

**President**

Val Moore  
53 Philpotts Road  
Mairehau  
Christchurch 8052  
Ph: (03) 386 1313  
E-mail: valanton@hotmail.com

Web Site: <https://.sites.google.com/site/nzcornish>

**Secretary & Treasurer**

Nick Bartle  
88 Weka Street  
Miramar  
Wellington 6022  
Ph: (04) 388 1958  
E-mail: nzcornish@slingshot.co.nz



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

# NEWSLETTER

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

## Change of guard

There was a change of guard at the National Biennial meeting in New Plymouth on Saturday 9 May.

Everyone had a lot of fun at the meeting hosted by the Taranaki Branch. The venue and the street outside were decorated with a black and white theme based on St Piran's flag. The volume of conversation and laughter only dropped when the pasties were served and, when the food was cleared away, the formalities of the meeting began.



Elaine James and Carol Cowling.

Nick Bartle gave his president's report for the two years and then Jean Harry presented the finances.

Val Moore of Christchurch was elected to the position of National President unopposed. Val's contact details are at the top of the newsletter.

Val is also president of the Christchurch Branch and would otherwise have been a national vice-president. It was decided to only have one vice-president - Elaine James, the President of the Taranaki Branch

Nick Bartle was the only nomination for the combined roles of secretary and treasurer. The meeting agreed that there need only be one signatory to authorise payments but that Jean's name should stay on the list of signatories as a back-up to Nick.

The annual national subscription was held at \$10.00. For members of our branches, it is included in your branch subscription.



Nick & Jean officiating at the meeting

Resolutions were passed to reimburse the expenses of office

holders.

When the business was over, Jonathan Hollow spoke to the meeting. He is a young medical student based at Barts Hospital and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry. He was in New Plymouth gaining clinical experience at Taranaki Base Hospital and shared with us his experiences of growing up in Hayle and being taken to all sorts of Cornish events by his grandmother, a bard.

Jean was presented with gifts to mark her retirement. The Christchurch Branch gave her a Celtic knot brooch and the National Association presented her with a Cornish plaid shawl. Graham Harry then showed video of Jean's investiture at the Gorsedh at Saltash last September.



Taranaki members laying out the spread of delicious food.

The afternoon ended with a cream tea, lots of other goodies and lots more talk and laughter.

Congratulations and thanks to the members in Taranaki for being wonderful hosts and arranging such an enjoyable event.

As is our tradition, the next national meeting will be held in Christchurch on a Saturday early in May 2017.

## Subscriptions

This is a reminder especially for national members to please send in your subscriptions for the 2015/2016 year. They are now getting overdue.

You can now pay your subs directly into the Association's Kiwi Bank account number **38-9003-0932058-02**. Please put your surname and initials in the reference field when making the deposit and send Nick your subscription slip to be sure that your payment is matched up with your membership. Nick's contact details are at the top of this page.

## Cornwall wins county rugby

Trelawney's Army was on the march again on Saturday, 31 May when the Cornwall took on Lancashire in the UK Rugby Union County Championship at Twickenham. It was a case of third time lucky for Cornwall as the two teams had locked horns at the finals in the previous two years.



Cornwall got off to an excellent start and put the first points on the board after only three minutes. The score stood at 10-6 at the break. Heavy drizzle accompanied the period either side of half-time and Lancashire kept the ball really well in the early stages of the second period. Cornwall maintained its scoring and it looked like they were going to win with a comfortable margin of 18-6 until, with only 8 minutes to go, Lancashire secured a converted try and narrowed the lead. Cornwall held on and the final tally was 18-13.

It was the fourth time Cornwall had won the county championship. The first occasion was in 1908 when the Cornish defeated Durham County on home ground in Redruth. Durham secured revenge the following year in West Hartlepool.

Cornwall had to wait 73 years to come out winners again in 1991 beating Yorkshire 29-20. By this time all the finals were being held at Twickenham. It was on this occasion that the Cornish supporters turned out in force, hiring whole trains to travel from Cornwall to London. The impact of thousands of supporters dressed in black and gold on the capital was so great that the term "Trelawney's Army" was coined. Books were written about the event.

The third time Cornwall became County Champions was a 25-15 victory over Gloucestershire in 1999.

## Porthcurno

The location of Cornwall places it better to access other areas of the world than the rest of the UK. In recent times the satellite dishes at Goonhilly Downs have been a major communications link and came to prominence when transmitting television coverage of the moon landing in 1969.

However, Cornwall has played an important role in international communications for much longer than that. Today it may look like a small out-of-the-way golden sand cove that only comes to life when tourists and visitors bustle in on sunny

summer days. But, in its time, Porthcurno was central to the UK's telecommunications with the rest of the world and a training ground for most of its telecommunications operators.

As long ago as 1858 a cable was laid across the Atlantic Ocean. In the ensuing years several cables were laid joining the UK with France and Spain. In 1870 the Falmouth, Gibraltar and Malta Telegraph Company laid a cable from Carcavelos, Portugal that it intended to terminate at Falmouth but realised that the risk of damage from anchor cables in busy Falmouth harbour was too great. Porthcurno was chosen as the alternative terminal. In 1872 it was brought under the control of the Eastern Telegraph Company.

This company went on to develop a worldwide telegraph network with Porthcurno as its hub linking London with the great British Empire of the time. At its height, 14 separate telegraph cables were landed at Porthcurno, necessitating the employment of a sizeable workforce. Teams of operators were required to read and re-key cable traffic – automatic signal regenerating equipment wasn't introduced until the 1920s –

and the station also acted as a training centre for operators destined to work in overseas cable stations.

When the Great War broke out in 1914 Britain's extensive network of cables provided

an important strategic advantage as did its cable-laying ships. One of the first moves against Germany was for these ships to drag up and disable the enemy's cables. Porthcurno was not attacked during that war despite its communications significance.

For WW II the cable office was more critical and was considered at serious risk of attack being only 160 km from the port of Brest in occupied France. A secure network of two parallel tunnels, connected by two smaller cross-tunnels, was bored into the granite valley side. Excavated by local tin miners, work started in June 1940 and was completed in May 1941. In total about 15,000 tons of rock were removed.

Each of the two main entrances was protected by offset and double bomb-proof, gas-proof doors. The tunnel interiors were windowless open-plan offices constructed as a building shell within the granite void, complete with a pitched roof to collect water seepage from the rocks, a false ceiling, plastered and decorated walls and



all the necessary services.

The concrete defences around the tunnel entrances and the nearby buildings were camouflaged with the help of a local artist. The design, when viewed from the air with some imagination, resembling a belt of trees, complete with rabbits and birds.



The Tunnels were secure, dry, and at a virtually constant temperature so proved to be ideal for the sensitive telegraph equipment. They continued to house the subsequently upgraded equipment after the War until the cable office closure in 1970. It was then used for training facilities for the Engineering College until the college itself also closed in 1993.

Today the tunnel is both an exhibit itself and houses exhibits of the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum, operated by PK Trust, a charity formed by Cable and Wireless Limited. PK was the call sign for Porthcurno. In Morse code it was



In 2001 and 2002 storms exposed cables running across the beach. Disused cables were removed but those still in operation were re-buried. Telecommunication by undersea cable is still very important because it is more reliable than wireless satellite communications. Old copper wires have been replaced by faster optical fibre. Cables still come ashore at Porthcurno but are now handled by a high tech but low profile facility inland at Skewjack nearer Sennen where other cables come ashore. This is the Fibre-optic Link Around the Globe – or FLAG facility.

### New Grand Bard

The Council of Gorsedh Kernow has announced 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.



“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.”

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 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.

*Article and photo used by permission of Gorsedh Kernow.*

### Add a little Cornish to your day

In my new role as treasurer, I thought I’d find out some relevant Kernewek words:

Kernewek	Sounds like	English
<b>Akontow</b>	<i>ack-ont-ow</i> (rhymes with cow)	accounts
<b>Budh</b>	<i>booth</i>	profit
<b>Debys</b>	<i>deb-ees</i>	debit
<b>Kresys</b>	<i>cress-ees</i>	credit
<b>Gasadow</b>	<i>gazza-dow</i>	balance
<b>Fros mona</b>	<i>fross moaner</i>	cashflow
<b>Toll</b>	<i>toll (rhymes with doll)</i>	tax

### Christchurch branch

When the Christchurch branch met on 2 May, the President welcomed 42 members and guests to the annual Pasty Lunch.

There were toasts to the "Duke of Cornwall", to "Cornwall" and to "Absent Friends". The



President accompanied by Heather on her accordion led the singing of "Hail to the Homeland" followed by "Trelawney" and the traditional "Oggy Oggy Oggy" called by Les. "Something about a Pasty" was sung and then the Grace in Kernewek.

Pasties were then served accompanied by coleslaw and a cup of tea. The pasties this year were supplied by Nigel Beal ex Liskeard, the pasty man of Ashburton, and very much enjoyed by all.

While the committee ladies completed the domestic chores in the kitchen Les gave his usual account of the recent happenings in Cornwall. Jeanette then gave a short talk in the first of a series by members of the committee entitled "My Cornish Connections". This showed a family which moved around the west of Cornwall before leaving for New Zealand in search of a better life. As is usual with families, there was the odd black sheep and skeletons in cupboard.

The afternoon's musical entertainment started with a small group of musicians leading a creditable Floral Dance in spite of being cramped for room. There were various solos, duets and accordion recitals. Everyone joined in some popular Cornish including "Goin' up Camborne Hill", the lament "Cornish Lads" and "The Mermaid" which tells of the dangers of seafaring.

The meeting concluded with afternoon tea.

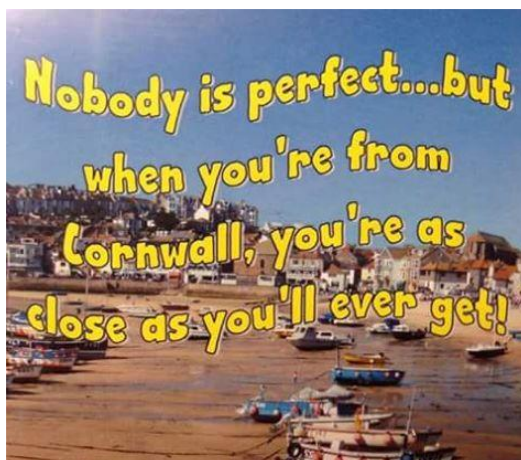
There were 33 members at the meeting on 13 June including a new member, Sharron Hillier. Apologies were received from nine more who were unable to make it on the day.

The next meeting will again be at St Paul's parish Centre Papanui on 11 July at 2pm. The speaker will be Jenny Haworth.

Joyce Doney was in the hot seat this month in the "My Connections with Cornwall Series". Joyce met Alan, her future husband, when they were both working in Plymouth. Alan was a Falmouth boy and Joyce from London. Joyce went on to talk of Alan's family connections with the Falmouth area complete with the usual minor

skeletons in various cupboards. Joyce and Alan later emigrated to New Zealand with their three young sons and lived in Dunedin before Alan came to work at the 'Christchurch Star'.

Val gave us our monthly Cornish language lesson. This time it was phrases to use as greetings, farewells or to sign off letters or cards.



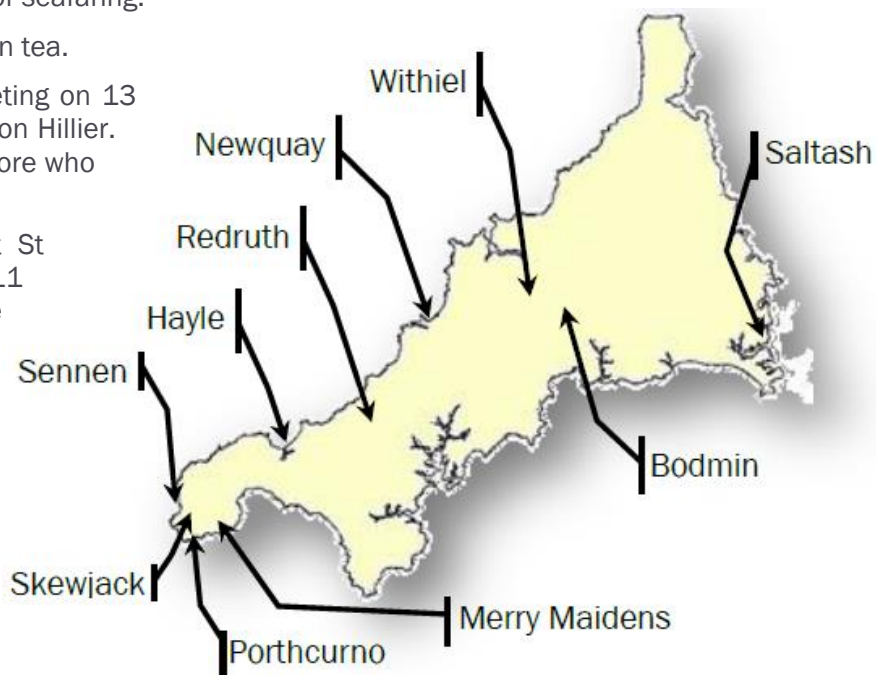
Les presented his monthly report on Cornish events including a detailed but confusing set of instructions from Gorsedh Kernow on how to get to the "Awen" ceremony at Carwynnen Quiot. This involved many twists and turns down very narrow Cornish lanes and caused much laughter.

President Val and Dorothy then gave us an account of the National Biennial

Meeting in New Plymouth in which Val was elected National President, this led to much applause. Dorothy spoke of her trip with some others to going to the meeting by car. They inadvertently drove via Stratford to the venue which was in reality only just down the road from their motel. This meant an almost cold pasty for lunch but caused a lot of amusement in the retelling.

The meeting concluded with afternoon tea and the usual raffle.

### Places mentioned in this newsletter



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