

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

Any opinions or errors in these articles are those of the authors and must not be assumed to be those of Cornwall Archaeological Society.

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Issue 47

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

- **HERITAGE AT RISK REGISTER 2020**
- **AREA REPS ZOOM IN**
- **WESTERN SNIPPETS**
- **AROUND THE ROUND AT TRETHURGY**

HERITAGE AT RISK REGISTER 2020



Photo: Peter Crispin



Photo: Peter Crispin

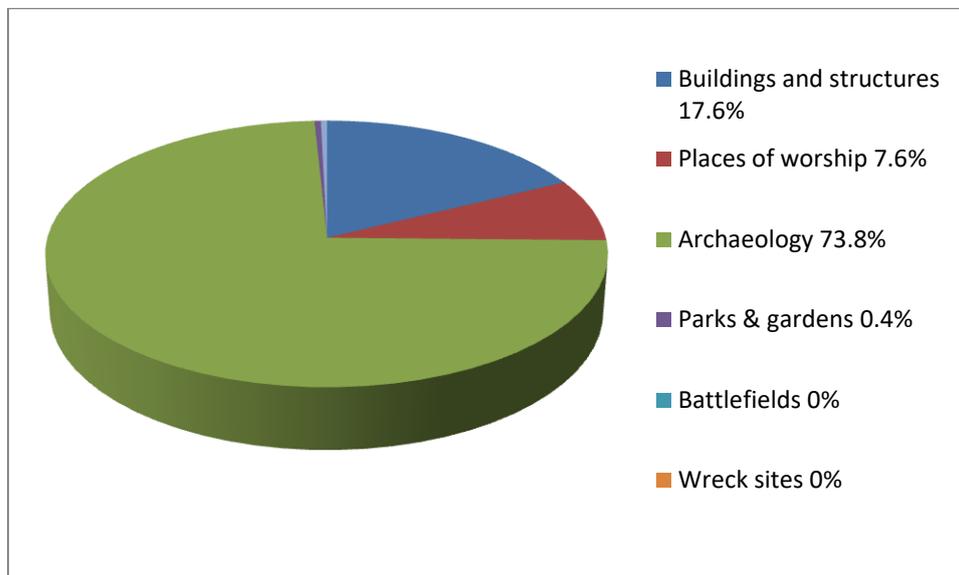
Trekelland Bridge (SX 3004 7984, Grade II* LB, South Petherwin parish) is an important part of our heritage and it is at risk from motor traffic. Following a tip-off from Robin Paris, Area Reps Peter Crispin and John Hanns visited it to assess the most recent damage and were rather discouraged by their findings.

What can be done? Much could be achieved in a country that was prepared to back up noble words about heritage with proper funding. And this would also have a very positive impact on the economy. But the very first step must be to methodically identify the problems and this is what Historic England's annual Heritage at Risk Registers do so well. All

of the latest registers can be obtained here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2020-registers/> .

What does the latest register tell us about Cornwall's heritage? This is available here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2020-registers/sw-har-register2020/> . A higher percentage of archaeological Scheduled Monuments in the South West are at risk than in England as a whole (15% compared with 10.5%). There is good news - 30 archaeological entries are no longer in the register – and bad news – 35 have been added. But it must be remembered that putting a feature on the register may be the first stage in solving a problem

Here is the basic picture for at-risk features in Cornwall:



The main register for the south-west is well worth browsing. Each entry gives a useful brief assessment. Here is the new entry for the much-battered Trekelland Bridge:

HERITAGE AT RISK 2020 / SOUTH WEST / CORNWALL (UA)



© Historic England

SITE NAME:	Trekelland Bridge, Lewannick / South Petherwin
DESIGNATION:	Listed Building grade II*
CONDITION:	Poor
OCCUPANCY:	Occupied/in use
PRIORITY CATEGORY:	A (New entry)
OWNER TYPE:	Local authority
LIST ENTRY NUMBER:	1155188

Trekelland Bridge is a grade II* medieval bridge with two main arches and a span flood arch. Carrying the road between Launceston and Liskeard, it is still heavily used. The bridge has been the subject of repeated vehicle impacts that have damaged its approach walls and coping stones in particular. No solution to these traffic impacts has been found to date.

Contact: Catherine Marlow 0117 975 0732

Historic England has also provided a clear summary of the overall picture for the south-west at:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/whats-new/in-your-area/south-west/heritage-at-risk-2020/>

and an interactive map at:

<https://englishheritage.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=5fced27775b44238beb524338e62e9d3> .

What are the key points about Heritage at Risk in Cornwall? Well, for anyone in despair about threats to heritage, it ought to be noted that over the last year Historic England has spent £1.53 million in grants conserving or repairing historic sites across the south-west. It is far too little and they need proper funding. The multiplier effect of such spending on employment and materials makes sound economic sense but until politicians accept this we have to be grateful for the grants that are made. Rebecca Barrett, South West Regional Director for Historic England, makes this very clear:

In challenging times such as these, heritage can provide a sense of continuity and bring us solace. We also know that investing in historic places can help boost our economic recovery.

One Cornish site that has been saved is Hall Rings near Pelynt:



According to Historic England:

Hall Rings is a hillfort dating to the transition between the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (8th–5th centuries BC), and an important monument for understanding how prehistoric communities functioned. The site has been removed from the Heritage at Risk Register after it was included in a farming scheme to revert the land from arable crops to grass. Recent geophysical work on the site, by kind permission of the landowner, has improved Historic England's understanding of the site.

This is great news but, on the other hand, there are 17 new Cornish sites on the Register. A whole class has been recognised as a cause for concern, namely Cornish medieval bridges, 3 of which are now on the Register (including Trekelland):

*Multi-span bridges – of two or more arches supported on piers – were built throughout the medieval period. Once commonplace, most have been rebuilt or replaced and fewer than 200 are now known to survive in England. **Helland Bridge** is one of them, built in the 15th century, spanning the River Camel. Its carriageway is less than three metres wide, and not built for modern traffic such as caravans, horse-boxes, tractors with trailers and lorries.*

***Trekelland Bridge**, another late medieval example, carries the main road between Launceston and Liskeard over the River Inney, and has been hit by multiple vehicles.*

The Grade II **ornamental carriage bridge serving Chyverton House** was built in 1780. It crosses a narrow stream that leads to a small lake. Recent ivy and shrub clearance has revealed problems with the walls which are unstable and leaning dangerously.*

But it must be remembered that an entry in the Register can be a positive first step. An example is the mysterious King Arthur's Hall, now on the Register because of the growth of gorse and the dilapidated nature of the surrounding fence. The Cornwall AONB Monumental Improvement Project, spearheaded by Chris Coldwell, is already taking action to clear and protect this earthwork, using volunteers from groups like Timeseekers and CAS.

Finance is short but great credit is due to the Historic England Heritage Risk Project Officers (Ann Preston-Jones for most of Cornwall and Dan Bashford for the south-east) and the willing groups and individuals who keep an eye on sites and help with clearance and conservation. The situation is serious but not hopeless!

AREA REPS ZOOM IN

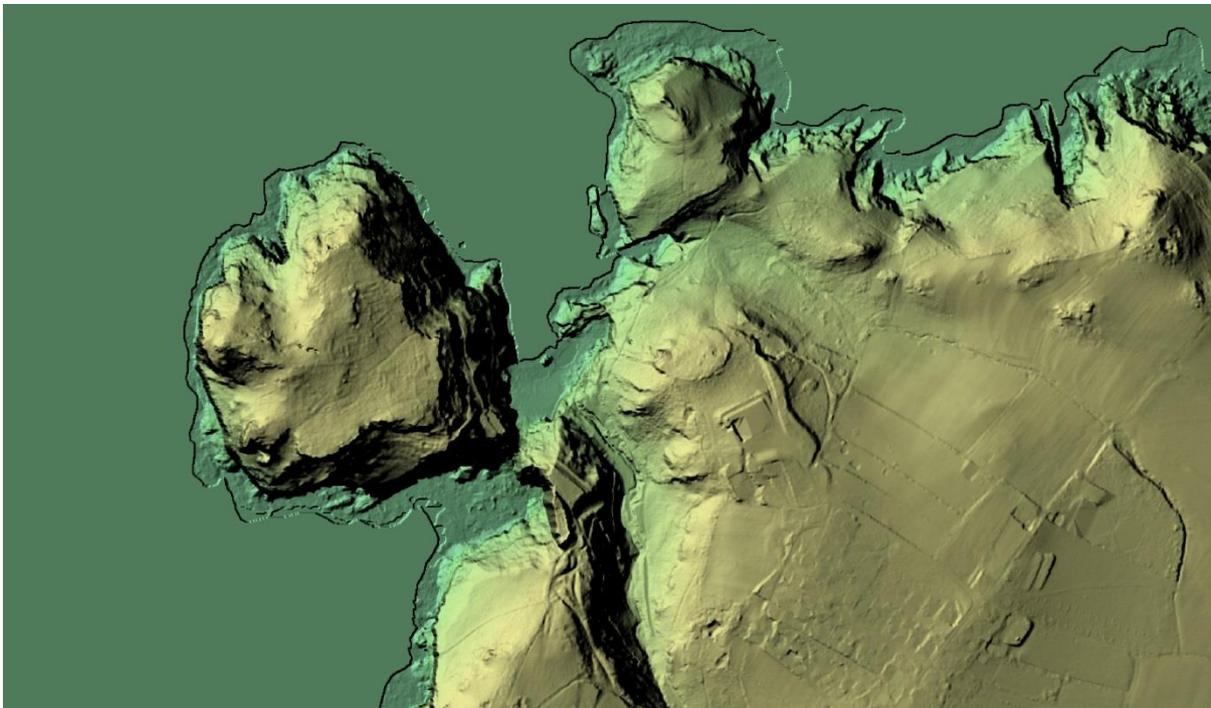
CAS Area Reps usually meet twice a year to discuss their findings and hear from professionals. The pandemic has made this difficult but Convenor Iain Rowe was not deterred and recently held a very successful meeting using Zoom. (The technical support of CAS Webmaster Millie Holman was essential.)

Presentations were given by John Rainer and Paul Holden. CAS members will have read John's piece about Lidar data in the recent newsletter (NL 154). John is an out-of-county member who has carried out extensive work using Environment Agency Lidar coverage for the county. Coverage of some areas, including parts of Penwith and the Lizard, is not available yet but will be by 2022. Nonetheless, a high proportion of Cornwall is covered by the available data, which John can access and make available on request to CAS members.

For those wanting to learn more about Lidar, he recommended:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=c6cef6cc642a48838d38e722ea8ccfee>.

John demonstrated the difference between DSM (Digital Surface Modelling) and DTM (Digital Terrain Modelling). While the former includes surface features such as trees, the latter does not. He cautioned that it is always important to investigate features on the ground, since, for example, a promising mound might only be a log pile. Already he has been able to point out sites in Cornwall that are exciting the interests of professional and amateur archaeologists alike.



Lidar image of Tintagel

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Data Processing and Rendering by John Rainer

Paul Holden is a well-known architectural historian and former Chairman of Cornwall Buildings Group (CBG). He is inviting participation in a very important project that complements the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register. The CBG began its Buildings at Risk Register in 2014 using volunteer input. Now it has grant-funding from Historic England and Cornwall Heritage Trust for a three-year project to identify and campaign for Cornish buildings at risk. Paul will be funded for two days a month as the project's case officer.

He invited Area Reps to join other volunteers in helping to identify and monitor buildings at risk.

The guidelines state that a building will be defined as in poor repair if it exhibits three or more of the following characteristics:

- The roof is not weather tight.
- Windows are boarded up or broken.
- Gutters and rainwater goods are not functioning properly.
- There are significant outbreaks of dry or wet rot.
- The building is unoccupied or out of use.
- Inappropriate alterations are proposed to the building.
- An inappropriate use is proposed for the building.



The former Town Wall Chapel in Bodmin. Built in 1851 by the Bible Christians, it is now derelict, forlorn and at risk.

This is an exciting project and Area Reps are hoping to get involved, alongside volunteers from other heritage organisations. Anyone wishing to learn more, or perhaps to join in, can find out more here: <https://buildingsatrisk.wordpress.com/?blogsub=confirming#538> .

This has been a very difficult year for Area Representatives. Nonetheless, they have continued to monitor sites and produce reports when circumstances have allowed. At the meeting many interesting stories were told. What follows is a quick summary of a few of them.

Val Jacob drew attention to vegetation encroaching on the Bronze Age barrow on Hensbarrow Beacon (SW 9968 5754, Roche parish). Some barrows are faring better: Diana Sutherland was pleased that Kernick Barrow (SX 2911 8592, St Stephens by Launceston parish) has not suffered further damage from cattle recently. She has also been consulting Ian Thompson of The Milestone Society about a recently discovered milestone in a green lane near Egloskerry. This will be added to the Historic Environment Record.

Richard McAulay has produced reports on various crosses in St Erth and St Hilary parishes.



Cross in St Erth Churchyard

Photo: Richard McAulay

Lezant parish has proved to be a very happy historical hunting ground recently for Peter Crispin, as well as providing him with welcome respite from monitoring the unfortunate Trekelland Bridge. Peter describes a very exciting discovery in Lezant:

A stone row in the parish, recorded on the HER as 'destroyed' in 1981 has been rediscovered. It was thought to have been destroyed in the 1980s when Greystone Quarry expanded. RAF reconnaissance photos from the 1940s show three aligned stones in a field near what was then a much smaller Greystone Quarry; although there was no documentary evidence, older local residents recalled the stones standing in the field.

Peter has been heavily involved in this project, alongside local people and the parish council, and his exciting news is that the quarry owners have agreed *'to lift the stones and store*

them until a new site within the parish has been agreed, when they will be relocated with their spacing retained.'

Not only that, Peter and another local archaeologist have been looking at what appears to be a crucible furnace of medieval or earlier date in the same parish.

Recently, Sheila James visited Lamorran Church, which nestles on a creek leading to the River Fal (SW 8786 4177, St Michael Penkevil parish), and found that the structure was suffering from damp as a result of blocked gutters. Further investigation led to the discovery that a new congregation has moved in, preventing previous worshippers from using the church. The new occupants do not belong to an obscure religious sect, nor are they ardent campanologists, despite an affinity for the belfry. They are (and this is a descriptive and not a pejorative term) bats! Sheila explains:

'A bat survey was carried out in 2019 which confirmed the presence of a Brown Long-eared bat maternity roost with about 25 individuals. A small number of Pipistrelle bats were also seen and earlier inspections have recorded roosts for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe bats in association with the belltower.'

No schism will occur and plans are in the making to permit peaceful co-existence, as Sheila explains:

A mitigation plan for the church has been drawn up which will involve creating bat voids under the ceilings of the north and south transepts, retaining the current access points for the bats but preventing them from entering the church. The inside of the church will be cleaned and redecorated and the internal fittings cleaned and replaced. Some remedial work to the structure will also be carried out. This plan has not yet been approved. Whether or not this goes ahead the gutters need clearing to stop the damp problem from getting any worse.



View of church from north east showing the east facing wall of the northern transept and the north facing wall of the chancel.

Photo: Sheila James

David Edyvean and Emma Allen have parishes to monitor on Bodmin Moor. For a long time, David's finds of flint artefacts have been recorded and the spatial information shared with Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) and the Historic Environment Record. This will add to our understanding of how the moor was used in prehistoric time. Unfortunately, at one site, flint-collecting became a popular pastime for many people this year. No doubt this was done purely from curiosity, with no intention to do harm, but it meant that no record was kept of what was found and where. As a result, CAU organised a fieldwalking day at this location to get a better understanding of activity between the Mesolithic and Bronze Age.

There was much more but this may be enough to show that our CAS Area Reps are still at work the length and breadth of Cornwall.

WESTERN SNIPPETS

Like many, Adrian Rodda is very impressed with the work of the Penwith Landscape Partnership and feels it deserves wider attention. Adrian writes:

'Area Reps and CAS Members may know already about this project to appreciate the monuments, ecology and beauty of West Penwith. However, its website has grown and now includes new routes for walks which we may enjoy when we feel safer to brave the A30 westwards and there are fewer tourists around. In my experience the visitors we are likely meet on the moors and cliff paths are considerate and careful. The link below will bring you to their website and the walks and much more. This will be a good start to our explorations.'



Kynsa ha Diwettha – Agan Tirwedh Bewa ha Gonis
First and Last – Our Living Working Landscape



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https://www.penwithlandscape.com/blog/post/our-new-trails-can-guide-you-through-the-heritage-of-the-penwith-landscape?fbclid=IwAR00jQ39C8AWCworGG50H7wN9NtzYxXjQzHsid6HgwmgjchqtuEE4NoD3_A

In recent editions of From Your Own Correspondents, Adrian has written articles about Godrevy (Issue 45, August 2020) and Crane Castle (Issue 46, September 2020). Professor Paul Williams, author of The Red River (Godrevy Press, 2016) has been in touch with Adrian about the fish press site at Godrevy and also about the barrows near Basset Cove.

‘He also has memories relevant to the barrows near Bassett Cove mentioned in the description of the cliff castle. I am sure there were piles of quartz boulders along the course of the new cycle path which may have been used in or on the barrows, but are not visible now. Bet NT used them in building the cycle track.

Paul’s comments also remind us of the bad old days before protected monuments and local HERs and archaeologists:

“I remember being with my grandfather (who was born in 1890) on the bank at the base of the cliff and his telling me of the cafe and boat which used to be there.

On your piece on Crane Castle I remember two barrows in the field behind and looking for flints with no success. These barrows were suddenly demolished by the farmer in about 1955/56/57. I think it was reported in the WB [West Briton] but I cannot find it online. I know my father wrote a letter of protest which was published in the WB but I cannot find this either. I would like to find the exact date.” ‘

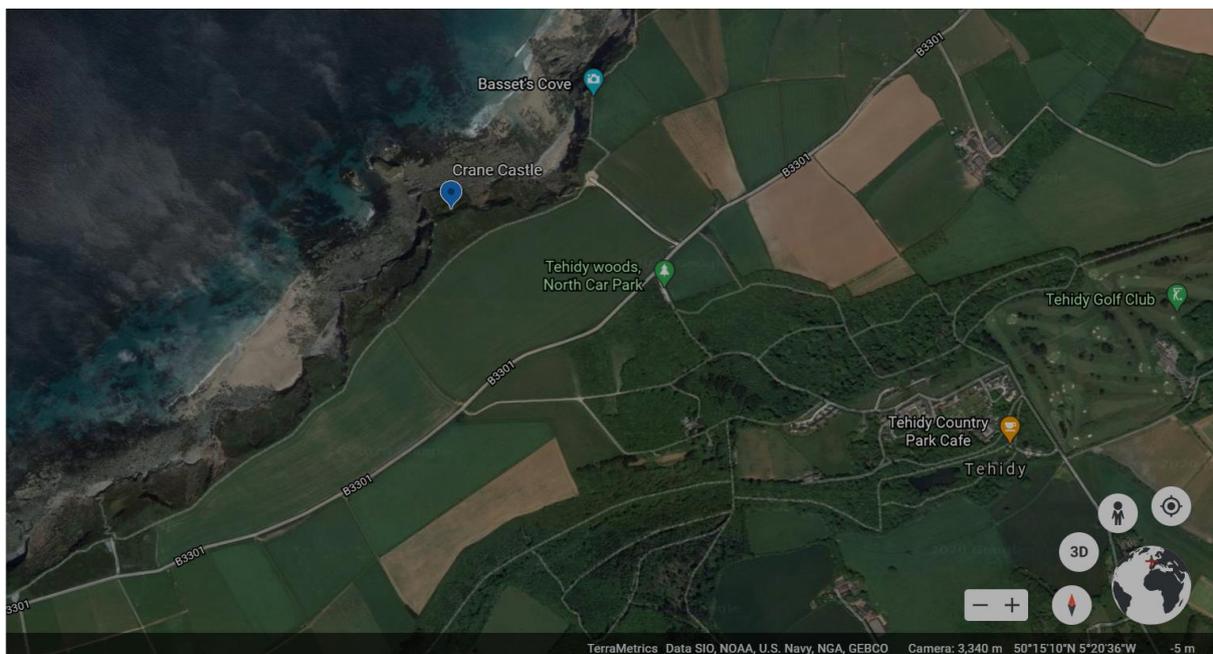


Image from Google Earth

AROUND THE ROUND AT TRETHURGY

Early in October, there was a big online audience for Henrietta Quinnell's CAS lecture, *Trethurgy revisited in colour*. This major excavation took place in 1973 in advance of the formation of a new waste tip for china-clay working.

A thumbnail summary of her findings can be found on the *Flying through Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's Past* website:

Our knowledge of Cornish rounds, their dating and how they worked comes from the few examples which have been excavated. The only one fully excavated is Trethurgy near St Austell; this has a number of features which are seen as representative of Cornish rounds. The round at Trethurgy enclosed less than a third of a hectare and was occupied from the middle of the second century AD until the sixth century. It was enclosed by a single ditch and a bank, both faces of which were revetted by stone. There was a paved entrance in the downhill side which was closed by a double-leaved gate. The enclosure contained five stone houses built around its internal periphery. There was also a range of ancillary buildings, including a byre and a granary. Throughout the life of the settlement its basic plan was maintained; the houses were rebuilt on the same spot, and the same areas were used for storage and for stock pens. (Source: www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/strategic-historic-environment-service/cornwall-and-scilly-historic-environment-record/flying-through-cornwall-and-the-isles-of-scillys-past/romano-british/.)

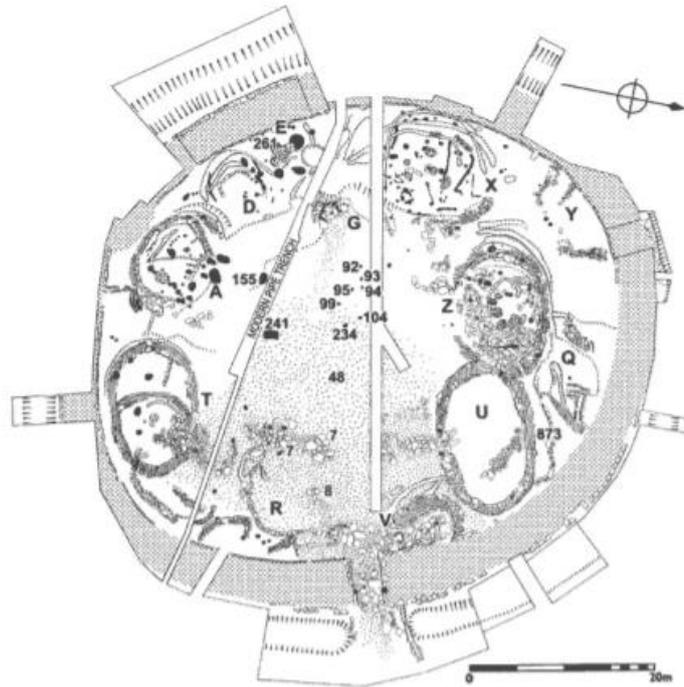
Henrietta found that 'small scale smithing of iron took place and possibly some work on copper alloy artefacts.' A tin ingot dated to the 4th century A.D. was found, raising the possibility that tin was being mined and worked locally, perhaps in the round itself.

Henrietta explains that no bone survived and the excavation took place just before bulk sampling and sieving to allow retrieval of grain became commonplace. As a result, no direct evidence about agriculture was obtained, although some form of mixed farming may have taken place.



West rampart from the outside.

Photo: Henrietta Quinnell



Plan of the excavated Roman-British round at Trethurgy, St Austell, showing the stone-revetted enclosing bank, lengths of the outer ditch, the entrance (towards the bottom of the plan), and the layout of the oval houses and other stone built structures.



Entrance from the east with post sockets

Photo: Henrietta Quinnell

At the end of her talk, Henrietta mused about the present-day appearance of the site of her excavation. Now this presented an intriguing challenge: was anything of the round left? Henrietta very kindly provided a location from map from her report (see below), so surely it should be easy enough to find the site of Trethurgy round? Maybe a fragment or two would be visible?

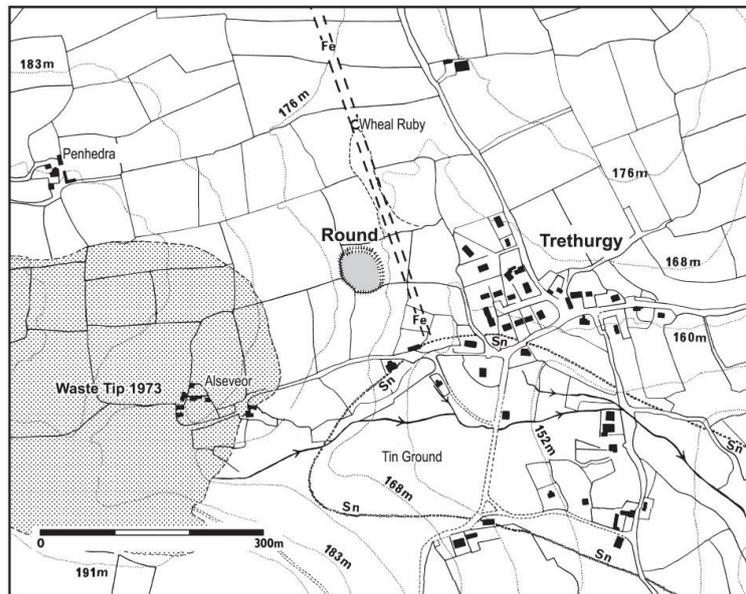
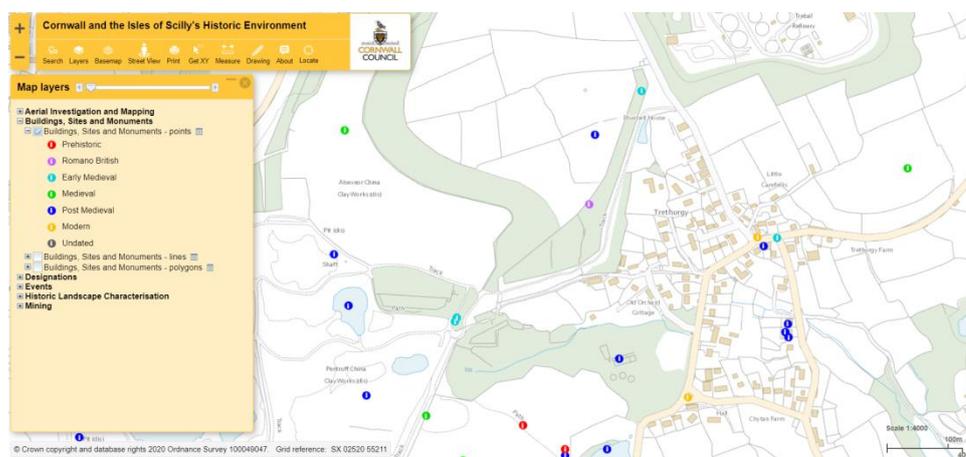


Fig.2 Location of the Round at Trethurgy. CCC © Crown Copyright. Trethurgy: Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: Community and Status in Roman and Post-Roman Cornwall, Henrietta Quinnell, 2004.

Trethurgy village hasn't grown very much, although there have been big changes in the landscape, which, of course, is what provided the opportunity for excavation in 1972. A purple dot on the HER map suggested that finding the location would be easy enough:



Source:

https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=8&xcoord=203310&ycoord=55588&wsName=CIOS_historic_environment&layerName=Buildings,%20Sites%20and%20Monuments%20-%20points

Even better, it looked as if access wouldn't be a problem because the track shown on the map above is now part of the multi-use Clay Trail. So, the members of the expedition set out on a sunny autumn day full to the brim with confidence and hope. However, what looked simple on the map was not so easy on the ground. According to the map, the round would have been somewhere in the plantation of trees to the left in the photo below.



Looking east along the Clay Trail. The site of the round would be in the trees on the left.

The chances of anything significant remaining after excavation and waste-tipping were slight but there's nothing wrong with a touch of optimism, so a search in the plantation began.



Trees in the round - but where's the round?

Some pre-tipping boundaries were visible but it was hard to match them to the map.



As the quest was proving hopeless, the eye of faith probably led to more excitement over a short row of stones than logic would justify:



Basic map reading seemed to support the idea that this was the right place but there was nothing to prove it. To return with no result would have been to admit defeat, so the last throw of the dice was to go to higher ground, in fact on to the waste tip created back in the 70s by the china-clay industry.



The site of the round is probably under the sand tip and the plantation beyond.

Looking down from the waste tip it was at least possible to get some idea of the geographical context of the site of the round. The next photo is looking south-east from the waste tip. The round would have been somewhere under the trees in the foreground. Beyond that, part of Trethurgy village can be seen. The proximity of Prideaux hillfort was interesting. Look at the clearing in the belt of woodland: in the middle of that, part of a circle of trees growing on one of the ramparts is visible (x marks the spot).



The hillfort is visible from the modern tip. Would it have been visible to the inhabitants of the round?

In this photo, it is possible to see Rough Tor and Brown Willy in the distance to the north-east. In the fields in the foreground, it is possible to see disturbance marking Wheal Ruby iron mine, a reminder that mineral exploitation has gone on for many years in this area.



For millennia, local people have valued Carn Grey (to the west of the round) as the highest local point. No doubt the round-dwellers too would have regarded it as a special place, if only as a viewing point. Waste-tipping by the china-clay industry means that it is dwarfed by nearby tips.



Carn Grey

Did this little expedition achieve anything? It certainly failed to find anything that could be linked to the round. Relic boundaries that were mapped before the encroachment of the china-clay industry can be seen. Other than that, the immediate area is a new and still-changing landscape. China-clay working to the north and north-west has erased the field pattern shown in the 1970s map. For quite a while this was a blasted, desolate wasteland. But nature and man are softening much of it, although an 'eco-town' is also under construction not far away. Trees have been planted, some have grown naturally, heather and gorse are rooting themselves in the white sand, so that a heathland is being formed, and the creation of the clay trails means that many people are enjoying the area rather than exploiting it ruthlessly. And it is a place to get away from it all: open and windswept on the higher ground, wooded lower down. There are spectacular views over St Austell Bay, towards the Castle Dore ridge (and beyond), as well as towards Bodmin Moor. It's just a shame that nothing of the Romano-British round seems visible.

With all this change it's hard to say what views would have been familiar to Trethurgy round's residents nearly 2,000 years ago. Carn Grey certainly. Could the ramparts of Prideaux hillfort be seen? They are visible from the artificially higher ground now but it's hard to be sure what it was like then. Possibly both Prideaux and Castle Dore would have been visible. One major change is that Trethurgy is now further from the sea than it was in the Romano-British period. At that time, navigable water may have reached farther inland, possibly near to what is now Tregrehan. The flood risk map may give a sense of the navigable waterways of the pre-industrial landscape (Trethurgy is marked by the blue dot):



Source:

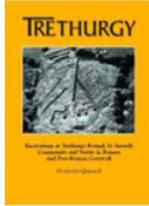
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One of the structures uncovered in 1973 Photo: Henrietta Quinnell

The fascinating story of the round and the excavation can be read in Henrietta's full report on the excavations which can be obtained here: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwall-archaeological-unit/publications/>.

Excavations at Trethurgy Round, St Austell: Community and Status in Roman and Post-Roman Cornwall (2004) was £16.60 Now only £7.50



[Buy online](#)

I would like to thank Henrietta for her help with this piece but claim full credit for all the mistakes and wild speculation!

Area Representatives would love to hear from fellow CAS members, and the general public, about any feature of the historic environment in their parishes, whether a new discovery, something causing concern, or even just to answer queries. If you have any concerns, or new information, about any archaeological feature, please contact the Area Representative for the parish. If you do not know who that is, just look at the inside back cover of the latest journal, *Cornish Archaeology* 57, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk.

Roger Smith, 14th November 2020

