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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

Storm Eunice

The UK Meteorological Office had already issued an amber weather warning for all of Cornwall. On 17 February it upgraded the alert to red (most extreme) for the north coast, extending up the coast of Devon to southern Wales. Residents were warned of possible danger to life.



The storm struck on 18 February. There were record wind speeds recorded and damage across Britain. In Cornwall, schools were closed, Covid testing and vaccination centres were shut and ferry, bus and train services were suspended. The effects of the storm were not felt quite so severely in Cornwall as elsewhere but there was still significant damage. The roof was blown off the lifeboat station at [Sennen](#) and fell across the road. The public was warned to keep clear as it was live with electricity.

In [Bude](#), a landmark tree growing in a triangle 'island' in the main street was caught on video as it swayed and fell. A section of the roof of the local leisure centre was also blown away. Several trees in other areas succumbed to the wind, falling on cars and blocking roads.



Thousands of Cornish homes were left without power prompting one pub, The Old Inn at [St Breward](#), to offer half price takeaways to local families experiencing power cuts.

Prior to Storm Eunice, the strongest wind gust recorded in England was 118mph (190kph) at [Gwennap Head](#) in Cornwall on 15 December 1979. A 122mph (196kph) gust was recorded at The Needles on the Isle of Wight at the height of Storm Eunice

Lego lost at sea – 6 years on

In the January/February newsletter of 2016 there was a report of strange flotsam being washed up on Cornish beaches. The list included pink plastic bottles that once contained Vanish cleaning liquid, a chunk of an American space rocket and thousands of pieces of Lego. 4.8 million pieces of Lego were in a container, one of 62, that had been washed off the deck of the Tokio Express on its way to New York during a storm in 1997 some 20 miles off [Land's End](#).

Even more strange is that the Lego, most of which was ironically themed on the sea (seahorses, life rafts and diving flippers), is continuing to wash up. It has triggered a fascination among beachcombers and beach cleaners to the point that a community has built up to record how far the Lego has dispersed. Some has

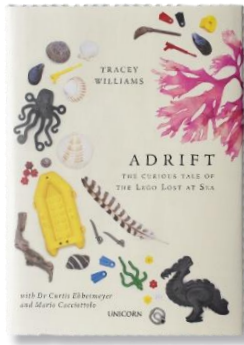


reached the shores of Europe but nowhere yet as far afield as New Zealand. Rare pieces are also highly valued. The most scarce among them are green dragons. The fact that these items have survived for 25 years and are still being washed up is testament to the longevity of plastic in our oceans. It is believed that pieces which initially sank are now making their way ashore, caught up in kelp and other debris or possibly only now being released as the container corrodes.

Tracey Williams has always been intrigued by chance finds and the stories and folklore behind them, from shells and sea glass discovered on childhood holidays in Cornwall. She has now written a book about it, *Adrift: The Curious Tale of the LEGO Lost at Sea*. One of the main messages of the book is that beachcombing has changed. It used to be hunting for pretty shells or pebbles. Now it targets plastic. Although Lego is the 'poster child' of the book, Tracey makes

the point that the toy bricks are only representative of a much bigger phenomenon.

Tracey first found beach Lego when she was living in Devon but moved to Cornwall in 2010. She found pieces on her first visit to a beach. Since then, she has set up a Facebook page that has attracted hundreds of reports of Lego finds.



Scientists at Plymouth University estimate that the Lego could last from 100 to 1,300 years. With such a broad range, they are unlikely to be far wrong.

If the container is gradually disintegrating and continues to release its contents, there are 50,000 Lego sharks that may yet begin to turn up.

Shark attack

I usually enjoy finding connections to Cornwall but this one is very sad. On 16 February there was a fatal shark attack a short distance off the coast near Sydney, Australia. The details were too gruesome to be fully reported in the media and onlookers were horrified at what they witnessed, the first such attack in the area for 60 years. DNA analysis was required to identify the victim, his injuries were so severe. Eventually it was released that it was 35-year-old Simon Nellis who grew up in [Ludgvan](#), Cornwall, and his family is still there.



The young man was an enthusiastic swimmer and was training for a charity sponsored ocean swim in aid of disabled children. Simon had served two tours of duty in Afghanistan with the RAF. After leaving the military about 6 years ago he visited Australia, immediately fell in love with the country and had not visited Cornwall for years. He became a diving instructor and had a deep passion for the sea. In a Facebook post he expressed his respect for sharks. He called for a ban on shark nets and drum lines, measures used to keep sharks away from public beaches, saying they indiscriminately killed wildlife. He had swum with sharks before.

Friends and relations claimed that Simon would not have wanted the shark that attacked him to be killed. Authorities explained that they were only searching for the

animal to frighten it away from the area. It is thought that the shark mistook Simon for a seal because he was wearing a black wetsuit.

A further heartrending aspect of the tragedy was that Simon was soon to marry. Our thoughts are with his parents and fiancée who, in a statement following his death, described Simon as a “proud Cornishman”.

Tregellas Tapestries

Judy Wright, our National President, contributed this story.

Looking through some back copies of the Association’s newsletters, I came across an article about the Tregellas Tapestries (Sept/Oct 2013 vol 410) that rang a personal bell for me.

The Tregellas Tapestries, now known as The Cornwall Tapestries, is a pictorial story of Cornwall. It was conceived and researched by the Cornish Bard, the late Rita Tregellas Pope to advance the knowledge and understanding of Cornwall’s cultural heritage and was designed and executed under her direction. In 1991, she brought together a team comprising two designers, Joanna Tucker and Annie Corey, and a group of skilled spinners, dyers and embroiderers. Using a variety of techniques including applique, embroidery and collage, the tapestry took three years to complete.

This modern embroidery comprises 58 individual panels portraying milestones of Cornwall’s rich history and culture from prehistoric to modern times. The story shows how the Cornish took their goods and skills across the world through the centuries.

I am honoured to say that my mother – Tilly Mitchell was one of those invited to take part in this project. My thanks to Ben Stanley-Butcher at Kresen Kernow (Cornwall Centre) for providing this picture of her embroidery with the title ‘Land, sea and air’ (number 049) and the transcript of the viewing notes that accompany it from their collection.



‘Land, sea and air’ embroidered by Tilly Mitchell:

‘The sea has been used for trade and travel since pre-historic times, now it mainly serves the leisure industry. The arrival of coaching improved

Cornwall’s land links with the rest of the country. Steam powered traction engines made

farming easier. The Bude Canal served industry for years and is now used for leisure. Passenger steamers carried goods and holidaymakers for trips on rivers such as the [Fal](#), where shipping is now laid up. From the [Royal Navy's Air Station at Culdrose](#), helicopter pilots fly life-saving missions. The [Isles of Scilly](#) are reached by sea and air and Newquay airport offers regular flights to London'.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, go to our website: www.nzcornish.nz – Cornwall-History-Kresen Kernow

Gleaning

Thanks to Warren Grenfell of Nelson for suggesting this topic.

Gleaning is the practise of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested and is illustrated by this famous painting by Jean-Francois Millet. Gleaning is not a new idea; it is mentioned in the bible and has a rich history over centuries. It is deeply connected to feeding those that did not have access to their own land and therefore could not grow food for themselves. It underwent a decline as landowners began closing off land and restricting access to fields.

Now gleaning is undergoing a resurgence. Commercial harvesting is not 100% efficient. Research by Feedback, a global charity promoting circular food systems, has found that up to 16% of a crop can be wasted due to a range of factors that are often beyond a farmer's control, such as produce not being the right shape or size for supermarkets, unexpected weather patterns changing harvest times or labour shortages. Even when all the variables seem to align, farmers must pick their time to maximise the return for the cost of harvesting a field which means that any plants left over can continue to grow and yield produce. For the farmer, it would not be cost-effective to return to the field. Modern-day gleaners volunteer to move in to manually mop up the surplus food.

The Gleaning Cornwall Network is a growing network of volunteer gleaners and drivers who salvage produce from farms and growers and distribute it to foodbanks, soup kitchens and charities that feed those most in need. It reduces waste and reduces food poverty. It's a win, win operation.

In a recent TV mini-series, Simon Reeves highlighted the unseen poverty in Cornwall. His programmes galvanised a local, Holly Whitelaw, to do something about it and start the Network last year. The Network operates through social media – Facebook and a web site to co-ordinate

sponsors, farmers, volunteers, equipment, transportation and deserving causes. It also has the benefit of bringing together groups of gleaners for fun, sociable, rewarding and outdoor workouts. In February and March the Network's Facebook page reported on efforts that rescued tonnes of cabbages, beetroot, potatoes, leeks and cauliflowers.

When interviewed by The Guardian, Simon Whear, a farmer near [Hayle](#) said "You get to a point with a commercial crop where there are too few pieces left in the field to make it financially viable to come back in again and cut what's left. There's always some left, and I thought this would be a good way for people to make use of it. It's better that it gets picked than just ploughed back into the field." What was a small amount of waste to Whear in retail terms provided rich pickings. Gleaners managed to fill 66 crates of cauliflower in just six hours The produce was perfect albeit too small to meet the demands of supermarkets.



Rev. William Woon

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga announced in its last Heritage Quarterly magazine that it had acquired an 1845 prayer and hymn book. It had been printed entirely in Te Reo Maori at the Wesleyan Māngungu Mission Press at Horeke in the Hokianga. The book, a second edition, is in a 'very tidy' condition, given its age. Personal notes and underlinings in pencil show that it has been well



used. It has also been given a hard cover at some point in its life. Heritage NZ curates the Māngungu Mission house where the book will go on display.

What stood out for me in the magazine article was that the printing press at the mission had been set up and operated by Rev. William Woon, a Cornishman.

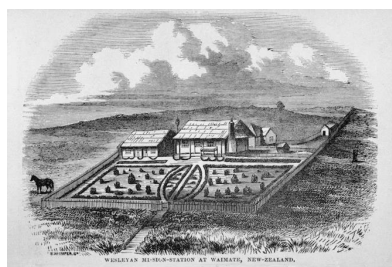
I had never come across anyone in Cornwall with the surname Woon but knew of Woon Farm near [Roche](#). According to Wikipedia, "it is a word in the old Cornish language, meaning 'someone living on the downs – a downlander', and remains a common name in Cornwall".

William Woon was born in [Truro](#) in 1803 and was apprenticed to a printer. After showing some preaching ability, he became a local

preacher and was accepted into the Methodist ministry in 1830.

His first posting was to the Friendly Islands Mission in Tonga where he was given the job of translating and printing the scriptures in Tongan. In 1833 he resigned and joined the Māngungu Mission where a new printing press had recently arrived. During his 10-year tenure there he did a lot of printing. In 1840 he witnessed the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi in the Hokianga. Due to rising animosity between Maori and Pakeha in the north, Woon and his family moved to Manukau in 1846. He and his wife, Jane (née Garland), had 7 children. Soon after, they were sent to Heretua near Hāwera in south Taranaki where he ministered to the Ngati-Ruanui and Taranaki iwi.

An article in the Hawera & Normanby Star in 1895 described Woon's house; "without a sawn plank in its structure, it was the largest native-built house in New Zealand. Raupo, faced with totoi reeds, gave warmth to the sixteen rooms of which the house was composed." The article went on to say that Woon had won over the locals by kindness. Known as Te Wunu amongst the Maori, he was a man of gigantic stature and greatly admired.



He retired to Whanganui in 1854 where he became postmaster and a supernumerary ministering to the military and civil population. He died on 22 Sep 1858 and is buried in the Heads Road Cemetery there.

William Woon's career as a missionary and printer has been well documented. The National Library and Puke Ariki in New Plymouth have collections of correspondence, extracts from his journals and other documents. The Wesleyan Historical Society of New Zealand has published a biography.

Rev. Woon's eldest son, Garland W. R. Woon, was a founder of the Taranaki Herald newspaper in 1852 and became its editor in 1856 until it was sold in 1867. While Woon was editor, the paper was sold throughout Europe and became renowned for its reporting of the conflicts of the First Taranaki War. At one stage Woon was accused of publishing material that could give "information to the enemy". He ran an issue with the offending paragraph removed, the white space being filled with fullstops. It remained the one and

only time the Herald was censored.

Our online presence

Between meetings and newsletters, topical stories are added to our website and Facebook page. Recent posts have been:

- ■ Shelterbox, a charity helping the displaced people from Ukraine, was founded in Truro where it still has its head office.
- ■ A sunflower growing competition in Cornwall to raise money for Ukraine
- ■ A father and son from Cornwall worked at the Winter Olympics as coach and equipment technician for the UK bobsleigh team.
- ■ Antiques Roadshow visiting the Eden Project and filming for the JK Rowling TV detective series, Strike, in Falmouth
- ■ A documentary of the making of the Ordinalia, a cycle of fourteenth-century plays, performed at St Just last year.

For more details of these stories, please use the links at

www.nzcornish.nz/news

www.facebook.com/groups/nzcornish

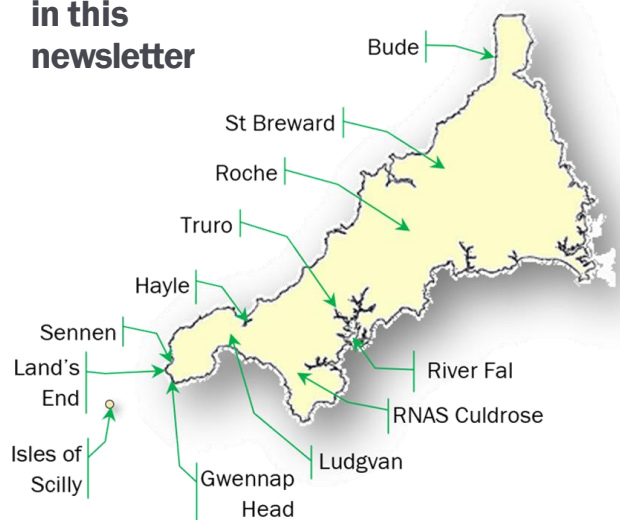
We would also love to have more people join the Facebook group.

Branch meetings

The Taranaki Branch held a meeting at the home of president, Elaine James, on 12 March.

The Christchurch branch continues to have issues with the use of its usual venue under Covid restrictions so has cancelled its last two meetings.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



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

