

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

AN UPDATE FROM CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S AREA REPRESENTATIVES

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HERITAGE CRIME?



Unexplained holes have appeared in the turf near St Piran's Cross and Oratory
Photo: Adrian Rodda

Adrian Rodda has been concerned recently about a great number of holes that have appeared in the turf near St Piran's Cross and Oratory on Perran Sands, noting that: 'Some of it is obviously by rabbits, but some of the smaller shallow pits are suspiciously rectangular with straight sides suggestive of a metal detectorist's narrow bladed spade.' Elsewhere on the dunes he observed 'shallow rectangular holes to be seen in many places'. This is just an observation, for which there is as yet no explanation. Possibly there is an innocent explanation but it does show that it is worthwhile keeping an eye out for suspicious activity, especially near Cornwall's many Scheduled Monuments.

On its website, *Historic England* defines heritage crime as: 'any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings'. This could include theft, criminal damage, arson and anti-social behaviour. Among the heritage assets likely to be vulnerable, it lists the following:

- Listed buildings
- Scheduled monuments
- World Heritage Sites
- Protected marine wreck sites
- Conservation areas
- Registered parks and gardens
- Registered battlefields
- Protected military remains of aircraft and vessels of historic interest
- Undesignated but acknowledged heritage buildings and sites.

Members of the public can find advice on what they can do if they witness such a crime at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/report/>.



This area is part of a Scheduled Monument and is protected by law

Photo: Adrian Rodda

THE THINKING PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE SEASIDE

The feature last month about Richard Heard's monitoring of changes at Duckpool prompted a message from Ann Preston-Jones about a series of wonderful, accessible and freely available archaeological reports made as part of the *Cornish Ports and Harbours* project run by Charlie Johns of Cornwall Archaeological Unit for Historic England.

So, if you are planning to head to the seaside, especially during this very hot weather, why not ditch the usual beach paperback and download one of the excellent reports from this site:

http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/cornish_ports_harbours_2017/downloads.cfm

- Fleming, F., Johns, C. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Bude**, *Cornish ports and harbours: assessing heritage significance, threats, protection and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological unit: Truro.
- Fleming, F., Thomas, N., Johns, C. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Charlestown**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, protection, threats and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological unit: Truro.
- Johns, C., Buck, C., Fleming, F. CAU (2016) **Duckpool**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, protection, threats and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.
- Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Fowey**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage, significance, protection, threats and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.
- Fleming, F., Buck, C., Johns, C. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Hayle**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, protection, threats and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.
- Fleming, F., Johns, C. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Higher Town Quay and Old Quay, St Martin's, Isles of Scilly**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, threats, protection and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.
- Johns, C., Thomas, N., Fleming, F. CAU (2016) **Kilcobben Cove**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, threats, protection and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological unit: Truro.
- Johns, C., Buck, C., Fleming, F. CAU (2016) **Lerryn**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, threats, protection and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.

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- Johns, C., Thomas, N., Fleming, F. Cornwall Archaeological Unit (2016) **Truro**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours: assessing heritage significance, protection, threats and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.
- Johns, C., Buck, C., Fleming, F. CAU (2016) **Wacker Quay**, *Cornish Ports and Harbours; assessing heritage significance, threats, protection and opportunities*. Cornwall Archaeological Unit: Truro.



Fowey: a medieval port



Bude and its canal



Charlestown harbour, dating from the 1790s



Hayle: once a major industrial hub



Penzance – well worth the journey

CHYSAUSTER – WORTH ANOTHER VISIT

Adrian Rodda has sent this report about one of Cornwall's most famous sites:



House 6 from the viewing platform

Photo: Adrian Rodda

Most CAS members will have visited the Courtyard Village in Penwith. (SW475351) Many will have attended Susan Greaney's lecture last year on the plans to update its presentation and some will have read the summary of the lecture in CAS Newsletter 144 June 2017. So, how has it all turned out? There is a new, well-illustrated guidebook which uses the latest research into the archives from various excavations and explains how the village fits into the landscape below Castle-an-Dinas. Indeed it is always worth going to Chysauster just for the views towards the sea and across to Mulfra Quoit.

Preparation for the guidebook has livened up the new interpretation boards with images of how the houses may have looked in their heyday. Kernewek is used sparingly on the boards and in the displays in the education centre. A viewing platform above the best preserved house allows us to get some good photographs of the houses and to appreciate better the layout of the village and the size of the houses. Do go and see for yourselves. It is a remarkable site with its stories now being told in a lively and colourful way.

Adrian Rodda

RAME - NOT BUILT IN A DAY

Rosy Hanns has provided this report about a beautiful and often forgotten corner of the county:



Maker Barracks front elevation Photo: Rosy Hanns

The Rame Conservation Trust (<https://rameconservationtrust.org.uk/>) is a buildings preservation charity founded in 1997 to preserve for the benefit of the people of the Rame Peninsula and of the nation at large, the historical, architectural and constructional heritage that exists in and around Maker Heights and the Rame Peninsula.

It is a Trust with the purpose of conserving and promoting the heritage assets and values at Maker Heights – the natural environmental value, the historical, aesthetic and communal values.



Redoubt 1 – view of the moat

Photo: Rosy Hanns

The Trust owns the Grade II* listed Barrack Block at Maker Heights, and leases from the Edgcumbe Estate a further 12 hectares which include these Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Redoubt 1, Redoubt 3, Redoubt 5 and Grenville Battery. Also the Nissen huts which house the Canteen cafe/restaurant and the camp site which the Trust manages.



Redoubt 3 – View of access steps

Photo: Rosy Hanns

The Maker Heights Conservation Management Plan is a collaborative project to explore opportunities for maximising public benefit and enjoyment of the site whilst conserving, enhancing and celebrating its heritage values and securing a sustainable future for the buildings, monuments and landscape.

The Trust has just secured its first Heritage at Risk repair grant from Historic England. This is for a condition survey, schedule of works, and repair of the worst windows in the Barrack Block.



Grenville Battery – front view

Photo: Rosy Hanns

Although Maker was originally a military base (from the late 18th century), it is also well known as the school holiday camp established by Nancy Astor and the Virginia House Settlement in the 1920's for 'deprived city children'.

Apart from a brief spell during World War II when it was recommissioned as a military base, it continued as this until its closure in 1987. As a result, thousands of children (mainly from Plymouth) had their first and sometimes only childhood holiday at Maker.



Redoubt 5: view down eastern moat

Photo: Rosy Hanns

More recently Maker has hosted hundreds of musicians who have played and learned their craft at the venue, thousands of festival-goers (with an annual music festival starting in 1999) and artists who had studios there. There's also been a campsite and facilities for people to hold their wedding.

Regardless of whether they're young or old, regular or occasional visitor, what's become clear through the project is that everyone holds Maker dear to their hearts.

Rosy Hanns

BRIDGE-BASHING

This is strange. I had intended to finish with a short piece about how the summer influx of traffic might pose an added risk to some of our historic bridges and, by way of illustration, to show recent damage to Ruthern and Helland bridges. But within the last hour I have received a distressing report from Robin Paris, a dedicated, unofficial, 'friend' of Respryn Bridge near Lanhydrock. Robin closely monitors the bridge throughout the year, no matter the weather, and keeps Dan Bashford, Historic England's Heritage at Risk Protection Officer for south-east Cornwall, and CAS, fully informed. And this is what she has just written: 'Respryn Bridge has taken a massive and/or lengthy knock, in the same area that capstones were already dislodged but this time extending to and including the refuges each side. The capstones are further dislodged towards the river in the earlier damaged place, and conversely towards the road at the eastern side.'

The photograph below was taken on 24th May 2017: it is depressingly easy to find photographs of substantial damage to the parapet of this beautiful, historically significant, yet frequently-hit, structure that spans the River Fowey. The National Trust rangers have already reported today's damage to Cornwall Council Highways and they have placed bollards to warn users of the bridge until Cormac can fence it off.



Respryn Bridge is frequently the victim of damage from vehicles, usually accidental.

The issue of our bridges nicely demonstrates the difficult compromise that we all have to achieve if we are, on the one hand, to conserve our historic environment, while, on the other, enjoying our modern mobility and comfort. We all need to get around, and visitors, essential to Cornwall's economy, wish to enjoy all that the county has to offer. Visiting car drivers, unfamiliar with our roads and more used to motorways and wide urban streets, are frequently led by sat-nav, a very crude form of guidance, on to a network of narrow winding lanes and fragile, ancient bridges. Additionally,

the shops and supermarkets which we all rely on have to be supplied, inevitably by road, which means that harassed drivers of commercial vehicles, pressurised by deadlines, will take short cuts, as a result of which bridges can be hit. And finally, as a farming county, with the astonishing swelling in the size of tractors and trailers, collisions with ancient masonry are inevitable. Damage is unintentional, yet can be very serious, and needs a solution which may involve changes for us all.

Helland Bridge, over the River Camel, not only has farming traffic but seems to be used as part of a short cut between the A30 and the B3266. It has recently been damaged on both the upstream and downstream parapets.



Another bridge which has fallen victim to motor traffic recently is Ruthern Bridge, between Withiel and Lanivet.



These stout wooden posts appear to have protected Ruthern Bridge from being hit by tractors turning the corner. Sadly, another part of the bridge has been hit by a vehicle.



Recent damage to the downstream parapet of Ruthern Bridge

Area Representatives would love to hear from fellow CAS members, and the general public, about any feature of the historic environment in their parishes, whether a new discovery, something causing concern, or even just to answer queries. If you have any concerns, or new information, about any archaeological feature, please contact the Area Representative for the parish. If you do not know who that is, just look at the inside back cover of the latest journal, *Cornish Archaeology 54*, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk .

Roger Smith, 30th June 2018