



The Packet



The Quarterly Newsletter of the Cornish Society of Durham Region

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Fall 2022

The Cornish Society of Durham Region began in 2019, however, COVID precautions shut us down in March of 2020 just after we had held a flag raising for St. Piran's Day on March 5th. Nothing else was done until the spring of 2022 when we held another flag raising on March 4th at the Municipality of Clarington flag staff in Bowmanville, with many in attendance.



Our next event was held at Eldad United Church at Solina, on May 14th, when members of the Toronto Cornish Association joined with us to celebrate our heritage.



Pre-meeting gab with old friends



Saffron Bread - we came for the nosh!



Scott Baker's talk about his genealogical research at Cornish Hollow, near Cobourg.



Deb and Herb Tink serving Deb's home-made traditional pasties.



Roger Farrow trying his hand at 'dowsing' in Eldad Cemetery.



Our Bard, Rosalee Armstrong, (in the dark shirt) who came all the way from Cornwall Ontario for the event.

March 5th photos from Peter Dale and Roger Leetooze
May 14th photos from Peter Dale.

This has been a busy year. I have been full of good intentions for a quarterly newsletter, but somehow, it hasn't happened. AND I keep forgetting to bring my camera! That is about to change.

In the past few weeks we have had some queries put to our members:

1. When noting your research in your genealogy, do you put Cornwall, UK, or Cornwall, England?
Most of our members responded with Cornwall UK, or just plain Cornwall. All agreed that Cornwall is indeed part of UK, but Cornwall is not part of England, just like Wales and Scotland.

2. As part of that discussion, Craig Norton noted that county boundaries also changed down through the years. If you were in Cornwall in one census, and Devon the next, which county do you list?
The original or the new one?

There were few thoughts sent in on this one, but myself I note both - the present county and the original, along with an explanation of why there are two locations when the place never moved.

3. We have recently been asked if we would hold another joint gathering with the TCA - this time perhaps to tour a Cornish cemetery and note the names, and maybe learn some of the places these Cornish immigrants came from.

The response was enthusiastic - YES! Let me know what I can do to help! So, put your thinking caps on, and we'll see what we can do about finding a cemetery with lots of Cornish content AND a ladies group at a local church who will cater a snack or small lunch for us.

4. The President of the Toronto Cornish Association always sends along a copy of any newsletters she receives from Cornish organizations around the world. Our own Pres, Sher, passes these along each time to members - hope you enjoy them!

5. The TCA has formed a special group - Cornish Research Group - who meet once a month and share research successes, as well as any research resources we've come across - in Canada or UK - to further our Cornish research efforts. Hopefully over the winter months ahead, I will be able to take these ideas and resources and put them up on a website for our members to use. Also, if you run into any brick walls during your research, why not let Sher know and she will bring your query to the next CRG meeting. ***Or you could apply to Scott Baker (who is co-ordinating our efforts) to be part of the next meeting where you can ask your question personally, giving whatever background you wish, and getting responses directly from our panel of researchers.*** His contact information: <ksbaker@sympatico.ca>



Something I've wanted to do for some time is highlight a particular part of Cornwall in each newsletter. This time I will highlight: PADSTOW.....



Padstow Harbour today. Picture that long sea wall lined with tall masted ships, unloading cargo and waiting for passengers to Canada to board. Many of our ancestors left from Padstow for their long journey to Canada aboard ships like The Clio, The John and Mary, The barque Bell, The Voluna; and the brig Dalusia.

Padstow rests in a deep valley protected from the prevailing winds of the Atlantic Ocean sheltered by a semi circle of elms protecting the top of the town that was built around the inlet on the west side of the Camel estuary.

Possibly from as early as 2,500 BC Padstow has been used as a natural harbour linking Brittany to Ireland along the 'Saints Way' from Fowey. Legend has it that St Petroc possibly one of the most important of the Cornish Saints arrived from Ireland around 520 AD and built a monastery on the hill above the harbour. The harbour developed in the Middle Ages as a trading port for copper, tin and lead ores, slate, pilchards and agricultural produce. Welsh coal was imported by sea along with timber and fish salt. Padstow has always been an important community because of its position as the only sizeable estuary on the North Coast of Cornwall. The foundation of the monastery by St. Petroc in the sixth century finalised its site and the monks acquired land from Portreath to Tintagel. In medieval times the port grew and trade with Ireland and Brittany developed as well as coastal trade with South Wales.

The Port had a thriving fishing industry and by the nineteenth century there were six shipyards. During the years when emigration from Cornwall was at its height, Padstow was the centre from where many people left to start a new life in the Americas and Canada. In the 1880s shipbuilding declined because wooden ships were replaced by iron ones but the town was fortunate that by the end of the nineteenth century east coast trawlers made Padstow the centre of their winter fishing.

Through all its long history, Padstow has been a tightly knit community with a tremendous sense of belonging. The people of Padstow have justly been proud of its long history and important customs. Padstow May Day is well known nationally and internationally. The carols sung at Christmas in the streets and Padstow Mummings Day form part of its living tradition.

The first stone pier was built in the 16th century and the inner harbour wall was built in 1989. The old town has retained much of its medieval and Elizabethan character and has 104 listed buildings of which St Petroc's Church, Prideaux Place and Abbey House are the most significant.

This is from the Padstow Town Council website: <https://padstow-tc.gov.uk/history-of-padstow/>