

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS: MARCH 2017

The photograph below is not a scene from China's Cultural Revolution, despite the red flags and the comradely march across the field. In fact, it shows a very successful field walk held on Saturday March 25th at Kestle Field near Roundwood in Feock parish. It was arranged by Anna Lawson-Jones of Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU), who kindly provided the photograph. The field is managed by the National Trust and had been identified as a possible site of an Iron Age fort. As it had been recently horse-ploughed it was an ideal opportunity for learning more about the site. The weather was perfect. David and Linda Edyvean (who usually cover Blisland and St Breward parishes) joined local AR Sheila James in the group of 20 volunteers who, led by Anna, walked the field from 10am until 4pm. David found a particularly impressive serrated-edge flint blade. Sheila adds that 'the finds included: flints; a number of pebbles, some of which could have been slingshot; pottery - mostly dating from late pre-historic to medieval; clay pipes; and some metalwork associated with farming. The number and nature of the finds meant that the exercise was certainly worthwhile.'



Anna gives more detail about the results: 'I have not had the pottery washed yet, but the majority looks medieval (13th century and later). There is the hope that a few pieces will be late prehistoric, which would fit in nicely with an enclosure of Iron Age date at this site. Some nice pieces of flintwork of Late Neolithic/Bronze Age date were also found. One or two of these could just possibly be associated with three possible crop mark identified barrows in the same field. As Sheila says, it was certainly worthwhile, and I'm very grateful to the volunteers for all their hard work and enthusiasm.'

If you would like to know more about the work of Cornwall Archaeological Unit, or to see the range of publications available for sale, go to: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwall-archaeological-unit/> .

Now: do you care for industrial archaeology? Do you wish to see the remains of the china clay industry respected as much as those of metal mining? Are you committed to the idea that important buildings should be treated sensitively, even when owned privately? If it has been 'Yes' so far things are looking good but here's the key question: do you have £75,000 to spare? Adrian Rodda has spotted that the Wheal Grey china clay works at Tresowes Green (in Germoe parish) is up for sale. According to the estate agent's description: 'It is approximately 1.8 acres of twelve massive granite

tanks that form terraces running down the slope, consisting of three rows of four huge tanks. These tanks can be seen as squares and rectangles on most maps, they vary in size from eleven meters [sic] to fifty something meters in length. They are floored and walled totally with granite, the walls span three feet wide and from five feet to eleven feet tall. Last used in 1932, the works have been left alone and is now an extraordinary and unique example of an industrial site gone back to nature.’ (Source: www.christophers.uk.com.) The vendor has researched the site and describes it as a ‘thing of beauty’; however, ‘nature is now starting to take its toll on some of the stone work and for any restoration to take place, some investment is needed. Hence my reason for putting this beautiful 1.8 acres of unusual structures and woods up for sale. I would like to see it in the hands of someone who can put more into her than I can and bring out the full potential of this historic site. Or enjoy her as she is.’

Although Wheal Grey lies within the World Heritage Site of the Tregonning and Trewavas Mining District, that offers no protection. The chimney and adjoining wall are Grade II Listed. Here is the List Entry: ‘Chimney and. adjoining wall, serving former china clay works. Circa mid C19. Granite rubble. Round-on-plan chimney with wall adjoining the south side. Single stage tapered chimney, possibly with collar (top obscured by ivy). One of a group of 3 surviving chimneys relating to formerly extensive china clay works at Wheal Grey. These are the only remains of clay works in west Cornwall.’

Maybe a bit more than £75,000 will be needed! It just shows that protection and good thoughts can only go so far in protecting the county’s heritage.

After peering into the estate agent’s window, Adrian made his way to Hayle, and sends good and bad news about the Black Bridge, which is Scheduled and Listed. The good news is that not only is the graffiti fading, no more has been added.



But the welcome news that the young scribes of Hayle are now putting their valuable thoughts about the world on paper (or, more likely, onto various social media) does not mean that this important bridge is in a healthy condition - as Adrian reports: ‘Of more concern is the state of the roadway. The whole causeway is part of the scheduled area but more gravel has been laid along it up to the bridge on both ends. Possibly the council or Cormac or whoever did not appreciate the

extent of the scheduling. The road surface on the bridge itself is badly eroded. Bricks are exposed and the scoria metalled surface is wearing away. It is closed to motor vehicles, but bicycles and pedestrians use it frequently.'



The List Entry description gives more detail about the feature:

The Black Bridge is a Listed Building Grade II. The 'Black' element in the name of both the causeway and bridge (also known as Sea Lane and Sea Lane Bridge respectively) derives from their facing of rectangular, moulded blocks of very dark, glassy, copper-smelting slag called scoria. Scoria blocks were a by-product from the Cornwall Copper Company's smelter which operated from 1758 to 1819 at Copperhouse, south of Copperhouse Pool. Produced in large quantities, scoria blocks were used extensively for a variety of building purposes during the smelter's operation and for long after it ceased production, providing one of the distinctive architectural features of the area. Source: http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=1020400&resourceID=5

Finally, it's nearly Election Day. On 4th May 2017 elections will be held for Cornwall Council, as well as for town and parish councils. If you don't feel that local politicians know or care about the historic environment, or the public services associated with it, now is your chance to have a say. Why not ask candidates for their views about Heritage Kernow (the strategic partnership for the historic environment of Cornwall set up by HM Government and Cornwall Council by the Cornwall Devolution Deal)? This aims for:

- Increased investment in the historic environment
- Improved data to support management decisions
- A reduction in heritage assets at risk
- A growth in the skills base of the sector; and
- Growth in the benefits that the historic environment delivers

Or, why not ask how they see the role of the Historic Environment Record, not only as a resource in determining planning decisions, but in contributing to the cultural life of the county? Do they know which features are on the Heritage at Risk Register for their parish, town or ward? How many archaeologists are available to investigate the county's archaeology? A few probing questions like these will soon show whether their awareness of our heritage is confined to Poldark, Pasties and Pirates or is something deeper and more meaningful. Go on – have some fun!

Remember that Area Representatives are always keen 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, our secretary can provide the information:

secretary@cornisharchaeology.org.uk .

Roger Smith, 30th March 2017