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■ ■ Est. 1962 ■ ■
 Founder: Cliff Trevelyan
 Trevelyan an Tyrnoweth
Kowethas Kernewek
Mordir Nowydh

N E W S L E T T E R

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

New Website

Following the plan discussed at the last national meeting in May 2021, a new website has been launched. It has a completely new look and updated content but still retains a very Cornish theme. The initial address is:

<https://sites.google.com/view/nzca>

Please look it over and let me have any feedback and don't hesitate to share it with friends and family. One reason for setting it up is to attract new members the other is for members to use and find out more about Cornwall.

We will eventually have our own domain name

www.nzcornish.nz

but some technical issues are holding things up and it currently does not appear in Google searches. The link on our Facebook page works.

Cornish Connections

One of the features added on the new website is a section on connections between Cornwall and NZ. There are few examples already included but we are looking for lots more. If you would like to add the story of your personal connection with Kernow or details of something you have noticed that links NZ to Cornwall, please let us know. Included with this newsletter is a flyer giving more information on how you can send in your contribution. Even if you don't use the internet yourself, we would be happy to add your 'Cornish Connection'.

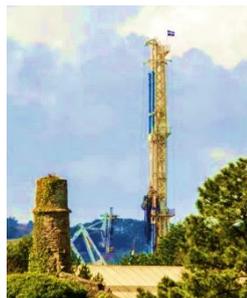
Photographs are welcome; they make articles much more interesting. If you prefer not to be recognisable on the world-wide web but would still like to share, we can 'de-personalise' your contribution using techniques like initials instead of full names or pseudonyms.

Geothermal power

I reported in newsletter 399 in 2011 that there were plans to build a geothermal power plant on [United Downs](#) near my old hometown, St Day. Here, in New Zealand, the geothermal heat is close

to the surface. In Cornwall it was necessary to drill two wells to access the earth's internal energy. The shallower well was bored down through 2.4 kilometres of hard granite. It is through this well that water is injected into the ground. The second deeper production well descends a staggering 5 km to collect the water as steam which drives turbines to generate electricity. Both wells tap into the Porthtown fault zone. While growing up 2 km away, I had no idea that there were fault zones anywhere nearby. Earthquakes were totally unknown.

In July the plant produced its first steam – a major hurdle in its development towards generating power. Initially this steam was released to the atmosphere but in future it will be captured and condensed to be reinjected underground. The aim is to deliver three megawatts of power to the national grid in 2022. Cornwall Council - which has a target to be carbon neutral by 2030 - is hoping residual heat will be used to supply a housing development for up to 10,000 people on the outskirts of Truro. No energy will be wasted.



The success of the United Downs plant has prompted the operator, Geothermal Engineering Limited (GEL), to apply for planning consent to build five similar plants in [Perranporth](#), [Penhallow](#), [Mawla](#), [Tolvaddon](#) and [Wendron](#). The plants

will be modest in size when compared to NZ's power plants at Wairakei where geothermal electricity was first generated in 1958.

GEL is also involved in using geothermal energy to heat part of the Jubilee Swimming Pool in [Penzance](#). Using a shallow well (about 410m deep) next to the pool GEL sustains a carbon-neutral temperature of 35°C which was first mentioned in newsletter 437 in April 2018.

Tin mining revival

We've heard it all before – another revival of tin mining has been announced. Cornish Tin has

recently gained permission by Cornwall Council's Mineral Planning Authority for phase 1 of its exploration programme and to drill up to 33 test holes around Great Wheal Vor at [Carleen](#).

To quote the company's website:

"The mines here [in Cornwall] closed in the 1870s, not through lack of tin, but due to 20 years of litigation against illegal operators who took what they could grab, against a deadline, but left significant mineral resources still in the ground. Operations were also hampered by poor mining practices and the inability of technology at that time to extract the ore at depth."



Sally Norcross-Webb is CEO and founder of Cornish Tin. Experienced in the mining industry, she is a corporate lawyer specialising in exploration and mineral rights. She has secured the required rights over all the minerals at Great Wheal Vor including tin, copper, lithium, tungsten and geothermal energy. The aim of the project is to access and extract the significant quantities of tin and other minerals left in the ground. Great Wheal Vor was once described as "the richest in tin of all the Cornish mines, probably the richest tin mine which has ever been worked in the world". Modern mining techniques are expected to be able to produce economic amounts of the minerals that are in increasing demand around the world. Historic production grades at Great Wheal Vor were very high, averaging around 3% tin, and peaking at over 5.5% tin. Even assuming a current production grade of only 2% tin this would be one of the top three tin mines by grade in the world if being mined today.

Phase 1 of the project is expected to take 6 months. The Camborne School of Mines and Exeter University have collaborated to identify key lode intersections as initial exploration targets. Several measures are being taken to mitigate any concerns of the local community which has already formed an action group to express NIMBY (not in my back yard) objections to potential noise, traffic congestion and damage to the environment.

It may be cynical to say that many similar attempts in the past to rejuvenate Cornish mining have come to nothing. However, Mike King, managing director of Cornwall Development Company (an economic development organisation funded by the European Social Fund and Cornwall Council), says;

"When (and it is when) current exploration for tin, copper, lithium and tungsten realise their

potential, hundreds of much-needed jobs will be created and, once again, mining in Cornwall will be at the heart of the 21st Century industrial revolution." That sounds hopeful.

Fairings

The recipe for this issue is for ginger fairings. Judy Wright baked them for the lunch at the last national biennial meeting. There was a small packet of biscuits at each place around the tables and received widespread compliments.

Fairings are spicy ginger biscuits traditionally sold at Cornish country fairs (hence the name) and today are popular with visitors.

4 oz flour	1 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp baking powder	1 oz grated lemon peel
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda	2 oz brown sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon	2 oz butter
1 tsp ground ginger	2 Tsp golden syrup

Set oven to 180°C gas mark 4. Grease baking sheets. Mix the baking powder bicarbonate of soda, the spices and lemon peel in a bowl. Sieve in the flour and add the sugar. Mix thoroughly. Rub in the butter (or margarine) until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Warm the syrup and add to the flour mixture. Using the fingers, combine to a smooth paste, then roll the final mix with floured hands into small balls each about the size of a walnut. Place the balls



on the baking sheet leaving plenty of room between each one. Cook for about 15 minutes then reduce temperature to 170°C gas mark 3 and finish cooking

for 5 to 10 minutes so that the biscuits sink and crack into their familiar form. Transfer to a wire rack to cool.

Tour of Britain

For the first time in the 17 year history of the UK's biggest bike race, the Tour of Britain started in Cornwall. On 5 September the Grand Départ took place on Penzance promenade. The first stage of the eight-stage race, that would take the riders to Aberdeen in Scotland, followed a zig-zag route of 180 km through the Cornish countryside and many of Cornwall's principal towns with a sprint ending in [Bodmin](#). The route gave as many locals as possible the opportunity to see the cyclists in action.

The peloton took in some of the most picturesque of Cornwall's countryside but the scenery was of little consideration to the riders.

They needed to concentrate on an uphill start and two steep climbs in the first hour. There were two intermediate sprints and a further especially tough 500m long climb to the finish.



The loudest send-off was reserved for Cornwall's first ever international cycling team called Saint Piran. The men's team was set up six years ago by former professional cyclist, Ricci Pascoe, who now owns a large bike shop and café in [Redruth](#). The team competes at the top levels of cycling in the UK but also provides a pathway for talented riders into the sport and promotes grassroots cycling and broad participation. A women's team was added this year.

Four of the six-man team who competed in the Tour of Britain actually hailed from Cornwall. Their final standing left a little to be desired but, for a debut performance in the Tour, it was a creditable result. Team manager, Steve Lampier (born in [Helston](#) but now based in [Falmouth](#)) achieved the highest overall ranking, coming in at 44th of the 96 competitors. His time was 13 minutes 38 seconds slower than the winner, Wout van Aert of Belgium.

Coming soon...

A film is about to be released in NZ that starts in Cornwall. A young woman, Eloise, leaves Redruth seeking her fortune as a fashion designer in London.

'Last Night in Soho' is a British psychological horror film (not to everyone's taste). Eloise has a sixth sense that causes her to travel in time to the swinging sixties where she inhabits the bodies of other women. Eloise is played by Thomasin Harcourt Mackenzie who was born in Wellington NZ, the granddaughter of Dame Kate Harcourt.



Kimbly

During my sometimes-aimless browsing during lockdown I stumbled upon a quaint and charming Cornish custom that I had not heard of before. It was listed as one of ten 'Things you don't know about St Ives'. Kimbly is a gift of bread or cake given to complete strangers to bring good fortune.

It is linked to major events in a family's life such as marriage and the birth of a child. The kimble is given to the first person encountered on the way to church for the wedding or christening.

Miss M A Courtney wrote a book of Cornish Feasts and Folklore in 1890. In it she gives examples:

"Two young men, I knew about thirty years ago, were taking a walk in West Cornwall; crossing over a bridge they met a procession carrying a baby to the parish church, where the child was to be baptised. Unaware of this curious custom, they were very much surprised at having a piece of cake put into their hands."

"A magistrate wrote to the Western Morning News, in January, 1884, saying, that on his way to his petty sessions he had had one of these christening cakes thrust into his hand."

Taking the ritual one step further, some mothers-to-be bake a special cake when they begin their labour. The cake is called Cheeld's Fuggan or groaning cake. Cheeld means the child and fuggan is a dialect name for a fruit cake. Groaning cake is a more evocative name that shows that baking the cake is meant to be a distraction from the discomforts of contractions and the impending birth. Breaking eggs into the mixture is heavy with symbolism of birth and fertility. The rich cake later becomes an enticing and nourishing treat for the mother after the birth and pieces are saved (fruit cake lasts for ages) to be shared as the christening kimble. Accounts of the custom differ in detail such as who is given the duty of handing out the kimble. Some say it is the father, some the mother and others are less specific saying that a woman is generally preferred.

Internet links can take you in all directions but during my research I found various references to birthing cakes including a modern recipe (dated 2018) for a groaning cake on a website called 'Home Birth Matters - home birth in Aotearoa'. The author was a bit squeamish about calling it a groaning cake and preferred 'Celebration Cake' but acknowledged its roots in Cornish history.

Given the surprise of the men receiving the kimble back in the 1880s, I wonder what the response would be today.

Medieval documents

This northern-hemisphere summer saw the celebration of ancient Cornish customs.

Kresen Kernow (Cornwall Centre), the archive of Cornish documents, books, maps and photographs in Redruth, brought four medieval documents together in a special exhibition. The documents are connected to Glasney College in [Penryn](#). They are religious play scripts written in the Middle Cornish language and show an immersive and exciting tradition of theatre in



Cornwall.

The Life of St Meriadoc, on loan from the National Library of Wales, includes the story of Camborne's patron saint and two other plays, complex political dramas.

The Life of St Kea, also supplied by the National Library of Wales, is incomplete but includes the miracles of St Kea and King Arthur's struggle with the Romans and his betrayal by Guinevere.

Ordinalia (a latin term – all the stage directions are in latin) means “prompt” or “service book”. The manuscript, from the collection of the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford, includes a trilogy of plays. Although similar to the mystery plays of northern England, they are unique to Cornwall. The subject matter covers the span of Christian salvation from Adam and Eve to the resurrection. Stage diagrams show a number of ‘mansions’ on the circumference of a circle representing locations of heaven, hell and earthly biblical sites. The audience sits (or stands) in the centre. The theatre-in-the-round reflects the layout of *plen an gwari* which were open-air playing places. Only two *plen an gwaris* survive at [Perran Round](#) and St Just in Penwith but it is believed that dozens existed at one time around Cornwall.

While the exhibition was on, modern adaptations of the three plays were put on in St Just which is the oldest working open air theatre space in Britain. Over 230 volunteers were involved in the 15 performances over two weeks. Each play had its own professional director and assistant director. The 150 costumes were made by a team of 17 and would not have been out of place in The Lord of the Rings; for example, the fearsome devil is pictured. Music was provided by a band of 15 and a 34 strong choir. The 11 mansions were built by 27 set makers - the spectacular jaws of Hell unleashing fire and brimstone next to the grim Torturers' Mansion and flanked by Pilate's palace.

Christchurch Branch

The Christchurch branch held a meeting on 14 August 2021 with an attendance of 23. A special welcome was extended to the National President Judy Wright who delivered the long-needed projector. The decision to buy it was made at the May biennial meeting of the national association. Judy generously donated a laptop computer to ‘drive’ the projector.

Long-standing members David and Olwyn King cut a large cake on the double occasion of Olwyn's birthday and their 70th wedding anniversary.

This month's Cornish song with Heather was "The Sweet Nightingale" which everyone enjoyed singing.

The meeting had an island theme. The new equipment proved to be very successful when our speakers Bert and Sharon took us on holiday to the Chatham Islands. What many of us thought to be a few windswept islands in the middle of the ocean proved to be wrong. There were beautiful beaches and coastline, a lot of history, very welcoming and friendly locals and wonderful meals. Some of the roads were a bit rough and the trees often had a permanent lean from the prevailing wind. It was an interesting visit to an isolated part of N.Z.

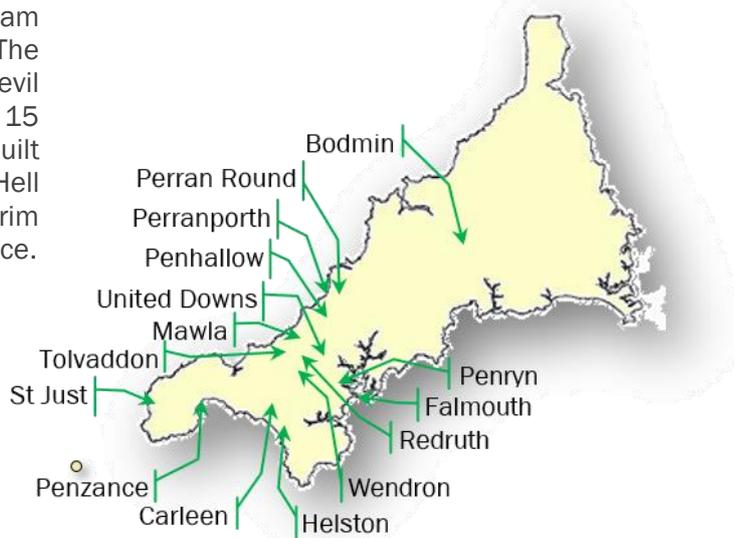
Judy brought us up to date with news from Cornwall over the past few weeks including a short video of the Scilly Islands.

Afternoon tea was served and followed by a committee meeting during which the National President put forward some ideas for the future direction of the branch.

The meeting that was due to be held in September was cancelled in response to the Covid lockdown.



Places mentioned in this newsletter



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

