

July/August-439 - mls Gortheren/mls Est 2018

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■ ■ Est. 1962 ■ ■  
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# N E W S L E T T E R

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

## Jean Harry

I am very sad to report the death of another office holder of the Association and a personal friend this year. Jean passed away peacefully on Friday, 24 August. She had developed Alzheimer's disease and had gone into care when she needed 24 hour attention. She was admitted to Waikato Hospital on Sunday with problems eating and drinking where she finally contracted pneumonia. Jean has left her very supportive husband, Graham, and their two daughters with their families.

A service to celebrate her life is being held on Tuesday, 28 August at the Union Parish Trinity Church in Cambridge where Jean and Graham had been members of the choir and congregation since moving there in 2013.

Born in Penzance, Jean retained a strong love of Cornwall and all things Cornish. Her home contained a wide range of memorabilia to the point of being a "Little Cornwall" in New Zealand. She was renowned for her pasty making and was once filmed making pasties by UK television as part of an episode about the NZ Cornish for a series of programmes on Cornish people abroad.

Jean and Graham first came to New Zealand in 1973 staying in Nelson for around a year. After going back to Cornwall for a while they returned in 1978 to live in Gisborne for 12 years. In the early 1980s they moved to Christchurch, joined the Christchurch Branch and have both been active members ever since. In 1999 Jean took on the role of national secretary and treasurer of the Association. It involved writing newsletters, maintaining membership records and looking after the library of Cornish books. She held the



position for 12 years before handing over the job of writing newsletters. While she was editor she produced over 90 publications all accurately typed (she was proud of her skills at touch typing) and neatly presented. For years she continued to be treasurer and only relinquished that job in 2015. Also up to that point Jean and Graham carried on printing and sending out the newsletters.

On a trip "home" Jean and Graham left Christchurch in August 2010 just days before the first large earthquake struck. It caused irreparable damage to her beloved Durham Street Methodist Church. Jean was a life-long dedicated Methodist. With their close association with male voice choirs in Cornwall, Jean and Graham had hosted members of the Trelawny Male Voice Choir during its 2007 tour of NZ. When they heard the news, the choir held a concert in aid of the church at the end of which Jean stood up to thank the choir. Later, she admitted it was something she would not have had the confidence to do but

for her experience of being an office-holder of the Association.

In 2009, Jean was awarded the Paul Smales medallion in recognition of her work for the Cornish in New Zealand. She is wearing it in the photograph. Five years later she became a Bard of Gorsedh Kernow and was delighted to be able to go to Cornwall in September 2014 to be inducted into the Gorsedh in person at Torpoint. Jean took the bardic name of Jewann Pensans ha Tramor which translates to Jean of Penzance and overseas.

Meur ras (thank you) Jean, for everything you did for us. Powes yn kres (rest in peace).

## St Day church

Despite its Christian nature and caring generosity, it is not often that the Church of England actually gives one of its churches to a community body.

The Holy Trinity Church in St Day was handed over to the St Day Old Church Community Interest Company (CIC) by The Archdeacon of Cornwall, the Venerable Bill Stuart-White at a ceremony on site in May.

The church was built in 1826-8 to designs by Charles Hutchens of Torpoint and was one of twelve in Cornwall funded by the Church Building Commissioners from money made available for church building following the Battle of Waterloo. Built of local grey granite ashlar in the "Commissioners' Gothick" style, it consisted of a five bay rectangular nave, shallow three-sided apse at the east end and a west tower. Internally it had galleries around three sides and a seating capacity of 1,500. The galleries were removed in 1931. Its size reflected the role St Day played in the times of booming tin and copper mining in the surrounding geography. These days, it seems totally out of proportion to the village and its Anglican congregation.



Sir John Betjeman, renowned for his quirky and poetic insights, said it looked like "an ecclesiastical toy fort".

With a declining roll, the upkeep of the church became uneconomic and the building fell into disrepair. In 1956 it was declared unsafe due to structural problems and was closed. Whilst growing up in the village I was warned never to go near the crumbling structure. We would hurry down the paths at either side of the church to reach my grandparents' grave. In 1985 vandalism caused part of the roof to fall in and, as a precaution, the remainder of the roof was blown up. Once made safer, the building was opened to the public. A small garden shed was installed to act as a souvenir shop that was staffed by volunteers to raise funds and serve the occasional tourist visitor.

The community has campaigned for 30 years to have more control and say over the building's future. There have even been proposals to convert it into housing. Now its future will return to its past as a focal point for the community.

Chairperson of the St Day Old Church CIC, Bernadette Fallon, said: "[the church] will become a facility which can benefit the whole community. We are particularly pleased that St Day and Carharrack Community School will be using the building for various activities.

"There is some work to do - nothing very major - before the church can be used and enjoyed by the public, and we are confident we can obtain the necessary grants to do the work. We will ensure that the building's listed status will be protected and enhanced.

"The church will eventually have a covered

performance area and will be a stunning venue for all sorts of community events."

The building is grade II listed and situated within a Conservation Area first designated by Cornwall Council in 1983 and extended in 2010. That Conservation Area and the entire village are also within the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape World Heritage Site.

### The Cornish jackdaw project

The University of Exeter has had a number of post-graduate students working on the Cornish Jackdaw Project since 2012.



Jackdaws are part of the corvid family of birds that are remarkable for their intelligence. The scientific name for the jackdaw is *Corvus monedula*. Other members of this 'family' are choughs - Cornwall's national bird - crows, ravens and magpies. Jackdaw in Kernewek is *chogha* (pronounced almost like 'chocka' in 'chocka block'). To me, the word shows signs of being linked to the English 'chough'. Kernewek for chough is *palores*.

Jackdaws' brains are similar in size (relative to their bodies) to larger animals, such as great apes, whales and dolphins, animals we more generally associate with intelligence. The brain-to-body ratio of corvids is only slightly lower than that of humans. They have been shown to have self-awareness in mirror tests, which means that they recognise that the reflection they see is actually themselves and not another bird. It is taken as a sure sign of higher understanding.

One of the reasons for studying jackdaws is that, unlike other corvids, they take to nest boxes. It makes it easier to establish larger groups of birds that, while retaining their freedom and (theoretically) their wildness, they are accessible for reliable and repeated study. The Cornish Jackdaw Project involves four colonies near Penryn and Stithians with 100 nest boxes and, by the end of 2016, almost 1500 jackdaws had been fitted with unique coloured ring combinations to easily identify individuals in the field. Almost all of the birds carry a transponder inside one of their rings that works like a contactless card that can be



detected by nearby readers to record visits to feeders, nest boxes, or anywhere else fitted with an antenna. The researchers can build profiles of the birds' social networks and

potentially programme field equipment such as puzzle boxes to behave differently depending on the identity and experience of the individual interacting with it.

Studies to date have focussed on learning and communication. One study claimed to have evidence that jackdaws could count based on the fact that they behaved differently when more than one bird was making alarm calls when predators were near.

The birds thrive in close proximity to humans and it has been shown that they are able to recognise the features of individual humans. What's more, they can do this without resorting to fixing coloured bands and transponders to the humans! Their responses to different people depends on their experiences of whether they disrupt their nests, capture them for ringing or do more 'friendly' things like feed them.

### **Lucky lamb rescue**

In early June, before the amazing story of the rescue of 12 boys and their soccer coach from underground caves in Thailand, Cornwall had its own international rescue story that reached TV news in New Zealand. It clearly appealed to local, national and international press who had a field day with headlines like "Lamb stuck between a rock and a baaa'd place" and "Rescued lamb looks sheepish".



The young lamb was spotted stuck at the bottom of 250-foot cliffs near Holywell Bay in Cornwall by the operators of a company that takes tourist groups on wildlife spotting trips along the coast. It's believed the lamb had fallen into the sea and saved itself by scrambling up onto the rocks.

Large swells and high tides prevented an immediate rescue so the lamb remained on the rocks for four days. Bob Coad, the farmer, happened to be a member of Holywell Surf Life Saving Club and was helped by two staff from the tour company. The men named the lamb 'Lucky' for obvious reasons.

When conditions improved they manoeuvred their inflatable and managed to get Bob onto the rocks. The lamb seemed willing and pleased to be rescued so Bob was able to pass the animal back into the boat to complete the mission.

### **Photography to order**

Two enterprising gentlemen (both retired) have established a business taking photographs of Cornwall and accept commissions from anyone around the world.

Alan Swann and Barry Yelland have contacted the Association offering their services. You can buy images (such as the view of Mevagissey Harbour in the picture) in various sizes from a range of photographs on their website [www.asby-images.com](http://www.asby-images.com).



The site also explains their bespoke business model:

"We often come across overseas visitors taking photos of ancestral homes and settings in Cornwall. They are keen to get to know the county where their forebears originated.

"You provide us with details of a family ancestor and we will endeavour to provide you with images of the Cornish links to your family."

Alan and Barry seem to be quite flexible in the work they undertake. They will charge a base fee for each project (usually around £50). The resulting images can be purchased in digital format (best quality £5.99 each) or ordered as prints in a wide range of sizes.

### **Ancient records of Duchy of Cornwall**

The Duchy of Cornwall was established in 1337 by Edward III. The income from the estate belongs to the Duke of Cornwall who is the eldest son of the monarch and the heir to the throne. The Duke cannot receive any of the Duchy's capital assets – just its annual operating surplus. Therefore the accounts of the Duchy are very important and have been from the earliest days. Being an accountant by profession, the news that some very old Duchy accounting records had been discovered sparked my interest.

Recently, a second-hand dealer bought a job lot of old documents at a Devon auction. In one of those incredible-but-true stories, the documents were found to contain some faded pages of parchment that the dealer identified as having 'potential'. They were taken to Bonhams, a well-respected auction house in Exeter, for assessment and valuation. The pages of parchment were found to be written in mediaeval Latin and to contain detailed records of the income and expenditure of the Duchy of Cornwall for a year. Bonhams estimated the value of the accounts, which are in a remarkably good state of preservation after surviving for nearly 600 years, at £4,000 to £6,000. When they actually went to auction the undisclosed buyer paid \$22,000.

The accounts are for the period Michaelmas, 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Edward IV's reign to Michaelmas, the first year of Richard III i.e. 29 September

1482 to 29 September 1483. During this time, the position of Duke of Cornwall was held by the future Edward V and then by Richard III's son Edward (who died a year later at the age of 10).

The records show totals for rents, sales and court receipts for each manor within the Duchy, with the names of the bailiffs or reeves. The receipts from tin mines were particularly valuable. By this period, the profits from the Duchy were worth around £500 a year. By contrast, the annual average wage of a labourer was then about £2.00.



The current Duke of Cornwall is, of course, Prince Charles, Prince of Wales. The Duchy is required to report its annual financial results to the British House of Commons. The surplus for the year to 31 March 2018 was £24.6 million. The Duchy has maintained and even increased its earnings relative to the average labourer. The surplus is used by The Duke to finance his public and private activities. The Duchy website went to considerable lengths to reassure readers that the Duke pays income tax on the earnings!

Most of the land holdings of the Duchy of Cornwall are currently and have always been outside of Cornwall itself. Only about 13% of its land is within Cornwall. The Duchy and the county are quite separate.

**Tin revival**

Nelson member, Francesca Menzies, has provided an update on the article in the March April 2017 newsletter about Cornish tin and lithium. An article in the latest UK Geographical magazine claims that “mineral mining companies around the world want to come back to Cornwall”.



In The 2017 article I mentioned that Canadian company, Strongbow Exploration was attempting to re-open South Crofty mine. The first production there was documented in 1592. South Crofty operated intermittently until it closed in 1998 and was the last operating tin mine in Cornwall. Strongbow is now very enthusiastic and has reported that, “The South Crofty project is [now] fully permitted, having underground permission (mining licence) valid until 2071, planning permission to construct a new process plant and a permit from the Environment Agency

to dewater the mine. Strongbow is now focused on the construction of a water treatment plant so the now-flooded mine can be dewatered.

“The underground permission area covers 1,490 hectares and includes 26 former producing mines. Current infrastructure on the property includes four usable vertical shafts and a 300-meter decline. Regional infrastructure includes excellent access to power, roads and rail. The process plant site is adjacent to the railway line and accessible grid power crosses the property. South Crofty mineralization occurs in laterally extensive lode structures, with some over 4 kilometers long, and extending to a vertical depth of at least 1,000 meters.”

Strongbow has also announced its intention to list shares on the AIM (alternative investment market) run by the London Stock Exchange as a way of raising £25 million over the next 18 months to progress to a production decision.

**Christchurch Branch**

The Christchurch branch held a meeting on Saturday, 9 June. President, Jeanette Beaumont, opened the meeting by welcoming 26 members and 4 guests.

A short silence was held in memory of Chris Clarke who passed away on the 6 June. Chris along with husband Ian were long time members of the Cornish Association.

Les gave an account of happenings in Cornwall since the last meeting.

The guest speakers Bert and Sharon took members on a walking tour of Nepal illustrated with some very colourful slides.

The President thanked Bert and Sharon for their enchanting look at Nepal and invited them to afternoon tea.

**Places mentioned in this newsletter**

