



**CORNWALL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Area Representatives Reports

Cornwall Archaeological Society

Registered charity: 1055654

13th March 2016

Representative: Roger Smith

Parishes: Lanhydrock; Lanivet; St Wenn; Withiel; Bodmin; Helland; St Mabyn; St Tudy; Luxulyan; Lanlivery; St. Blaise; Tywardreath.

Visits to the northern parishes (Helland, St Mabyn and St Tudy) in my group are long overdue. Although I travel around the other parishes frequently, few reports have been produced. Most of my attention recently has been centred on my home parish of Luxulyan and parts of Bodmin.

The Luxulyan Valley (actually divided between Luxulyan and Lanlivery) is a 250-acre site owned by Cornwall Council. It includes the Treffry Viaduct/Aqueduct, which is owned by Cornwall Heritage Trust (CHT). In October 2015 Cornwall Council and CHT were awarded development funding of £246,800 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will be used to prepare a detailed application for full funding (a sum of £3,473,800) of the Luxulyan Valley Heritage Restoration project. It will be used mostly on upgrading the viaduct/aqueduct, with investment too in repairing the leats and carrying out natural history projects. All of this will be, according to the HLF 'underpinned by an activity programme that will engage new audiences, improve accessibility and provide inspiring training and volunteering opportunities for the local community'. John Smith, who now represents CHT, monitors the Viaduct but reported last week that the heavy winter rains have prevented it from drying out as quickly as he had hoped. This means that repointing etc will be delayed. However, Historic England has given Scheduled Monument Consent for core-drilling and other investigatory work. Hopefully there will be sufficient funding for effective repairs to the two leats that will carry water for the Pons Mill hydro-electric turbine. Jenny Heskett has recently taken over as the CORMAC Valley Ranger and is doing a superb job, complementing the meagre staff numbers with volunteer work parties.

Another piece of good news for Luxulyan parish is that Treskilling Downs, an area of open access noted for remnants of a medieval strip-field system, is undergoing a programme of vegetation clearance that will make it easier to visit and reveal the low, stony banks that used to separate the strips. It is also due to become an SSSI.

Treskilling Downs,
Luxulyan



Low bank revealed by clearance

Luxulyan Parish Council is seriously considering starting a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which, hopefully, will offer greater protection to the historic environment.

The annual Tony Blackman memorial walk was held in Bodmin this year and thanks are due to Andrew Langdon for his valuable advice and assistance. The idea was to visit certain sites that face problems. Castle Canyke, Cornwall's largest Iron Age hillfort, is not directly threatened by development; however, a massive housing and retail scheme between it and the town has been given approval by Cornwall Council, despite reservations expressed by Historic England and Nick Johnson, who wrote to them on behalf of CAS. The site of Bodmin Priory is under-recognised. Interestingly the Grade II 18th century Priory House, which lies on the site, is now the subject of a planning pre-application. Will Cornwall's planners take account of the national importance of this site? Will the opportunity to investigate another part of the Priory be taken up? If so, will the Cornwall Archaeological Unit be allowed to carry it out, rather than archaeological contractors lacking local knowledge? All these questions will test the commitment of the Council to the county's historic environment. One of the other sites visited on the day, the Chantry Chapel of Thomas Becket, which is now on the Heritage at Risk Register, continues to suffer from vandalism.



Recent damage to masonry at eastern end of Chantry Chapel of Thomas Becket, Bodmin

One other monument of concern is Ruthernbridge (Lanivet and Withiel). The parapet was badly damaged last year, allegedly by tractors, but still has not been repaired. It would be interesting to know if other Area Representatives are observing a similar impact on bridges and other features from tractors and heavy vehicles.

Representative: Sheila James

Parishes: Feock, Gerrans, Kea, Kenwyn, Ladock, Mylor, Perranarworthal, Philleigh, Probus, Ruan Lanihorne, St Allen, St Clement, St Erme, St Just-in-Roseland, St Michael Penkevil, Tregony, Truro, Veryan

There continues to be housing development around many of the villages in the area, in addition to the major new housing developments around Truro. It is important to make sure that these do not adversely affect any sites of historic interest, including sites not on the scheduled monuments list.

Visits this season have concentrated on the parishes of Kea, Feock and St Allen.

The barrows in Kea and Feock parish visited this autumn are largely unchanged. The barrow at Parkwood Hill, Carnon Downs has been protected from grazing stock by the provision of an electric fence. Some barrows would benefit from scrub clearance, see example below.



SM 32921 Round barrow SE of Chapel Farm, Kea parish

The Feock village pump and holy well site which was heavily overgrown in the spring has now been trimmed, and the steps are again visible in the grass.

Graffiti on Feock church porch was photographed and reported to Emma.

The crosses in St Allen parish were visited and no significant problems found, although the undermining of the bank at the site of Trevalsa Cross continues to give some concern.

There are currently crops growing over the site of the round and annexe at Lanner Barton, and a proper examination of the site will have to wait until the crops have been harvested.

On a visit to the hillfort in Bishop's Wood it was noted that a section of the south side of the rampart would be at risk of damage if any of the trees growing on it were to fall. Visitors to the fort have also created a picnic site in the centre of the fort. The report on the hillfort was prepared by Jennie Hancock who has recently volunteered to assist with Monument Watch.



SM 32591 Bishop's Wood hillfort, erosion of section of south rampart due to weathering and root growth.

Representative: Steve Hebdige

Parishes: Colan, Crantock, Cubert, Mawgan-in-Pydar, Newlyn East, Newquay, Padstow, Perranzabuloe, St Agnes, St Ervan, St Eval, St Issey, St Merryn

Mawgan Porth's Medieval village visits once a month for maintenance and make sure no damage has occurred.

Our scrub bashers group has cleared the vegetation around the St Eval Longstone.

Four of us from the scrub bashers group helped in the repair of Rampart 7 on Trelvegue Island. We have visited several more times to check on the progress of work and checking that no new damage has been done to other areas at risk during the winter storms.

We have also kept a watching brief on East Pentire Headland, noted some erosion on the far end Barrow since last visit.

The group have located and recorded some but not all the Pisky Holes on Little Fistral/Fistral Beach, these are circular hollow pipes eroded in the sand rock large enough to put a pisky in. Similar pipes have been found at Gwithian & St. Agnes. This is a Riggs site and when all are photographed the information will be sent to Sue Hockin Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Denise Marshall a member of the scrub basher group found three Quartz Pilchard Pressing Stones with their iron hooks attached on Towan Beach after the storm around the 5/2/2016. These have been photographed & removed from the beach. Two are in the Newquay Old Cornwall Museum and the other one is in the rowing club Newquay harbour. The Museum did not have the room for all three. The pressing stones could have come from any of 7 fish cellars around the harbour.

Representative: Katherine Sawyer

Parishes: Isles of Scilly

1. The Community Archaeology Group continues to go from strength to strength with well-attended monthly site clearance meetings or guided walks. We have a Facebook group page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/473127096149620>. The Group is open to everyone with an interest in the archaeology and history of Scilly.
2. A couple of sites have been uncovered in the inter-tidal zone in the last few months. In June 2015 I was informed about a structure which had appeared on the beach at Green Porth, Tresco; it had not been visible in living memory. Charlie Johns and I visited and recorded it and concluded that it was probably a quay, perhaps built in connection with the construction of the Old Blockhouse in the late 1540s.

The second structure appeared on Stony Porth, Bryher in February 2016. It is a rectangular stone-built enclosure. Its closest parallel in Scilly would seem to be the enclosure in Appletree Bay, Tresco which is believed to be a post-mediaeval oyster bed or holding tank for lobsters and crabs.

