

Buildings at Risk

June 2021

Newsletter No.8



A three-year project led by the Cornish Buildings Group and supported by Historic England and the Cornwall Heritage Trust commenced in September 2020. The funding supports a case officer in order to help identify and monitor buildings at risk and seek solutions for neglected, redundant or derelict listed buildings and unlisted buildings.

Chapels special edition newsletter

'Mapping Methodism' is an initiative between the Methodist church and the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies that will chart the history of chapels throughout the county. A dotted-line connects this worthwhile research project with our own work on buildings at risk. This edition of the newsletter will highlight some of the plights of some Cornish chapels as congregations fall and buildings fall empty.

For more on this project go to [Mapping Methodism Cornish Story](#)

In the news

A planning application to re-development the 18th century Polvellan Manor, West Looe, into six 'elderly living' apartments and the erection of 19 new-build apartments and single stand-alone house is active and can be viewed on the Cornwall Council planning portal at [PA21/03163](#) The Cornish Buildings Group response is currently under consultation.

This project has formally applied to Historic England to statutory list Pomery's building in St Mawes. This important building, as featured in [Newsletter No.7](#), is one of the last examples of vernacular warehouse architecture on the harbourfront and, as such, is a much-valued local heritage asset. The distinctive building today is neglected and at risk of demolition.

Our recent blog [Focus on Penzance](#) which highlighted the deteriorating condition of the Grade 1 listed market house received much local support. We have expressed our concerns to Cornwall Council and have written to Penzance Town Deal who have not responded.

Casework

[Newsletter No.7](#) highlighted the plight of two Grade 2 listed mines – Trevaunance (NGR: SW 71254 50989 [Heritage Gateway – Results](#)) and St Aubyn (NGR: SW 71746 42287 [Heritage Gateway – Results](#)). The former is located within the A7 Area of the World Heritage Site – The St Agnes Mining District. A duty of care is placed on the owners to maintain these structures. We will continue to pursue both of these cases.

This project continues to talk with various partners about casework. In June we met with Historic England to discuss various listing projects; the Victorian Society to consider St Paul's church, Truro, and our e-petition that has now reached nearly 3,000 signatures and we have written to Natural England regarding the growth of Japanese Knotweed on the Grade II listed Greenburrow engine house, Boskednan (NGR: SW 43449 34420 [Heritage Gateway – Results](#)). In addition, we had an introductory talk with Matthew Knight, Cornwall Council's new historic environment strategy lead, who is extremely supportive of this project. We feel it is very important to gather wider support and work with statutory bodies and interest groups in order to strengthen our position to champion buildings at risk in Cornwall.

Emma Trevarthen's excellent blog [Ponton's Piece, St Cleer](#) prompted a conversation with Historic England about the condition of this important small holding complex. The blog will, I am sure, continue to generate interest and we will decide on further action after a site visit with Liskeard Old Cornwall Society in July.



Pontus Peace in the parish of St Cleer is a settlement that now consists solely of two adjoining smallholders' cottages, located between the village of Minions and the hamlet of Gonamena, on the south-eastern edge of Bodmin Moor.

We were very pleased to be invited by Historic England to consult on an application to upgrade the listing of the former smithy at Wheal Busy, Chacewater (NRG SW7388344752), from Grade 2 to 2*. The site has a fascinating history – active in the 17th century, the earliest Newcomen engine was installed here in 1724, later replaced by a Smeaton engine before the first Boulton and Watt engine was installed in 1778. Abandoned and reopened several times in the 19th century the site finally closed in 1872, only to reopen again in the 20th century to mine arsenic. It remains one of Cornwall's most important industrial sites and worthy of an elevated listing.

Chapels at risk

Picking up on the 'Mapping Methodism' project we remain concerned about the plight of redundant and empty chapels in Cornwall. Highlighted here are a few of the chapels that have been reported to us as being at risk.

It is not known when **Pisagh chapel**, situated between Ruan High Lanes and Philleigh (SW 89856 40046), was built, however it was first mentioned in 1842 when it was referred to as 'chapel in Treworga Vean'. In 1844 there was an account of a 'good union meeting' at Pisgah, and in 1848 a dozen new members had been recruited. By 1878 the chapel was renovated by Mr Curgenven at a cost of £70; some 200 people attended the re-opening where the Rev T. E. Mundy preached three sermons, followed by a tea in a barn supplied by Mr Davy.



Somewhere beneath this undergrowth are the remains of Pisagh chapel!

The chapel closed in 1892 due falling membership. Throughout the 20th century the building has fallen into disrepair a consequence of its various uses, latterly being used as to house farm implements. Although now essentially a ruin, what is left of the building is a completely overgrown.

Scarcewater Bible Christian chapel, near St Stephen, built 1869, now disused (HER Number: 27061). Small wayside example near the site of an earlier chapel, presumed to have become the Sunday school, now also disused. The building is constructed of granite rubble with some granite rustication with a dry slate roof and crested clay ridge tiles, The round-arched window openings have Y-traceried heads. There is a round inscribed panel to the front gable. The building is declining fast and needs urgent repairs.



Having passed the site recently the building is in a far more parlous state than shown in this image. The roof, in particular, large areas of missing tiles leaving the interiors open to the elements.

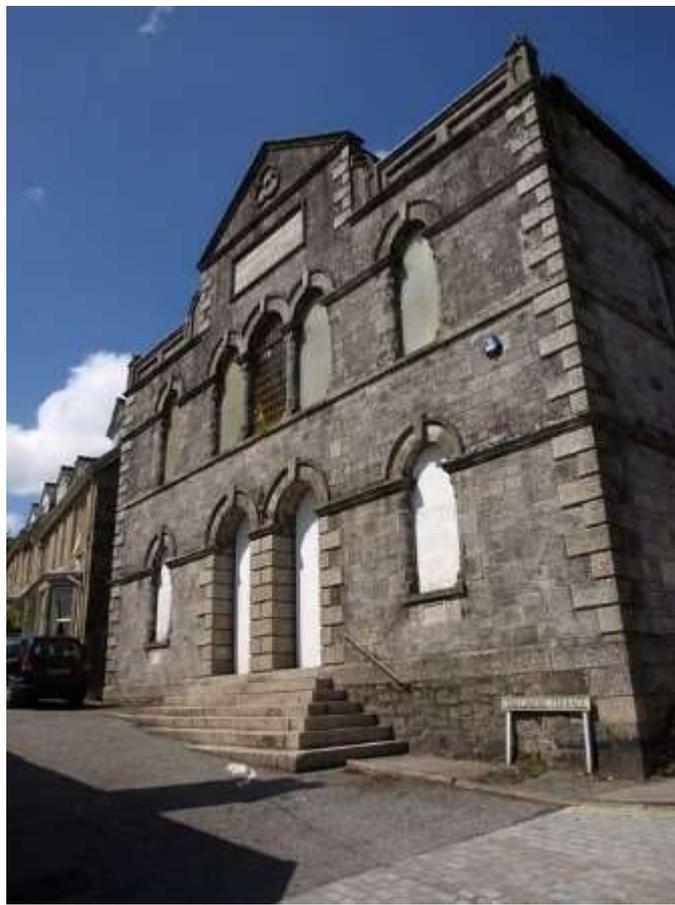


St Day Primitive Methodist Chapel.

St Day Primitive Methodist chapel (HER record 139213) by James Hicks c.1865, now converted to commercial premises. The 3-bay front has fine dressed granite detailing, and buttresses capped by spirelets dividing the bays. A central rose window is positioned above the late-20th century enlarged doorway. Despite later alterations this building makes an important contribution to the character and interest of the St Day Conservation Area

Of the building Mr Pullen noted in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* of 1860.

‘The re-opening services of our chapel at St. Day were held January 8th and 10th, 1860: on the former day the Rev. R. Killingrey preached morning and afternoon, and the writer in the evening; on the latter day the writer preached in the morning, and the Rev. G. Johnson afternoon and evening. On Wednesday, January 18th, a tea-meeting, gratuitously provided, was held in the chapel; after tea, the public meeting was presided over by Mr. R. Tolley, and addresses were delivered by Messrs. H. Worth, S. Kelley, and O. Pullen. A blessed influence attended the whole of these services, and considering the unfavourableness of the weather, the congregations have been good, and the collections liberal. The chapel has been lengthened 17 feet, a lobby erected, four additional windows put in, and a centre piece, six feet in diameter; it will seat about 340, being additional accommodation for 100 hearers. The whole of the cost will be about £130, towards which we shall perhaps obtain £50 by opening services, subscriptions, and donations. We tender our thanks to all who have assisted us in any way. Our prayer is that God may pour out His Spirit on us, and that the chapel may become the birthplace of many souls’.



We are still awaiting a new planning application to convert **Tregarne chapel** (above) in St Austell to residential units. Tregarne chapel and the former Sunday school building had been rapidly declining for well over a decade. The chapel has a long and troubled planning history however we are sure a good solution can be found to revitalise this much valued building



Dimma Methodist church

Dimma Methodist Church, situated between Wainhouse Corner and Treskinnick Cross on the Atlantic Highway in North Cornwall, is a detached chapel with Sunday school and a former stables. The property is adjoined to the north and west by a graveyard which continues to take burials. The former Bible Christian wayside chapel has picturesque Gothic windows with margin panes and intersecting glazing bars to the arched heads. Rendered rubble walls with brick dressings. Gabled porch with arched doorway. Rubble road-frontage walls and gate-piers. The building has recently been sold

We are still awaiting a planning decision from Cornwall Council for the conversion of **Carharrack Methodist church** to residential dwellings. The various comments regarding this scheme can be seen on the [Cornwall Council Planning Portal](#) against applications PA20/11000 and PA20/11001. See the building's full history at [Mapping Methodism](#)

Request for information

Two farmsteads that we are concerned about are Townsend farm and Penance farm in Lanteglos by Fowey and St Stephen in Brannel parishes, respectively.



Townsend farm, near Fowey

Both farms comprise of barns and stables, grouped in a loose courtyard plan around three sides of a farmyard of mid to late 19th century and 20th century date. At Pennance ([HER record](#)) the farmhouse is to the south east of these buildings. The barns and stables are made from rough local slate (shillit) with dressed granite quoins, door jambs and lintels, and a range of roof coverings including slate, corrugated asbestos and corrugated iron.

Any information or history on these historic farmsteads would be very welcome.

How can you follow the project?

Our WordPress blog <https://buildingsatrisk.wordpress.com/> has proved successful and up until mid- January has received over 3,000 views. Our website has been updated as the project progresses

<https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/home>

Updates and alerts will be shared via our Twitter feed @CbgCornwall

To keep up-to-date on the project please follow our blog; when we have something to say you will receive an alert. Or you can follow us on Twitter.

Please support us

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of the project and its aims.

You can play your part in this work by volunteering to support our aims. You can do this by reporting your concerns about historic buildings or valued heritage assets in your area which are either derelict or not being properly looked after. Please contact Paul Holden at cbgcasework@gmail.com

A form that will help us with some background local knowledge is available on our website

[CBG – Buildings at Risk Project 2020-2023 \(google.com\)](#)

And finally...

Historic chapels can be successfully reused as seen by the recent restoration of Godolphin chapel. A place of worship has been on this site since at least 1830 as a Bible Christian chapel. In 1934 the original chapel was converted to a Sunday school and extended to provide a newer, larger Methodist chapel to the front. In 2017 the chapel was sold to Godolphin Cross Community Association and long overdue works to repair, update and convert the building began. Ponton Bradbury Wynter and Cole were the architects. The chapel had strong connections with the village, the nearby Godolphin Estate and today, the wider Mining World Heritage site. The project was funded by The National Lottery-Reaching Communities, Architectural Heritage Foundation, Biffa, SITA, Breage Parish Council, Cornwall Council, Cornwall Community Foundation, Sport England, Trusthouse, BA, Garfield Weston, EU Leader Programme and the local community.

