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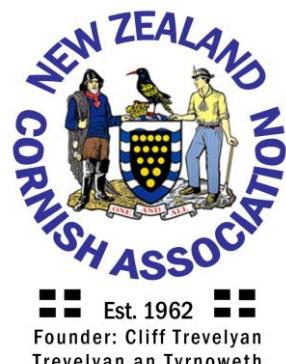
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# NEWSLETTER

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

## Gorsedh ceremony 2020

Covid 19 placed severe restrictions on the annual bardic ceremony this year. As the Grand Bard, Elizabeth Carne, Melennek, said in her speech, the Gorsedh has held a ceremony every year since 1928, even during the war years. It was especially important not to miss a year due to the virus. Relatively few bards were present this year and those who were there wore masks or visors and kept their distance from each other.



The event was to have been held at Bude Stratton but was relocated to the courtyard outside Lys Kernow (County Hall) in Truro, by kind permission of Cornwall Council. Among the 22 new Bards were filmmaker Mark Jenkin (Bait) and the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall, Colonel Edward Bolitho. The ceremony also honoured Bards who have died in the past year, including former Grand Bard, Vanessa Beaman, Gwenenen.



A grant from FEAST, a body funded by Arts Council England, that supports and promotes the arts in Cornwall, enabled the Gorsedh to engage Three S Films to live-stream the ceremony. You can watch the resulting video using the following link: <https://vimeo.com/454332175>. The order of ceremony in English and Kernewek can be downloaded from the Gorsedh website: <http://gorsedhkernow.org.uk/>

## Lobb Brothers – part 1

In 1809 when their son, William, was born, John Lobb and his wife lived in Lane End between Wadebridge and Bodmin. John worked as the estate carpenter at Pencarrow, the local stately home. When John lost his position at Pencarrow, they moved to Perranarworthal and he was taken on at the Carclew Estate near Falmouth. Here another son, Thomas was born in 1817. There were 6 children in total: 4 boys and 2 girls.

When they were old enough, William and Thomas worked in the stove houses at Carclew. The squire

there, Sir Charles Lemon, had a keen interest in exotic plants. The estate hot houses were needed to provide suitable growing conditions for seeds and plants sent from overseas. Sir Charles encouraged the young men to study horticulture and botany and set them on life-long careers. The other two brothers went into the mining industry; Henry worked as a labourer in a gunpowder plant and James became a cooper.

In 1837 William was recruited by Mr Stephen Davey of Redruth to help set up a "horticultural establishment". From there, he moved on to become gardener to the Williams family at nearby Scorrier House. He gained a reputation as a keen amateur botanist and assembled a fine collection of dried specimens of British plants, particularly Cornish ferns.

Based on his experience at Carclew, Thomas had been employed in 1830 by the Veitch family who operated a plant nursery near Exeter in Devon. James Veitch wanted to expand his range of plants by engaging a plant hunter to source new specimens from South America that he could sell exclusively. Thomas suggested his brother. Despite not being a trained botanist, William impressed Veitch as being "quick of observation, ready in resources and practical in their application". He was given an introduction to Kew Gardens near London for training on preparing herbarium specimens for transport back home.

William's first expedition was on board HM Packet Seagull which set sail from Falmouth on 7 November 1840 destined for Rio de Janeiro.



He was given an annual allowance of £400 for incidental expenses. In his baggage were seeds of the early Rhododendron hybrid "Cornish Early Red" as a gift from Veitch to the new emperor of Brazil, Pedro II.

The seeds were planted in the gardens of the

Imperial Palace at Petrópolis where they are still growing today. The first shipment of specimens back to Devon arrived in March 1841 including orchids, begonias, alstromerias, a red salvia, a pink mandevilla and a small hindsia shrub that became popular in Victorian greenhouses. It was a good start, but his second consignment two months later arrived in poor condition and none of the plants survived. The next year William sent back 5 cases of plants, seeds and dried specimens from Argentina. He continued his journeys but the crossing of the high Andes through extremely cold temperatures into Chile took its toll and laid William low for a while. His goal was to find *Araucaria Araucana* more commonly known as the monkey puzzle tree. It wasn't completely new to England – specimens were growing at Kew – but Veitch wanted bulk supplies to cultivate on a commercial scale. His hunt was successful and, demonstrating typically Cornish resourcefulness, William shot down cones from the trees while his porters gathered them from the ground. He managed to send sacksful back home and Veitch was able to start selling seedlings in 1843 at £10 per 100. William did not share in any of the profits earned. He did, however, send packages of seeds to Carclew and Scorrier where they grew a plantation of monkey puzzle trees.

William moved on to Peru, Ecuador and Panama and continued to supply a wide selection of novel plants including varieties of calandrinia, calceolaria and passionflower. He had accumulated another four cases of material but was required to seek quarantine on Puna Island to avoid an outbreak of yellow fever in Ecuador. The delay in despatch resulted in the consignment being ruined. Veitch wanted the shipment replaced. Despite being exhausted from his travels and repeated attacks of ill health (he had contracted dysentery in Panama), Lobb returned to the interior of Peru for a further four months, finally arriving back in England in May 1844 with yet more plants and seeds.

In 1845 William went back to South America and toured through Brazil, Argentina and Chile as far south as Tierra del Fuego. This trip was specifically to collect hardy and semi-hardy trees and shrubs. His despatches back to the Veitch business were as extensive and successful as before. The most noteworthy catch was a berberis that had been discovered by Charles Darwin on his voyage on HMS Beagle. The Gardeners'

Chronicle claimed that "the introduction of this single species would be enough to earn the gratitude of the whole gardening world".

The following year William was sent abroad again. This time, in cooler climates, he visited North America on search of conifers and hardy shrubs. He arrived at San Francisco at the height of the gold rush then travelled south into the Monterey area. He collected samples of many species of pine including, as you would expect, the Monterey Pine. In the autumn of 1851, he moved north and continued returning stock of several species of pine trees such as the California redwood. After 2 years he returned to San Francisco where he met the California Academy of Science and was introduced to a hunter called Augustus T. Dowd who told him a story of stumbling over a grove of "big trees" while chasing a bear. With typical enthusiasm William set off immediately to the Calveras Grove and was astonished to find monstrous trees, recording in his notebook "From 80 to 90 trees exist all within circuit of a mile, from 250ft. to 320ft. in height, 10–12ft. in diameter." He gathered as many seeds, cones, saplings and vegetative shoots as he could transport. Veitch was able to propagate them and they became a popular commercial success. The previously unknown species was eventually named sequoiadendron gigantium (Giant Redwood) but in the UK was given the common name of Wellingtonia after the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Wellington. Lobb returned to England in 1853 but had little respite from his gruelling travels and was sent off again in '84 to California on another three-year contract.

This time he did not return. His health failed and communication with him declined. Although he sent some samples to private collectors, few, if any, went to Veitch. On 3 May 1864, Lobb died forgotten and alone in San Francisco. The cause of death was recorded as "paralysis" but was probably as a result of syphilis contracted during extracurricular activities at some point in his various travels. He had no mourners and was buried in a public plot.

#### Lobb plants in NZ

Various plants collected by the Lobb Brothers have made their way to NZ given their popularity in British gardens and can be found the length and breadth of the country. The Monkey Puzzle is related to kauri but,



Monkey puzzle



Giant redwood



Darwin's berberis

coming from the high Andes, is suited to colder climates. On the NZ Tree Register there is a grand specimen listed at Waihopi just outside Invercargill. A giant redwood grows near Reefton hospital. Pitcher plants can be seen in Pukekura Park fernery in New Plymouth (and your local garden centre). Vireya rhododendrons are increasingly popular as bedding plants.

Not all Lobb plants are welcome. Weedbusters, who run a programme to educate about, control and irradicate weeds from NZ, has listed berberis darwinii (Darwin's Berberis) as an invasive weed. I was surprised to find it growing prolifically on the route up Mount Kaukau near my home, its bright orange flowers and dark green foliage blending well with the surrounding gorse, another introduced scourge.

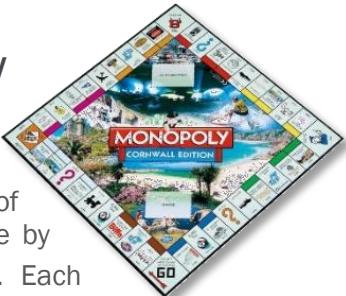
There will be more about the Lobb brothers in the next newsletter.

## Cornwall Monopoly

Searching for a Christmas present with a difference? A Cornwall edition of Monopoly is being made by 'Winning Moves Games'. Each of the squares has a Cornish place name. For instance The Eden Project and St Michael's Mount, Cornwall's two main tourist attractions, replace Mayfair and Park Lane as the premium blue properties. The utilities include Newquay airport and St Ives station.

You can buy the game for £29.99 from the The Cornish Store at 11 Arwenack Street, Falmouth TR11 3JA, Cornwall, UK or through their website - [www.thecornishstore.co.uk](http://www.thecornishstore.co.uk).

Although the concept is appealing, some reviewers were critical of the quality of the making which includes a thin playing board and plastic pieces, saying things like "They don't make Monopoly like they used to".



## Contributions sought...

The Association has been approached by three artistic projects seeking contributions from members in NZ.

### Agan Kernow Project

The Cornish Association of Victoria is compiling a book of Cornish anecdotes and stories that they are calling the Agan Kernow Project (Our Cornwall). Ken Peak, president of CAV, has been in contact saying "We are seeking vignettes and short stories about Cornish ancestors and/or stories about trips to Cornwall. We plan to publish these in book form as the outcome of this

international project. The project will remain open until the end of 2020, depending on the response.

"They don't have to be long stories; a page or two will suffice. We have developed a series of questions to help you make a start. These documents are a helpful place to begin and are posted at: <http://www.cornishvic.org.au/>. Your stories don't even have to be typed – just send us what you have and we will gladly edit them."

If you would like to contribute and share your story, contact Ken at 15 Shorthorn Crescent, Doreen, VIC, Australia 3754  
email: [pkicons29@bigpond.com](mailto:pkicons29@bigpond.com)  
phone: 0061 400 309 469

As Ken pointed out, the project is open until the end of the year, so please submit your drafts as soon as possible.

### Mining history

Wellington artist and lecturer in photography at Massey University, Caroline McQuarrie, is working on an exhibition about Cornish settlers who came to work as miners in New Zealand in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and she needs your help.

During a residency at Plymouth University she photographed abandoned mining sites in Cornwall. On returning home she photographed similar sites in New Zealand. Along with her photographs Caroline is making embroideries from photos of the settlers and she would love to hear from anyone who has old family photos from mining areas such as Otago, the West Coast region, the Waihi area or Kawau Island. She would be happy to provide you with high resolution scans of your photos in return for using the images. She is particularly interested in photos that show signs of everyday life, as she intends to highlight these details in the embroideries. The original photographs won't be used and will be returned to you. People won't be recognisable in the final embroideries. Included here is an example of an embroidery she has made from one supplied by Wellington member, Elaine Bolitho. If you would like to learn more, share your photos, or simply be notified when the exhibition happens, please email Caroline:



Mary Jane Bolitho with her son James, his son Ben, and his daughter Esther posing for a rare four-generation picture circa 1927. VIC BOLITHO

[c.l.mcquarrie@massey.ac.nz](mailto:c.l.mcquarrie@massey.ac.nz)

For examples of her previous work see her website: [www.carolinemcquarrie.com](http://www.carolinemcquarrie.com)

## Music archive

 A collaborative project funded by the Cornwall Heritage Trust, Gorsedh Kernow and the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies has resulted in the launch of a new website featuring all kinds of music; from brass bands to choirs, pub songs to rock bands and orchestral to pop. The project stems from an archive of sheet music and old manuscripts collected by the former Cornish Music Guild, which had been housed in the Cornish Studies Library until it was rediscovered by the group and handed to Kresen Kernow, Cornwall's archive centre in Redruth.

[www.cornishnationalmusicarchive.co.uk](http://www.cornishnationalmusicarchive.co.uk) is freely available online for people to search and explore. It has a section where visitors can create a profile and log in to write their own articles for publication. The creators encourage contributions on all aspects of music in Cornwall with categories for individuals, performing groups, songs, tunes, and many more.

What qualifies for inclusion in an archive of Cornish music? Tony Mansell, projects co-ordinator, explains 'We've put our heads together and decided that the archive should be broad and diverse, rather than narrow and prescriptive. It includes music that is, or has been, popular in and special to Cornwall, impactful in Cornwall, written in Cornwall, written about Cornwall, inspired by Cornwall – covering individuals, traditions and compositions that express, reflect and celebrate Cornwall and our distinctive identity.'

You may respond to these requests directly but I am happy to act as 'postman', if necessary. My contact details are at the top of the first page.

## Branches

### Taranaki

Our thoughts are with Carol & Graham Cowling who have both been key members of the Taranaki Branch for many years. They have had a tough time recently. Graham has been enduring continuing poor health, Carol lost her mother earlier in the year and in September their son, Mark, died in Christchurch. **Keskalar Gwir** (sincere condolences).

That's it for this newsletter my 'ansomes. See 'ee again dreckly!

## Christchurch

Attendance at the Branch meeting on 8 August was as high as usual. David spoke on another item from Rev. Schollar's book. This time it was the fate of the people who were sentenced to transportation to Australia for very minor crimes, nominally for 7 years but with no hope of return to Cornwall. Upon completing their sentence, they were given a parcel of bushland to clear and make a home for themselves.

Les read out the legend of the Mermaid of Padstow who, upon being injured by a fisherman, put a curse on the port that it should be forever subject to being silted up by sand banks which it is to this day. Barbara and Jennie presented a pictorial "News from Cornwall" which was compiled by Judy of Martinborough. Mikki then showed us a Penelope Keith DVD of customs in the villages of Devon and Cornwall.

The afternoon was completed with a raffle and afternoon tea.

There were 26 people at the meeting on 12 September when the branch celebrated its 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary with a cake at afternoon teatime and a rendition of 'Trelawny'. The entertainment included more passages from Rev. Schollar's book and news from Cornwall. Dorothy Drew reported on the second half of her holiday journey across Canada which included the annual Calgary stampede, a scenic helicopter ride over the mountains near Banff and a coast-to-coast train ride.

## Places mentioned in this newsletter



Nick