

President

Judy Wright
19 Fairway Drive
Martinborough 5711

Ph: 027 5347197
E-mail: judywright13@hotmail.com

Web Site: www.nzcornish.nz

Facebook: NZCornish

Secretary & Treasurer

Nick Bartle
49 Lohia Street
Khandallah

Wellington 6035
Ph: 04 280 7501 or 027 578 8568
E-mail: nzcornishassociation@gmail.com



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

Kowethas Kernewek
Mordir Nowdyh

N E W S L E T T E R

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

Nadelik Lowen!

Merry Christmas!

Gorhemynadow a'n Seson

Season's Greetings

Christmas traditions

If you were in Cornwall now and planning for Christmas, you would be well into winter weather and thinking in terms of warming log fires and dark evenings.

Some Cornish customs are aimed at beating the cold and dark – like mahogany, a festive drink combining gin and dark treacle. The tradition was that shopkeepers would offer their customers gin and cake as a way of thanking them for past business. The recipe uses two parts gin and one part black treacle. Some say molasses but I think that the flavour of true molasses would be unpalatable (too strong) and that dark treacle has the right sweetness and flavour. To mix the two ingredients, one has to be warmed and old recipes say warm the gin. I reckon that would evaporate some of the alcohol and defeat the objective of the spirits. In these days of microwaves, warming the treacle is easier. Thoroughly stir to mix. The resultign drink (according to reports – I haven't tried it yet) tastes like boozy treacle toffee. Could be good served with the Christmas pud!



The drink has a genuine history and is also known as a sailor's tippie. In 1781 James Boswell and Samuel Johnson were visiting Joshua Reynolds (all famous gentlemen). Another guest at the time was Cornishman Edward Craggs-Eliot who became Baron Eliot of [Port Eliot](#). He made mahogany for Boswell who later wrote that he "thought it very good liquor".

Today, there is a range of gins distilled in Cornwall

to add even more local flavour.



Other, more recent practices seem to totally contradict the climatic conditions. Many beaches around Cornwall now host Christmas Day swims. The more adventurous Cornish gather in crowds wearing very little, although fancy dress is

encouraged, and take a brief dip in the freezing Atlantic Ocean or English Channel depending on which coast they select. It is recommended to take part before indulging in the festive turkey, all the trimmings, pudding and mahogany!

60 years ago

In October 2021 the Tamar Road Bridge celebrated its 60th anniversary; not to be confused with the rail bridge designed by I K Brunel in the 1850s.

Prior to the building of the suspension bridge for road traffic in 1961, vehicles used ferries at [Torpoint](#) (which are still in operation) to cross the River Tamar. The opening of the bridge sped up the journey between [Saltash](#) in Cornwall and Plymouth in Devon. 4,000 vehicles used the bridge each day in its first year despite there being a toll in one direction - to leave Cornwall. These days 10 times that number of vehicles make the crossing and the money collected pays for all the upkeep, operation and improvements.

The national government of the time refused to fund the bridge so, in an unusual act of unity for local government bodies, Cornwall County and Plymouth City Councils combined forces to meet the original cost of £1.8 million. The road is 642m long, 73 metres above the river and is suspended from two towers 335 metres apart. It was officially opened by HM The Queen Mother on 26 April 1962 even though cars had been using it since the previous October.

In 1995 a survey of the bridge found that it could not support the weight of the latest heavy vehicles. The solution was reminiscent of work on the Auckland harbour bridge. Two additional cantilever lanes were added to each side for vehicle to use while the original roadbed was reconstructed to handle the increased weight. Ironically the renewed structure weighed less than the original. The new improved bridge was opened by HM Princess Anne on 26 April 2002, exactly 40 years after her grandmother's initial opening ceremony.



Both the rail and road bridges are important landmarks when travelling into or out of Cornwall. Passing over the Tamar in either direction on either bridge always brings a tear to my eye.

50 years ago

Here's an extract from Geoff Curson's draft history of the NZ Cornish Association showing how 1971 was something of a turning point. Newsletters reported a host of events and landmarks.

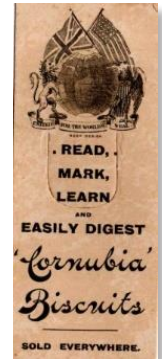
- ■ The Association had received Christmas cards from the Prime Minister, Sir Keith Holyoake, and several overseas Cornish bodies.
- ■ Palmerston North member Annie Teague celebrated her 101st birthday. She'd been born in [Michaelstow](#) in 1899 and came to New Zealand in 1906.
- ■ Work started on a new subdivision in Wellington that was to be called Camborne. See our website for more details.
- ■ Cliff Trevelyan stood down as secretary. The job was taken over by Vic Hocking whose first newsletter (issue 92) was sent out in July.
- ■ The May national meeting was held in Nelson. W Oliver continued as national president.
- ■ The Nelson Pictorial newspaper published several photos of the national meeting including this one of Francesca Menzies who was then secretary of the Hawkes Bay Branch and remains a member to this day. She is with Taranaki president, George Morgan, and Vic Hocking.



A Little Hayle Treasure

Judy Wright, our National President, contributes this story about a surprise find in an old book.

I recently got around to reading a book that held great sentimental value to my late mother, Tilly Mitchell. In the years that I had taken ownership of it, it had travelled around with me with the promise to myself that I would read it one day. Well, that day came and from the pages of this book a wonderful little treasure dropped into my lap, this vintage bookmark advertising Cornubia Biscuits. It reads "Read, mark, learn and easily digest. Cornubia Biscuits. Sold everywhere" and probably dates from before 1920.



On further investigation, it transpires that the Cornubia biscuit factory was based in [Hayle](#). This intrigued me as I was brought up in Hayle and had never heard about this.

The factory, pictured here and located in



Foundry Square was originally Harvey & Co's ironmongery store. In 1895 it was sold to Hosken, Trevithick and Polkinghorne", the

initials of which "HTP" were to become a household word for flour throughout the west of Britain. The store was converted that same year to an early purpose-built production line factory designed to bake biscuits on a conveyor belt system.

The milling of flour commenced in 1852 at the easternmost end of Hayle at Loggans Mill by William Hosken. The mill is still standing, (listed though deteriorating).

In 1890 Hosken was joined by Richard Trevithick, second son of the famous innovator and a Truro based miller, J.S. Polkinghorne to form the partnership "Hosken, Trevithick and Polkinghorne"

In the period to 1913 the partnership owned a large farm, 50 horses, 3 traction engines, various lorries and its own "Hayle & Bristol Steamship Company" whose "Cornubia" and "M.S.Hedley" brought the wheat for Loggans Mill, via a canal excavated at the edge of Copperhouse Pool, to the Copperhouse 7 wharf. It was at the time the largest wholesale grocer south west of Bristol. However, by

1927 the manufacture of Cornubia biscuits in Foundry Square had ceased, for during the 1890s the company had acquired a mill in Plymouth and - as now - so then - further rationalisation led in 1930 to the closure of the Loggans Mill and the company's centralisation in Plymouth.

The multi-windowed grade II listed building at 18-20 Foundry Square is still resplendent with the top 2 floors being converted into flats and now known as Foundry House.

Thanks, Judy. I can't resist adding a little. 'Cornubia' was the Roman name given to the area we now know as Cornwall and even appears on some copies of the 1215 Magna Carta which refers (in Latin) to "in Anglia et in Cornubia" - in England and in Cornwall.

By complete coincidence BBC news reported early in November that a building just along the street at number 24 Foundry Square has been added to the 'at risk' register by Historic England. Parts of the building are being used as Hayle's heritage centre, but structural issues, drainage, damp and potential subsidence have landed it on the risk register.

The building was originally the offices and foundry of Harvey & Company. Harvey's of Hayle were major players in the development of steam engines and mining equipment in Cornwall and left a widespread legacy of industrial archaeology.

Laura Walton, chief executive of Harvey's Foundry Trust which owns buildings in the area, said: "This is a call to action - the building needs significant structural work and being on the Heritage at Risk Register enables us to access advice and grants to protect it."

Almost all the buildings around Foundry Square are listed. In total there are 133 buildings listed in and around Hayle. Surprisingly it is not included in the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site.

COP 26

There seem to be only two topics in the news at the moment: Covid 19 and global warming, especially following the COP26 conference in Scotland.

In New Zealand we hear of the devastating effects that a rise in sea level will have on the low-lying Pacific Islands. Without diminishing their plight, it should be noted that the consequences will impact the whole planet including Cornwall and the [Isles of Scilly](#).

28 miles off the Cornish mainland, 140 islands

make up the Scillies but only 5 are inhabited.

Most people live in the picture-perfect Hugh Town on St Mary's. The town is built on a narrow isthmus only 130m wide at its narrowest point between two beaches. Rising sea levels are attacking from both sides and are also threatening to inundate the inland's fresh water source. Street level in Hugh Town is 3m above current sea levels and the highest point on St Mary's is only 49m. The UK Met Office predicts that sea levels will rise by one metre this century. Hugh Town



may require relocation but also runs the risk of inhabitants deciding to leave permanently. St Mary's may also be split in two.

More pressing are the changes in, frequency timing and severity of storms that are already being felt. Locals are used to waves crashing against their homes, but the storms are starting earlier each year and coming on stronger than before. They also impact the local population of seals. New-born pups last year were not yet strong enough to survive the onslaught of early storms that swept them off rocks and beaches, separating them from their mothers.

In contrast, on St Agnes, an island just 20 minutes by boat from St Mary's, farmers are struggling to feed their stock during dry summers months due to lack of grass growth.

The Council of The Isles of Scilly assesses that the islands could be one of the worst affected places in Britain. The council has put out plans for community comment to spend millions on raising and strengthening sea defences. Further hope for residents is coming in possible improvements to transport to and from the mainland. A £48 million bid has been made for funding from the UK Government 'Levelling Up' Fund. If granted, the money will be used to replace current shipping with three new vessels offering a wider range of freight and passenger options along with greater fuel efficiency and faster crossing times. Modifications will also be made to the docking and harbour facilities at Penzance, St Mary's and Tresco, the second most populous island.

Higher Town St. Martins
Maypoie St. Mary's
Hughtown
Gugh St. Agnes

The Lunacy of Tourists

Business operators have a love/hate relationship with tourists. They can't make a living without them but visitors from 'Up Country' seem to come with a sense of entitlement, lack of manners and an



expectation that Cornwall is a theme park made specifically to meet their requirements. Tourists are given the disrespectful name of 'emmetts', a Cornish dialect term for ants, because they follow each other around and congregate on beaches just like small insects.

A book has been published by author and illustrator Gretchen Viehmann of [Fowey](#), called *Disappointed!* An illustrated compendium of displeasure. Not Cornish by birth, Gretchen has lived in Fowey for 15 years and has developed friendships and sympathies with local business-people. She has collected comments posted on social media by dissatisfied and disgruntled visitors. She takes advantage of their poor spelling and grammar and the book includes comments such as:

"Do not go here with a family"

"Salad mostly lettuce"

"It rained and was windy"
"Mussels to fishy"

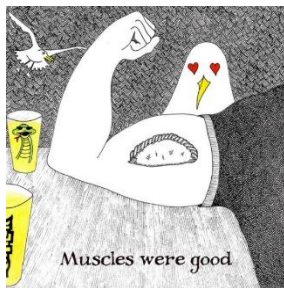
"Muscles were good"

"Don't the seagulls ever sleep?"

"Bloody hourly chime a bloody nightmare glad to get home"

They seem to have missed the point of visiting seaside towns like Fowey.

Gretchen's illustrations add a humour of their own. The book is available online at [hissingvulture.com](#). The price including international post is £30.00 (NZ\$60).



Taranaki Branch

The Taranaki Branch held a meeting on 16 October at the home of Carol and Graham Cowling. It was well attended with 12 people present, all bringing a plate and sharing in general chatter and good food [as shown by the spread in the picture].



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

Christchurch Branch

The Christchurch Branch did not hold its October meeting because facilities at its usual venue were closed under Covid restrictions.

The President opened the first branch meeting in 3 months on 13 November by welcoming 19 members.

Heather started the entertainment by leading the singing of "Wassail Kernow" from the Cornwall Music Federation; the idea being for groups all over the world to record the wassail and be combined in a mass broadcast.

Les' legend was how [Helston](#) got its name. The Devil was flying over the town carrying a large rock to block the door to Hell when he was attacked by St Michael. In the ensuing fight the Devil dropped the rock which was later broken up in 1700. Parts can be seen in the wall of the Angel Hotel in Coinagehall Street.

The guest speaker, Renee Blackburn, spoke of the formation of the 'Book Discussion Group' in 1973 to help migrants with literature and understanding English. There are now 1500 book clubs nationwide.

Barbara and Jennie presented "News from Cornwall" compiled by Judy and carried on the book theme.

Afternoon tea, wrapped in gladwrap on individual plates, was served to the tables with only soft drink available to comply with the current Covid19 rules.

Places mentioned in this newsletter

