FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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Issue 74

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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- THE LAND OF KING PIPPIN

VERYAN GEOPHYSICS

Sheila James has sent in this account of surveying undertaken recently at one of the monuments she monitors: Veryan Castle (HER 22826; Scheduled Monument 32939; SW 9090 3880; Veryan parish):

A workplace with a view. **Photo: Iain Rowe**

As part of their second phase of work, Cornwall AONB's Monumental Improvement project is offering training in, amongst other topics, basic geophysical surveying. One training day was held at Veryan Castle in the area for which I am the CAS Area Representative (AR), so of course I applied. The training was given by South West Archaeology (SWA) and our contact for the day was AR co-ordinator Iain Rowe.

Training day, Tuesday 24th January, was bright and sunny but the thermometer showed -2 deg C when I left home, and not much warmer when I arrived at the designated car park. We had been advised that geophysical surveys are affected by metal, so we were to avoid wearing jewellery and clothing containing metal. In view of the temperature we were all wearing warm jackets with metal zips or similar, but this did not prove to be an issue.

Veryan Castle (scheduled monument no. 32939) is described as an "Iron Age or Romano-British defended site defined by an enclosing rampart and ditch with traces of a second and third rampart on the south-eastern side." The site is towards the top of a steep hill not far from Carne Beach. I normally approach the site by footpaths from Veryan village which lead to the top of the site. On this occasion we were kindly offered free parking by the National Trust in their beach car park at the foot of the hill. Climbing up the defensive slope on grass

still slippery with frost presented some difficulty but ensured that we had all warmed up by the time that we had reached the site.

We were greeted by Joe from SWA and introduced ourselves – Iain, myself, Steve and Charlie ex-CAU, Tasha and Emily from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and Liz and Graham from MAG. Joe gave us an explanation of the two types of survey that they would be carrying out at the site – the magnetic survey and earth resistance survey. The magnetic survey had been carried out on the previous day and had identified a couple of anomalies. Joe was in the process of carrying out the earth resistance survey over an area that he had already marked out. The group were given maps of the site and invited to explore the area.

Joe from SouthWest Archaeology explains the survey process. Photo: Iain Rowe.

On most of my visits the site has been very overgrown, particularly in the ditch and over the sides of the ramparts. On this occasion the ditch and upper rampart had been completely cleared ready for the survey, giving a very detailed view of the site. Some large stones had been uncovered lying at the south end of the ditch. I hadn't seen these before as on previous visits they have always been covered in scrub. The site suffers from badger damage and the burrowing was clearly visible, particularly around the north end of the ditch.

The cleared ditch at the southern end. Photo: Sheila James.

The cleared upper rampart. **Photo: Sheila James.**

The surveying continued with some group members assisting Joe by moving his measuring tapes, until Iain returned with lunch. The hot pasties were much enjoyed by all, sitting in the bright sunshine gazing at the stunning view over the bay. After lunch Joe showed us the results on the laptop of the previous day's survey. One area of particular interest showed a line apparently across the south end of the ditch, quite near the stones. They are hoping to investigate this further.

The site is close to Bronze Age barrow Carne Beacon (scheduled monument no.32938) and some of the group took the opportunity to walk over to see it. The sun was still shining when we left the site and headed for home. It was a good day, both interesting and enjoyable, and I look forward to reading the site report in due course.

Report by Sheila James. Photos: Sheila James and Iain Rowe.

CORNISH ROAD TRIP

Ian Thompson of The Milestone Society ((https://www.milestonesociety.co.uk/) is always busy, even in the cold month of January, as his latest update shows:

Milestone News January 2023

Constantine Guidestone Restored

Parish Councillor Chris Painter of Constantine near the Helford River in Cornwall, wanted to repaint the Grade II listed granite guidestone in the centre of the village (SW7304 2909 No. 1310987). He approached Cornwall Council who referred him to Cornwall Highways, who referred him to the Milestone Society. Their records showed the guidestone had been repainted in 2000 as a Millennium Project. The style was unique to this particular stone. The archive photograph of 2008 showed the paint in good condition. It was now quite difficult to read. Chris was able to use our archive image to enable a local signwriter to restore the guidestone again.

1. Constantine Guide Post No.1310987 before re-painting (12.07.22) Photo: Ian Thompson

2. Constantine Guide Post No.1310987 Repainted (11.11.22) Photo: Ian Thompson

<u>The Roads through Connor Downs</u>

To see the history of a road imprinted on the landscape, there is no better place to visit than Connor Downs in West Cornwall. Here, the original road, the turnpike road and the modern A30 road run side by side.

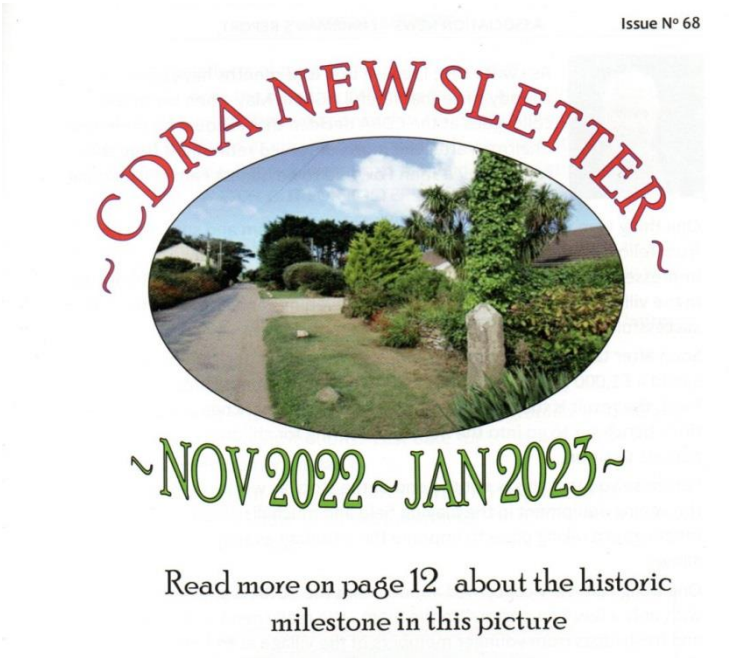
The original road went up and down and up and down across deep valleys taking the pack horse trains from the mines of Redruth to the port of Hayle. Milestones were set up on this road in the 1730s – massive granite blocks with the inscriptions raised, not incised.

The turnpike road was not begun until 1839 which was very late in the history of turnpike roads. It turned Connor Downs from open moorland into a thriving community, growing around the 'Turnpike Inn', with triangular incised milestones marking the miles.

By 1985, Connor Downs had turned from a thriving community into a bottleneck, and a new by-pass was constructed, speeding motorists along the A30 towards their holidays in Penzance and Land's End.

When a new arm was made in 2014 for the cast iron fingerpost near the Turnpike Inn in the centre of Connor Downs, it had the road number A30 with a line through it as a neat way to show the history of the route.

In July 2022, the Connor Downs Residents' Association asked the Milestone Society for advice on repainting the fingerpost. Ian Thompson took the opportunity to write a piece for the Residents' Newsletter about the old road and its original milestones.



3. Connor Downs Residents' Association Newsletter featured the pre-turnpike milestones on the original road.

<u>Guide stone set upright</u>

4. SX303740 leaning guidestone at Halwinnick Butts, Linkinhorne. Photo Iain Rowe

In June 2022 several alert members of CAS reported that the guide stone at Halwinnick Butts, Linkinhorne (SX3031 7409) had been knocked over and was leaning against the bank. The stone seemed undamaged, apart from traces of paint from the vehicle that had knocked it over. A request for restoration was sent to Cormac and by December, the guide stone had been nicely set upright, the drainage channel had been cleared and a row of protective rocks had been added to keep turning vehicles at a distance. Thank you, Cormac.
The inscriptions on the four faces are in large capitals, broken up to read:

CAM	RED	LIS	LAU
EL	GAT	KEA	N
FOR	E	RD	CES
DE			TON

5. SX303740 Halwinnick Butts restored. **Photo Susan Boggis.**

Launceston and Liskeard are important destinations not far away. Red Gate was a key access point the south west, but Camelford(e) was a very long way to the north west on a route no longer traceable across the moors. There are other similar guide stones not far from the one at Halwinnick Butts, but only this one indicates Camelford(e).

Famous Milestone knocked over again

The only milestone in the whole of Cornwall to feature in the 1930s National Benzole booklets of 'Famous Milestones' is not a milestone at all, but a capped guidestone on B3266 at SX057721. In the 1930s, it stood six feet tall, but since then the column had been broken and only a stump remained. Local funding was raised to make a new hexagonal column to

the full height, using local granite. Sadly, when the highways team set up the restored guidestone they decided to bury almost half the column. It was not six feet tall, and, with such a large part of the column underground, when it was hit by a passing vehicle, instead of toppling over the column broke in two.
The broken parts were taken to De Lank Quarry to await repair. With lessons learned, when re-erected it should be set to the correct height this time and there are plans for extra bollards to offer some sacrificial protection to future vehicle onslaughts.

6. SX057721 Famous Milestone in De Lank Quarry for repair Photo: Ian Thompson.

<u>Goonamarris Fingerpost in St Stephen in Brannel to be Restored</u>
Countryside Ranger, Jenny Heskett, wrote to Roger Smith at the Cornwall Archaeological Society asking if he knew anyone who might help ‘to revamp this nice old finger sign’ in Goonamarris. Roger passed Linda’s query to the Milestone Society’s Ian Thompson.
At the same time, Rachel Tatlow, Cornwall Highways Manager, contacted Ian directly about the same fingerpost. Rachel’s angle was that, if the rusty old fingerpost could be restored, highways would remove the reflective aluminium signpost, a process called ‘decluttering’.
Ian got on his motorbike and rode to Goonamarris in the china clay country near St Austell. He got into conversation with the elderly gentleman living in Goonamarris House immediately next to the fingerpost. The gentleman explained that for years he had complained that the council did not cut the hedge and that the old fingerpost was invisible, buried in the undergrowth. Eventually, this year he decided to cut the hedge himself, revealing the fingerpost in all its glory. Ian was able to explain that this was a rare example of a Charlestown Foundry fingerpost, identified by its large ball finial, barber’s pole spiral and fluted column, arms mounted with vertical bolts on a horizontal disc and with pointing hands.

The gentleman explained that the modern replacement had recently been hit by ‘a Polish lorry following his satnav’, breaking off the three rusty steel posts.
St Stephen in Brannel Parish Council has a sexton and team of maintenance operatives. Ian contacted Linda Ranger, the Clerk to the Parish Council. She replied, ‘Great minds think alike!’ She was already in touch with Cornwall Highways and hoped Highways and the Parish Council team would get the fingerpost restored and the modern sign removed by the spring of 2023.

7. SW954550 Goonamarris, St Stephen. Fingerpost revealed when hedge was cut, with broken modern replacement. Photo: Ian Thompson.

<u>Boundary Stones</u>
The mining district around Camborne and Redruth is full of boundary stones. The Ordnance Survey 25” map of 1906 shows the crossroads at Tuckingmill with at least two dozen dots labelled ‘Stone’ lining the radiating roads. None were known to survive at this location, until Hannah Curnow of the Historic Environment Record department at Cornwall Council was driving to work one day and spotted a stone with a carved letter ‘B’ tipped through ninety degrees and built into a boundary wall. Well done, Hannah!

8. SW66229 41237 East Hill, Tuckingmill, Pool Boundary stone built into wall spotted by Hannah Curnow. Photo: Hannah Curnow.

8a. SW66229 41237 East Hill, Tuckingmill, Pool Boundary stone built into wall spotted by Hannah Curnow (close up). Photo: Hannah Curnow.

Paul Barnett spotted a stone lying flat on its back in the pavement in Pool, not far from Hannah's boundary stone. It was at the crossroads of Agar Road and Wheal Fortune Lane, opposite the Railway Inn at SW67788 41627. Paul posted an image on Geograph and reported it to the Milestone Society as a possible stolen milestone. It had a capital 'B', similar to Hannah's boundary stone, but beneath the B was the number '8'. Was this a milestone from the other end of Cornwall, originally eight miles from Bodmin? It seemed possible. Or was it yet another of the many B for boundary stones? There were no 'Stones' marked on the Ordnance Survey 25" map of 1906 near the crossroads. Google Earth street view images showed that in 2009 Paul's stone was invisible because it was beneath a breeze block wall. The Google Earth street view image for 2022 shows the wall cut back and the stone revealed.

9. SW67788 41627 Stone in the pavement in Pool. Photo Paul Barnett.

Report by Ian Thompson, January 2023

Ian's book Cornish Milestones: The development of Cornwall's roads in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries *(Twelveheads Press, Truro 2013) is a fascinating, lavishly illustrated account of how our modern road network evolved and gives an essential insight into the social, economic and cultural history of the county.*

ST TORNEY'S, NORTH HILL

'Altogether, this is one of the handsomest and best kept of the country churches of Cornwall.' So wrote Joseph Polsue in 1872 of St Torney's parish church in North Hill (Lake's Parochial History of the County of Cornwall, Volume IV, Truro, 1872). But by 2022 it had been placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register (https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/4364955):

© Historic England

SITE NAME:	Church of St Torney, North Hill	Large parish church on the eastern edge of Bodmin Moor. There are structural problems in the tower where the floors are unsafe for use. The rainwater goods are rusted and leaking. There are major damp problems in the east end and structural problems in the tower. The church has closed and was transferred to the Churches Conservation Trust in late 2021/early 2022.
DESIGNATION:	Listed Building grade I	
CONDITION:	Poor	
OCCUPANCY:	Vacant/not in use	
PRIORITY CATEGORY:	D (New entry)	
OWNER TYPE:	Charity (heritage)	
LIST ENTRY NUMBER:	1249982	Contact: Chris Miners 0117 975 1355

Sadly, this is not an unusual story because many ecclesiastical buildings of great beauty are in a similar plight. However, Susan Boggis' photograph below shows that action is being taken:

Photo: Susan Boggis

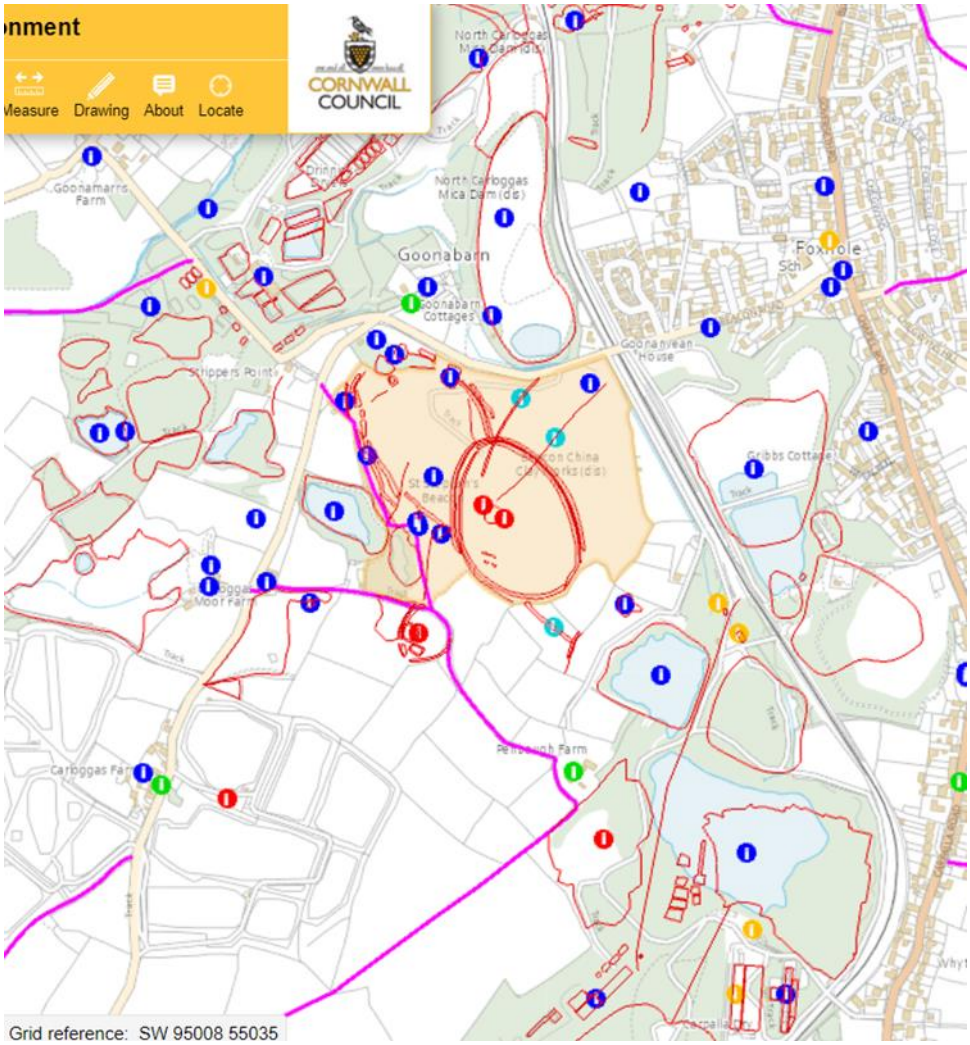
This structure (HER 17571; Listed Building (I) 432198; SX 2719 7664; North Hill parish) has numerous features of interest. The chancel dates from the 14th century and the tower, nave, north aisle, and porch are C15 and built of granite. Internal decorations, including monuments, are of high quality. Restoration took place in 1868, which may have prompted Polsue's comment about how well kept it was.

Susan has taken a close interest in the fate of the building. Initially, it looked like a hopeless case; then the Church of England Commissioners took expert advice and recommended that St Torney's, which is a closed church, should be preserved by the Churches Conservation Trust. Recently, the church was granted 'vested church status' and £365,000 of funding has been found. Some of the first work will be stop water entering the building. The parish council has been informed about what is proposed and noticeboards will be put up to tell local people and visitors about the progress of the work. More information can be found at: https://northhillparish.co.uk/

Sunset at North Hill **Photo: Susan Boggis**

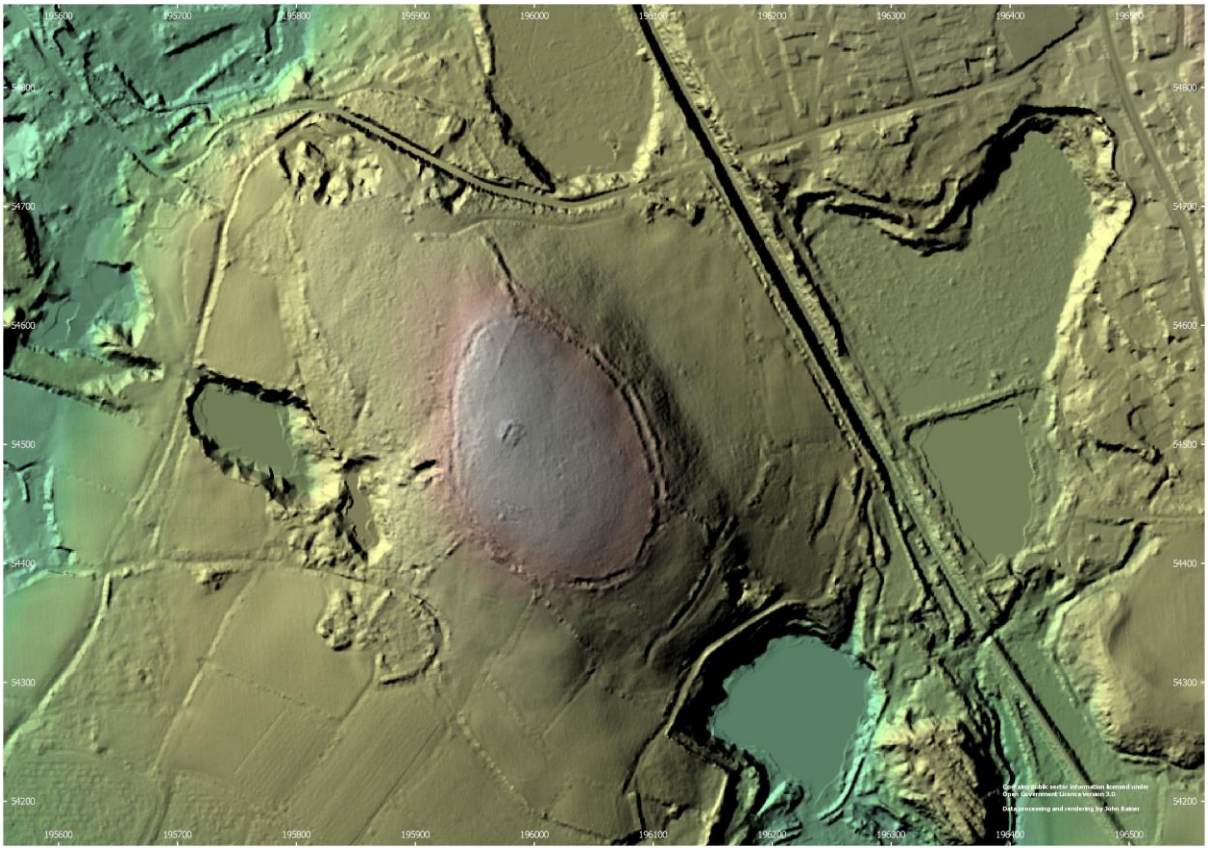
THE LAND OF KING PIPPIN

Recently, a team of Historic England surveyor, led by Dr Olaf Bayer, has been surveying an intriguing hilltop near Foxhole, known as St Stephen's Beacon (HER 20651; Scheduled Monument CO591; SW 9597 5452; St Stephen – in - Brannel parish). As the extract from the HER map shows, it is a 'busy' area archaeologically, with a hilltop enclosure that may date to Neolithic times, a Bronze Age barrow and many blue dots that testify to its rich industrial past. It is even thought that William Cookworthy was responsible for establishing an 18th century clayworks just to the west of the hill.



Source: https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/strategic-historic-environment-service/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-historic-environment-record/

The Lidar image is interesting:



Source: Image: Open Government Licence version 3. Data processing and rendering: John Rainer

But what looks interesting and clear on Lidar isn't so obvious on the ground. Before Olaf and his colleagues got to work it was necessary to clear a lot of vegetation. This was done by two groups: a crack team of volunteers led by Pete Dudley of Cornwall Archaeological unit as part of the Scheduled Monument management programme; and Mat Bateman's volunteers in the G7 Legacy Project for Nature Recovery scheme. They didn't always have the easiest weather either:

Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

Olaf led a walk around the Beacon in early February, pointing out features and the techniques being used. A full report will be published which will give us the clearest idea about the complex and long history of this hilltop that we have ever had. A working theory is that it is a Neolithic hilltop enclosure, akin to the causewayed enclosures of southern England. He suggested that its purpose might have been the prehistoric equivalent of the combined functions of Truro Cathedral, Royal Cornwall Showground and the Glastonbury Festival.

So where does King Pippin come into this? Is he a member of the surveying team? Or perhaps one of the intrepid lopper-wielding volunteers? Not exactly. Malcolm Gould, Cornish Bard and an expert on the local area, drew attention to an intriguing passage in the 1864 *Mining Journal*, quoted in A.K. Hamilton Jenkin's *Mines and Miners of Cornwall: VIII Truro to the Clay District* (Truro Bookshop, 1964). It relates to the setting up of nearby Tin Hill Mine. This is the mine captain's account:

'Our mine is situated on the Western slope of a beautiful little Cornish mountain called in provincial language the Beken Hill [Beacon Hill] or in nautical language, it being a sea mark, King Pippin's Mount. On the top of this hill are the remains of an ancient British fortification, three lines of circumvallation being distinctly visible, enclosing some acre and a half of level land. In the midst of this plain was a cairn or pile of stones and as a great many of them appeared suitable for building an engine house, I set men to take them out. After clearing to a depth of 7 feet we came on a level platform of large stones 5 or 6 feet in length. On lifting these stones we found underneath a complete stone coffin, about 7 feet long, 20 inches deep, 15 inches wide at the end and 2 feet 6 inches at the breast. In the coffin there were about 4 gallons of ashes and a few cinders. In the ashes I found a seal of yellow metal in good preservation, with the Masonic arms engraved in the stone. [sic.] I have ordered the coffin to remain undisturbed for the inspection of the antiquary or other scientific explorers of ancient British remains.'

We must wait to see what Dr Bayer has to say about King Pippin's kingdom.

Area Representatives would love to hear from fellow CAS members, and the general public, about any feature of the historic environment in their parishes, whether a new discovery, something causing concern, or even just to answer queries. If you have any concerns, or new information, about any archaeological feature, please contact the Area Representative for the parish. If you do not know who that is, just look at the inside back cover of the latest journal, *Cornish Archaeology* 59, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk .

Roger Smith, 23rd February 2023