



Cowethas Kernewek Loundres

London Cornish Association Newsletter



www.londoncornish.co.uk

Summer 2015

The gardens are hinting that it is summer, but the weatherman seems to forget this at times. I however am not complaining as I am not a fan of hot weather (despite growing up in South Africa and Australia!) so I say, let this lovely mild summer continue!

The summer newsletter always carries the reports which have been prepared for the AGM. This year is no different except that on this occasion, they will be published before they have been presented. This means that you will be able to see them before the meeting and have a chance to think up questions.

That brings up the matter of the AGM. You will be aware that this event has had to be rescheduled, thanks to the threat of a rail strike on 10th June. By the time the unions had decided to cancel the strike, we had had to make a decision about whether to go ahead. We do apologise for any inconvenience this has caused, but it seemed the right and fair thing to do considering that many of those who wanted to attend – not

least our speaker – had to use trains for at least part of their journey into London.

We encourage you to attend the AGM and what promises to be a most interesting Trelawny Lecture on 23rd July. The meeting is a good chance for you to hear news of the LCA and to have the opportunity to meet your Council, ask questions, make suggestions, offer support. Please remember though that whether you are coming or not, we would like to hear from you. If you are coming, it will ensure that you get a pasty for your lunch and if not, we will ensure that your apologies are recorded. You should contact our Chairman, Francis Dunstan whose contact details are listed further down this page.

All that now remains is for me to wish 'One and All' a good summer break. I hope you have a relaxing time and come back refreshed and ready to join in the Association's programme for the coming year.

Kernow bys Vyken

Rescheduled AGM and Trelawny Lecture

The AGM and Trelawny Lecture have been rescheduled to Thursday 23rd July 2015. This change was made necessary because of the threat of a rail strike which would have affected our Speaker and those members who have to travel by train.

The meeting on 23rd July will be held at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church and will follow the original programme timings:

1 pm - lunch, 2 pm - AGM, 3 pm - Trelawny Lecture, 4 pm - tea and biscuits, 4.30 pm - Close.

Our Trelawny lecturer this year is Mrs Ann Hicks, Chairman of *Cornwall Family History Society*, who also leads its team recording Monumental Inscriptions for all of Cornwall's burial grounds. From this well established ongoing project, Ann has developed 'Cornwall's War History project' with its own website: www.cornwallswarhistory.co.uk. It gives a fascinating account of the part that Cornish people played in the many conflicts since the start of the Great War in 1914. It includes not only those who died, but also those who played other roles (Civil De-

fence, Home Guard, Miners etc) and indeed those who arrived home to tell the tale, etc I invite you to come and hear Ann: her information is always being refreshed and I'm sure she will give us a very interesting lecture.

Booking is essential both for your attendance (for BCBC security, and my peace of mind) and to indicate if you will join us for the pasty Lunch. The deadline for both is **noon of Monday 20 July**, but of course, the sooner the better!

You may book by email (francis@francisdunstan.plus.com) or by telephone (01494 531703) (There will be an answering machine until June 24th). To help us in our planning, apologies for absence would also be gratefully received.

The **cost** of the day, including pasty lunch, is only £10, payable on the day.

I apologise that that our AGM/Trelawny Lecture had to be postponed, but I look forward to your support on July 23rd.

*Francis Dunstan
Chairman*

Dates for your diary ...

Mid-Summer Lunch
11th July - 12 noon
Penderel's Oak

Rescheduled AGM
23 July - 1pm
Bloomsbury Baptist Church

Rosyer Lecture

Further details of these events can be found on page 2

Deadline for the Autumn Newsletter is

5th August

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.

Midsummer lunch – 11th July – 12 noon

Venue: Penderel's Oak – 283-288 High Holborn, London
(Nearest tube: Holborn or Chancery Lane – on the Central Line)

Contact: Liz Broekmann – Tel: 020 3638 6817 (Leave a message)

Re-scheduled AGM and Trelawny Lecture – 23rd July – From 1pm

1pm - Pasty lunch
2pm - AGM
3pm - Trelawny Lecture
4pm - Tea and biscuits

Trelawny Lecture: Ann Hicks, *Chairman of Cornwall-Family History Society* will tell us about the Cornish War Project.

Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church,
235 Shaftesbury Avenue. London WC2H 8EP (Nearest tube stations: Holborn or Tottenham Court Road - NB: Central line is not stopping at Tottenham Court Road)

Cost: £10 which include a pasty lunch as well as tea and biscuits after the lecture.

Booking is essential whether you require a pasty lunch or not.

Please RSVP to the Chairman, Francis Dunstan by lunch time on 20th July.

(Tel: 01494 531703 or Email:
francis@francisdunstan.plus.com)

26th Rosyer Lecture - 18th July - 2.30pm

Kowethas Kernewek City Lit/ City Lit Cornish Society
Presents
The 26th Rosyer Lecture

Caroline Vile



& Other Unique Aspects of Pre-industrial Cornwall
2.30 for 3.00pm, Saturday, 18th July 2015

Room 122
City Lit
Keeley Street
London WC2B 4BA
Admission Free

News of Past Events

The 129th Annual Dinner

On a crisp March evening, 46 members and guests descended on the Thistle Hotel at Marble Arch for the LCA's 129th Annual Dinner. The evening began with drinks and chat, after which the party moved through for dinner.

Guests were in for a real treat when they entered the dining room as they were greeted by an impressive floral display - there were daffodils in abundance, thanks to the generosity of the Cornish flower growers. Their wonderful smell and bright yellow colour were reminders of the beauty of a Cornish spring.

Waiting on each seat was a 'goodie' bag which had been kindly brought by our Principal Speaker, Mr Malcolm Bell who is Head of Tourism at Visit Cornwall.

After a delicious dinner, elegantly served, we had the privilege of hearing Malcolm Bell's most entertaining speech. This was most interesting and was greatly enjoyed.

For the past few years, we have enhanced the Cornish 'feel' of the event by giving the tables Cornish names. This year we opted for Cornish saints, something which featured in our Chairman's reply to the Principal Speaker's toast. This is what he said...

You will see that the tables have all been named after some Cornish saints. The official top two Saints of Cornwall are the Patron Saints St Michael and St Petroc. (St Petroc, said to be the Captain of the Cornish Saints). The third, but in many people's minds, the actual number one Cornish saint is St Piran, (or as some of us say St Pyran) who was originally the patron saint of Tanners (and sinners?) of Cornwall and whose black and white flags we see all around us this evening. That is why the top table bears his name. You may be aware that the BBC Songs of Praise on Sunday 22 March will be coming from St Piran country i.e. Perranzabuloe celebrating one of the oldest Christian buildings in the UK. Of course St Piran is also remembered in Perranwell and Perran Ar Worthal as well as my maternal Perranuthnoe.

Perhaps I should say at this point that on a recent modern road map of Cornwall there are 67 place names beginning with the word Saint, Those 67 do not include all the old Cornish saints names themselves, St Non, St Breaca, St Juliot, St Stediana, St Lallulow, St Gundred, St Credan, and many more.

The fourth saint your Committee chose is St Endellion who was named after a Prime Minister's daughter, (or should that be that the other way round), anyway, She is looking after one of our distinguished guests tonight who was born in that region.



Finally is St Just (and we have two of them on the Map i.e., in Penwith and in Roseland. The former is associated with our Editor whose ancestors owned a large house near Cape Cornwall.

So where did all these Saints come from: well, many were the children of King Brechan originally from Breconshire in Wales. He must have been a bit of a lad because he married three times and had numerous children ranging in number from 12 to 63! depending on which book you read. The favoured number is 24, (boys and maids, as we say in Cornwall) St Endelenta was one, Menfre at St Minver was another, many ended up in North Cornwall.

However I will end this list by offering you one of their siblings as an alternative to St Valentine, namely St Adwen, of Advent, the Cornish Patron saint of sweethearts.

So it is not much use to trying to remember where an incident in your life took place in Cornwall by saying 'know it begins with Saint'. It is a bit like being in China and being told to 'follow the man in the gray suit'. Even worse is to say 'I know it begins with TRE because in Cornwall alone, there are at least 146 place names beginning with TRE. And here is a list of them! So Cornwall is a very special place, unique, in fact. But I would not want to be a post-man there! Would you?

This was a most enjoyable evening ... let the pictures tell the story.



Chairman Dr Francis Dunstan in conversation with LCA President, Sir John Trelawny (Rt) and Councillor Hugh Rayner, Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet



A group of guests relaxing at the dinner

Family History Day

The convenors of the Family History Day Conferences achieved an amazing scoop when it managed to book Dr Nick Barratt as a speaker for the April conference. Nick is a medieval historian and is currently Head of the Medieval, Early Modern and Legal team at The National Archives. However he is probably better known to the general public for his role as consultant on the TV programme 'Who Do You Think You Are? His entertaining (and informative) talk provided us with a wonderful insight into what really goes on behind the scenes in the making of a programme like this.

The other speaker on the day was David Luck, Senior Archivist for the London Metropolitan Archives. His talk is covered in the following report.

Talk on the London Metropolitan Archives

The second session at the Family History Day in April was an introduction to the London Metropolitan Archives. This was as a prelude to a visit that LCA members will make with David Luck on May 28th. David is a senior archivist with LMA. He subtitled his talk 'Where we've been and where we are going'.

About a fifth of the UK population can trace their ancestry to London at some point, and for the London Cornish this is likely to be a lot higher. My own grandfather left his family in Illogan in the 1870s and came to London to train, earn his living, marry and have children. So finding out about the records held at LMA is as relevant to us as the Cornwall Record Office.

David described how the LMA was one of a patchwork of 624 archives within the London area. It had its origins in a number of well-known predecessor organisations including the Greater London Record Office and the City of London Record Office. Amalgamation of these archives occurred in 2005. The archive supplements the City of London Guildhall Library which David described as the library and bookstore for the City.

The collection policy of the LMA is to document activities within the City of London and additionally to acquire records concerning the whole of London.

The archive is housed in an old print works in Northampton Road Clerkenwell. David pointed out that there was logic in this. Archives are particularly heavy. Fortunately old industrial buildings such as those used for printing were built to bear heavy machinery, and are better able to bear the weight of the 105km of records in the collection. Holdings include records from:

- London County Council, Middlesex County Council, Greater London Council and the City of London Corporation (Livery Companies)
- Pan-London organisations, businesses and charity such as Corams.
- Church records from the Diocese of London and CofE parish records
- Welfare institutions, Board of Guardians and Hospitals
- Directories of London
- Maps
- Prints and images

Amongst the 80 staff who work at the archive are dedicated digital imaging and conservation teams. Both unfortu-

nately are threatened by economics and cut-backs. So it is understandable that LMA should come to a commercial arrangement with Ancestry.com to scan some of their records and make them available online to family historians. More than 200 000 000 records have so far been uploaded including more than 150 000 000 entries from the London electoral registers between 1835 and 1965.

Another LMA digital initiative is called 'Collage'. This is a growing bank of images - prints and photographs - searchable online by place.

David was keen to talk about the future challenges for the London Metropolitan Archive following on from comments made earlier in the day by Nick Barratt. He mentioned in particular, issues surrounding how to deal with digital records from the 1970s to the 1990s. Many of these records are in a form that is not easily accessible now because of changes in the hardware and software used. It struck me that this is something that we as family historians need to be really aware of - the potential obsolescence of recording technology.

David felt that another challenge would be the need for London's local authorities to merge their archive services in an effort to reduce costs yet further. In many ways this would make a lot of sense for us family historians but with more than 600 separate records offices could be a process that takes some time.

Chris Burgess

Federation of Old Cornwall Societies
Summer Festival
Public Hall, Liskeard
Saturday 27th June 2015
10am - 4.30pm

Following a parade of the banners of the Old Cornwall Societies and a Roll Call of all Societies and Associations present, there will be bus excursions to St Germans, St Neot, Trelawne Manor, Minions and the Cheesewring as well as a walking tour of Liskeard and an optional rail excursion to Looe.

It is hoped that a replica of Richard Trevithick's *Puffing Devil* will be on the Parade, next to the Michael Loam fountain as well as a number of restored Rowe Hillmaster lorries built at Liskeard during the 1950s.

Pre-booking is preferred and the cost will be £6 per head.

Contact : Ivor Corkel - Email: corkengine@talktalk.net,
Tel: 01209-712267

Condolences

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death, in March, of Tom Sims. Tom was a very active member of the Association and served on Council. But, it is probably as a part of the Family History Group that he will be best remembered. He was a hardworking member who was particularly good at dealing with technical issues!

Tom will be missed by all who knew him and we offer our condolences to his family and friends.

7th Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival

'*Let all men sing*' was Basingstoke's introduction at the Gala Concert in Truro on 4th May. And so they did - from Land's End to Launceston through five days of comradeship in song. Seventy choirs, of which I heard but thirteen, sixty events and fifty locations including schools, the Eden Project and the Minack Theatre made for a logistical nightmare in the organisation of a significant choral festival worldwide.

I was particularly impressed by the boy choirs, one Lithuanian and the other from St Petersburg in Russia, each composed of over forty choristers between the ages of nine and nineteen. The '*Hallelujah Chorus*', sung in Russian, and Andrew Lloyd Webber's '*Pie Jesu*' were mind blowing. So too were the contributions by the unaccompanied group of eight young Gentlemen Singers from the Czech Republic.

Other choirs of all ages came from Georgia (USA), Canada, Africa, Australia, Europe, Wales, England and 'West of the Tamar'. They combined to create unforgettable, moving and contrasting experiences. I look forward to the eighth event in 2017.

Mary Watters

Voices of London Festival 2015

Building on the success of its pioneering inaugural outing in 2014, this year's festival will feature new commissions, come and sing workshops, and of course, a huge range of choral music. The Festival is generously hosted by St James's, Sussex Garden, and will run from 19-27th June 2015.

Celebrating the extraordinary range of vocal diversity on offer in the capital and beyond, the festival showcases ensembles of all shapes and sizes, from community choruses and youth groups to professional chamber choirs and operatic ensembles. At the heart of the festival lies collaborative music-making in a wide range of guises.

This year the premier of the festival commissioned work, A Cornish Requiem by young British Composer Jamie Brown brings the life and culture of Cornwall into focus, drawing on folksongs, poems and themes from the region. The premiere will take place at the Festival Finale on the 27th June along with works by the prolific British Composer, John Rutter. The forces involved include vocal soloists, brass, organ, a professional chamber choir as well as the Voices of London Festival chorus comprised of numerous choirs from across London. Following its world premiere in London, the composer hopes to take the work to Cornwall for performance by local musicians.

The Festival will be held at St James' Paddington, Sussex Gardens, London W2 3UD

For more information, visit the Festival website at www.voicesoflondonfestival.com

AGM Reports 2015

Report of the Chairman

Well. what do I write this year?! I've just read my last year's report and you will not be surprised to learn that I could repeat most of it for this year! Unfortunately so. I have to say that this has been a difficult year for the working of the Association. In particular the proposed strike of the railway men this very week has caused much concern for those who have tried to organise our 2015 AGM and Trelawny Lecture. I am also very disappointed that only 13 members had registered for this year's event, and that I have received only two apologies, out of 220 members, re the AGM. This meeting is a costly one to arrange for the Association and the lack of support for it is disturbing.

Three positive areas stand out I'm delighted to report:

- The Newsletter written for the most part by Elizabeth Broekmann our Editor continues to be the main contact between the Council and the membership. We are grateful to Liz for all the hours she spends in maintaining the high standard of the newsletter. It would help her if members would write something for the NL. It does not have to be a full article but something our members may find interesting. A Cornish joke?? A memory of 'home'?
- Secondly, the continuing success of our Family History Group bi-annual day conferences are reported elsewhere. The committee of Carol Goodwin, Gill Penny, Chris Burgess, Mary Timmins, Jackie Trembath and, until his recent death, Tom Sims, have worked to keep these events two of the most successful of our year.
- Thirdly, our Annual Dinner proved to be a success at the Thistle Hotel. It is a pity that members leave it so late before sending in their bookings, giving the organising Committee much worry, rather unnecessarily. This year for the first time I can remember, two London mayors attended, but no Cornish mayors - a sign of the times? Changes are likely to occur next year. The hotel threatens refurbishment and there is talk of changing the Dinner to a Lunch. Your comments on this idea would be welcome, and your presence even more welcome. The Dinner committee is very grateful to Lizzy Broughton for arranging the flowers, and to Graham Gendall Norton for arranging for Malcolm Bell to be our Principal speaker.

Our monthly lunches are on the decline, as I have remarked previously and maybe it is time to discontinue them. (They are scheduled for this coming year 2015-16). Other Lunches have proved more successful, including the New Year lunch with a very good turn-out. We are grateful to Tony Wakeham for continuing to be responsible for these special lunches in spite of his ill-health.

We thank Jackie Trembath for keeping our finances in order and Graham Pearce for keeping our Membership list in order. Graham reports that our numbers remain constant at around 220. If you are a new member we welcome you and will be glad to see you at any of our events.

Carol Goodwin has taken over the Emailing list and the refurbished Website. May I urge you to let Carol have your up to date email addresses and for you to look at your emails and the website more often than maybe on your birthdays! A Heartfelt plea!! As I remarked last year it is a

pity that so few of our members who say they are on email respond to notices sent out between Newsletters.

I continue to be LCA Chairman and reluctantly resumed that of Hon Gen Sec, which is a Bad Thing, and we have no Vice-Chairman either. I also look after the Paul Smales Award, and am Archivist. My recent illness has made me think of what would happen were I to fall under that proverbial London bus. Members might like to think about that too and its implications for LCA! Really!

We do not have a social Committee any more! Council meetings are often attended by only four officers. Three council members are unable to travel easily and cannot often attend. However, I thank them for all the work they have done on your behalf this year.

To end on a more cheerful note:

- One of our former Chairmen, Miss Priscilla Oates, and her partner Mr Paul Blaber danced the Flora again this year on my behalf.
- Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and Duke of Cornwall has been pleased to continue as our Patron for another seven years. And...
- Our member Mrs Elizabeth Lane has been awarded a Bardship of the Gorsedh Kernow, and Mrs Kath Slatter was awarded the LCA Shield for services to Cornwall. We congratulate them both.

I have represented the LCA at the Midlands and Thames Valley Cornish Assns Annual Events.

We look forward to the New Year 2015-16

Francis E Dunstan (Chairman)

Family History Group Report

We had a Family History Group meeting at the end of last year where consideration was given to a number of things including advertising, ways of increasing attendance, costs and the fact that sometimes we were not breaking even.

We do get good calibre speakers but obviously the fees have increased somewhat. This past Family History Day in April, we had two excellent speakers who fortunately charged us less than they would usually command. The result was we had probably the best attendance since taking over from Lorna's tenure.

Dr Nick Barratt who is a Researcher – in particular on the TV programme 'Who Do You Think You Are' and who gave the attendees an excellent view of how the media works to obtain factual and entertaining family histories of celebrities.

Mr David Luck, a Senior Archivist at the London Metropolitan Archives also gave an excellent insight into the workings of the LMA – and this was followed by a visit to the LMA in May, arranged by Mary Timmins.

At our October 2014 FHG Day, Ian Waller came to talk on Handwriting Reading. Our second speaker on that Day was Jane King from the Foundling Museum. It was a different slant on Family History but definitely enlightening and quite sad. Later this year, we will arrange for a visit – at a weekend – to the Foundling Museum.

We promote the FH Days as much as we can but would also ask our LCA Members to assist by advertising these events by word of mouth also. We need to have good support on these days to justify the costs incurred.

For the next FH Day on October 17th, we have arranged for Dr Paul Blake to speak on Manorial Records for the morning session and in the afternoon, Dr Peter Stanier will be talking on Mining in West Penwith. (a recommendation from our member Sheila Henwood).

We are always pleased to hear of suggested speakers. Do let us know.

Carol Goodwin (Family History Day Convenor)

LCA Website

The training by Nicola Bathe in Truro last year consisted of updating and backing up the site. This went very well.

There was a problem in that the system was very slow and therefore during early this year, the Host Company was changed to a much faster Host site and better administrative setup.

The website is updated where necessary with the appropriate back up.

We now have a good site so please look at it as much as you can.

Carol Goodwin

Publications Report

Members Leaflet

The LCA Leaflet is published at the beginning of September each year and mailed out with the Autumn newsletter.

The 2014-5 brochure was, once again, in the slimmed-down format which was introduced last year. This format is much easier to produce and cheaper to publish and, because it is smaller, we are able to mail it out with the newsletter which means that our September postage bill has been reduced by half.

Newsletter

Newsletters are published quarterly and provide information on Association activities as well as other items of Cornish interest. They endeavour to promote the London Cornish Association and to encourage members and visitors to participate in the Association's social programme.

The newsletter is sent to members, local and overseas Cornish Associations, the Cornish media and Cornish MPs as well as organisations such as the Cornish Gorsedd and four of the Legal Deposit Libraries. It is available as both a hard copy and an emailed version.

The good news this year has been the re-introduction of regular rugby reports. When Dickon Moon was unable to continue because of work commitments, there was a real gap in the newsletter. We were therefore very pleased when Ben Gilby, the Press Officer of the London Cornish RFC approached us with an offer to provide regular reports – and so we have, once again, been able to follow what's happening at the LCRFC - of particular interest this season when 'our' team has been doing so well.

We are always on the lookout for Cornish news which would be of interest to our readers and ask our members for leads. We also encourage members to contribute reports and articles for the newsletter. Whilst these were forthcoming in the past, the number of items currently being sent in has dropped substantially. This means that the size of the newsletter has been reduced during the

past year. In order to maintain a newsletter of a reasonable size, we appeal to members to send in items of general Cornish interest which could be considered for inclusion for future issues.

Elizabeth Broekmann (Editor)

Financial Report

At the financial year end, 31st March, the Association held a bank balance of £7277.75, a small increase compared to the previous year end and our income was slightly more than our outgoings.

Our main source of income is the annual membership subscription which remains unchanged at the current rate of £15. We are also grateful for the donations members feel able to make.

Unfortunately, due to a decline in attendance, the 2014 Trelawny Lecture proved quite costly as we had to pay for hall hire and the travel expenses of the speaker. The Family History days did not quite manage to cover all their costs but these popular days continue to be very well attended and Council feel able to continue to support them. The Annual Dinner was very successful and covered all its costs.

As with previous years, we continued to hold most of our Council and Committee meetings, and also several social events, at the Penderel's Oak, so saving the cost of a meeting room.

The highest expense we have is for printing the Newsletter but we feel it is a worthwhile expense as this is our only contact with most of our members. We hope you enjoy reading it.

Our Truro-based web designer completed the final work on our re-launched Website during the year. She also provided some much appreciated training for the Council member who has responsibility for updating the site, to enable her to keep the site going forward. There will be an annual charge for hosting but we don't anticipate any more development costs in the coming year.

Jacqueline Trembath (Treasurer)

St Keyne Holy Well Clean Up

Before World War 2, a Liskeard Solicitor bought the site of the St Keyne Holy Well which was part of the Morval Estate and bequeathed it to the St Keyne Parish Church. A condition of the bequest was that the well be cared for by the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society

On Monday 8th June, a small group from the Liskeard OCS went to the well to carry out the half yearly clean up, after which they enjoyed tea and saffron buns.

According to legend, the first of a couple to drink water from the well after the marriage ceremony becomes 'Master of the Home'! There is a story of one enterprising bride who caught her husband out by visiting the well earlier in the morning and collecting a jug of water from the well which she placed in the church porch. So, when her new husband trotted off a mile or more to the well after the ceremony to drink the water, he had been pipped to the post!

Duncan Paul Matthews

Lostwithiel's Connection With The Sinking Of The Lusitania On 7th May 1915

John Thomas (Tom) Matthews was born on 6th November 1887 in the parish of St Winnow, the eldest son of John Clements Matthews and his wife Eliza. After leaving Bridgend School (afterwards Downend School and now St Winnow Church of England School), he became a slaughterman for a local butcher.

During 1909 Tom's brother-in-law, Arthur Martin emigrated to Michigan, USA to work in the copper mines where wages were good. In 1913, when Arthur was on a visit home, Tom decided to accompany him when he returned to Michigan. He planned to work in the copper mines, to earn enough money to set up his own butcher's shop when he returned home. Tom and Arthur set sail on 6th March 1913 from Liverpool Docks on White Star Line Ship Baltic.

Seventeen months later war was declared between Britain and Germany. By 1915 Tom and Arthur had decided to return to Cornwall but at the eleventh hour on New York docks, Arthur, who was incidentally a non swimmer, changed his mind. He said goodbye to Tom and remained in the USA. Tom boarded the Cunard Liner *Lusitania* on 1st May 1915 bound for Liverpool with almost 2000 passengers.



This picture, taken in Calumet Michigan, shows Tom Matthews (seated) just before he boarded the Lusitania. The other person in the picture is not known.

On Friday 7th May sailing off the coast of Southern Ireland, just off the Head of Kinsale and just a few hours from Liverpool, the liner was torpedoed by a German U-boat. The *Lusitania* sank within 20 minutes with the loss of 1195 lives. There were 764 survivors.

Tom was forced into the sea. Being a fit 27 years old and a very strong swimmer, he managed to survive the cold water for four and a half hours before being rescued. He returned to his wife and son in Lostwithiel and was subsequently awarded £26 compensation for the loss of all his possessions.

In June 1916 Tom enlisted in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, but was then transferred to the 15th Hampshire Regiment before being sent to fight in France.

On his return from active service at the end of the war he finally fulfilled his dream of opening his own butcher's shop at 9 Quay Street. This was known as T. Matthews and Son. Tom ran the shop for 39 years. His son Howard worked in the business with him until ill health forced Tom to retire at the age of 70 in 1957.

Tom passed away peacefully at his Quay Street home on 25th May 1962, aged 74. He was survived by his son and two grand-daughters all residents of Lostwithiel.

Throughout his life Tom had been very reluctant to talk about his experience of the sinking of the *Lusitania*. His family knows the barest outline of the story.

By a strange coincidence at the time, a Royal Navy Petty Officer, Leonard Bloomfield, was involved in the rescue operation and 25 years later his younger daughter, Kathleen, married Howard Matthews.

Uncle Arthur Martin (who, had he boarded the *Lusitania* may well not have survived the disaster) lived permanently in USA and never crossed the Atlantic again. He married and had a son and two daughters. The families on both sides of the ocean keep in regular contact.

On 11th November 2009 my husband Donald and myself were chosen to represent the Duchy of Cornwall at a memorial service in Westminster Abbey in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. The invited guests around us were chosen because their family member had died in the Great War but my story was a happier one of survival amongst great sadness.

On Thursday 7th May this year, Donald and I were on the Cunard Queen Victoria which at 3.30am hovered over the site where the *Lusitania* sank in 18 minutes, 100 years ago. A prayer was said by the Captain followed by wreaths being thrown overboard and each relative was given a white rose to toss over in remembrance of their loved ones. The following afternoon in Cobh, Southern Ireland a memorial service was held in the centre of town at the *Lusitania* Peace Memorial in the presence of the President of Ireland, the Irish Navy and many Dignitaries. At twilight the day concluded with a flotilla of boats lighting the waters of Cobh harbour.

A very memorable day which we were proud to have witnessed.

Gillian Parsons (nee Matthews)
Grand-daughter.

New Members

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

Ms Ruth Martin
and

Mrs. Hilary Ohrstrand
Both living in London

Mrs Jacqueline Martin, living in Sevenoaks

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

Gorsedh Kernow announces new Grand Bard Elect

The Council of Gorsedh Kernow is delighted to announce that the new Grand Bard elect is Merv Davey from Withiel.

Merv, whose Bardic name is *Telynor an Weryn* meaning Folk Harper, was made a bard in 1978 at the Merry Maidens stone circle near St Buryan, West Cornwall, through examination in the Cornish language *Kernewek*.

'It is a great honour to be elected as the next Grand Bard of Cornwall,' said Merv, accepting the invitation, 'and a wonderful opportunity to work with Gorsedh Kernow in promoting, and sharing my enthusiasm for, Cornwall's distinctive culture and Celtic identity.'



Grand Bard elect, Merv Davey with the Grand Bard, Maureen Fuller

Merv qualified as a social worker in 1974 and has worked in a variety of social care situations, most recently as sensory team manager for Cornwall Council. In 2005 he undertook postgraduate research with Exeter University's Institute of Cornish Studies which led to the award of a Doctorate in 2011. His thesis explored the fascinating world of Cornish folk tradition and identity and is due to be published as a book later this year.

Affectionately known as 'Dr Folk', Merv Davey was born in Newquay and lists among his many interests Cornish studies, folk dance, guizing and kayaking. He was one of the founders of Lowender Peran, Cornwall's own Celtic festival, and plays banjo for the North Cornwall Ceilidh Band. It is, however, as a Cornish Bagpiper at the head of parades and processions that he will be recognised by many.

'The highlight of my year is doing duty as Bodmin Town Piper on St Piran's Day,' said Merv, 'and at the end of the procession we lead some 500 children through some Cornish dances and they have an absolute ball.' Dr Davey has been elected for a period of three years. The only candidate nominated by the College of Bards and following the agreed procedures laid down in the Gorsedh Kernow constitution, he will assume full duties as

Grand Bard of Cornwall at the bardic ceremony to be held at St Austell on Saturday 5th September 2015.

His role as Deputy Grand Bard will be conferred at the same ceremony to Elizabeth Carne, *Melennek*, who was elected to this role by the College of Bards last year.

A Taste of Cornwall in London: *Clare's Cornish Kitchen* Opens in Primrose Hill

A new Cornish outlet - *Clare's Cornish Kitchen* – opened in Primrose Hill, London in May. According to Clare Latimer who is running the shop on behalf of *Beside the Wave* in Falmouth, it has '*all Cornish things including staff*'. The wide range of stock includes frozen and dried foods, skin care products, cushions and textiles, baskets, chocolates, tea, coffee etc etc - and even Cornish dog bowls.

The shop can be found at 6 Elsworthy Road, Primrose Hill, London, NW3 3DJ

Clare can be contacted at:

Email: clottedcream@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 0207 722 6554 Mobile 07930 321 889.

www.clareskitchen.co.uk

News from the past...

Taken from: West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser - 18 February 1859

Notice To Mariners Godrevy Island Light-House St. Ives Bay – Coast Of Cornwall Trinity-House, London, January 25, 1859

The Light-House on Godrevy Island, St. Ives Bay, being now nearly completed, Notice is Hereby Given, that the Light will be exhibited therefrom on the Evening of the 1st of March next, and will be thenceforth continued every evening from Sunset to Sunrise.

Mariners are to observe that the GODREY LIGHT will be a bright revolving Dioptric Light of the 1st order, shewing a flash every Ten Seconds; and burn at an elevation of 120 feet above the level of High Water; and be visible in clear weather at a distance of about 16 miles.

Notice is also Hereby Given, that on the exhibition of the Light from the Godrevy Light-House, the LIGHT VESSEL now moored in the Channel between Godrevy Island and the Stones Rocks, will be taken away.

By Order, P.H. BERTHON, Secretary

Francis Dunstan

Do we have your correct email address?



If you change your address, please do let us know so that we can update our records.

Please contact us on
lca@londoncornish.co.uk

A Cornish holiday diary

When my Cornish cousin from Toronto told me she wanted to come and stay and also get down to Cornwall I was delighted but I have to confess slightly wary. After all, I had never met her outside emails and her fitness level clearly outdoes mine by more than a country mile. We made a deal, however, that I would do the driving, she would do the walking and that we would rely on kinship, shared interests and basic commonsense to make this trip a success.

First came the Cornish cheese

Ann discovered Yarg from the Lynher Dairy some while ago and so arranged for a large cheese, clad in wild garlic leaves, to come to my house in South London in time for her arrival. It served us well appearing in various forms and always starring in our picnics.



Easter Monday

The weather was beautiful and stayed that way all week for us. So the countryside welcomed us with lambs, sunshine and banks covered in primroses as we turned left after the Tamar for the 'land of our fathers', sometimes known as the forgotten corner of Cornwall. The village of Craffhole is remarkably unchanged since their time, so much so that the cottages and road layout are easily recognised in photos from 1900! Having been once before I was happy to stay at the Finnygook Inn where you can look out across the landscape to the Lynher river. Inside there is a wonderful selection of old prints and photos including a poster for the 'Silent Guide' tours by the Trelawney Tours Ltd in the 1920s. The proprietor Mr Harding of Penzance had invented a mechanical device fitted to the windscreen giving passengers a key to principal objects of interest on their journey. A Cornish kind of Sat Nav!

Tuesday

We decided to start with local scenes. First stop was Sheviok Church where some of our Landrey, Davey and Giddy ancestors lie in an ancient and beautiful churchyard. The parish, mentioned in the Domesday Book, was consecrated in the 13th century and is still rural with rich soil and mature trees, not to mention cliffs and beaches. (I have yet to look up any family members who may have attended the Methodist Chapel in Craffhole.) The three

cottages lying to the side of the church were run as a pub by my family in the late nineteenth century.



Sheviok Church

Next we drove down Finnygook Lane to the Portwrinkle front. Sitting at the Gook cafe and looking down the steep cliffs to the rocks below it was hard to imagine the pilchard or mackerel fishermen at work. My great grandfather Joseph W Landrey inherited family shares in the mackerel seines at Portwrinkle (he signed the accounts from 1886 – 1917) and kept his association with the co-operative until it was wound up just before the end of the first world war. Ann wandered down as far as the Fish Cellars – now holiday homes - and the little harbour.

From Portwrinkle, where families were happily playing on the beach, we drove through Donderry to Seaton. There where the river meets the beach we watched a heron wait patiently and finally catch and eat his supper. A couple of days later weaving down the lane to the picturesque Liscawn Hotel we came upon a pheasant and his mate picking their way through woods full of wild flowers. Sights for sore city eyes indeed.

Wednesday

Ann had long planned to join the Bodmin beating of the Bounds to remember our family connections and celebrate tradition and a special birthday. This part of the story really belongs to her because, as I rested in the sun and read a book by a sparkling sea, she hiked 18 miles 'thorough bush and thorough briar'. I sipped a frothy coffee admiring the rise of the land above the cliffs shining yellow with gorse and then I retrieved her, muddy and triumphant, at the end of a remarkable day where she found good company and conversation, not to mention pasties and saffron buns. She left the taking of photos to others as her energy was needed for the job in hand but it was clear that she has wonderful memories.

Thursday

Now to the village of St Neot. Earlier family research than ours suggests that one Stephen Landrey married Elizabeth Willes in 1600 in the church dedicated to St Neotus which has links with King Alfred and Oliver Cromwell to

name just two. The family are recorded here in the eighteenth century but moved on to Liskeard, St Cleer and Shevioc. The team at the archives there have said they may be able to help me but it promises to be a long task. We contented ourselves with viewing the extremely rare stained glass and with being onlookers to a military wedding. It was an unexpected treat to hear the bells rung for the ceremony.



Gookview

No bells rang for us at the church of St Lalluwly at Menheniot. There was a relatively recent vicar by the name of Landrey whose legacy is a road name and an ancestor died there in 1793 but we were becoming a little exhausted with history and church buildings. We just gazed from afar at the enormous St Germans priory and the quay for the sailing club in that village. I think there is another family connection but by this time we were just happy to admire in passing some unique almshouses from the 16th century and to drive along the wooded banks of the Lynher.

Friday

Reluctantly we set off to London again with a promise to return although it won't be in time for this year's bluebells. I still haven't seen the holy well at St Neot, the Golitha Falls nor the Rum Caves and I have a nasty feeling I left my glasses in the village shop. We received a warm welcome and felt refreshed with good food and fresh air - we didn't have a cream tea but managed plenty of seafood and some Cornish icecream.

If any reader should recognise our name of Landrey it would be lovely to hear from them; it is relatively unusual as opposed to the Rowe strand! I think we proved the strength of the Cornish connection. There are many beautiful photos of the area to be found on the internet but those the editor has chosen are my own souvenirs and although I am happy to talk about it I am still glad it is relatively undiscovered.

Ursula Jeffries

Going to Cornwall this summer?

Two Cornish Exhibitions not to be missed...

Two exciting exhibitions will be held in Cornwall from June this year. If you are going to be in Cornwall in the second half of the year, make sure you include the Royal Cornwall Museum on your itinerary.

The Campaign Trail: Sir Hussey Vivian from Waterloo to Westminster Exhibition

13 June 2015 – 2 January 2016

Was A Cornish Man Really Pivotal To Winning The Battle Of Waterloo?

Waterloo is one of the world's most famous and important battles. We all know it was a showdown between the military giants of the time, Napoleon and Wellington, but was a Cornish man, Sir Richard Hussey Vivian, really crucial to securing battle victory?

More than 150,000 French, British, Dutch and Prussian soldiers fought a bloody and decisive encounter that ended the Napoleonic Wars and led to Bonaparte's final abdication and decades of international peace in Europe.

However there is evidence to suggest that Hussey Vivian, at that time a Major General, commanded the 6th cavalry brigade that led the final crucial charge said to have resulted in victory at Waterloo on the morning of Sunday, 18 June 1815.

Dan Snow, TV presenter of many historical programmes and author of the book, *The Battle of Waterloo Experience* says: 'The Royal Cornwall Museum is putting on a remarkable exhibition and Hussey Vivian was an important part of military history. This new exhibition is a chance for people to understand one man's personal story and how that shaped the battle and its aftermath.'

And Emma Bridgewater, Britain's leading designer of pottery and a direct descendant of Vivian added: 'People of all ages who are fascinated by Waterloo will finally have a chance to see items from the Vivian family collection that have never been seen publically. I've even produced a limited edition Waterloo mug in support of the exhibition and to commemorate the 200th anniversary of this battle and Vivian's involvement. Because of the small quantity these are fast becoming a collector's item and a small number of these mugs are now available at the museum.'

The exhibition will feature original weapons, Vivian's own essentials for the military front line, medals and paintings from the time.

Born in Truro in 1775, Richard Hussey Vivian attended Truro Grammar School and Harrow and went on to become Equerry to the Prince Regent - the future King George IV, which resulted in Vivian securing the royal patronage enjoyed by the Royal Cornwall Museum to this day.

Reputedly a great swordsman, ambitious and driven, he was also a great socialite and went on to have a successful political career, becoming MP for Truro.

Poldark's Cornwall Exhibition

18 June – 4 September 2015

Following the Sunday night phenomenon that has swept the nation, the Royal Cornwall Museum will present a series of Poldark related exhibits this summer that will explore the rich and varied nature of Poldark's 18th century Cornwall.

Winston Graham wrote 12 Poldark novels starting with Ross Poldark in 1945 and ending with Bella Poldark in 2002. The internationally bestselling novels are set in Cornwall where Winston Graham spent much of his life.

Andrew Graham, Winston Graham's son, who is Executor of his father's literary estate and was a consultant on the Poldark TV series, is working closely with the Royal Cornwall Museum.

The RCM holds many of Winston Graham's original notebooks, showing his novels written in long hand, as well as the typewriter on which he wrote to his many fans. The RCM also runs the Winston Graham Literary Prize with a prize fund donated by the author in his will.

The prize is worth £3000 and is awarded for excellence, originality and accessibility in the writing of historical fiction. This year's deadline for entries is 31st July, 2015.

Andrew Graham said; 'I am delighted to be working so closely with the Royal Cornwall Museum and I'm greatly looking forward to their Poldark inspired exhibits this summer and hearing the outcome of the Winston Graham Literary Prize.'

Highlights of Poldark's Cornwall at RCM include:

- The original manuscript of 'Bella Poldark'
- Winston Graham's first acceptance letter for a published work
- The detailed Poldark family tree with Winston Graham's handwritten research notes

Royal Cornwall Museum

Admission FREE for children and members, £4.50 for adult tickets giving unlimited admission for a year.

The Royal Institution of Cornwall – the organisation that owns and manages the Royal Cornwall Museum and Courtney Library – was founded in 1818 for 'the promotion of knowledge in natural history, ethnology and the fine and industrial arts, especially in relation to Cornwall'.

Cornish memories

In his *Meanderings* in the Spring 2015 Newsletter, Graham Pearce wrote 'if you go abroad you should look for Cornish names.' Not long afterwards, a response was received from Tauranga in New Zealand!

The following email from Florence Mainwaring shows that, although not Cornish herself, she has Cornish links and a special place in her heart for God's chosen county.

Dear Editor,

I have been reading your latest newsletter which was sent to me courtesy of the New Zealand Cornish Association. I do not belong, am not Cornish but close to it.

You see, I was a London evacuee from WW2. I landed in Summercourt then Fraddon in 1940 and was there until 1945 with my wonderful Elsie and Wilfred Hambly foster parents, both now departed.

Cornwall is in my heart and soul and I have been back several times. I am your greatest ambassador - I tell anyone I meet that I come from London and Cornwall and none of my family or friends will ever doubt that Cornwall is a very high priority in my life. I do not sound 'London' or Cornwall in accent, just maybe Southern England. I have been in New Zealand for around sixty years so maybe a bit of that thrown in. Travellers from here have gone to many Cornish places at my suggestion, always returning with thanks that I sent them there.

Anyway,.to get to the point! When reading 'Mem Sec's Meanderings' I was interested how he (Graham Pearce) was saying that he hopes that 'if you go abroad' that you should look out for Cornish names. Well, I am always listening for Cornish names myself and surprise people that I have detected where they or ancestors hail from. Last November I was visiting Napier to attend the service in the cathedral for the installation of the new bishop. At communion time in a very full cathedral, we were being shown to places to line up for communion. I noticed the surname label on the man directing me – it was Julian - and quickly asked him if his family were from Cornwall. His face lit up and in the few moments available said, 'Yes! from Mawgan'. He did more smiling when I told him I knew the place. I would think he went on his way smiling more.

I always ask anyone with a likely name the same question – it is a very interesting and rewarding pastime. I make excellent pasties and do all sorts of things that I know in my life have stemmed from growing up in the most lovely county in the UK - my second home.

Ten years ago when visiting England for only two weeks, my New Zealand daughter in law and I purposely spent a whole week in Cornwall. When we were driving to Plymouth on the final day to get the train to London, Louise said to me, 'Do we really have to go to London Florence? I so love it here! - the Pisky had won her heart too.

News from other Cornish Associations

USA

At its AGM in May, many of the offices of the **South West Wisconsin Cornish Society** were up for election. In his address, the President expressed concern about the future of the SWCS. However, unlike many other associations this is not because of declining numbers but because of a reduction in the number of members living near enough to be actively involved.

After the meeting, members had the pleasure of listening to a presentation by young people from Mineral Point High School who'd recently returned from an exchange visit to Redruth.

Plans for the 23rd Cornish Festival and Celtic Celebration at the end of September are well underway. On the Saturday evening, Blackthorn Folley, a Celtic band from Milwaukee will perform.

The **California Cornish Cousins** recently held their 24th Annual Gathering in Penn Valley/Grass Valley. The theme was Cornish Cowboys. Professor Roger Burt of the University of Exeter talked about the influence of Masons and Lodges on Cornish migration while Greg Drew from South Australia talked about the Cornish in the Copper Triangle and their links to California.

Every year, crowds gather in downtown Grass Valley to celebrate St Piran's Day – but this year, something was missing. For the first time in its 10 year history, there was no town crier. Traditionally, the town crier starts the proceedings by ringing his bell and declaring that 'Today, everyone is Cornish'. The search is on for a new crier.

CANADA

The **Toronto Cornish Association** had a presence at recent Montreal Celtic Festival. This included a display table and member Rosalie Armstrong marching in the Festival Parade. Rosalie also gave a brief speech in which she explained the background to the Gorsedh Kernow – and why she was not wearing her Bardic robes.

The big event occupying the Association at present is a visit by the Trelawny Male Choir in the autumn. This choir, which consists of 80 singers from 18 Cornish choirs, will perform in a special concert in Toronto on 8th September.

The traditional raising of the St Piran's flag took place at the Toronto City Hall in March, attended by about 12 hardy people who braved minus 15 degree temperatures and brisk winds. The morning's festivities included the recital of the poem 'A Proper Job' and the singing of 'Trelawny – after which everyone adjourned to the café for a well-deserved hot drink

AUSTRALIA

The big news from Australia recently was Kernewek Lowender 2015 which took place in the Copper Triangle in South Australia. This was an important mining area in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and attracted many miners from Cornwall.

It is estimated that this year, about 35 thousand people attended the activities and events which included 'Dressing the Graves', 'Furry Dances' and a Bardic ceremony. The theme of the Cornish Seminar was '*They were here earlier than you think*'. The Seminar was opened by the Grand Bard, Maureen Fuller.

In March, the members of the **Cornish Association of Victoria** heard an interesting talk on Brunel. The talk, 'Bridging the gap over the Tamar', provided some insight into the planning and building of the Saltash Bridge in 1859.

At their May meeting, they were honoured with a visit by the Grand Bard who was in Australia to attend Kernewek Lowender.

St Piran's day this year was extra special for the **Ballarat Branch of the Cornish Association of Victoria** because it was the day when one of the most important buildings in the history of Cornish settlement in the town was given back its original name, *Carn Brea*. The building had originally been built in the 1880s as a home for Cornishman Cyrus Bath Retallack. After he died, it had several name changes until more recently it became part of the Ballarat Catholic University. Thirty five people attended the ceremony, toured the mansion and partook of the specially made pasties and saffron cake.

Towards the end of October, members of the CAV and the Ballarat and Geelong Branches will get together for an outing to Tarndwarncoort Homestead near Birregurra.

The Cornish Association of New South Wales recently celebrated its 40th anniversary with a lunch, which also marked St Piran's Day. A special birthday cake was made by Del.

Last year, the President and the Secretary of the CANSW moved 500km from Sydney which has made it difficult for them to be as involved in the Association's activities as

they have in the past. They are congratulated on keeping going.

Another Association which has celebrated a milestone is the Cornish Association of South Australia which is 125. The celebration took the form of a lunch, attended by 80 people. A special birthday cake was made for the occasion and the Grand Bard sent a congratulatory message.

Like so many other associations, the Cornish Association of Queensland has a declining membership and is finding it difficult to recruit people onto the committee. This is adding to the worries about the future of the Association.

The Annual Pasty Picnic took place in mid-June and their Foundation Day Luncheon will take place in September

NEW ZEALAND

The New Zealand Society of Genealogists' Family History Fair which was planned for August has been cancelled but the Cornish Interest Group will take part in the Research Expo being arranged by the Auckland City Library.

The latest CIG newsletter includes a report on a visit to Victoria, Australia by the Group's Convenor, Keith Vautier and his wife. While in the Ballarat area they visited Sovereign Hill and the Gold Museum. On the underground tour they were shown a mine cavern directly under Sovereign Hill which was rediscovered in the 1970s. This cavern was originally mined by three Cornishmen who removed more than 500 tons of quartz rock by hand in order to extract the gold from it.

UK

The **West Somerset Cornish Association** has had a tough year, with dwindling numbers and this led to important decisions being made at the AGM. It was agreed that the Association should continue with evening meetings until the end of the year, but from January 2016, they will switch to daytime meals and outings. It was also agreed that the financial year would change from April-March to January-December.

The Association's Christmas lunch was held at the Old Bear Restaurant, the same venue that they have used in their past for their St Piran's Lunch. They were pleased to welcome four Bournemouth Association friends to this event.

Members of the **Torbay Cornish Association** have had two very different talks in the past couple of months – in March, Brenda Loosemore talked about '*Ladies of Laughter*' while in May, Mike Griffith shared his experiences of '*Being a Prison Governor*'. They had their AGM at the end of April which was followed by a quiz, devised by Mary.

At the end of May, members of the **Thames Valley Cornish Association** held their AGM. Gomer Walters was elected as President in place of Ruth Williams, who sadly passed away a couple of months ago. During the meeting members shared their special memories of Ruth.

After the business part of the meeting, Chairman Francis Dunstan gave a talk on Cornish Saints which revealed that there are considerably more places with 'St' in them in Cornwall than in other part of the country.

Publications

Battle Beneath The Trenches: The Cornish Miners of the

21st Tunnelling Company

By: Robert Johns

Publisher: Pen & Sword

ISBN: 9781473827004

A note from the author:

If the expression 'pals battalion' is heard in reference to the First World War, one immediately thinks of the 'Swansea Pals' or maybe the 'Accrington Pals', but never the Cornish Pals, and yet the 10th (Service) Battalion DCLI (Cornwall Pioneers) was precisely that. This battalion (The Cornish Miners Battalion) was formed in Truro in March 1915 by Acting Mayor Roskelley, with two of its major supporters being R. Arthur Thomas, Captain of Dolcoath Mines, and tin smelter Fred Bain from Portreath. Their initial remit was to form two companies of men, the one from the West to be specifically from a mining background. The response was very positive and my Grandfather, a miner from a mining family spanning 3 generations, was one of those who volunteered in April 1915. The 10th were initially based at home, but a training camp was soon set up in Penzance, their headquarters being at Chyandour, at what is now the National Coastwatch Station.

By mid 1915, the Western Front was static and mine warfare had started in earnest with the Germans having the upper hand. Urgent calls went out to find experienced miners to help combat this threat and a number of Cornishmen volunteered for the Tunnelling Companies. However, more were still needed and on 29th September 1915, 221 miners of the 10th DCLI, my Grandfather being one of them, found themselves transferred to the 251st Tunnelling Company Royal Engineers, which had been formed at Hayle that same day. This is not surprising as the Cornish miners were highly respected and some of the best in the world, and could always command higher wages than others. This was to be the case for many in the 251st, who on transfer found their pay increased by one shilling to two shillings and two pence per day, and rising to 6 shillings a day if classified a skilled tunneller.

The 251st were billeted in Bethune, working in the Cuinchy Cambrin sector, one of the hottest sectors on the Western Front. Their first task was to gain control over the German superiority in mine warfare, and then build defences capable of withstanding any German offensive; behind Bethune lay 75% of the French coalfields, coal being important to factories manufacturing much needed munitions. These defences were extensive to the extent that there were more men living underground in 1918 than there are living above ground today (it was nicknamed the Bunny Hutch). When attacked during the German Spring Offensive in April 1918, the 251st went from tunneller to infantryman and fought alongside the infantry in the trenches, rifle in hand. The defences were so well constructed, that although the battle was intense no ground was ever conceded, one of the very few sectors held. Their efforts were later mentioned in Field Marshall Haig's report to the War Cabinet, possibly the only time that a small unit such as a company was singled out for praise in such a report.

During the Advance to Victory, their skills at handling explosives came into its own. They were continually clearing explosives in front of the advancing Infantry, and making safe booby traps that had been placed by the retreating Germans. Finally, when the armistice was signed, their war did not come to an end as they were used to reconstruct major infrastructure; repairing road bridges, breached canals, and railways.

Whilst some men left and others joined, the 251st remained a predominantly Cornish Tunnelling Company, and was without question one of the best, if not the best, of the 32 Tunnelling Companies in the First World War (25 British, 3 Australian, 3 Canadian, 1 New Zealand). Under such dangerous operating conditions, their losses were remarkably low, given that the Tunnelling Companies had no reserve lines and so were on the front line for the whole duration. This success was due to more than just luck, and I believe was partly attributable to the comradeship and friendship that the Cornish show to each other. They set many all-army tunnelling records, and never was the motto 'One and All' better demonstrated than within this Tunnelling Company.

As I examined a wealth of primary source evidence about the 251st Tunnelling Company, I found that this was very much an untold story about the Cornish miners. I have hopefully rectified this in the publication of my book. During my research, I identified other Cornish Miners in other Tunnelling Companies whose stories are still not complete, so if you have any further information you think might be of interest, please let me know through my website www.robertjohns.co.uk

Exposed To All Villainies

By Stephanie Haxton

This is an historical novel about a tumultuous period in Cornish history in which three women have their lives ravaged by civil war.

The author is an historian who specialises in 16th and 17th century British history and has a particular interest in Cornish history

The book is available as a paperback from www.stephhaxton.com or as an ebook from <http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00LLH443U>

Condolences

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death, in March, of Tom Sims. Tom was a very active member of the Association and served on Council. But, it is probably as a part of the Family History Group that he will be best remembered. He was a hardworking member who was particularly good at dealing with technical issues!

Tom will be missed by all who knew him and we offer our condolences to his family and friends.

Rugby

History Making Season For London Cornish

By Ben Gilby, Press Officer, London Cornish RFC

London Cornish have just completed the greatest season in their 52 year history.

The club finished as runners-up in London Two South-West, their highest ever league position, having lost only three matches all campaign. By finishing second in the league, it meant they would face a 'winner-takes-all' promotion play-off game against Medway RFC, the runners-up of London Two South-East. Whichever side won the match, which was to be played at the Kent side's ground in the historic city of Rochester, would go up to London One South – just one league from National League rugby.

The match generated huge publicity for London Cornish RFC – both in Cornwall and in South-West London. The Wandsworth Guardian featured previews and match reports on their website – spreading the word about this unique band of Cornish exiles and their passionate supporters. What was quite incredible was the amount of support generated for the club within Cornwall – two Cornish newspapers featured detailed previews and reports, the Trelawny's Army supporters club spread the word on social media, Cornish Pirates RFC spread the word on their internet message board in order to mobilize their exiled supporters and BBC Radio Cornwall broadcast live reports from the game. All of this publicity generated quite staggering support for London Cornish on the day – people came from Penzance, Saltash, Leicestershire and around London clad in Black & Gold all united for London Cornish Rugby Football Club.



A view of the huge crowd that watched the Medway v Cornish clash

Going into the game, club Director Rugby Dickon Moon, who has also been a long time member of the Cornwall County squad coaching staff remarked: 'We are truly a Cornish side with a Cornish coaching team in Tom Sincock, Marc Sweeney and myself. If we could win we would become one of the county's top 5 ranked clubs, which would be some achievement given 13 years ago we were the lowest of the lot!' He believed that Medway would be favourites on the day; 'Medway are the home side, and had a better playing record than us in the respective leagues, but we wouldn't be here if we couldn't play and I hope we can display the same relentless tenacity that has characterised our league season.'

The game itself was played out in front of a very large crowd indeed, in what was undoubtedly a carnival atmosphere. Medway RFC laid on a lunch for all supporters of Cornish Pasties and scones with clotted cream to follow, which was gratefully received by 'One And All'. The first half was, generally as tight as a drum, but the home side looked slightly stronger as the play went on. Josh Allison sent four penalties between the posts for 'The Black & Golds', as Medway led 13-12 at half-time. The Kentish side continued their momentum in the opening quarter of the second half, and built a 29-12 advantage, but to London Cornish's eternal credit, they would not lie down, and proceeded to dominate the last ten minutes of the game, laying siege to the Medway line. Despite throwing the kitchen sink at the Kent side, roared on by the large numbers of black and gold supporters, they could not get over the line, and Medway went on to win 29-12.

After the game, Director of Rugby Dickon Moon commented: 'We have achieved our pre-season goal of topping our previous best ever finish in the league structure, and what this defeat tells us is that we are not quite ready for the step up despite winning 29 of our last 34 games at this level. Medway were able to nullify our chief threats in the set piece, and though we defended magnificently, the level of aggression they brought to the breakdown made it tough for us to create quick, a clean ball. Head coach Tom Sincock and I were delighted with the way we finished the game, and for the last 10 minutes we showed real spirit given the game had all but gone. We all agreed post match that this is the beginning for us - while we wish Medway well - what a welcoming and decent rugby club they are - at the level above, we will have a short post season break before focussing on next season. The target now has to be to win the league.'

Everyone at the London Cornish has certainly earned their close season break, but it won't be long before all eyes focus in on 2015/16! We urge all London Cornish Association members to come and join us on the touch-line next season. It is great fun and a wonderful way to share an afternoon with fellow proud Cornish exiles.



Tom Baker makes a late break through the centre

We are keen to arrange an outing to cheer on 'our' team at some point in the new season. If you would be interested in attending a match later in the year, please let the Editor know. The contact details are on the back page of this newsletter.

Mem Sec's Meanderings...

Thank you to all members who have paid their subs. on time and a special thank you to those who generously included a donation to the Association. There are still a number of people who have forgotten and I shall be sending them a final reminder later this year. Could I please ask you to check whether you have paid? If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me. My address and telephone number are at the end of these *Meanderings*. I don't like having to write members off for non payment, particularly when I do not know why they have not paid..

We have had one resignation.

Sadly in March, Tom Sims died. He was a serving member of Council and was also a member of the Family History Committee. Our sympathies go to his family.

But, I am glad to say that there are three new members and I am therefore very pleased to welcome Ms Ruth Martin who lives in London E12, Mrs Jacqueline Martin, living in Sevenoaks and Mrs. Hilary Ohrstrand now resident in London SE1.

As you can see our membership has, for once, not decreased and I am able to report that it now stands at 226. Not all of them are living in London and the Home Counties as there are 100 living farther afield - this of course does include Cornwall and a few abroad.

Do you know people of Cornish decent or people with Cornish interest? If you could encourage them to become members of the Association, this would be greatly appreciated.

I am continually looking for snippets about Cornwall from newspapers and various books. I try not to look too deeply into the past and have, instead, found the following items quoted in recent newspapers:

One paper had a list of reasons to be happy to be in Cornwall. These included:

World class beaches. (For going for a swim or simply resting)

They are often mentioned in the media. The most recent was a survey that placed Porthminster, Perranporth and Fistral beaches in the top ten.

Pasties and Saffron Cakes. (My favourites)

In Cornwall you are never more than five miles from a Pasty shop and these are within 20 minutes of a beach with many bakeries in coastal towns and villages.

Food and drink. (Never be hungry in Cornwall)

Many favourites from pasties, Cornish cream teas, ice cream and, of course, saffron cake. I am sure there are others that you enjoy or remember.

Heritage history and identity.

Many generations of miners and engineers have left life-long legacies and history is often kept alive by farmers, fishermen and mariners.

Coastline. (Lovely coastal walks)

The approximately 600 miles of Cornish coastline with its coast path is World renowned, together with its wildlife.

Folklore.

Cornwall is a county full of legends and myths that include piskies, knockers and fairies as well as mythological creatures such as the Mermaid of Zennor, the Beast of Bodmin, the Mousehole Cat and, of course, King Arthur.

Festivals.

These, of course included Helston Flora Day, Padstow 'Obby 'Oss, The Cornish Gorseth (Kernow Gorsedh) and numerous other ceremonies.

Ancient landscape.

Some of these date back to the Stone Age up to 10,000 years ago. These include Lanyon Quoit near Penzance and the Stripple Stones near Bodmin Moor.

Outdoor pursuits. (if you are active enough!)

These can include walking along the waterways and coastal paths. Then if you rally want to take on Celtic sports there is Cornish wrestling, hurling, dancing and sea surfing.

Cornwall is a lovely place to live or go on holiday. Do you agree? Apart from our members who live there how often do you visit our home County? Perhaps the recent Pol-dark films on TV have created a greater interest in 'going down there and having another enjoyable look around'. Have you been to Cornwall recently? Is it still as you remember it, or has anything changed?

We like Cornwall. My wife and I were in Cornwall on St. Piran's Day and had a meal at a Pub. We were delighted, at 9 pm, to hear a local choir sing Trelawny. This happened in public houses and inns across Cornwall and it was a great pleasure to be there and be able to stand up for the singing of Trelawny.

Another interesting fact we also learnt was that in 1899 the Norway Inn, lime kiln and a four bedroom cottage at Perranarworthal was sold at auction for the sum of £425. It was sold as 'lock, stock and barrel'. This term appears to have originated from sales in the 'licensed house trade'. Now days you hear people saying that they bought something 'lock, stock and barrel'. Well now you know where the expression came from.

The World Pasty Championship was held again at The Eden Project just before St. Piran's Day. Pasty-makers came from around the World to make not only Cornish Pasties but local variations like a traditional Chilean Pasty made with beef, onion, hardboiled egg, olives and sultanas, by a Chilean miner who had come over to visit his relatives. Cornish miners went all over the World in the past and took Pasty recipes with them. They did, however, adapt them to local conditions but, no matter what, a Cornish Pasty is a Cornish Pasty and in my mind they are a 'proper job'. My wife makes delicious ones, but of course living in Kent they cannot legally be called 'Cornish Pasties', but I still consider them to be a proper job.

That is nearly all for now. I hope you have found these "Meanderings" of interest and that they have given you even some 'food for thought'. I also hope you have had a good start to the year as we are now well into spring, looking forward to a good summer and, of course, a good holiday time. Don't forget that if you are abroad do look out for some Cornish names. I am sure that the Cornish influence has spread further around the World than that of any other country.

Kernow bys vyken

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Crowdy Crawn

Cornwall 'right up there' on the 'best university' list

Each year, *Whatuni* publishes a list of the UK's best universities, a list which is compiled from the reviews of 20 000 students. These reviews are based on criteria such as accommodation, clubs and societies, courses, facilities and support.

Cornwall can really celebrate this year and take pride in the fact that in the latest *Top 100* list, Falmouth University achieves a very worthy *number 5*.

Petition to save a Cornish Victorian architectural gem

The Victorian Society has launched a petition to save the Old Rectory in St Columb Major. This house, which was designed by the architect William White, is considered to be one of the most important Gothic Revival houses in the country. It is currently in a very poor condition and at risk of being lost.

The building obviously has real public appeal as within a few days of the launch, the petition had close to 1000 'signatures'. The Society hopes that many more people will add their signatures as this would indicate the public support for the building and help to put pressure on Cornwall Council to take action to save it.

Find more information and a link to the petition at <http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/news/victorian-society-puts-saving-cornwalls-heritage-into-election-debate/>

South Crofty Jewellery Continues To Thrive

South Crofty mine, the last operating tin mine in Cornwall, ceased production in 1998. Before the closure, local craftsmen began to design and produce a small range of jewellery and gifts using tin from the mine. When South Crofty closed, some of the last tin ore to be mined was stockpiled to enable production to continue. Since closure, the company has gone from strength to strength, with most of its sales now coming from online orders.

While continuing to produce Cornish and Celtic pieces the company has, in recent years, developed some more contemporary designs as well. Despite this, they remain loyal to their traditional roots, continuing to use some original equipment and traditional skills from earlier times.

The company produces some very beautiful pieces of tin jewellery. To view their range, visit their website - www.croftytin.co.uk. For further information, email sales@wheal-jane.co.uk

An Amazing find at Lanhydrock

A book in the magnificent library at Lanhydrock was recently identified as having been owned by Henry VIII! The book - *Work of Ninety Days* - which was written by English friar William of Ockham was dated 1495. It was used to help build the case for the annulment of Henry's

marriage to Catherine of Aragon when he wanted to marry Anne Boleyn.

The book provided philosophical arguments which challenged the pope's supremacy and stressed the independence of the authority of the monarch. Some sections have been marked, presumably for Henry's consideration, including one entitled '*When it is permitted to withdraw from obedience to the pope*'. There are some handwritten notes against some passages.

The book was identified by Professor James Carley, an expert on the libraries of Henry VIII. When it was opened, it revealed an inventory number - 282 - which enabled Professor Carley to link the book to Henry's library at Westminster Palace.

In the 17th century, many of the books in the royal collection were disposed of and a Cornish scholar and chaplain, Hannibal Gamon, acquired this one. He in turn left it to his patron John Robartes from Lanhydrock. Amazingly, although it suffered some damage in a fire at the house in 1881, it was not destroyed.

The book is now the centrepiece of an exhibition on *Monarchy and the Book* which is being held at Lanhydrock during this season. Information can be found on the National Trust website <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/article-1355881345833/>

Postcard Project

The theme for Truro Festival this year was 'JOURNEYS' - a very appropriate theme for Cornwall which, in the past, sent so many skilled miners and their families around the world, but which has also welcomed many people from around the world.

To mark this and to celebrate the Cornish diaspora, Truro Arts, in conjunction with Faces of Cornwall launched a postcard project. They were keen to get people from around the world who have a connection to Cornwall to send in a postcard explaining briefly where they are from and their link to the duchy. They were also asked to include a sketch depicting something about Cornwall which is special to them.

The cards which they received were included in a display in the Truro Arts shop in River Street during the Festival.

Did anyone send in a card? Or see the exhibition? Please let us know if you did.

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

5th August

Please send all contributions to:

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