

# The Cornish Association of Victoria Inc. Ballarat Branch

A.C.N. A0008 264A

## April 2020 Newsletter

# Onen hag oll

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## Dates

### for your Diary



Saturday 4th April 2020 - has been cancelled  
The topics for this meeting will be held over to another meeting

Influential Ballarat Identities - with Wendy Benoit (William Hicks), Di Christensen, (Josiah Pearce) and Robyn Coates (Albert Coates)

Saturday 6th June 2020  
Annual General Meeting

Saturday 1st August 2020  
Yvon Davis - Mining, Mud and Medals - the story of the Tunnellers from World War 1

Saturday 3rd October 2020  
Peter Griffiths - The Welsh on the Central Victorian Goldfields

Saturday 5th December 2020  
Christmas Function

February Meeting

At the February Meeting, Wendy Benoit informed us that Cornish Pioneers of Ballarat, volumes 1 and 2 have now been reprinted.

Copies are available for \$22 - contact Lorice Jenkin if you are interested.

(details above)

### Planning for the St Piran's Festival was discussed and

Keith Lanyon gave us a brief summary of the life of St Piran.

We were pleased to welcome Anne Corbett, Ros Hendy and Sean Collins to our meeting.

### St Piran's Festival - 5th-8th

March 2020

#### As the day dawned on St Piran's

Day, Thursday 5th March, Ballarat was foggy with a misty rain - reminiscent of the Cornish mizzle that many had experienced whilst visiting Cornwall.

Not to be deterred 50 or so people gathered in Victoria Square to raise the flag of St Piran.



After a welcome from Wendy Benoit, Cr Mark Harris extended a welcome on behalf of the Mayor of the City of Ballarat and acknowledged

the Wadawurrung People



*It is an honour to be here today to celebrate this special occasion with you.*

***I'd like to wish you Gool Peran Lowen – which is happy St Piran's Day in Cornish.***

*As you may know, I am of Cornish descent.*

*The Harris family lived in the Mount Pleasant area for many years after Charles Harris came from Cornwall to improve the family fortunes – initially settling in Geelong, then Gordon and finally in Mount Pleasant.*

***St Piran's Day is the national day of Cornwall. It is held on the 5th March every year and is named after one of***

Meetings are held on the even months at Skipton Street Uniting Church Hall,  
cnr Darling and Skipton Streets, Ballarat.

Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and are followed by a shared high tea.



the patron saints of Cornwall, Saint Piran, who is also the patron saint of tin miners.

Cornish immigrants played a major part in the early development and prosperity of Victoria.

They brought skills on which the early settlement of Ballarat was dependent.

This included mining skills – with an influx of engineers and mine managers.

The Cornish brought educators, including William Henry Nicholls at Mt Pleasant, Charles Curnow Phillips and Sir Leslie Morshead.

They established churches, including the community of Wesleyans in Skipton Street.

They embarked on civic duty. At least four Mayors of Ballarat – John Henry Williams, John Whykes, Henry Leggo and Richard Pearse – were all Cornish.

They forged businesses –

Henry Richards Caselli – the architect of many buildings around Ballarat including the Ballarat Fire Station Tower in Ballarat East, the Ballarat Woollen Mill and St Alipius Catholic Church to name a few

James Ivey, the boat builder, whose steamers in 1882, Prince Consort, Queen and Princess, sailed every-day to and from the Ballarat Botanical gardens

Cyrus Bath Retallack, a blacksmith with a shop in Sturt Street who later became a blacksmith and farrier with premises in Mair Street

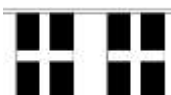
And Thomas Bath – **who obtained Ballarat's first publican's licence and opened what we now refer to as Craig's Hotel.**

And those with Cornish connections served our country in times of war. Sir Leslie Morshead and Sir Albert Coates **had Cornish connections while William Dunstan VC's grandparents were Cornish.**

Today, we continue to celebrate our important Cornish **heritage that laid the foundation's for Ballarat's future** and for our future generations.

**I'd also like to congratulate the Ballarat Branch of the Cornish Association of Victoria for its dedication to raising awareness of the importance of the Cornish emigration in the development of Australia, particularly in Ballarat.** And also for its work to stimulate interest in the history, family history, antiquities, traditions and social conditions of Cornwall.

I hope you enjoy this special day.  
Thank you. Mark Harris



The President of the Cornish Association of Victoria, Ken Peak, responded:



**Meur ras a'n**

*dynnargh kuv na.*

*Pur lowen ov vy bos*

*omma yn Ballarat avel Lywydh an Kowethas Gernewek a Victoria.*

*Enor meur yw ragov vy ow honen ha rag Kernow.*

*Myttin da! Ass yw dydh arbennik!*

*Hedhyw yw Gool Sen Pyran - vydha pub blydhen dhe'n pypmes a vis Meurth.*

*Gool Sen Pyran yw tra vras yn Kernow ha dres an norvys. Dell, Gool Pyran lowen!*

For those who may have missed a few words, this is what I said in the ancient Cornish language:

*Thank you for that warm welcome.*

*I am very pleased to be here in Ballarat as President of the Cornish Association of Victoria.*

*It is a great honour for me personally and for Cornwall.*

*Good Morning!*

*What a special day it is!*

**Today is St Piran's Day** - the fifth of March each year.

**St Piran's Day is a big affair in Cornwall** and around the world.

**So, Happy St Piran's Day!"**

**Now before we raise the St Piran's flag** - the flag of the Cornish nation - I would like to very briefly tell you the story of the legend of St Piran and why the day is so important to all people with a Cornish heritage.

There was a holy man called Kieran who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century in the land of 'Iwordhon' or Ireland, as we would call it today in English.

One day Kieran came across a battlefield and there were dead and dying men everywhere.

The ground was red with the blood of brave warriors. Kieran prayed for the souls of these men. Then a miracle happened and the dying men got up as if they had woken from a deep sleep.

The now healthy warriors thanked Kieran and gave thanks to God for sending him to them.

However the King who led the winning army was **very upset by Kieran's efforts to help his enemies.** He sent soldiers in the middle of the night to seize him. They took him to a cliff on the coast nearby. It was a wild and wet night and the waves were

crashing on the rocks below.  
They tied poor Kieran to a round granite millstone and threw him into the wild raging sea.

**No one in 'Iwordhon' ever heard of him again.**

But that's not where the story ends.  
Somehow, so the legend goes, the huge millstone floated in the sea with our Kieran tied to it! It floated across what we know now as the Celtic Sea and finally landed on a wide sandy beach.  
It was the 5<sup>th</sup> of March.

Kieran had arrived on the north west coast of what we know today as Kernow or Cornwall.  
Kieran was met by a group of Cornish locals who freed him.  
They mispronounced his Irish name and they called him Perran in Cornish.

A very cold Kieran or Perran gave thanks to God and with the help of his new friends they made a ring of stones for a fire to keep warm.  
**Perran's magical fire got so hot that a pure white metal, which we know today as tin, began to flow out of the blackened stones.**

The people had seen these stones in the ground before and so tin mining began in earnest, making the Cornish people happy.

**They named this stretch of beach 'Perran's Cove' or 'Perranporth' in Cornish where a village of the same name still stands in Cornwall.**  
The people of Kernow were so grateful to Perran or Piran as he came to be called, that they made him **'Sans Tasek an Stenoryon'** or the Patron Saint of Tinnars.

St Piran went on to become a great orator and converted many local folk to Christianity.  
The flag that you see here today represents the white tin on the black stones.  
This is why Pirantide is so important for people of Cornish heritage.

For us it also represents the contribution to Australia made by Cornish miners - **the 'Cousin Jacks and Jennies' who were our Cornish ancestors.**  
So many Cornish miners came to the goldfields of Central Victoria 170 years ago, including my great, great grandfather.

Like many others from Britain at the time, they were forced to find work in other lands.  
But it was the Cornish miners who were sought after to work all over the world.

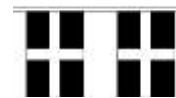
Their reputation, hard work and expertise went before them and they were at the forefront of mining innovation and progress.

Today we pay tribute to the contribution of the Cornish miners here on the goldfields of Ballarat.

**With great pride I raise the St Piran's flag.**  
**'Kernow ha Sen Pyran bys Vykken!'**  
*Cornwall and St Piran forever!*



Thank you.  
Ken Peak



Following the Flag Raising, people adjourned to the Sipton Street Uniting Church Hall for a delicious Pasty and Salad Lunch, with Pasties supplied by Kieran King from the Aussie Oggie Pasty Company in Ballarat and salads prepared by Bev Hocking.



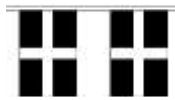
During the afternoon, Ken Peak, CAV President, gave us an interesting insight into the genealogy of his family initially using the DNA results of his and his mother but also through researching the origins of the Peak surname.  
He was surprised at some of the DNA results as far as locations were concerned including connections to the Basques in Spain.

An ancestor, William John Attwood, who travelled from Frome (Somerset) to Texas to Tylden (near Woodend) had many adventures.  
During his time in Texas, William Attwood was granted several hundred acres of land by the American government for his contribution to the civil war.  
A plaque on the Frome Sunday School building where he had served as Sunday School Superintendent for many years is of particular significance to the family.

**'Peak' or 'Peake' is not a traditional Cornish surname but is most likely derived from a 'Saxon' or**

'Old English' word 'Pekke' meaning hill or mountain. It is recorded that the 'De Pech' family received tenanted land in Denbighshire in Wales not long after 1066.

Ken's great, great grandfather, Thomas Henry Peak, arrived in Australia in late 1854 and his wife to be, Ann Curnow Roberts, travelled to Australia four years later (with some members of her family), and they were married in December 1858 in Castlemaine. They made their home in Spring Gully. Thomas was the night manager of the Duke of Cornwall Mine and later was employed by the Mt Alexander Shire. The family moved to Collingwood and he worked for the Collingwood Council. One of their daughters, Harriet, married Albert Woolhouse, and they lived in Northcote. Albert Woolhouse is a relative of Janet Woolhouse and so Ken and Janet are Cornish Cousins.



Thirty-one participants assembled at Skipton Street Hall, on the morning of Friday 6th March, for a tour of Creswick, and were met by Leanne and Rob, from Bendigo, at the Creswick Information Centre along with our guide for the morning, Val Lawrence.



A short tour of Creswick and visits to the Anglican church (home to the Barkly Street UC Organ) and the Masonic Temple, a first for most people, and a drive past the Australasia Mine no. 2 disaster site, where 22 miners died in 1892, preceded our visit to the immaculately kept Creswick Cemetery.

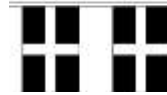
Jim and Bev Hocking, our tour organizers, had arranged for each person to have a pack of material, with information about some of the interments in the cemetery - Bev and Jim had previously been to the cemetery to tie gold and black ribbons on graves of interest.

People enjoyed morning tea in the Rotunda.



Returning to Creswick several people stopped off at the Creswick Woollen Mills and others returned to have lunch in Creswick.

The Creswick Museum was of interest to most and some people enjoyed sitting in the sun chatting and relaxing.



The South Gardens, opposite Lake Wendouree, was the venue for the 34th Australian Assembly of Bards of the Gorsedh Kernow, on Saturday 7th March. Twenty-one Bards participated and had travelled from NSW, South Australia, Bendigo, Geelong and Melbourne to join those from Ballarat.



Following the Ceremony Bards and their families and friends adjourned to the Skipton Street UC Hall for afternoon tea.



In the evening fifty-two people gathered for dinner, at Barklys restaurant, where a celebratory cake was cut by Lenice Stuchbery. Our after dinner speaker, Dr Phil Roberts, shared information concerning **Ballarat's Avenue of Honour and Arch of Victory.**

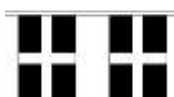
Phil was the recipient of **the Premier's History Award** in 2019 for his book, *Avenue of Memories*.



*Avenue of Memories* was produced to mark the **centenary of Ballarat's Arch of Victory and Avenue of Honour**, which runs for 22



kilometres and is considered the longest avenue of its kind in Australia. Close to 4,000 trees were planted on the avenue to pay tribute to the men and women from the district who served in World War One, 528 of whom died.



Some lusty singing of Methodist hymn favourites preceded and were included in the Heritage Church Service at Skipton Street Uniting Church on Sunday morning.

Rev. Ted Curnow and his wife Beryl led the Service based on a **Chapel Service and Ted's text was from the book of Hebrews 13: 8 - *Jesus the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow.***

(Ted has kindly allowed this to be placed on the CAV website:

<http://www.cornishvic.org.au/docs/An%20Autumn%20Cornish%20Weekend%20%20%20Ballarat.pdf>



After a light lunch provided by the Skipton Street UC women, Max Duthie gave us a short talk about the history of the Mt Pleasant area of Ballarat, before twenty-one people travelled in convoy to a selection of sites where Max gave us information about each of the sites.



Special thanks to Bev and Jim for providing transport in their mini-bus.

In the evening twenty-two met for dinner at the Leagues Club.

Thank you to everyone who came to the Festival and also to all those who contributed in any way to the **Festival's success.**

## It's Celtic Saints' Month

With St David's Day tomorrow (1st March), St Piran's on Thursday (5th March) and St Patrick's (17th March) in a couple of weeks' time, this has to be the month of the Celtic saints.

To the greater glory of St Euny, my local saint, I shall be forced to devote the next three blogs to the subject.

### Who were the Celtic saints?

Saints were supposed to have been roaming around in the early middle ages causing all sorts of mayhem while confronting pagans and serpents alike.

They were men and sometimes women, Christian missionaries, suffering for their faith, performing miracles and founding churches during their hectic voyaging up and down the seaways of Celtic Britain.

### What truth can be gleaned from the scanty historical record is more prosaic?

Some saints may well have taken to their boats (or millstones or leaves).

The life of Samson, written in the late 600s, suggests he crossed Cornwall on his way from Wales to Brittany.

**However, most saints' lives were written up much later, from the ninth century onwards, centuries after their subjects had died, and are much less credible.**

**Although people liked to think that 'their' saint personally founded 'their' church, it's more likely that the saint's cult migrated, not the saints themselves.**

The great age of the Celtic saints was the period between 500 and 700, a time when Christianity was spreading across the Celtic world.

This was probably also the time cults began to spread, transferred from monasteries to daughter churches.

Maybe a relic or two, the supposed teeth or a **fragment of a saint's bone for example, would accompany the cult, to be proudly displayed in a shrine in the church.**

Saints often had their holy wells, to which people would head to seek healing.

Certain saints had particular specialisms; for example, St Cadoc was good for intestinal worms. Meanwhile, if you had a sick pig, St Sancred was the chap to pray to.

They would also have had their special days when services were held, feasts were prepared, relics were proudly paraded around the parish and **sometimes the saint's play was performed at the local plain an gwarry.**

<https://bernarddeacon.com/2020/03/01/its-celtic-saints-month>

The lifestyle of the Celtic saints  
Around 140 separate Celtic saints were venerated in Cornwall.

Later, it was assumed most of them came from elsewhere, from Wales, Brittany or Ireland, even though many were in fact probably native to Cornwall. As time passed, saints became the object of local folklore.

In imagining the histories of their saints, the Cornish revealed how they saw themselves. Nicholas Orme (in his *Cornwall and the Cross*, p.18) has written that **'between about AD 900 and 1500 ... people in Cornwall ... saw their past as linked with Ireland and Wales, not with England or Rome'.**

Various miraculous events were associated with **Cornwall's saints.**

Cuby and Piran could carry fire without being burnt. Petroc lived on an island in the Indian Ocean for seven years sustained by a single fish, while Carantoc possessed a magic perambulating altar. This sailed of its own volition across the Severn from Wales with the saint hot in pursuit. Once across the Severn Carantoc had to tame a serpent that was annoying the locals. The same district near Bristol seems to have been particularly infested with serpents as Keyne turned them to stone by her praying. Not all serpents and dragons were being slain by the score in what was becoming England. Samson had to deal with one on his way through Cornwall for example.

Arthur figured in relation to several saints.

Carantoc was assisted by Arthur when taming his dragon, while Kea returned to Cornwall from Brittany to broker a peace deal between Arthur and Modred.

Endelient was the god daughter of Arthur, who had helped her when a local lord killed her cow. When **she died, Endelient's body was dragged in an ox-cart** and the church built at the place the oxen stopped, something that also happened to Mylor.

Some saints were incredibly strong.

Morwenna carried a stone for the font of her church on her head from the shore up the cliffs to the spot she chose.

Selevan cracked a stone with a single blow of his fist. Menfre or Minver could fight off the devil merely by

throwing her comb at him.

Saints seem to have had more than their fair share of bad luck.

When a child, Mylor, son of a duke of Cornwall, had his hand and foot chopped off by an evil uncle. He received silver replacements that miraculously grew with him.

Blaise was tortured with wool-combs but then very forgivingly became the patron saint of wool-combers.

Selevan caught two fish with a single hook to feed the two children of his sister Breage. Unfortunately, the children choked on the bones.

Gwinear was beheaded at the site of his church, massacred by the Cornish pagan King Teudar along with the rest of the company of 777 that he had brought with him from Ireland.

Sancreed killed his father by accident and had to live as a swineherd in penance, later being revered for his ability to cure pigs.

According to Nicholas Orme, in 1677 the too-clever vicar of Sancreed was prosecuted by his parishioners **for unwisely saying that he was 'the unhappiest of ministers, for that other ministers were patrons of their flocks but that he was but the herdsman of a company of swine'.**

And finally, saints could make what look like quite odd decisions.

God offered Sithney the chance to be the patron of young women.

**'No,' replied the misogynist, 'for they'll always be pestering me asking for husbands and fine clothes.'**

Instead he chose to be the patron of mad dogs.

Much less trouble.

<https://bernarddeacon.com/2020/03/03/the-lifestyle-of-the-celtic-saints>

Bernard W. Deacon is an academic, based at the Institute of Cornish Studies; he has previously worked for the Open University and Exeter **University's Department of Lifelong Learning.**

His main research interests are:

\*18th and 19th century Cornish communities

\*The Cornish language and its revitalisation

\*Cornwall's population and how it has changed

\*How peripheral regions are governed

\*Who are the Cornish and how their identity is presented

He is a fluent Cornish language speaker, and represents the Institute of Cornish Studies on the Cornish Language Partnership. In 2007, he was re-elected as Chairman of Cussel an Tavaz Kernuak (The Cornish language Council).

Festivals cancelled

Cornwall is not being spared from the effects of COVID 19 and has been experiencing the same panic buying as we have seen in Victoria.

It is unfortunate that three of the major Cornish Festivals have been cancelled and the three places where these are held will no doubt be missing the money brought into their towns/cities by the visitors who attend.

However given the hospital facility shortage in Cornwall and the age of many of its residents, it is understandable.

Several cases of COVID 19 have been reported in Cornwall

The Festivals are:

\*Trevithick Day held on the last Saturday in April in Camborne

\*May Day Festival in Padstow held on 1st May

\*Flora day held on 8th May in Helston

The Royal Cornwall Show has been postponed and is now scheduled for 10th to 12th September.

Pasty Championship

A decorated amateur baker from Bristol has taken top prize at the World Pasty Championships at the Eden Project in Cornwall.

Vanessa Farr, who won in the prestigious Cornish Pasty Amateur category, and her friends have been attending the competition since the first one in 2012.

She previously won the category at the championships in 2017, before bagging third place in 2013 and 2014 and second place last year (2019).

Vanessa bakes her competition pasties in Padstow, Cornwall to ensure they can be defined as Cornish.

Some Cornish Pasty Facts

- The first evidence of the pasty in Cornwall has been traced to 14th Century
- During the 19th Century, pasties became the staple food for miners, as they were a convenient size for carrying to work
- It is thought that the miners gave the pasty its distinctive D shape too - the crust became a handle
- The Cornish Pasty received protected status from the EU in 2011. It means any product sold as a Cornish pasty must be made in Cornwall, to the genuine recipe
- A Cornish pasty must have 12.5% meat and at least 25% vegetable content
- The industry employs more than 2,000 people and is worth £300m per year

Source: Cornish Pasty Association

## Pesky seagulls

If you have been on the beach happily munching your lunch and find that a seagull flew down and snatched it, here maybe the reason why.

Seagulls are more likely to be attracted to food that has been handled by humans first, new research suggests. The study was carried out in Cornish towns including Falmouth and Penzance.

Scientists armed with two identical food items approached herring gulls in Cornwall.

When presented with a choice between the treats, 79% of the gulls opted for items they had seen in human hands.

Senior author Dr Laura Kelley, of Exeter University, said the study's findings demonstrated the importance of disposing of food correctly.

The report, published in the Royal Society Open Science journal, said a researcher carrying wrapped flapjacks covered by buckets approached lone gulls.

When the buckets were lifted, the researcher handled one of the flapjacks for 20 seconds before putting it back on the ground.

Of the 38 gulls tested, 24 pecked at one of the flapjacks and 19 of these (79%) chose the one that had been handled, the study said.

To see if gulls were responding to human handling alone, the experiment was repeated with two non-food items – sponges that were cut into the same size and shape as the flapjacks.

**In this case, gulls' preference for the handled sponge did not exceed "chance levels"** – suggesting that handling draws their attention to food in particular.

Source BBC Cornwall & Pirate FM

## Second Fisherman's Friends Film

It has been announced that a new Fisherman's Friends film is coming to Cornwall.

Filming for the sequel will start in the Duchy this summer. (June, July, August)

The first film told the story of how a group of fishermen and workers from Port Isaac signed a million pound record deal ten years ago.

Their success led to a top ten album and performances in front of the Queen and on the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury.

No information has been revealed about what will happen in Fisherman's Friends 2 but it is due out in cinemas in March 2021.

## Floating Wind Farms

A major £150 million project to install floating offshore windfarms off the coast of Cornwall could become a reality within the next five years.

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has been leading on the plans for floating offshore wind turbines to be installed off the Cornish coast and another plan off the Welsh coast.

There are plans to have some floating offshore turbines plugged into the Wave Hub off Hayle and power up to 23 000 homes.

It has been suggested that the floating wind turbines could be constructed in Falmouth which would bring further economic benefits to Cornwall.

## Contaminated sites identified

Almost 2,000 'potentially contaminated sites' have been identified in Cornwall which are going to be investigated.

Cornwall Council is carrying out an online survey dealing with contaminated land affecting parts of the Duchy.

With its mining and steam engineering past, Cornwall is rich in industrial heritage, but over the centuries some land has been impacted by industrial and commercial changes.

A new contaminated land inspection strategy has now been produced.

Experts say this will help protect the health of the environment and the people who live in it from land contamination that can pose a serious threat.

The Council has identified 1,920 potentially contaminated sites that require investigation. No information has been revealed as to where these are though.

What does this mean?

Officials say that many of the sites that have been identified for inspection may not be considered to be a cause of potential harm and nothing may need to be done to the land.

For example, a former mining site that has no person living on it and where the environment is not being significantly impacted by contamination may need no action.

However, where land contamination poses a serious threat the council can require a number of remediation measures to be carried out, including treatment of contamination on site, removal, barrier or capping methods, or putting other measures in place to restrict access to a particular area.