*The great great granddaughter of Francis Oats outside the Francis Oats hostel at Kimberley Boys' High School*

### **The Lemoine Affair**

There is one fascinating – and somewhat different - diamond story in which a Cornishman was involved. It concerned a Frenchman, Henri Lemoine who claimed to be able to make artificial diamonds.

When Lemoine's claim got out, it understandably, caused panic amongst those who had invested in natural diamonds. They feared that the news would lead to panic selling and a collapse of the diamond market. One of those who was particularly concerned, and was prepared to get involved financially, was Sir Julius Wernher who was both a banker and a director of De Beers. He asked Lemoine for proof and was invited to the Frenchman's laboratory in Paris. He took Francis Oats and two others with him.

Lemoine carried out his demonstration naked so he could not be accused of hiding diamonds in his clothes. He mixed various ingredients in a crucible, heated them and then cooled them. When the crucible had cooled, he took out several small diamonds and passed them around for inspection. After examining them, Oats became suspicious about their origin, convinced they were from the Kimberley area. After a Parisian jeweller eventually admitted that he had sold Lemoine the diamonds and that they had come from one of De Beers' own mines, Lemoine was convicted of fraud. How proud we can be that a Cornishman was the principal witness and it was he who had exposed a fraud which would have had dire effects on the world's diamond industry. Marcel Proust was a shareholder in De Beers at this time and actually lost a lot of money thanks to this fraud.

---

### **The Kresen Kernow Project**

The tender documents, plans and specifications for the Kresen Kernow build were issued in May and it is hoped that a contractor to build Cornwall's new archive centre in Reruth will be appointed during September.

The majority of the retained historic structure is now propped and archaeologists from the Cornwall Archaeological Unit are recording features which cannot be integrated into the new design.

While work takes place on the façade of the building in the coming months work will also begin on the designs and fitting out of the strongrooms, public spaces, learning rooms and exhibition areas.

Site tours will be available in September as part of Reruth's Pasty Festival and Heritage Open Days. You can find out more about what is happening on their website: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/community-and-living/records-archives-and-cornish-studies/kresen-kernow-cornwalls-new-archive-centre/>

---

### **Our Village**

By Mabel Pearce  
(Sent in by her niece, Jenny Bray)

Perhaps you know St. Mabyn  
It's perched upon high ground.  
With several draughty corners  
When Wintertime comes round

But now that we're in Springtime  
There's many a pleasant sight  
Orchard and gardens blossoms -  
A froth of pink and white.

The trees around "God's Acre"  
In shades of soft green light.  
Mingling a delightful scene.

The Church tower is a landmark,  
And on a special day  
The Union Jack waves cheerily  
To greet us on our way.

The feast of St. Mabena  
Has a November date.  
But feasting's out of fashion now -  
We have to watch our weight

The butchers and the bakers  
Flip round with meat and bread.  
While Donald, Bruce and David  
See that we're duly fed.

Sometimes Youth will shake a leg  
To strains of Ginhouse Band.  
It's very much like Bedlam,  
But youngsters think it's grand.

There are more points of interest,  
But I can't make them rhyme,  
So I must drop my pencil,  
And try some other time.

*Mabel Pearce*

*Jenny writes:*

*These verses called 'Our Village' refer to St. Mabyn and were penned in the 1960s by my maternal aunt Mabel Pearce who lived there with her sister Ruth. She and my Mother Kitty Bray were cousins of the late Cornish Bard, Kathleen Hawke who died in 1999. Their Grandfather was James Stevens (1847 - 1918) who farmed first at Zennor and then at Sancreed. Selected writings were published as 'A Cornish Farmer's Diary' in 1977. It was edited by P.A.S. Pool Past President of The Royal Institution of Cornwall and contains much supporting information, including memories of James and Honor Stevens by Kathleen*

# News from other Cornish Associations

## USA

For some months now, the Board of **Cornish American Heritage Society** has been looking at the issues which will confront the Society in the future. While everyone agrees that an organisation which strives to promote and remember Cornish Heritage in North America, brings enrichment to their lives, the future is uncertain because of the challenges posed by an aging membership and the difficulties of getting more people involved in the actual running of the Society. One of the things which has become clear is that there is no home for another Gathering as member Associations now seem to lack the resources to be able to put on a major event. The recent news that the **Cornish Society of Greater Kansas City** and the **Cornish Society of Illinois** are disbanding for these same reasons demonstrates the severity of the challenges which lie ahead for associations in many parts of the world. We will all watch with interest to see what ideas the CAHS come up with for dealing with these difficulties.

The summer issue of the CAHS newsletter reports that the Grass Valley Male Voice Choir attended the 25th Annual Gathering and reunion of the **California Cornish Cousins** in June. The choir, which is directed by Past President of the California Cornish Cousins, Eleanor Kenitzer also led the Sunday morning service.

The **Cornish Society of Greater Milwaukee** held a pasty lunch and AGM in April. The pasties were purchased in Michigan and according to Alice Lundstrom who was responsible for heating them before the meal, they 'were by the far the largest and tastiest I have eaten.'

In September, the Society will hold its annual picnic in Homestead Hollow Park in Germantown where there is a great nature trail.

The latest newsletter of the **Southwest Wisconsin Cornish Society** provides information on the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Cornish Festival will be held in Mineral Point in late September. One of the highlights of the Festival will be a performance of *Pirates of Penzance*. There will also be many activities with a pirate theme for children.

Confirming the importance of the Cornish in the Old Lead Region in general and Mineral Point in particular, a park adjacent to the Opera House will be officially renamed the **Cornish Heritage Park** when a Wisconsin State Historical marker is unveiled. One side of the sign will tell the story of Cornish immigration to the area while the other side will have examples of Cornish traditions that continue today.

## CANADA

At their June meeting, Jim Dagg of the **Toronto Cornish Association** played a film performance by the Trelawny Male Choir which had been recorded last September when the choir toured Canada. In appreciation for hosting the Choir, a plaque was presented to the TCA and St. Olave's Church where the 2015 tour premiered on an extremely hot night. As TCA lacks a permanent home, it was decided to present the plaque to the church where it could be displayed. There is also a card which explains the Cornish coat of arms.

The TCA had a table at the Ontario Genealogical Society Conference in June and several members volunteered to help. Their '*participation in this year's OGS Conference was extremely successful and resulted in recruiting three new members to the TCA.*'

In July, members were treated to a talk on St Ives while in mid-August, they held their Annual Summer Picnic. At the Association's next meeting, Sher Lootz will talk about Cornish Ports.

## AUSTRALIA

In her review of the past year, the President of the **Cornish Association of Victoria** stressed the importance of dealing with the challenges facing the CAV (and other associations) – aging membership, difficulties recruiting new members, the impact of IT on the use of the research library etc. etc. She stressed the need to adapt so that the Association can remain '*relevant and viable in the years ahead*'. With this in mind they will review several of their activities and procedures.

Monthly meetings are a key feature of the Association. Recently they have had talks on genealogy from the President of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies and family stories from Greg Campbell who talked of his Cornish links to the Isles of Scilly.

In 2015, the Association chose the Anzac National '*100 Years Remembers*' theme at three of their meetings. During the year, Liz Egan, Jill Beard and Derek Trewarne spent hours preparing a Data base of soldiers with Cornish links who served in WW1. Many of them have descendants in the CAV. They presented their completed work at their August meeting.

The CAV's Cornish Language Group will present some plays at the November meeting.

The **Ballarat Branch** of the **Cornish Association of Victoria** held their AGM in June, after which, Past President of the CAV, Rev. Prof. Robert Gribben gave a talk on '*The Varieties of Methodism*'. In August, John Hosking spoke on the Cornish Clay industry.

The **Geelong Branch** of the CAV had a stall at the National Celtic Festival at Portarlington over the Queen's Birthday weekend which gave them the opportunity to talk to many people '*on all things Cornish*'.

In July, the **Cornish Association of New South Wales** held its pasty day where about 20 members were able to enjoy home made pasties.

In October, there is to be a gathering at Lennox Head and Ballina where members will be able to enjoy a tea on arrival, a walk on the beach and a bbq lunch. Following this, they will go on a scenic coastal drive to the Naval and Maritime Museum.

They will hold their pre-Christmas lunch at Circular Quay at the end of November.

Their June/July newsletter reports that the Cornish involvement at this year's Australian Celtic Festival at the end of April was smaller as the focus was on the Isle of Man. There were, however, enough cousins to do justice

to a meal at a local hotel and seventeen people joined the street parade on the Saturday morning.

Good news from the **Southern Sons of Cornwall** is that Sonia Reuter is to become a Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh. She was a co-founder of the SSOC and has worked hard for many years to promote Cornwall. We offer our congratulations on this well-deserved acknowledgement.

Congratulations also go to Fay Binns who was awarded the Triquetry Achiever Medal by the Australian Celtic Festival at the end of April.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Berry Celtic Festival was held at the end of May. The theme this year was *'The Year of Cornwall'* and it coincided with the Shoalhaven Cornish Gathering. The SSOC organised an exciting program of events for the Gathering including a dinner, a cruise on the river and a bus tour of sites around Shoalhaven which have Cornish connections. Members from the South Australian, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria Associations attended as did past Grand Bard, Maureen Fuller.

The SSOC will spend a day at the races in late September.

The **Cornish Association of South Australia** has an active choir. At the end of May, it gave a concert in the Summertown Uniting Church. In June, members gathered for a Soup and Pasties evening while in July, they toured Cummins House, followed by afternoon tea. Cummins House was built in 1842 for Sir John Morphett and his wife Elizabeth. Following their AGM in August, Rev Matt Curnow shared some 'Cornish Snippets' gleaned from various internet sites.

Like so many Associations, the **Cornish Association of Queensland** is suffering from reduced numbers at events as members' age, and the workload is falling on a few people.

The Association will celebrate its Foundation Day on 1<sup>st</sup> October with a lunch, and they will hold their Christmas party at the end of November.

## NEW ZEALAND

At their April meeting, members of the **Christchurch Branch** of the **New Zealand Cornish Association** heard Margaret Swanney talk about her Cornish family. They originally came from Madron and settled in New Zealand after spending time on the mines in South Australia and South Africa. The guest speaker for the meeting was Beverley Van who is an expert in the art of growing Bonsai plants. She brought along a number of specimens she is working on and spoke of the material mix for growing Bonsai, the trimming of the roots to match the plants, leaf and wood growth. The plants are grown in pots which are

only glazed on the outside and can be made to produce miniature flowers and fruit in proportion to their size.

The Branch held its annual pasty lunch early in May when they *'over-indulged in all things Cornish'*! Jean and Graham Harry, who now live in the North Island were able to join them on this occasion. The entertainment was provided by St Alban's choir, led by Heather Gladstone on her accordion and, *within the constraints of the room two sets of dancers led by a band with a curious tone managed a very passable version of the Helston Furry Dance to much applause.*

---

## Keep Kernow Whole says the Grand Bard of Cornwall

'This is the parish that holds the spirit of Cornwall' said Grand Bard Merv Davey, *Telynor an Weryn*, in his address to fellow bards, visiting dignitaries and members of the public at Gorsedh Kernow's annual bardic ceremony, held this year in a rain soaked St Keverne.

'It was from this parish some 500 years ago that Michael Joseph the Smith led the Cornish host to London in protest at the destruction of our way of life. Throughout the centuries the people of Cornwall have asserted their distinct identity and heritage.'

Thanking members of the local organising committee for all their hard work over many months and the Chairman of St Keverne Parish Council David Lambrick for such a warm welcome, Mr Davey stood alongside delegates from the Welsh and Breton Gorseddau and reminded the crowds who had managed to squeeze into St Keverne church of the importance of retaining the border between Cornwall and the rest of Britain.

'The spirit of Michael Joseph and St Keverne are seen in our success with the recognition of the Cornish Language, our National Minority Status and the Devolution Deal for Cornwall Council' said the Grand Bard, 'but the time has come now to campaign to keep our land whole.'

Urging his audience to recognise Cornwall as a place apart with its own political history and cultural heritage the Grand Bard insisted that to place parts of Cornwall into Devon for the purpose of Parliamentary Constituencies would be a serious denial of history. He feared for the success of any Devolution Deal and called on Cornwall's MPs to support Gorsedh Kernow's call to 'Keep Cornwall Whole.'

'Any recommendation that parts of Cornwall are placed within Devon constituencies would be a disaster for Cornish democracy, heritage, culture and our national identity.'

## Are you planning to visit London?

Don't forget to contact the London Cornish Association and let us know when you are coming. If possible, we would love to meet you.

Contact us via the website - [www.londoncornish.co.uk](http://www.londoncornish.co.uk) OR  
Email: [lca@londoncornish.co.uk](mailto:lca@londoncornish.co.uk)

***A warm welcome awaits you at the London Cornish Association***

# Rugby

## A triumphant end: County Championship Rugby 2016

As the rugby season enters May, I always experience mixed emotions – sadness that the season is about to end, with the prospect of several months of no rugby to go along to watch – but also massive excitement at the prospect of the commencement of the highlight of my rugby calendar – The Bill Beaumont Cup!

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May saw me leave my Surrey home and take the two hour or so journey with a fellow Exile up to Bishop's Stortford RFC for Cornwall's clash with Hertfordshire. A 20 minute walk through a bustling town centre took us up the hill to the Silver Leys ground. Upon arrival we were immediately greeted by BBC Radio Cornwall's Dick Straughan and then bumped into so many of our fellow Exile friends as well as Trelawny's Army who had just arrived from the Homeland. At this point, Bishop's Stortford was a confirmed outpost of the Cornish empire, given the numbers already present in Black & Gold! There was just time for a pint to lubricate the vocal chords before the team coach arrived, and a loud singing of 'Trelawny' as the team disembarked. Head coach and former England international Graham Dawe appreciatively applauded the singing! The announcement by Bishop's Stortford officials that pasties, freshly sourced from the Homeland (and tasting bleddy 'ansum, it has to be said) were available for One and All. This was a really nice touch by the home officials, topped off by them allowing a St. Piran's flag to be flown from the tent selling the 'oggies'!



*Cornish supporters welcome the team coach to Bishop's Stortford. Photo: Ben Gilby.*

Being present at a Cornwall match is about so much more than just watching the rugby. It is a chance to renew friendships and also, for us Exiles, to see people we haven't seen for twelve months and get immersed in the elements of Cornish culture (a good 'shout' and banter) that we are denied being outside of the territory. So it was marvellous to enjoy all of this again. The game itself was the usual tight and tense tussle between these two sides. Cornwall started with a bang and had built an early two-try lead through absolute pack dominance. Sam Matavesi and Herbie Stuppel grounded the ball after the Black & Gold demolished Hertfordshire up front. However, after twenty minutes it was all change as the home side got a foothold in the game thanks to a try from hooker Brett McNamee, who has been an impressive member of their county side for many years. As half-time approached,

Cornwall were starting to struggle in the scrum, and after giving away a large number of penalties, the patience of referee Luis Caviglia snapped and a penalty try was awarded. Josh Sharp's conversion ensured Hertfordshire went in at the break 12-10 ahead. Matters appeared to get worse after the break as Cornwall were reduced to 14 men for 10 minutes. On reflection, this was the turning point of the game, as heroic defence, coupled with a brilliant 40 metre plus penalty from Matt Shepherd ensured that Cornwall ended the sinbanning period in front. Another Shepherd penalty edged the Black & Gold closer to a victory which was confirmed near the end when Sam Matavesi, who was immense throughout grounded the ball following a rolling maul. The fun continued after the game when the Hertfordshire RFU removed their flag from the pole at the ground. An enterprising Cornish person grabbed the nearest St. Piran's flag and hoisted that to the very top in its place!



*Sam Matavesi – another standout performance against Hertfordshire. Photo: Ben Gilby*

The following week saw a trip to Camborne for the final group game against Surrey. Nothing unusual about that, you might think, except that this took the form of a 300 mile pilgrimage from Surrey especially to watch my Black & Gold heroes. The irony was not lost on me that the county that I live in were playing the territory of my heart – and I would be one of the very few people travelling down from Surrey to watch the game – but clad in Black & Gold and desperate for Surrey to lose! Boarding the train from Falmouth Town Station at 11:50 on the day I was one of only two people wearing the Black & Gold, but once the mainline train called at Redruth, there was a Black & Gold invasion and all was well with the world again! Once I arrived at The Rec, I seemed to be immediately surrounded by endless Cornish rugby friends who all welcomed me 'Home'. What a great start to a marvellous day! A pasty and a pint followed before joining the mass hoards in getting ready to roar my support for the boys. Although Surrey had lost both of their opening two games, they had given both Hertfordshire and Gloucestershire a real run for their money. Again, Cornwall started the strongest and another brilliant run from Sam Matavesi put in Nielson Webber to put the Black & Gold ahead. Matt Noble replied immediately to show what Surrey were capable of. The home side looked to have made a game breaking assault on events following further scores courtesy of Matt Shepherd's penalty and two tries from Billy Searle, one of which Shepherd converted. Surrey rallied and, aided by the Cornish line-out struggling and a concession of a number

of penalties, hit back to be within six points through Noble (2) and Turner's penalties. At this point, the game became very difficult viewing for Cornwall support as Surrey appeared to be in the ascendancy. Yet, to the relief of *One And All*, a strong last twenty minutes saw the excellent Billy Searle complete his hat-trick of tries and Lewis Webb also going over. We were at Twickenham. Again!



*Greg Goodfellow clears the danger against Surrey with an expertly struck box-kick. Photo: Ben Gilby*

Then, all roads led to Twickenham the following Sunday. The usual pre-match meeting point of the Cabbage Patch pub saw Black & Gold in large numbers from 10am. After being interviewed by Duncan Warren on the phone for BBC Radio Cornwall, it was time to meet up with so many friends who had travelled to the game. A drink, pasties and the first 'shout' of the day got us in fine fettle for the game. The Twickenham staff were glad to see us – the guy who sold me my programme (£6?! What was that all about?!) saw my Cornwall shirt and said: 'Great to have you back. We love your singing every year!' Into our seats alongside Trelawny's Army and we strapped ourselves in for the rollercoaster ride! Cornwall made yet another rapid fire start when Billy Searle made it four tries in two games following some good play in the build up from Matt Shepherd. A great rolling maul try from Sam Matevesi saw Cornwall 12-0 ahead. The hoards of Black & Gold, who appeared to be present in larger numbers than last year

were loud and proud – but we all knew that early scores counted for nothing. Sure enough, just after the 20 minute mark, Cheshire hit back as Lavin's penalty was added to by hooker Millea's try from close range. 12-10 and it was game on. Crucially in this period, Cornwall stepped up the gears and two penalties from Matt Shepherd calmed the nerves somewhat for an 18-10 half-time scoreline. It was a scoreline that scarcely did justice to Cornwall's dominance, but the main thing was we were in the lead! Lavin's boot reduced Cheshire's arrears to 18-13. Cometh the hour, cometh the Black & Gold as Cornwall produced their best rugby of the competition as Robin Wedlake's searing pace set up a great try for Herbie Stupple. Shepherd kicked another penalty before adding the icing on the cake with the final try in stoppage time. A tap penalty near the Cheshire line was worked across from left to the right wing where Shepherd gathered and plunged over. 35-13 and history had been made!

After the ever emotional trophy presentation, the Falmouth Marine Band led the Black & Gold to the Line Out Bar for the now traditional post-match 'shout' which was louder and prouder than ever before!

*Ben Gilby  
Press Officer: London Cornish RFC*



*Just champion! Matt Shepherd celebrates the Twickenham triumph. Photo: Ben Gilby*

## Forthcoming Fixtures for Cornish Teams playing in London:

### **Saturday 24th September**

15.00 - Wealdstone Fc v Truro City Fc

### **Saturday 1st October**

15.00 - London Scottish Rfc v Cornish Pirates Rfc

### **Saturday 29th October**

Old Elthamians Rfc (Sidcup) v Redruth Rfc

### **Saturday 10th December**

London Irish Wild Geese Rfc (Sunbury-on-Thames) v Redruth Rfc

### **Saturday 24th December**

14.00 Ealing Trailfinders Rfc v Cornish Pirates Rfc

*Jonathan Henwood*

## New Members

*We welcome the following new members who have recently joined the LCA:*

Miss Margaret Bassett from Helston, now living in South Croydon, Surrey

Mrs. Susan Stonebanks, a member by descent, now living in West London

*Do you know anyone who has Cornish connections – whether by birth, descent or marriage? Why not encourage them to join the LCA? They can obtain an application form from:*

The Membership Secretary  
17 Trellyn Close  
Barming  
Maidstone  
ME16 9EF

## Mem Sec's Meanderings...

Summer is now with us and I hope it remains at least until the autumn equinox in September!

In my last Meanderings I included a reminder that subscriptions were due on 1st April but a number of members seem to have forgotten and embarrassingly, had to be chased. I thank all of you who have paid on time and give an extra thank you to those who have generously included a donation to the Association. I also thank our editor, Liz Broekmann for e-mailing, on my behalf, those who had forgotten to pay. Sadly, there are still quite a number of members who have not paid their subs or responded to reminders. If you have any questions about your membership, please don't hesitate to contact me. My address and telephone number are at the end of these Meanderings. I never like having to write members off for non-payment of their subscription, particularly when I do not know of their reason. Sadly if I hear nothing from you this could be your last Newsletter.

We welcome two new members to the London Cornish Association. They are Miss Margaret Bassett from Helston, now living in South Croydon, Surrey and Mrs. Susan Stonebanks a member by descent who lives in London W7. Unfortunately two other members have decided to cancel their membership and I can report that there are now 211 of us.

If you know of anybody who was born in Cornwall or is of Cornish decent - or who has an interest in Cornwall - you could direct them to the London Cornish Association and encourage them to join.

In my last Meanderings I referred to the Trelawny Club, which was originally for members up to the age of 30, and asked if anybody would like to re-establish the Club with an upper age limit. So far there has been no response. If you have thought about it do not hesitate to let me or the Secretary know.

Seagulls are hitting the news for their activity in Cornwall, particularly St. Ives, where they enjoy stealing people's ice creams or at least diving down to grab them. I believe it is not only ice creams they like, but sandwiches and pasties, they seem to be connoisseurs of Cornish delicacies! The advice is 'do not eat in the vicinity of hungry seagulls'. In July one person fell off the pier as she ducked out of the way of a diving gull that was after her ice cream! Fortunately she was not seriously injured. The lesson learned here is 'do not sit on the pier while enjoying your ice cream'.



Waiting for a snack in St Ives?

Towards the end of July, I am sure that many of you would have seen in the newspapers and on the TV the Giant Mechanical Cornish Miner. This is a puppet constructed to display a number of symbols reflecting Cornish mining and includes a giant beam engine at its heart. It weighs nearly 40 tons with the accompanying converted digger that helps to move it around the roads. It is twice the height of a double-decker bus and is the largest mechanical puppet ever built in Britain. It was unveiled in Tavistock and then began a two week journey around the mining areas of Cornwall to mark the tenth anniversary of the inclusion of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape on the list of Unesco World Heritage Sites. The puppet made 20 stops across Cornwall before finishing its journey at Geevor Tin mine on 6th August. Let us hope that on its journey across Cornwall it did not cause too many traffic jams and road hold ups, particularly during the busy holiday season. I'm sorry this news is too late for you to witness its travels, but you will be able to see it at Geevor.

You will not be surprised to hear that I have again been looking at some of the interesting articles in the copy of the 1854 book, Geography of Cornwall, to which I have previously referred. There are so many interesting items in this book that could be included in my Meandering, but this time I decided instead to include something from my copy of Kelly's Directory of Cornwall, which was published in 1897. On the first page, one can read the following interesting details about Cornwall:

*Cornwall is the most south-westerly portion of England and forms a peninsular which is bounded by the sea on three sides and along four-fifths of its Eastern border. It is separated from the county of Devon by the River Tamer, except from the north of Launceston where a small portion of Devonshire juts into Cornwall. The length of the county from Devon to Lands End is 80 miles and its greatest breadth, from Rame Head in the south to Marshland Mouth in the north, is about 45 miles. Other parts of the county are about 24 miles wide, but between St. Ives and Mount's Bay it is only seven miles. The area of the county is 868,208 acres, or 1356 square miles.*

It then continues with details of the population:

*Its population steadily increased up to the year of 1861, when it numbered 369,390, since which it had decreased, chiefly in consequence of emigration, to 330,686 in 1881, of which 155,115 were males and 175,571 were females. In 1891 the population had further decreased to 322,571 with males at 149,259 and females at 173,312.*

*The number of houses inhabited was 70,558 and a further 5,191 were empty.*

This decline was most probably the result of many of our miners emigrating abroad as the mining industry of Cornwall declined.

In the earlier 1800's, and even before then, there were many quarries and mines and these, and the smelting of ores, provided employment for a large portion of the population of Cornwall. In addition, there were fisheries, which were also of great importance.

What is the population of Cornwall today and how many houses are there? Today 'holiday lets' are of great importance, but it is of concern that there are

those who buy Cornish houses to use for only a short time each year. This results in many villages being 'no longer truly Cornish'. Is this progress or development-over-time? Cornwall does today depend on holiday venues.

So much for items from books and newspapers for these Meanderings. I will continue to look for things to include another time.

Well that is all for now and once more I hope you have found these Meanderings to be of interest. Perhaps they have brought back memories of Cornwall - of your childhood days, time at school or early working days in that marvellous county of Cornwall?

I wish you all the best for this year and I hope you will continue to support the London Cornish Association.

Kernow bys vyken

Graham Pearce, 'Pengwyth', 17 Trellyn Close, Barming, MAIDSTONE, Kent, ME16 9EF  
Tel (01622) 727167

## Crowdy Crawn

### London Cornish Pilot Gig Club now afloat!

In August, the London Cornish Pilot Gig Club heard the exciting news that Sport England is to award them a £10 000 grant to enable them to buy their first gig, *Fury*. Having this boat will allow them to bring regular Cornish pilot gig rowing to London and introduce this special Cornish sport to the city. We wish them well in this new venture..

You can find out more about the club and its activities on its Facebook page -

<https://www.facebook.com/londoncornishpilotgigclub/>

### Did you know...

You can now read Winnie the Pooh in Cornish? The book, entitled *Winni-an-Pou*, was translated by John Parker and is published by Kesva an Taves Kernewek. It is the winner of a 2016 Gorsedh Kernow Holyer an Gof Award in the category Cornish language books for children.

Other familiar stories which have won awards in this category are

*An Kanker ha'y Dhiwbaw Owrek* (The Crab and his Golden Claws) by Herge, translated into Cornish by Mark Trevethan, published by Dalen Kernow and

*Cass Coynt an Doctour Jekyll ha Mester Hyde* (The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde) by R L Stevenson, translated into Cornish by Nicholas Williams, published by Everttype

### Link to St Michael's Mount restored

After many years service to foot and motorised traffic, and after being battered by incoming and outgoing tides and storms for many decades, the causeway from the mainland to St Michael's Mount needed extensive repairs. These began in 2007 and were initially expected to take 11 years to complete. However, after severe storms in 2014 caused extensive additional damage, the repairs became more urgent. In consequence, work was speeded

up. The final stones were laid this summer meaning that the work was completed two years ahead of schedule. An amazing 3 500 tonnes of concrete, 4 500 pins and four miles of marine grade stainless steel bar were used during the operations and it took an estimated 218 000 man hours to complete the job. This is no mean feat when one considers the challenges facing the contractors, not the least being the tides which meant that the causeway was submerged for extended periods each day.

Careful consideration was given to the materials to be used in the repairs to the causeway in the hopes that they will be able to withstand any adverse conditions thrown at them and continue to provide good access to the island for many years to come.



**The deadline for the next issue of the  
LCA Newsletter is**

**5th November**

*Please send all contributions to:*

*The Editor  
55 Brownell Place  
London  
W7 3AZ*

*Or email to [lca@londoncornish.co.uk](mailto:lca@londoncornish.co.uk)*