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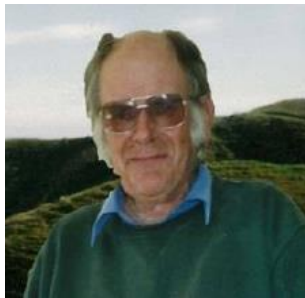
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■ ■ Est. 1962 ■ ■  
Founder: Cliff Trevelyan  
Trevelyan an Tynnoweth

# N E W S L E T T E R

## Gary Wellington 1946 – 2014



On 9 December Gary Wellington, President of the Taranaki Branch and National Vice President, suffered a heart attack and passed away. Our commiserations go to

Raewyn, Gary's wife, and the rest of his family. Keskalar Gwir – sincere condolences.

Gary joined the NZ Cornish Association in 1989 and was elected Taranaki Branch president in 2007. Having been a farmer in the Inglewood and Stratford area all his life, Gary was an active member of the local community and had great enthusiasm for everything he did. The Lions Club and Bowling Club (both he and Raewyn enjoyed their roll-ups on the green) spoke glowingly of his commitment to their organisations. A man with a dry wit, passionate and very knowledgeable about local Cornish history, he was organised to the point of taking his own minutes while charring meetings, ensuring the Taranaki Branch had speakers/events arranged.

In more recent times he stepped in to assist the local St. John's organisation in financial and purchasing roles.

On moving into Inglewood, Gary had to give up his pride and joy, an old Land Rover. He had a flag pole installed at his new home and proudly displayed the St. Piran's flag on a regular basis. The flag (well worn and loved) was buried with his ashes.

A smart new flag of St. Piran was draped over his coffin.

*Powes yn kres (Rest in peace)*

## Message from the Grand Bard

The Grand Bard issued this Christmas message. Even though it will reach you a little late, the content is still relevant.

## A Gernowyon ha kernewesow pub le

*To Cornish men and Cornish women everywhere*

What an amazing year in the Cornish world this has been! I write after attending the service held in St. Piran's Oratory, after standing in his church, before the altar where he served his flock, which has been an iconic magnet for Cornishmen since the 6th century. To have our patron saint's church revealed again in the same year we were recognised as a nation by others, our cup runneth over.

In times of austerity, in a world where lots of 'nasties' are being revealed to us daily, when our fellow travellers in time, men, women and children, are suffering the distress through war, displacement, poverty and being overlooked or forgotten, we revert to what is right and good, the old way, helping one another and sharing what we have, one and all. As we stood in Piran's church, the link to him and his message seemed so very short; in the journey of time, it is but a blink of an eye.

In our Cornish lives, down the centuries we have had little, but our hard work and creativity have honed our survival. When we had the bonanza of our mineral wealth, it was the rich who benefited and when that went 'scat', we had to leave and disperse throughout the world to earn a living, feed our families and survive, far from home. This week I attended a conference at our university entitled "Sustainable Cornwall"; this was an admirable title, but when you have had nothing, your wits to survive are sharp and if any nation can survive and sustain, it is the Cornish. Our riches are seen in the place where we live, the landscape and its people.

I hope we are now on the crest of a wave and we know how to surf! With our national minority status, we are standing rather taller than we did last Christmas and our confidence and determination have risen to unimagined heights to see this through. We thank all Cornish folk down through the ages who have stubbornly kept the faith that we would overcome and those who have recently rolled up their sleeves and shovelled sand to reveal the jewel in our crown at Porthpyran. It's been an amazing year, have a

wonderful Christmas wherever you are in the world, one and all, and may you all look forward to a bright New Year.

Maureen Fuller                      Steren Mor  
Bard of Cornwall                      Bardh Meur Kernow

### Date for your diary

The 2015 national meeting will be at the Pioneer Village in Stratford on Saturday, 9 May 2015. A formal notice of meeting and agenda will be sent out in the next newsletter.

### Add a little Cornish to your day

For those members in rural areas, here are some words in Kernewek to practice on the local livestock.

Kernewek	Sounds like	English
Enyval	any vaal	animal
Cath	kath	cat
Ki	key	dog (male)
Gast	ghast	dog (female)
Yar	yarr	chicken
Bugh	boo hh*	cow
Margh	marr hh*	horse
Hogh	ho hh*	pig
Davas	daav az	sheep

\*"hh" is a guttural sound - a cross between the sound of "ck" and clearing your throat. Bugh sounds similar to book, margh similar to mark and hogh is close to hock making it easy to remember it means pig. Think of ham hock.

### St. Piran's Day

Remember St. Piran's Day on 5<sup>th</sup> March. It's our national day and no better time to celebrate all things Cornish. So plan pasties for tea, bake some saffron cake and wear your Cornish tartan on the day.



St. Piran floated from Ireland on a mill stone, according to the legend and came ashore near the present day Perranporth (Porthpyran). As a Christian monk, he is said to have set up a mission near the coast and built a small place of worship, referred to as his Oratory. Over the centuries a small stone building has been repeatedly buried and exposed by the sand dunes at Gear Sands north of the town. The original oratory was more likely to have been constructed from wattle and daub (wood and mud) which would not have survived for so long. The latest excavations were carried out last year by St Piran Trust as reported in the March/April 2014 newsletter and mentioned above by the Grand Bard.

On 7 February this year, the BBC recorded a programme of Songs of Praise at the Oratory

which is scheduled to be screened in Britain on 1 March – very close to St Piran's Day.

There are two other places close by named for St. Piran. With the demise of the Oratory, a church was built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century further inland and on the opposite side of stream that was hoped would keep washing away the invading sand. First built to the same design as the Oratory, the church was extended over time and grew in importance. It was included in the pilgrim route via St. Day to St. Michael's Mount. The plan worked until the early 1800s when tin mining affected the flow of water in the stream and the sands marched on. Burials continued in the churchyard until 1835 but, by then, parts of the old church had been dismantled and moved even further inland. The tops of the ruins of the remaining church can peek above the sand.

A mile or two from the coast lies the village of Rose and nearby is the third of the St. Piran sites – St. Piran's Round. It consists of a



circular mound 4 m high surrounded by a ditch 2 m deep creating a bowl 40 m across. According to archaeologists, the Round started life as fortifications for an Iron Age farm. It would have been familiar to St Piran but may not have been in its original use by the 6<sup>th</sup> century. It has, in fact, been put to a wide range of uses in its history many as variations of its role as a "plen an gwarry" an open-air theatre or performance space. It was a site for wrestling competitions, miracle plays, political rallies, Druidic ceremonies, Christian services and meetings as well as the venue for the annual gathering of the Gorsedh.

For hundreds of years a road ran through the middle of the Round and the land was farmed. In the late 1800s some forward-thinking locals with the necessary resources provided materials and labour to divert the ever-increasing traffic around the historic site and new farming practices meant that the land was uneconomic. The Round survived to claim the title of Britain's oldest theatre. Within the Round there is a depression; shallow now but which would once have been quite deep and covered during the miracle plays. It was used to hide the actor cast as the Devil so that they could appear as if from nowhere during the proceedings. It is known as the Devil's Spoon or the Devil's Frying Pan and may have had a "handle" that would let the Devil move under cover to appear elsewhere as if by magic.

## Explosives in mining

The Chinese are credited with the invention and development of gunpowder and its use in warfare and public spectacle. The French were the first to use explosives in mining but it was in Cornwall that their use was made a lot safer by the invention of the safety fuse.

Gunpowder was imported into Cornwall until 1808 when the first Cornish gunpowder factory opened at Cosawes Wood, Perranarworthal, about 5 miles from Falmouth. The site at Cosawes and at other works – such as the one at nearby Kennall Vale which followed in 1813 – were chosen for their seclusion in wooded river valleys. This ensured both the availability of water power and the relative safety of nearby settlements, shielded as they were by the trees. These also served to shield the process buildings and storage magazines from one another, should an explosion take place. The roofs of the buildings were also designed to blow off relatively harmlessly in the event of a detonation.

The adoption of gunpowder for mine blasting in Cornwall in 1689 represented a great technological breakthrough. By 1836 the consumption of gunpowder was considerable with 30 tonnes being used in Cornish mines.

Gunpowder may have saved a lot of work but it came with high risk of unintended and unexpected ignition and explosions. The method used to blast rock involved drilling several holes across a rock face that were filled with charges of gunpowder. In order to confine the gases produced on ignition (and hence maximise the effect of the explosion), the gunpowder within each shot hole was sealed in place by inserting a pointed rod known as a "needle" in the hole, then packing in soft clay and tamping it down to form a plug. To prevent sparking, a copper needle and a non-metallic ramming rod, typically made from hickory, were used. The "needle" was then removed and replaced by a fuse.

A nominated miner ignited the end of the fuse which was intended to burn at a known rate so the length of the fuse would determine the time between lighting the fuse and the ignition of the main charges. Early fuses, powder-filled reed or goose-quills, were unpredictable. They had a tendency to burn irregularly, "flash off", or break. If moisture got in, the fuse could smoulder and, if the main charge failed to ignite - a misfire or "hang fire" - the miners would need to wait before returning to the work face to set new

fuses. Increasingly, miners in Cornwall in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were becoming badly injured after suspecting that there had been a misfire and returning to the work face just as a smouldering damp quill ignited the gunpowder charges.



Enter William Bickford (pictured). He was from Devon but moved to Truro to work in the leather industry. Even though he had no direct involvement in mining he was disturbed by injuries and the loss of life through mismanaged use of explosives.

The story goes that Bickford had an insight while visiting a friend who was a rope maker. While observing his friend

winding cord together to generate a rope, Bickford realised he could adapt the same method to make fuses. He invented a machine which would thread and weave two layers of jute yarn (a shiny vegetable fibre), spun in opposite directions (to stop the fuse untwisting) over a small "tube" of gunpowder, the whole of which would then be "varnished" with tar to waterproof the end product. The outcome was a fuse that, when lit, "the fire only travels along it slowly, rate of burning ... being about 30 seconds per foot." Bickford had developed a fuse which would burn for a known length of time, depending on the length of the fuse.

He obtained a British Patent for his device (No. 6159 "Safety Fuze for Igniting Gunpowder used in Blasting Rocks, Etc") in 1831. It was originally called "The Patent Safety Rod" but its name was later changed to the "Safety Fuse". It was supplied as a "rope" of about half an inch diameter that sold for thruppence (3d) per fathom (6 feet).

Bickford built a factory in Tuckingmill near Camborne with his son-in-law, George Smith. Sadly, Bickford died in 1834 just before the fuse factory opened. In its first year the factory produced 45 miles of fuse but, a hundred years later, the same factory, which had been enlarged, made over 100,000 miles of fuse. This shows the scale of mining, as only a few feet would be needed for one blast.

It took some time to get miners to use these safer fuses, as the older, unpredictable ones were cheaper. Eventually common sense prevailed and the mining industry moved over to the safety fuses. Word of the reliability of Bickford's safety fuse spread and was eventually in large demand across world markets.

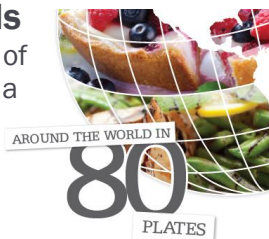
Bickford-Smith & Company expanded its operations into America in 1836. The basic



process of manufacturing the detonator cord remained unchanged. In 2003 it was merged with Dyno Nobel linking Bickford's safety fuse with Alfred Nobel who invented dynamite in 1866. Nobel became famous for his prizes set up from a bad conscience over his horror invention. Dynamite, a nitroglycerine-based explosive reached Britain in 1857 and Cornwall soon after. It was safer to use (in the right hands) and more efficient than the relatively slow burning gunpowder. A large factory was built amidst the protective sand dunes of Hayle Towans and soon became one of the leading manufactories in Britain.

### Pasty among top global foods

Kenwood, the well-known brand of kitchen appliances, has released a recipe book containing 80 of the world's most famous culinary dishes called "Around the World in 80 Plates". Along with the pavlova, fish and chips with mushy peas, jam roly poly, beef Wellington and sushi, the book features the Cornish pasty.



One of the judges was Andy Bates, well-known in the UK for being a champion of British food, also travels the world as a roving chef, reporter and TV presenter. He wrote the book's introduction to the pasty:

"Regarded as the national dish of Cornwall and iconic to England, the pasty is right up there with all major British dishes. Made for miners to take down the mines, the pastry was used as a barrier so the miners' dirty hands would not touch the meat and was then discarded. Now it's one of the most important parts of the meal. I say meal because it is very substantial and filling. The debate rages on as to whether the pastry should be made of shortcrust or rough puff. Personally, I use rough puff because it gives a richer, flakier, more buttery finish."

The recipe is close to my opinion of the classic pasty but uses both beef mince and ribeye, not skirt or chuck steak. There is no kidney and no parsley but these are not to everyone's taste.

### Christchurch branch

The President welcomed 31 members and 8 guests including 4 children to the Christmas party on 13 December. Ten apologies were received.

The President announced that a former member Beth Moores had died. Beth and her late husband Nigel were members of the branch committee for a number of years.

There was a range of Christmas-themed entertainment. Heather on her accordion, assisted by guest artists performed various musical items and played for members to sing some favourite carols and songs

Val read a poem "The Christmas Beetle" and Les brought us up to date with some Christmas news from Cornwall.

As has become a tradition, the committee presented a Christmas fairy tale pantomime. This year it was "Hansel & Gretel" complete with nasty parents, a cannibal witch, a not so silly heroine, Gretel, and a very helpful White Bird.

All could have resulted in mayhem but was kept under control by the rhyming narrator Dorothy.

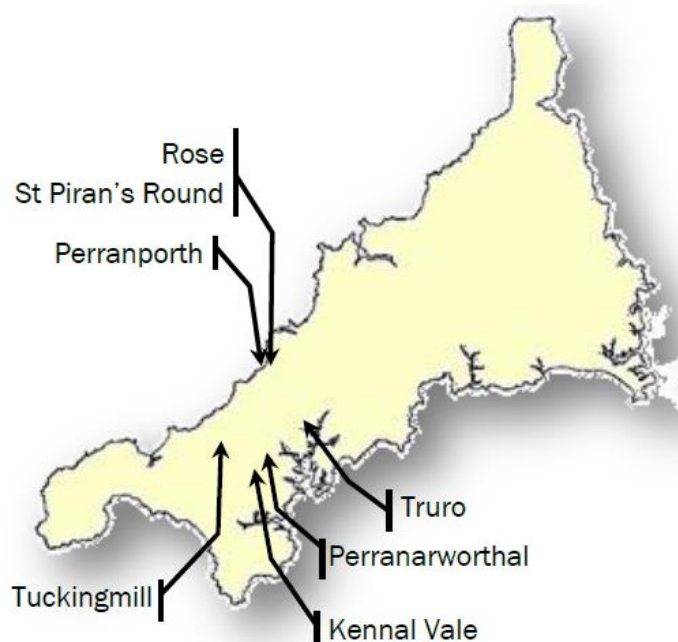
Mother Christmas put a stop to the frivolity and gave out presents for all.

While the ladies of the committee set out the afternoon tea the raffle was drawn with 9 prizes to be won, probably some sort of branch record.

At afternoon tea the President thanked the guest artists and wished every one "Nadelik Lowen ha Bledhyn Nowyth Da".

Since sending in this report, the Christchurch Branch has suffered another loss. Shortly before Christmas, John Moulton passed away. John, with his wife Rosemary, were on the branch committee until John, who had declining health for some time, was unable to attend meetings. Our thoughts go to Rosemary and the whole Moulton family.

### Places mentioned in this newsletter



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