

January/February 454 - mis Genver / mis Hwevrer 2021

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Est. 1962
Founder: Cliff Trevelyan
Trevelyan an Tynnoweth

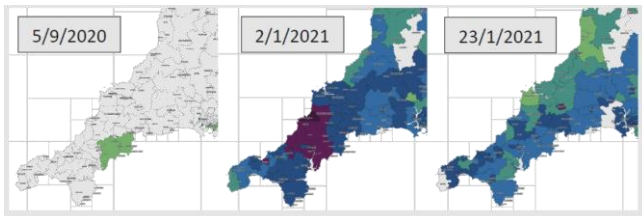
NEWSLETTER
L y t h e r - n o w o d h o w

2021
BLEDHEN NOWYDH DA!
Happy New Year

Covid-19 update

Despite recent scares in NZ, it is still saddening to compare our situation with that in Cornwall. The effects of covid-19 have been felt there to a lesser extent than the rest of the UK but the rates of infections and deaths far exceed those in NZ. The following statistics should be interpreted knowing that the population of Cornwall is about 570,000, not much more than in Greater Wellington.

The UK government provides data on infection rates by tracking cases at three levels of detail. The most detailed level is called - in typical bureaucratic gobbledygook - middle layer super output areas (MSOAs). Cornwall is broken down into 73 MSOAs. The following maps show the progress of the second wave of covid-19 in these areas. This is at such a detailed level that, if there are less than 3 cases in a MSA, the data is suppressed to protect the identities of the patients and the MSA is shown in grey. Low infection rates (per 100,000 population) are green; higher rates are shown in progressively darker blue and then purple. The website coronavirus.data.gov.uk provides data from 1 August 2020.



The first cases were recorded in the Mevagissey and Probus/Roseland MSOAs during the 7 days to 2 September. The spread of the virus peaked in the 7 days to 2 January 2021 and the maps show how measures put in place since then have begun to show some reduction in infections. Even so, deaths of people within 28 days of testing positive for the virus have been an almost-daily occurrence this year and, at 28 January 2021, the total in

Cornwall stood at 180 since the pandemic began. The Scilly Isles have shown no (or very low) infections throughout due to their isolation.

Arrangements for vaccinations are progressing. Hospitals and some medical centres have been giving injections for some time. On 25 January the first mass vaccination centre in Cornwall opened in the agricultural showgrounds at Stithians with one of two marquees coming into action. When the second opens, the daily capacity will be to carry out 1,000 injections. The picture shows the marquee under fitout.



People are invited to appointments using strict criteria based on workers in essential services, residents and staff at aged care facilities, individuals' age

(starting with those over 80) and people with other medical conditions that make them more susceptible to the virus.

Letter from member

In response to the last newsletter Wellington member, Elaine Bolitho, got in contact to say:

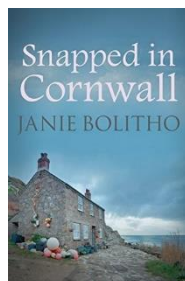
"Re your comment about the moa leg bones from Castle Hill - these would have been collected by one of the Enys brothers from Castle Hill. A pair of interesting characters known as 'buckets in the well' for most of the time one was en route to Cornwall, there or returning! They took many NZ plant specimens to Cornwall - we spotted some on our visits there. I found John's correspondence at the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch - a fascinating source of research when I wrote 'Reefton School of Mines - Stories of Jim Bolitho' some years ago.

"I hadn't heard of the John Bude mysteries. Have you caught up with the late Janie Bolitho's murder mysteries? Ian and I have enjoyed those very much and Janie and I - as two Bolitho writers - were in touch until just before

she died. Her books now fall into the genre 'cosy murder mysteries' as they are fairly light-hearted. We got most of them from Khandallah Library, but our daughter Sharron bought us 4 reprints the last time she was in Cornwall."

Janie Bolitho was born in [Falmouth](#) and turned to writing after having worked in various jobs ranging from psychiatric nurse to book-maker's clerk to debt collector. She died in 2002.

Her work consists of two series of crime mysteries. A seven-book series based in Cornwall has Rose Trevelyan as the amateur sleuth. The other series stars DCI Roper and the crimes take place in other locations.



The first of the Rose Trevelyan books has the title Snapped in Cornwall. It was followed by Framed in Cornwall, Buried in Cornwall then Betrayed..., Plotted..., Killed... and Caught Out... – all in Cornwall.

Lobb brothers - part 3

While researching the articles in the last two newsletters about the plant-hunting Lobb brothers, I came across yet another Cornish Lobb who achieved fame and fortune. I have not been able to confirm any direct family link with William and Thomas Lobb but, coming from so near-by in Cornwall and at a similar time, it is fair to suspect some blood connection.

John Lobb was born in [Tywardreath](#) in 1829 and was described as "a lame farm boy". It seems ironic that a lad with such a disability should become a cobbler. It may be that he learned to make shoes for himself to improve his walking comfort.

Like many Cornishmen, John decided to try his luck in Australia during the gold rush. In 1858 he found himself in Sydney where he started a business making boots for miners. He came up with the novel idea of hollow heels where the diggers could store and hide their nuggets. When the Great Exhibition was held at Crystal Palace in England in 1862, he submitted a pair of boots and won a gold medal for their quality. A year later he sent a pair to Edward, Prince of Wales, who was so impressed that he awarded Lobb a royal warrant.



Royal warrants are still in place for the current Duke of Edinburgh and The Prince of Wales/Duke of Cornwall. As we know, where royalty shops, all

fashion- and quality-conscious customers follow. His success prompted John to return to the UK in 1866 to establish a shop in London.

John Lobb died in London 1895 and is buried in Highgate cemetery.

The business flourished and now boasts not only royalty in its customer list but other famous names such as Enrico Caruso, George Bernard Shaw, Harold MacMillan, Frank Sinatra and Jackie Onassis. Lobb's has survived where most other companies making footwear by hand have not. Based in St James's Street, its premises were blown to bits six times during the Blitz. Esquire magazine has called the wood-panelled store "The most beautiful shop in the world..."

In case you were thinking of treating yourself to a pair of the finest hand-made shoes – they will set you back £4,840 (about \$9,250). For that amount each of your feet would be measured in minute detail, personal wooden lasts would be made and kept for future purchases. Your shoes would be made of the best materials and would come with hand-made wooden shoe trees to maintain their shape and prolong their life. The price does not include the travel costs to England for the fittings!



International diplomacy

On 23 January, the office of the British Prime Minister announced that the next summit of the G7 in June 2021 will be held at the Tregenna Castle Resort on a hill overlooking [St Ives](#) and [Carbis Bay](#). Prime Ministers and Presidents from UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, USA and EU will come together to "address shared challenges". Australia, India and South Korea have also been invited to send delegates.

The announcement included the statement that "The choice of Cornwall as the location for the summit will mean the eyes of the world are on the beautiful, historic and innovative region. The whole of Cornwall will reap the benefits of hosting the G7.

"The region is already a powerhouse for green innovation, providing as ideal setting for a summit focused on building back better from the coronavirus pandemic.

Visit Cornwall estimates that total economic impact for the county will be £50 million".

Tregenna Castle was built in 1774 by Samuel

Stephens. Designed by John Wood the Younger, the original building had only 12 bedrooms. It changed hands in 1871 when it was bought at auction by the Bolitho family, a prominent family in the area that ran a local bank. By 1878 it was leased to Great Western Railways as a hotel servicing the tourist trade following the opening of the St Ives branch line a year earlier. It was developed as a holiday destination whereas most other railway hotels were used only as stop-overs in longer journeys. All railway hotels were privatised in the 1980s. The Tregenna Castle has a Grade II listing and, along with the grounds, is currently managed by the Tregenna Castle Estate.

As demand grew, the hotel expanded and now provides 98 rooms. On its 72 acres of land, there are two restaurants, tennis, badminton and squash courts, a croquet lawn, swimming pools and an 18-hole golf course. Despite all the amenities, the hotel has a 3-star rating and rooms are available from under £140 (\$270) a night. Subject to the weather, which can be fickle in June, the location should impress the foreign dignitaries and ensure that Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, Joe Biden, Boris Johnson and other attendees enjoy their stay.



Cornish poetry

One Christmas card I received from a good friend in Cornwall carried some interesting facts on the back about a type of poetry I had not heard of before. The card was published by a company based in [Redruth](#), The Heart of the Garden Ltd.

“The egllyn (pronounced eh-glinn’) is an ancient Celtic verse-form. Like the epigram and the haiku, it is terse and disciplined, ideal for crystallising experience and focusing reflection. This poem is in the measure called besontenn (‘little bezant’). It has fifteen syllables, one for each of the fifteen golden bezants on the black Cornish shield.”

**unn vordonn heb ken
a lanow’n vlydhen
ow frappya a sen**

*only one sea-wave
from the tide of the year
resounds as it breaks*

The poem was written by Bardh Gwerin/Tim Saunders who works as a poet and journalist in many other Celtic languages including Welsh, Irish and Breton. He was born in [St Tudy](#) in Cornwall but now lives in Cardiff, Wales. He has written and edited several books of poetry and has been deeply involved over many years in the revival of the Cornish language and culture. He has taken a

stand against the adoption of a Standard Written Form of Kernewek but usually provides translations.

Polperro repair

Are you as big a fan of The Repair Shop as I am? If you don’t watch it, I thoroughly recommend trying an episode. It shows how expert craftspeople can use their skills and resources to restore and repair heirlooms and treasured antiques to their former glory. Some of the owners become very emotional when they see their objects looking good as new and back in working order. The Repair Shop staff also make each job seem a labour of love.

Previously it has been a weekly treat but so far this year it has been screening every weekday evening on TVNZ One. On Monday, 11 January there was a repair with a Cornish link.

When you see these things for the first time you think it is fresh and new but it appears TVNZ was repeating the first series made in 2017. The story is worth retelling.

Metal worker Dominic Chinaea used all his skills to future proof an old, Cornish museum sign. Ian Elliott, who is chair of the [Polperro](#) Promotional Group, was given the job of delivering an old advertising sign to the Repair Shop. The sign dated back 60 to 70 years to when the museum first came into being. The aluminium sign was hung on a wrought iron frame surrounded by tiny brass bells. The whole sign was mounted on a wooden pole with wheels at its base. The original museum owner, Mr Williamson, would wheel the sign around the village with its bells jingling loudly to advertise the Heritage Museum of Smuggling and Fishing.

The museum relocated many years ago and the sign was lost during the move but was recently discovered in an antique shop in North Wales by a village resident. Luckily, the museum had a postcard showing the sign in its former condition to use as a basis for the restoration.

Caught just in time, because the sea air was corroding the metalwork, the sign was stripped down and dismantled. All the old, flaky, rusty paint had to come off so it was necessary to trace over the remains of the letters to save as much information as possible and so the words could be reinstated when the sign had been repainted. The sign had all been painted by hand originally. The bells were rebrazed and two flamboyant tassels had to be made to replace ones that had been lost but appeared on the postcard.



← Before



After →

The 'after' photo above shows the Ian Elliott (right), handing the sign to the Chairman of the Museum, Mike Blackmore, who said, "During the summer months it will come out and about to be wheeled around our harbour again, just as it was decades ago."

Menacuddle Well

The name of this place appealed to me while I was researching the birthplace of John Lobb so I followed some links to find out more.

The secluded site lies in a small valley just a short walk from the main road near [St Austell](#). Apart from its picture-postcard good looks the valley has a mysterious fairy grotto feel even without visiting in person.



Its history dates back to Celtic times when the spring beside the St Austell or Vinnick River provided fresh water for a nearby settlement called Trenars-Austol. The name was recorded as Menequidel in 1250 and comes from the Old Cornish *mened* and *cuydel* meaning hillside with a small wood.

The water source was valued so much that, over time, it was credited with magical and curative powers, like so many other Cornish holy wells. The water was used for healing weak children and ulcers as well as various other illnesses. Local tradition was to throw bent pins into the water for good luck. Often Celtic customs include making an offering of some object or coin to retain the 'sympathy' of the well for the person seeking its benefits.

On the opposite side of the river to the well-house is the Druids Chair made from solid granite. It has also been called King Arthur's Seat.

The small baptistry or well-house was built probably in the late 15th century after the land had been acquired by Tywardreath Priory. It would have been at this time that the well gained its Christian associations but, unlike many holy wells, there is no saint associated with Menacuddle. The building

is small – only 9.5 square metres in floor area and 2.3 metres high – made of local granite and uses the solid rock hillside as one of its walls. Even the roof is built of granite slabs and inside the water from the spring fills a granite basin.

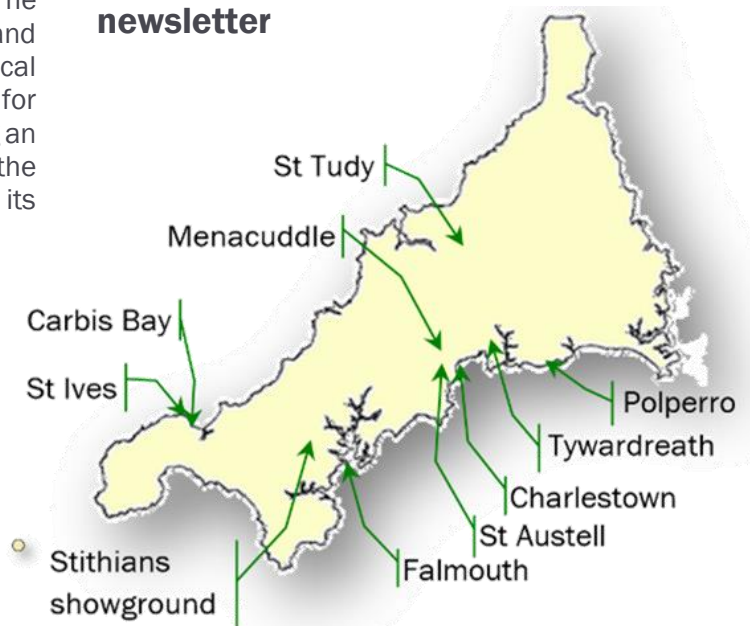
Towards the end of the 18th century Menacuddle was bought by Charles Rashleigh of the wealthy and famous Cornish family. The coastal town and port of [Charlestown](#) was named after him.

The valley had been on a route to the coast for the products of tin, copper and china clay mines upstream but became disused and almost forgotten when more convenient roads were built. In 1815 Menacuddle passed to the Sawle family of Penrice. Richard Sawle was killed in Ypres during the First World War and the family donated the building and grounds to the parish of St Austell in his memory - the gift is recorded in a plaque on the outside of the building. Menacuddle has remained in public ownership ever since.

It was neglected for decades until in 2018 a group established themselves as Friends of Menacuddle with the aim of reclaiming the site from the undergrowth, restoring it to its former quaint charm and maintaining it for public access.

It is now a scheduled monument by Historic England and its listing suggests that it may be one of the most beautiful in Cornwall.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



That's it for this newsletter my 'ansomes. 'Ave a proper New Year!

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