

May \ June 462 - mis Me / mis Methaven 2022

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

**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

In memoriam

There is sad news to share. During April, two of our longest-standing (and oldest) members passed away.

First was David King at the age of 95 followed in just days by Graham Harry who was 88. The Association was represented at both funerals. Our commiserations go to their families.



Celtic cross
Padstow

Keskalar Gwir
(Sincere condolences)

A bench for memories

Netflix is the unlikely donor in conjunction with the suicide prevention charity, Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), of 25 community benches around UK. The move was inspired by the TV show, After Life, starring Ricky Gervais and was timed to mark the launch of the third and final series. The benches are designed to encourage people to reflect, share, listen and support one another. Every bench is inscribed with a quote from the series, "Hope is everything." together with contact details to CALM.

In the series, Gervais' character, Tony, visits his wife's grave. He is often joined on a cemetery bench by a woman, played by Penelope Wilton (Ever Decreasing Circles, Downton Abbey), whose husband is also buried there. It becomes the setting for the two strangers to offload companionably and help each other deal with their grief. Tony has contemplated suicide but, after deciding against it, he sets out to live his life as brutally honest as he can be. The lack of regard for anyone else makes for hilarious scenes, intertwined with emotional and heart-breaking storylines.



One of the benches has been set up in Gyllyngdune Gardens in the Princess Pavilion complex in [Falmouth](#), overlooking the sea.

Cornish DNA

We hear so much about DNA these days – not only in TV detective programmes but in news of variants of viruses and tracing family trees.

In April I 'Zoomed' into a truly international online presentation about Cornish DNA. I first heard about it from the Toronto Cornish Association but the event was hosted by the British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa. The presenter was Dr Joe Flood who was talking in Melbourne, Australia to an audience dotted around the globe.

Dr Flood hosts a website called familytreedna.com where you can order kits to get your own DNA sequenced. The aim of the Cornish DNA Projects run by Dr Flood is to identify family links between participants in the projects by matching gene sequences in their DNA.

There are three types of DNA that can be used:

- Autosomal, the DNA in our chromosomes other than the X or Y chromosomes
- Y-DNA, the genes that appear on the Y chromosome which is inherited only along the male line – from father to son
- Mitochondrial DNA which is inherited only from mothers. This DNA is in parts of the cell other than the nucleus.

General findings from these studies show that there are distinctive genetic fingerprints for Cornish people. The lineage extends back to migration of early Bronze Age people from the central steppes of Europe who can be characterised as the Beaker people due to the design and manufacture of their pottery. They crossed Europe to what are now referred to as the Celtic nations; Scotland, Ireland, Wales, the Isle of Man, Brittany and Cornwall. There was a rapid expansion of Beaker populations around 2,800 BC. Dr Flood claims that 70% of European men can be genetically linked to just five males.

The attraction to Cornwall for early civilizations was, of course, its mineral wealth and Dr Flood refers to it as the world's first gold rush closely

followed by the discovery of surface tin. The use of metal resulted in population growth by providing durable tools like the axe, plough and wheel.

There could be many factors in why the genes of the ancient inhabitants can still be seen in people with Cornish ancestry. For centuries Cornwall was isolated, the people primitive and aggressive with their own language, laws and customs. The other Celtic nations have their own distinctive genetic markers, probably for similar reasons.

Nebra Sky Disc

The British Museum is mounting an exhibition called The World of Stonehenge. Although the Beaker folk were not the first to develop the Stonehenge site, they were responsible for much of the structure that are visible there now. The Nebra Sky Disc is from a similar time to Stonehenge hence its inclusion in the exhibition. It was first discovered in 1999 near the town of Nebra in Germany. It is held by State Museum of Prehistory in Halle, Germany which is lending the disc to the British Museum. The curator of the exhibition, Neil Wilkin, considers it a “remarkable homecoming for some of the most eye-catching aspects of the design”.

The 30cm bronze disc with a blue-green patina is decorated with inlaid gold symbols thought to represent the sun, moon, stars, the solstices and the Pleiades constellation which is, of course, known in NZ as Matariki. The metal used for most of the disc’s decorations is almost certainly Cornish gold (from that initial gold rush?). The mix of minerals in the gold has pinpointed the source as being the Carnon River, where gold was extracted during the period of the sky disc. In this case it was exported to mainland Europe quite probably as part of Beaker trading routes. The [Carnon River](#) flows from near [Chacewater](#) into Restroguet Creek and thence into Falmouth Harbour.

“It’s a really special moment to see this gold back in Britain nearly four millennia after someone first saw it glinting in the Cornish water.”

The decorations were added in stages. The sun, moon and stars were the originals and are made of Cornish gold. Two arcs were added on opposite sides of the disc to mark the zones of the rising and setting sun and used metal from another source. One has since been lost. The ‘rainbow’ or ‘sun boat’ arc was the final embellishment.

The disc was initially uncovered by two unlicensed treasure-hunters using a metal detector. They sold their discovery on the black market and received



custodial sentences when their crime was uncovered in 2001. Their desecration of the site caused confusion and uncertainty over the age of the artefacts they found. There were bronze swords, hatchets, a chisel and fragments of a bracelet found with the disc. Because the site was not properly recorded and unearthed it is not certain whether all the artefacts date from the same time or not. It is now generally accepted that the disc dates from 1,600 BC.

The disc may be an astronomical instrument as well as an item of religious significance. The arrangement of the stars, sun and moon suggest the disc was used to mark the solstices. While much older earthworks and megalithic astronomical complexes, such as Stonehenge, had already been used for this purpose, the disc is the oldest known “portable instrument” to allow such measurements.

Hidden corgis

Not only is Matariki coming up on 24th but June will also see the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee on 5th. The UK and Commonwealth are celebrating all year but events will peak during an extended public holiday weekend from 2 to 5 June.

The British Women’s Institute (WI) has come up with its own, rather quirky but oddly characteristic, way of marking the event. It is encouraging its members and the public to knit soft toy corgis (Her Majesty’s favourites) using remnants from their yarn stash or recycled materials. My mother, who was a member of the local village WI for as long as I can remember, would have been right into this project.

Special tags can be downloaded from the WI website to be attached to the completed corgis.



They are then hidden in public places. Anyone who finds a corgi can register their find on the WI website to go into a prize draw. One lucky winner will receive

tickets to go to the flagship Big Jubilee Lunch in London.

Why is this story relevant? The first five corgis to be hidden were concealed in the large biomes (giant greenhouses) at the [Eden Project](#) in Cornwall. People who found these toy dogs received a pack including everything they needed to put on their own community Big Jubilee Lunch.

The scheme is called “Where’s Winnie?” building on references to Where’s Wally?

puzzles as well as a play on WI winner. If you would like to join in the fun by crafting your own corgi, the knitting pattern can be downloaded from the NZ Cornish Association's Facebook page or directly from the WI at:

<https://online.fliphtml5.com/gphbd/ejbg/#p=43>

Ann Jones, Chair of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, said, "We're delighted to hide the first of the WI's Where's Winnie? corgis at the Eden Project. [The] Where's Winnie? initiative is about the love of craft, extending the hand of friendship and bringing Jubilee joy to others."

Chemistry in Cornwall

I have read a few books by Bill Bryson. The latest one was *The Body, A Guide for Occupants*. Always on the lookout for references to Cornwall, I perked up when Bryson mentioned Cornwall. He was describing the stuff responsible for the energy in the cells of our bodies - a substance called adenosine triphosphate (ATP). How it is made in the cell was not known until the 1960s. To quote Bryson, "The person who discovered the answer was an eccentric, self-funded scientist named Peter Mitchell, who in the early 1960s inherited a fortune from the Wimpey house-building company and used it to set up a research centre in a stately home in Cornwall. Mitchell wore shoulder length hair and an earring at a time when that was especially unusual among serious scientists."



Mitchell was born in Surrey, went to Cambridge University and had been working at the University of Edinburgh when he was struck down by stomach ulcers and was advised by his doctors to take a break from work. He decided to spend time in his family's holiday home at Glynn Mill near [Bodmin](#) (almost as far away from Edinburgh as you can get in the UK). While there he saw [Glynn House](#) which was in a state of advance dilapidation but he bought the large house for £2,800 and restored it, designing and supervising the construction himself. In the process he created a research centre to his ideal specifications. Peter Mitchell and his brother, Christopher, funded the project using shares in George Wimpey Ltd. Their uncle had been president of the company. His vision was for a 'quiet haven for untrammelled scientific work and thought.'

It was here that he developed the theory of how ATP is made in living cells. There is a special protein in the walls of mitochondria that uses the difference in electronic charge across the membrane to power the necessary chemical

reactions. Mitchell was awarded the Nobel prize for chemistry for his work. He died in Cornwall in 1992 at the age of 71.



Glynn House has since reverted to a private residence and is currently on sale for the princely

sum of £4 million. It has 7 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, various out-buildings housing further accommodation and 4 acres of land.

The value is partly driven by a long and illustrious history. The original manor dates back to before the Norman conquest and was mentioned in the Domesday Book. Richard de Lucy, Henry II's Justiciar, who ruled in the King's absence and negotiated with Thomas Becket; Ralph de Monte Hermerii, who married the princess Joan of Acre, daughter of King Edward I; Warwick the 'Kingmaker' and Bridget Skipwith, Lady-in-Waiting to Elizabeth I, as well as Henry of Monmouth, Earl of Lancaster and Keeper of the Realm were all previous owners.

The Glynn family occupied the manor for almost 400 years and gave their name to the valley it overlooks. They were mine owners, royal commissioners, sheriffs, MPs and property owners. Edmund Glynn, a banker, added two wings in 1805 and was founder of the *West Briton* newspaper. He was bankrupted in 1833 when the Vivian family took residence until WWII when it became a secret naval station and was attacked by a German plane. It was let go until Peter Mitchell came to the rescue in 1964.

Last Bus

A film has been screening in Wellington recently advertised as the journey of an old man from John O'Groats to [Land's End](#) using only local service buses. Called 'Last Bus', the film stars Timothy Spall, famous for his roles in *Auf Wiedersehen Pet*, the *Harry Potter* movies, *Mr Turner* and *Mrs Lowry & Son*.

John O'Groats is the northernmost point on the mainland of Scotland. Land's End is, of course, in Cornwall and at the other extreme end of Britain. When I went to see the movie, I expected to see glimpses of Cornish countryside.

I was disappointed. I could not believe it when Tom, the old man, arrived at so-called Land's End. It bore no resemblance to the real place. There were houses, a road and a wharf. The

towering cliffs and rugged rocks of Land's End in Cornwall were nowhere to be seen. A bit of internet research when I got home soon revealed that the film had been made on a low budget and had been shot entirely in Scotland. It must have been a very low budget if they could not afford a quick trip for Mr Spall and a film crew from Scotland to Cornwall to add the necessary accuracy to a film that was quite specific about its locations. It was a good story and included some moving moments but lost its credibility for me in the final scenes.



Land's End in the film...and the real thing

Taranaki Branch held a meeting on 12 March including its AGM. Elaine James was re-elected president,

Carol Cowling continued in the role of secretary/treasurer and they will be supported by a vice-president and a committee of three.

The informal meeting had lots of discussion of Cornish roots. Janet Grange shared some of her brother's writings. Lawrence Polglase had spent only 2 months in Cornwall but fell in love with all things Cornish and had since learned to write in Kernewek.

The Christchurch branch had a small turnout for its meeting on 14 May. It was the first meeting for over 6 months due to the pandemic.

Heather led songs to mark two Cornish festivals held in May – Padstow 'Obby 'Oss and Helston Flora Day. Les told the story of the lost Land of

Lyonesse and then he conducted a quiz on Cornish subjects.

Anniversary project

This year is the 60th anniversary of the NZ Cornish Association in its current form. To mark the occasion the President has launched a project to record where in Cornwall members can trace their connections whether it be by birth, marriage, ancestry or simply love of the place. The links will be shown on a map on our website and possibly in a future newsletter. Branch members may already have submitted their responses.

You will find a simple form attached to complete and return - before the end of June, please. Email or postal responses are fine.

News from Cornwall

Our website contains a page that Judy Wright regularly updates with quirky and interesting news from Cornwall. Go to: www.nzcornish.nz/news

At the time of writing, there is news of [Helston](#) Flora Day, Trelawny's army off to Twickenham again and an ancient beech tree at [Tehidy](#).

By the time you read this there may be a range of different stories to keep you up to date with the good things happening in Cornwall.

Branches

As mentioned in the last newsletter the

Subscriptions

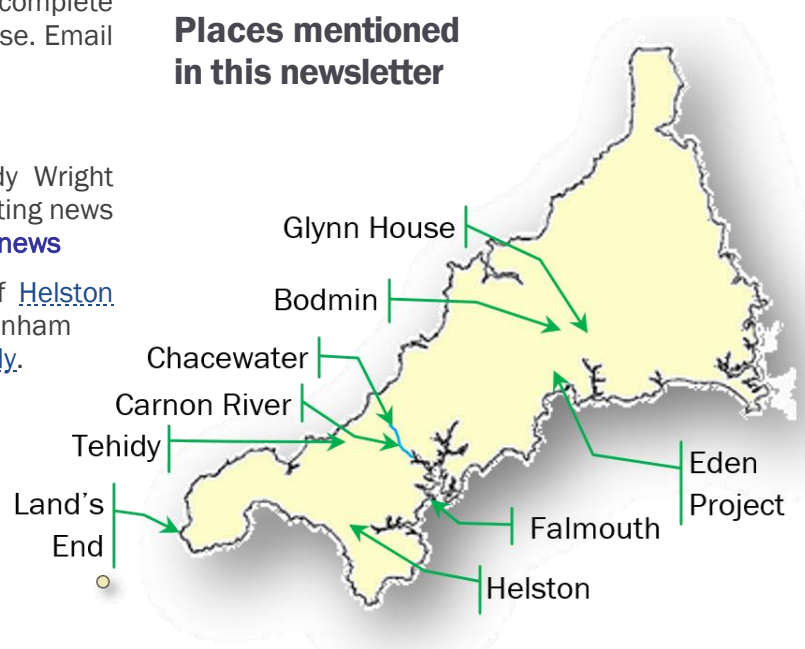
It is subscription time again for the year to 31 March 2023

■ ■ Branch members, please pay your subs to your local treasurer.

■ ■ National members, you will see a renewal form on the back of your address slip or attached to your email. The annual sub is still only \$10. Payment options are given on the form.

■ ■ If you wish to upgrade and avoid future national subs, life membership is \$100. You may still be asked to pay part of your branch sub to support local activities.

Places mentioned in this newsletter



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

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