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■ ■ Est. 1962 ■ ■
Founder: Cliff Trevelyan
Trevelyan an Tynnoweth

N E W S L E T T E R
L y t h e r - n o w o d h o w

Notice of meeting

The **2021 Biennial General Meeting** will be held on **Saturday, 8 May at 1:30 p.m.** at the **St. Pauls Parish Centre, 1 Harewood Road, Papanui, Christchurch.**

Arrangements are, of course, subject to Covid-19 status and any restrictions on travel around the country. At the time of writing, the meeting could proceed because everyone is permitted to travel to Christchurch and our attendance is unlikely to exceed 100.

The agenda will follow our usual format:

- ■ President's report
- ■ Secretary/treasurer's report
- ■ Election of officers
- ■ Officers' expenses
- ■ General business

Nominations are open for officers – president, secretary and treasurer - so please let me know if you would like to nominate someone for any of those roles. Elaine James has told me that she is no longer able to be National President so we will need a volunteer or nominee for her successor.

The Christchurch Branch has been using a member's laptop computer to show slideshows and news from Cornwall at its meetings. The computer is becoming too old to handle the job. The Branch has asked the National Association if it can provide some financial support or other assistance in finding a replacement.

If you would like a topic added to the agenda for discussion please mail, e-mail or phone your suggestion to the Secretary/Treasurer at least 10 days before the meeting.

Lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. and there will be entertainment after the formalities are completed.

All members are encouraged to attend. Please let the secretary/treasurer know if you will be coming from outside Christchurch for catering purposes.

Away down to Lamorna

Fancy buying a stretch of Cornish coastline? An area of legendary Lamorna Cove and nearby cliffs are on the market for a mere £2.6 million (NZ \$5.0 million).

I associate Lamorna Cove with the folk song that has the chorus:

*'Twas down in Albert Square
I never shall forget,
Her eyes they shone like diamonds
and the evening it was wet, wet, wet.
Her hair hung down in curls,
she was a charming rover,
And we rode all night,
through the pale moonlight,
away down to Lamorna.*



I had always thought it was traditionally Cornish, so was disappointed to find it was an adaptation of

a 1910 Manchester-based music hall number called Away down to Pomona. Pomona Palace and gardens were in Old Trafford and are now the site of Pomona Docks. The Albert Square in the chorus is really outside Manchester Town Hall and not in St Just as I mistakenly believed. No wonder they rode all night!

The beautiful cove was also the setting for the film, Summer in February, about the artist AJ Munnings starring Dan Stevens (from Downton Abbey).

The real estate listing covers 14.84 acres (6 hectares) of land that come with the private road leading down to the cove, the beach and foreshore to the low water mark, private moorings in the harbour, boat launching slipway and harbour wall, tourism-related commercial operations and extensive cliffs to the South West Coastal Path. Who could ask for more?

An article in Country Life magazine said, "Every so often an opportunity comes along which is so rare as to be effectively unique. That's the case today, as the picturesque and unspoilt Lamorna Cove has come up for sale. Located at West Penwith, five miles from Penzance, it's one of the last remaining bays in Cornwall that remains in private hands – and the whole place is up for sale at £2.65 million. That price includes a tourism business (including restaurant and apartments) and two delightful homes, one of which is amongst the most photogenic in Cornwall."

The property may be split it into lots. Lot 1, the residential, boating and holiday business – a restaurant, one- and two-bedroom holiday homes and a pay-and-display car park – for sale at a guide price of £1.45 million.

Lot 2 is the majestic Cliff Cottage, a granite-built former count house for the old Victorian quarry, now one of Cornwall's most photographed houses, at £695,000. Finally there is lot 3, a semi-detached, four-bedroom cottage, at £495,000."

Lamorna Cove was the site of a thriving quarry industry in Victorian times. High-quality granite was cut by hand from the cliffs and shipped to destinations around the world. Loading from the small quay was often delayed by heavy seas and sea transport was eventually abandoned in favour of transport overland to Penzance.

The quarry ceased production in 1911, after which Lamorna Cove became an outpost of the Newlyn School of artists, among them AJ Munnings. Augustus John was a regular visitor, as were the writers John le Carré and Derek Tangye.

The cove and its surrounding lands were then owned by Col Paynter, who encouraged artists and writers to live there. Tourism took over when Col Paynter's daughter, Mary Elizabeth, sold the cove in 1982. The present owners, Roy Stevenson and his family, have enjoyed sharing Lamorna Cove with the public since 1995.

"It is only going to be sold to someone who feels the magic of the place. If you arrive and you don't feel the magic, don't even get out of your car," Roy Stevenson said.

One of the obvious buyers, The National Trust, has ruled itself out of the deal on the basis that it already owns large tracts of the Cornish coastline.

Contrast Cadgwith

In stark contrast to putting property on the open market, the fishermen of Cadgwith have worked together to prevent buildings on their harbour from being sold to developers.

Cadgwith, on the Lizard peninsula, is another strikingly pretty harbour village. Unlike Lamorna, its traditional industry is still active. A small fleet of fishing boats continue to operate from the harbour. There are three buildings on the sea front that are crucial to the fishermen.



The key building is the Winch House which, as its name suggests, contains a winch used to pull the boats up the beach. It was purchased and renovated 26 years ago by a charitable trust. The trustees decided in February that it was time to sell and use the funds for other charitable

purposes. The trust gave the local parish council first refusal to buy the building so that it could be held in perpetuity for the whole community.

Although the other two buildings were not on the market, the fate of the winch house brought the issue to light. The fishermen decided to fundraise a reserve of money to buy them when the time came. They set a target of £300,000 and BBC news reported on 31 March that they had already reached their goal.

The Cadgwith Fishing Cove Trust is now in a position to secure the future of all three buildings, the fishing businesses and the local economy. A loan from the parish council will buy the Winch House and the funds to buy the other two which are used to process catches and store equipment. Fundraising will continue for running costs and repairs.

A singular Cornishwoman

It is not unusual these days to hear stories of women who have started from humble beginnings and who have risen to the heights of professional or social standing. In the fifteenth century it was almost unimaginable.

Thomasine Bonaventure was such a woman. The details of her life are sketchy, especially the dates. She was born in Week St. Mary

southwest of Bude around 1450 – 1470. Her first lucky break came in her early teens while she was looking after some sheep. Richard (or Thomas – accounts vary) Bumsby, a London mercer or draper, was in the



area visiting customers and collecting debts. He was looking for somewhere to stay the night and

asked the young shepherdess. She took him home and her parents offered him accommodation. Mr Bumsby was so impressed with the girl's quick thinking, charm and beauty that he offered her a position as a servant in his London home and undertook to treat her well and provide for her financially for the rest of her life. This was an opportunity that could not be turned down.

The second stroke of good fortune came when Mr Bumsby's wife died. Distraught widower as he was, he made what must have been a controversial decision and married Thomasine. Two years later Mr Bumsby himself died leaving Thomasine a wealthy widow.

She was now a highly eligible lady and there were many suitors. Henry Gall won her heart, but she was careful to secure the equivalent of pre-nuptial agreement. They were married and lived happily for some years until Mr Gall passed away. Thomasine's third husband was John Percivall Esq. who was made a sheriff of the City of London. In 1498 (or 1499). He became Lord Mayor and was knighted by Henry VII. The simple Cornish shepherdess had become a titled lady and first lady of the capital city. Sir John died in 1504 leaving Lady Percivall with a third fortune. She had been active in the business interests of all three of her husbands and continued her involvement for the rest of her life. She lived to be 89.

Thomasine was generous in sharing her wealth. On the death of her first husband she granted ten marks (a unit of currency at the time based on the weight of precious metals) for the construction of a bridge at Week St Mary.

After her marriage to Henry Gall, she purchased twenty acres of woodland "for the perpetual use of the poor of Week St. Mary, for fuel to be hewn in pieces once a year and finally and equally divided, for evermore on the vigil of St. Thomas the Twin."

Another gift commemorated her marriage to John Percivall. "A firm and stedfast road should be laid down with stones, at her sole cost, along the midst of Green-a-moor, and fit for man and beast to travel on with their lawful occasions from Lanstephadon (Launceston) to the sea." She gave forty marks for the building of a tower for St Stevens church in Launceston (10 miles southwest of Week St Mary) subject to the specification that the tower should have "pinnacles so high that they might be seen from Swannacote Cross, by the moor, to the intent that they who do behold it from the Burgage Mound may remember the poor mayde who is now a wedded dame of London Citie."

One of her better-known and enduring gifts was of a chantry, boarding school and library at Week St Mary in around 1510. The sons of many gentlemen of Cornwall and Devon received an education there. Chantries were abolished by a law passed in 1550 and the school was re-established under different rules in Launceston. The remains of the original buildings are now owned by the Landmark Trust and have been converted into a holiday rental.



Thomasine's will, drawn up in 1512, is held by the British Library. In it she bequeathed a "little gilt goblet with a blue flower in the bottom" to the vicar of Liskeard "to the intent that he should pray for her soul." She was clearly concerned over the fate of her mortal soul as the purpose of the chantry was that, as patron of the school, songs and prayers would be said there for her spiritual benefit. Perhaps all her charity worked - we still remember her.

Christchurch branch

The Christchurch branch held its first meeting for 2021 at the St. Pauls Parish Centre Papanui on Saturday, 13 February.

The President welcomed 17 members, a rather smaller attendance than usual. Apologies were received from 7 more members.

David King presented a few more facts from the Rev. Schollar's first book and Les Mitchell spoke on the legend of who cut the steps in the cliff path to Bedruthan Beach.

The News from Cornwall covered a longer time span than usual and was presented by the combined efforts of Judy, Barbara and Jennie.

Another episode of John Nettles DVD was screened before afternoon tea and the raffle.

The Branch held its AGM on 6 March 2021 with an attendance of 18 members.

The Secretary read the minutes of the 2020 AGM. The President then presented her report on the year. The Treasurer's report showed a healthy balance and the treasurer recommended it would be unnecessary to increase the annual subscription which would remain at \$25.

When electing officers, president Jeanette Beaumont was re-elected unopposed. Vice-presidents were all re-elected as were the secretary and treasurer.

Margaret Swanney resigned from the Committee after more than twenty years'

service. The President expressed thanks for her efforts.

Heather Gladstone then led members in singing Trelawney finishing off with the traditional battle cry. Then everyone enjoyed afternoon tea complete with scones jam and cream

50 years of Cornish

To mark her long service to the Cornish in Christchurch Dorothy Drew wrote the following poem and read it at the last branch meeting:

Well, I've been around Cornish for 50 plus years.
It's been a time of education, laughter, yes, and some tears.

I've been transported all over the globe
Without leaving my chair or having to disrobe.

Of Presidents I've known only three.
That must be a record of serving surely.
From Father Schollar to Val, his choice,
Each year she was re-elected we did rejoice.

For two years in her absence I took over the mantle
But to Val's leadership I couldn't hold a candle
And willingly returned to the kitchen space
This was so much more my choice of place.

Now Jeanette is president and happy we were
When she accepted the challenge. We must support her.

She did such a great job in the treasurer's role.
We knew she would be fine wearing the president's stole.

The monthly meetings were oftentimes held at Bond Street

And we could usually find everyone a seat
But one memorable meeting 36 showed up.
We were wondering whether we could find another cup.

Wall to wall people just waiting to see
Malcolm's lovely photos of the Isle of Orkney.
Heather came through the back and crawled under the screen

And I wondered whether she would find somewhere to lean.

So that was the last full meeting held there.
We had to find a bigger space, but where?
We settled at Aldersgate for some years, then
The earthquake happened and we were homeless again.

We became a nomadic lot but, never fear,
Val was on the job, so we settled here
And we are so grateful for this gathering space.
For our meetings large or small it's been a good place.

Now the committee meetings were often hilarious
And the subjects of conversation many and various

But we always managed our business to do
Once the president was able to calm down the crew.

"Put the kettle on" someone was shouting.
"No, not until everyone stops spouting".
Our neighbours thought we sounded like a drunken lot
But we could reassure them of alcohol not a drop.

Planning for St Piran's lunch, May meal and Christmastime

All happened; Santa, Heather's music and the pantomime.

One thing we Cornish can do without compare
Is bringing delicious food for us all to share.

I just want your attention for one minute more.
In 50 years I've supplied quite a score:
Bottles of milk 700 were used, teabags 5,000 or more

Coffee 1,500 jars, sugar approximately 3 kgs or 4.

Sandwiches: 500 trays is my count
And some meetings I had to double the amount.
The fillings for these have added up too:
Ham 1,000 slices, eggs 1,000, cream cheese I haven't a clue.

This isn't a scientific compilation though.
I've worked on ten meetings a year so
(Working with figures is certainly not my gift)
It's just a fun estimate, if you get my drift.

Sadly, many of our friends have now departed
But we have lovely memories and can't be downhearted.

So thank you everyone. It's been a blast
And probably time for afternoon tea at last.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



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

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