

July/August - 421 - m/s Gortheren/m/s Est 2015

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■ ■ Est. 1962 ■ ■
Founder: Cliff Trevelyan
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NEWSLETTER

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

Member news

We have five new members to welcome.

From Taranaki:

Jackie Barr, Lynette Kivell,
Evelyn Young and Jennifer Bösch.

From Christchurch:

Sharon Hillier.

It's wonderful to have you in the NZ Cornish Association. We hope you enjoy the newsletters and attending meetings at your local branch.

One ex-member has passed away. Mary Tait has written with the news that David Thomas of Napier died at home – the home that he built himself 64 years ago – on 18 June. His wife, Dot, still lives in the house. Mary suggests that some of our longer-standing members will know of David. “He was a Cornishman through and through”, she says. Our thoughts are with Dot and her family.

We also extend our sympathies to national member, Virginia Graham, and her family. Virginia's 20 year-old grandson, Alex, died when his car collided with a truck at Huntly on 19 June. Alex's parents Christine and Tristram Snowdon and sister, Tamsyn, must miss him greatly. Keskalar gwir – sincere condolences.

Kernewek Lowender

Kernewek Lowender (Cornish festival) was held in the Copper Triangle of Southern Australia on 18 to 24 May. These are extracts from the newsletter of the Cornish Association of South Australia who organise the event.



We were privileged to have the Grand Bard with us again. This is the first time that a Grand Bard (who is elected for a 3-year term) has made 3 trips to Australia during that term, and she has earned a special place in the annals of the Cornish diaspora for that effort – particularly as ‘Grand Bard’ is an honorary, unpaid, position with no funding to assist her travel costs.

Lilian James conducted a successful Cornish language class, assisted by the Grand Bard. It

was pleasing to have so many of the public interested enough to attend.

June Ladner's pasty-making workshops were booked out well in advance – but June and a friend have produced a DVD, which she claims was not meant to be funny, but turned out that way, with comment about resembling the BBC TV series of ‘Two fat ladies’!

On Wednesday evening there was a show presented by the Cornish stand-up comedian Kernow King (Ed Rowe), making his first trip to Australia – but is already talking of coming back. He made extensive use of ‘audience participation’. His humour was not everyone's “cup of tea”, and some of the locals may have been a bit bemused by some of the specifically Cornish references, but the audience got plenty of laughs.

Thursday was our Seminar, on the theme “The Cornish were here earlier than you think.” We had an interesting array of speakers giving some insights into various aspects of our Australian Cornish heritage.

On Friday was the street parade in Moonta where the Cornish people walked in a block at the head of the procession. The Lowender was officially opened by the Governor of South Australia, Hieu van Le AO, who enjoyed his time in the Copper Coast. Schoolchildren performed maypole dances and the Furry Dance.

Friday evening was ‘Meet the Cornish’, in the Wallaroo Town Hall.

The concert was provided mainly by our Association Choir, with guest artist Jenny Cowley playing the cello. The “Three Janners” presented the Cornish song ‘The robber's retreat’ (the Cadgwith anthem).

Our Association Choir sang near the rotunda in Kadina on Saturday morning, and was once again well-received – with comment about needing to be booked for 2 years' time!

The choir then moved to Wallaroo to sing for the bardic ceremony at 2.30 pm. This ceremony was

led by the Grand Bard, and once again included schoolchildren as dancers. The ceremony is conducted in the Cornish language, with some explanatory comment from the MC.

Sunday began with the 'Blessing of the waters' in Wallaroo, followed by the cavalcade of cars, and the ecumenical service in the Moonta Mines Uniting Church.

In between all these events were lots of displays, dinners and concerts. Rosanne Hawke had a book launch for her latest book "Kerensa" – the story of a family which migrated from Cornwall to the South Australian mallee in 1911.

Truly "something for everybody" – and a wonderful opportunity to share time with our friends from around Australia and from Cornwall.

Cornish people in the headlines

We hear all too often about fighting and bloodshed and we can be thankful that we are so far removed from it in New Zealand. It is sad to find out that Cornish 'cousins' get caught up in the violence.

A Bodmin couple, Cheryl and Stephen Mellor, were on holiday at Sousse in Tunisia. On 26 June they were enjoying themselves in the sunshine on the beach when a gunman opened fire indiscriminately. Cheryl suffered hideous wounds as early shots hit her leg, arm and severed one of her hands. Stephen bravely tried to shield his wife of nine years from more harm and was killed. There were 38 victims on the beach that day.

Cheryl, who used to be a psychiatric nurse, was initially treated at a Tunisian hospital but was quickly flown back to Brize Norton in the UK by the RAF and was taken to Plymouth hospital for more therapy.

Stephen's body was flown back to Cornwall on 1 July and, despite her injuries, Cheryl was able to attend his funeral in Bodmin two days later as all of Cornwall marked his death by a minute's silence at noon.

Sir John Betjeman

Sir John Betjeman was not Cornish – he was born in London of 'up country' parents – but he adopted Cornwall as his home and wrote many poems about it. I particularly like this one. It has a clever and cynical irony criticising tourists and their careless disregard in terms that, at first, sound poetic and romantic. He abbreviates caravan to "cara".

As a child Sir John had frequently been taken to Trebetherick on the north-west coast of Cornwall for holidays by his parents. Even though he was

unlikely to have stayed in a 'cara', he was a one-time summer tourist himself.

Delectable Duchy

Where yonder villa hogs the sea
Was open cliff to you and me.
The many-coloured cara's fill
The salty marsh to Shilla Mill.
And, foreground to the hanging wood,
Are toilets where the cattle stood.
The mint and meadowsweet would scent
The brambly lane by which we went;
Now, as we near the ocean roar,
A smell of deep-fry haunts the shore.

In pools beyond the reach of tides
The Senior Service carton glides,
And on the sand the surf-line lisps
With wrappings of potato crisps.
The breakers bring with merry noise
Tribute of broken plastic toys
And lichened spears of blackthorn glitter
With harvest of the August litter.

Here in the late October light
See Cornwall, a pathetic sight,
Raddled and put upon and tired
And looking somewhat over-hired,
Remembering in the autumn air
The years when she was young and fair
Those golden and unpeopled bays,
The shadowy cliffs and sheep-worn ways,

The white unpopulated surf,
The thyme- and mushroom-scented turf,
The slate-hung farms, the oil-lit chapels,
Thin elms and lemon-coloured apples
Going and gone beyond recall
Now she is free for "One and All."

One day a tidal wave will break
Before the breakfasters awake
And sweep the cara's out to sea,
The oil, the tar, and you and me,
And leave in windy criss-cross motion
A waste of undulating ocean
With, jutting out, a second Scilly,
The isles of Roughtor and Brown Willy.

Even after several attempts, John failed to get a degree at Oxford, earning himself a reputation for being somewhat idle. Nevertheless, he made a career in journalism and, among other things, was involved in developing Shell Guides for motorists in Britain. He wrote many books and had a passion for Victorian architecture and railways. The two loves came together when he was instrumental in saving St Pancras Station in London. When it was developed into the Eurostar terminal for the capital instead of being



demolished, a statue was erected in the station concourse in his memory. He also made a number of television documentaries but was best known for his poetry which was often humorous and readable. In 1972 he was made Poet Laureate. Instead of being idle he had a busy and productive life which was ultimately rewarded with an honorary doctorate from Oxford.

Later in life, Sir John bought a house called Treen in Trebetherick. Where he died in 1984 after suffering from increasingly debilitating Parkinson's Disease. He is buried just inside the gate to the churchyard at St Enodoc Church.

Add a little Cornish to your day

The topic for this newsletter is the cold and wintry weather the whole of the country has been enduring. You are likely to have lots of opportunities to practice these words over the rest of winter.

Kernewek	Sounds like	English
Awel	ah well	wind
Hager awel	hay ger ah well	storm
Ergh	erg	snow
Rew	rue	ice
Glaw	glawe	rain
Keseren	kez erren	hail
Yeyn	yay in	cold

“Hager” has its own meaning of ugly, foul or rough so that a storm – hager awel - is a foul wind which is quite descriptive. The same approach is taken to describe a storm at sea. Sea translates to ‘mor’. The initial ‘m’ softens to ‘v’ when hager is put in front so a rough sea is hager vor.



“Through the centuries Cornish agriculture followed quite a different course to that of the [other] counties. Until recent times the Cornish people tended to neglect their land in favour of seeking wealth from the mine and the sea. However, most of the fertile land had been

Zealand could claim she was much more Cornish than England. Since Cornwall possessed a highly distinctive social and economic life, her contribution to the making of rural New Zealand is too significant to be ignored.”

The decline in the mining industry in the 1860s and 1870s was a principal driver in Cornish families making the decision to relocate to “The Farthest Promised Land” – New Zealand.

Arnold continues, “The Cornish miner would have been less valuable as a colonist had he not also commonly gained some experience in working the land. This arose in part from the ebb and flow in the fortunes of mining, and of individual mines, which both drew men from farm labour, and on occasions sent them back into it. Even more important was the widespread holding of land by miners. A great deal of the waste land of Cornwall was reclaimed by miners in holdings that were commonly of from one to five acres. During the eighteenth century a number of landowners adopted the practice of leasing this coarse land at a rent of a few shillings an acre, for a term of three lives, on condition that a cottage was built on the holding. Many a miner thus built his own home, at little cost, the main building material being stone which could be had from the moor for the labour of carrying it.

enclosed long before the eighteenth century enclosure movement, which in Cornwall involved, in the main, winning new land from the waste rather than enclosing open arable fields. An important result was that while the small yeoman farmer was being eliminated elsewhere, in Cornwall the number of small holders was increasing. It has been estimated that probably 25,000 to 30,000 acres of wasteland were reclaimed between 1700 and 1860. Over the same period there was also much building up of soil fertility, largely by drawing on the resources of the coast and the sea. Seaweed, and the waste products of the pilchard fishery, were extensively used as fertilisers. Many Cornish soils are deficient in lime, and this was widely corrected by dressing the land with sea-sand.

“New Zealand's Cornish immigrants will have brought to the colony much valuable experience in the subduing of waste land, and in the adoption of improved farming methods.”

Royal visit

The Prime Minister announced in early July that the Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall and the Duchess of Cornwall are to visit New Zealand again in November 2015, three years after their last visit. Details of their itinerary will be made public closer to their arrival so, if you want a chance to see or even meet them, look out for announcements.

Cornish emigration to New Zealand

In his book, *The Farthest Promised Land*, published by Victoria University Press, Rollo Arnold studies the large inflow of British migrants in the 1870s county by county. When he gets to Cornwall Arnold says:

“in response to economic forces of a global nature, Cornwall sent a larger proportion of her population to the colony during the 1870s than any other English county. ...they joined a population already rich in Cornishmen, New

For a long time I have thought that the Cornish 'can do' attitude was the source of the Kiwi resourcefulness with number 8 wire. This seems to be an academic support for the idea. Arnold was a teacher, lecturer at Palmerston North Teachers College and later was a researcher at Victoria University.

Book gift

Max C S Beck has kindly donated a copy of a book he has written called A Different Earth. The book will be added to the Association's library (but only after I have read it!).

Max was a barrister and solicitor for 22 years and then became a magistrate and coroner for the State of Victoria. His research for the book involved two trips to Cornwall and a voyage on board a tall sailing ship around the south of Tasmania.

Based on the true story of his great, great grandmother, Jane Dunstan, Max has embellished the bare facts into an epic 'docu-drama'.

Born in Cornwall, Jane had lived in Tolcarne near Wendron in harsh conditions. She emigrated to Burra, Australia with her miner husband, Richard, and seven children on a free passage. However, she tragically lost her husband and three daughters. Life was very hard for a widow and she decided to join other Cornish folk in the goldrush by making an overland trek of 885 km with her surviving children and her worldly possessions on a hired bullock cart to Castlemain, Victoria.

The book is published by Palmer Higgs Pty Ltd ISBN 978 0 992 5494 5 9 and is available by order through book shops or from various on-line book sellers and in eBook.

Christchurch branch

The branch held a meeting 11 July 2015 at St.Pauls Parish Centre Papanui.

The President welcomed 31 members and our guest speaker Dr. Sue Bagshaw. 10 apologies were received including one from Pastyman Nigel, because there were no pasties available this month.

In the "Connection with Cornwall" series Les spoke of being born in the village of Charlestown (St. Austell) before moving back to Port Isaac at age 6. The family had been in St Endellion parish for at least three hundred years. Les went on to tell some stories of various ancestors, one who kept a "Kiddley", another transported to Australia

for 7 years after committing fraud, while yet another was baptised twice on following days.

Val's Cornish language lesson was based around the current cold weather.

Les gave his usual round up of Cornish happenings over the past month.

Dr Bagshaw came to New Zealand in 1981 with her husband whom she met while at medical school. She helped set up a family planning clinic at 198 Hereford Street to serve the needs of young people. It expanded to become The Pulse which provides housing for homeless teenagers and care for those with mental illnesses. Following earthquake damage "198" had to close. Finding somewhere else to set up proved difficult but eventually, in conjunction with 20 other agencies, a row of 9 houses in Barbadoes Street became available for youth aid. Semi-permanent housing for 16-22 year olds is a problem which may be solved by multi-storied containers converted to self-contained units brought from China. Land is being sought but has to be close both to the new bus station and the Polytech.

Taranaki Branch

Husband and wife duo and Taranaki Branch members, Faith and Graham Richards, helped spread the word about Cornwall by giving a talk at the Heatherlea Rest Home in New Plymouth on 29 June. They backed up their presentation by flying St Piran's flag. Heatherlea is the home of another Taranaki Branch member, Douglas Chisholm, who was able to contribute his own tales and experiences.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



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

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