

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

AN UPDATE FROM CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S AREA REPRESENTATIVES

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SAVING CHAPEL MILL

The photograph below shows Brian and Val Jacob busily clearing vegetation from Chapel Mill at St Stephen-in-Brannel (SW 948531).



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

Val Jacob is one of the longest-serving Area Representatives, as well as being a pivotal figure in St Austell and Pentewan Old Cornwall Societies. She and her husband Brian have long been concerned about the deteriorating condition of this former china-stone-crushing mill.



Although very close to the main road, the mill is not easy to see, especially when hidden by vegetation, yet, as Val points out, its archaeological significance is considerable. This is supported by John Smith in *Cornwall's China Clay Heritage* (Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Twelveheads Press, Truro, 1992): 'Chapel Mill is not as imposing as the Tregargus Mills, but very important in that it is the only one to have all its machinery intact, including the waterwheel, underdrift gears, and pans. At the rear are a set of diminutive tanks and the pan-kiln for drying the ground stone.'

The china-stone industry has been overshadowed by china-clay. Unlike china-clay, china-stone's only use was in the making of porcelain. It was quarried, then ground into a powder which was mixed by the potters 'with water to form a slip, suitable for applying to the ware as a glaze or for mixing with china-clay in the manufacture of high-grade porcelain' (John Smith, 1992). The mills tended to be in deep wooded valleys, where the fast-flowing water courses provided sufficient power. One of the best areas to see this is the nearby Tregargus Valley where there are extensive remains.

Chapel Mill desperately needs re-roofing to allow the future survival of the various features, such as this waterwheel:



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

The following photographs show features in nearby Tregargus Valley:



A china-stone mill



Circular grinding pans, Tregargus Valley

Val and Brian are determined to continue their efforts to ensure that Chapel Mill is protected so that future generations can understand and appreciate this important local industry. The Tregargus Valley is overseen by a local charity, The Tregargus Valley Trust, which has managed to conserve many of the features in the valley and to open up footpaths. It would be wonderful if something similar could be done for Chapel Mill.

PROTECTING TREVELGUE CLIFF CASTLE

The cliff castle at Trevelgue Head at Porth, near Newquay (SW 8251 6304) is the most heavily defended prehistoric site in the county. Its exposed situation, and the impact of the summer influx of visitors, makes it vulnerable to erosion.

Steve Hebdige is the local Area Representative and, with Sheila Harper and colleagues from Newquay Old Cornwall Societies Scrub Bashers, they not only monitor the site but also do what they can to ameliorate the damage from nature and man. Steve has recently undertaken a very detailed survey of vulnerable locations on the headland and has submitted the report to Historic England and Cornwall Council. The following photograph shows one of the barrows free of gorse and bramble thanks to the group's work this July:



Photo: Steve Hebdige

Extensive conservation measures have taken place but in this location they sometimes need to be repeated. Steve's next photograph shows that the topsoil placed on top of the gabions (stone-filled mesh cages) has been blown and washed away by the elements.



The ranging rod in this picture indicates how much soil has disappeared.



The next picture shows the original level of the grass.



Despite this, Steve reports that the site is in overall good shape and that there may even be signs that localised damage from bicycles may be stabilising or even declining.

Anyone wishing to learn more about the activities of Newquay Old Cornwall Society should go to <http://newquayoldcornwall.org.uk/main/index.php> or visit their Facebook page. Bargain hunters wishing to read the definitive report on Trevelgue (see below) should go to: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/cornwall-archaeological-unit/publications/> where they will find that the 2011 volume is on sale at a much reduced price. Other volumes about Cornwall's archaeology are also being sold at reduced prices.



MORE BRIDGE DAMAGE

On 15th December, Area Rep Peter Crispin was dismayed to discover that Trekelland Bridge (SX 3004 7984) has once more been struck by a vehicle. According to the Historic Environment Register, it is 'one of the best preserved and most beautiful of Cornish bridges' and is the 'only bridge in Cornwall with a true 4-centre arch'. (See:

http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO9740&resourceID=1020). It dates from the 16th century, or possibly earlier, and is a Scheduled Monument and a Grade II* Listed Building.



Photo: Peter Crispin

The photographs indicate that it received a very hefty bump and that the parapet stones may have become unstable as a result.



Photo: Peter Crispin



Photo: Peter Crispin

Once more modern motor traffic is causing damage to our historic infrastructure. Possibly a Respryn Bridge-style solution is called for here (see *From Your Own Correspondents*, November 2018).

A PEEK AT TROUGHS

In December the BBC reported recent buildings and features that had recently been given Listed Building status by Historic England, including this cattle trough in Hampstead in London:



The report (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-46618992>) mentioned that the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association had provided for over 1,000 such troughs being installed but that many of the 500 that once existed in London had since been lost. The one in the Historic England photo above is missing the pump and spout mechanism.

Well, it is undoubtedly wonderful that such a fine object has been given this protected status but the 'metropolitan elite' of whom we hear so much should not be allowed to feel that their cattle trough glory is unique. Dr Johnson may never have said that a man who is tired of St Austell is tired of life but even he would have accepted that the trough on the St Austell by-pass is worthy of recognition:



Cornwall Council archaeologist Ann Reynolds has added it to the Historic Environment Record (it is now officially MCO61507) but work needs to be done to find its original position. The bypass road (this section is named Southbourne Road) was opened in 1926 which would have been rather late for the installation of such a feature. Horse-drawn vehicles before that time would have been more likely to have used the east-west route of Truro Road (or Bodmin Road), Fore Street, East Hill, Watering Hill (renamed Alexandra Road), so possibly its original home was on one of those roads.

It is easily overlooked because the road is so busy but next time you use the road, look along the southern verge between the Mevagissey and ASDA roundabouts.



Brian Oldham has pointed out this fine example, which is already a Grade II Listed Building, in Liskeard:



PAVING THE WAY TO KILKHAMPTON CHURCH

Richard Heard is a leading authority on the archaeology and history of the Kilkhampton area. He has got in touch recently to tell the 'the sad tale of the removal of the blue Delabole flag stones of 1860, or even before' from the main path to the parish church of St James the Great at Kilkhampton. 'In their place', he reports, 'are fitted non-slip blocks' because of 'concerns about health and safety'.



Whatever the reasons for the removal of the Delabole slates, it is vital such changes are reported because it is upon the long-term accumulation of such observations that an overall understanding of the evolution of such an important building will be based. Non-slip or not, the path to the church door is well-worth treading to see the south doorway, described by Charles Henderson as one of the finest pieces of Norman architecture in Cornwall.



In his report, Richard noted that 'close to the church porch, Portland limestone flagstones, purchased in summer 1739 from the demolition auction of Stowe mansion were laid', adding that they remained in the churchyard 'for the time being'. These may well be the stones to which he refers.



The famous Grenville family lived at Stowe (SS 2119 1129), to the west of Kilkhampton, from the 1580s, and in 1679 built the mansion that was demolished in 1739. A fascinating drawing of this can be seen at: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/topdrawings/s/zoomify86035.html> . It is incredible that so large a structure has disappeared but fascinating to think that these stones, dumped at the edge of the churchyard, were once part of such an imposing building. The Grenville coat of arms can be seen on the south wall of the church:



SCRUBBED UP NICELY!

A very successful day of scrub-bashing took place at King Arthur's Hall on Bodmin Moor recently. It was organised by Cornwall Archaeological Unit as part of a programme of site-clearing arranged with Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Despite a biting wind, and a poor forecast, a large number of volunteers turned out and huge amounts of gorse were removed from the site.



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

The next events will be at Prideaux Castle near Luxulyan on the 10th and 17th January 2019: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1006663>. Details can be found at: <https://cornisharchaeology.org.uk/> , or from secretary@cornisharchaeology.org.uk

KILKHAMPTON CASTLE: A SUCCESS STORY

Kilkhampton is an extraordinarily interesting and attractive area, well worth visiting. Besides the beautiful church mentioned above, there is much else of interest for students of the past. One of the most stunning sites in the parish must be Kilkhampton Castle. It may have been an adulterine castle built during the Anarchy, or Civil War, between Stephen and Matilda between 1135 and 1153, a period when 'men said openly that Christ and His saints slept' (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Everyman's Library translation, by G. N. Garmonsway, 1954, Dent, London).

The silhouette of the motte and two baileys can be glimpsed through the trees on the hilltop.



Possibly the castle was built by Robert, earl of Gloucester, or even by a member of the Grenville family, but such activity was, according to the Chronicle, common throughout the land: 'For every great man built him castles and held them against the king; and they filled the whole land with these castles. They sorely burdened the unhappy people of the country with forced labour on the castles; and when the castles were built, they filled them with devils and wicked men' (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).



The view from the motte west towards the sea at Duckpool

The castle is well worth visiting for its historical importance and it is publicly accessible. In addition, it is an interesting example of a successful conservation management programme. The report written by Ann Preston-Jones in 1988 (*Kilkhampton Castle: Archaeology, History, Management, Cornwall Archaeological Unit Report R003*) is available online at:

http://map.cornwall.gov.uk/reports_event_record/1988/1988R003.pdf . Among those referenced in it is Richard Heard, the local Area Rep for CAS who has been monitoring it for many years. Besides describing the site and its history, the report describes the severe problems that existed at the time: 'Until October 1988, Kilkhampton Castle was completely overgrown by mature trees, saplings, bracken and brambles, the latter two in particular forming an unpleasant and impenetrable blanket on top of the motte and two baileys.' Recommendations were made in the report, such as vegetation clearance and the establishment of good grass cover to protect underlying features, as well as improving access. Various agencies were named in the report and the judging by the appearance of the site, they not only carried out impressive work, but have ensured that the site has remained in good condition. The key players were: Cornwall Archaeological Unit, English Heritage, the National Trust and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

This photograph is taken from the motte, looking eastward to the inner bailey. Access between the motte and inner bailey and between the latter and the outer bailey may have been by a bridges or drawbridges. Note that vegetation is well under control and access is easy.



The inner bailey may have been the site of a hall, with the motte itself being a refuge of last resort:



The outer bailey is shown below. It is unusual for such a castle to have two baileys, although Eastleigh Berrys, which is not far away, also has two.



The impressive ditches surrounding the site and between the motte and inner bailey:



Kilkhampton has much to offer. For anyone who enjoys walking, this short circular walk is highly recommended: https://www.iwalkcornwall.co.uk/walk/kilkhampton_to_coombe_valley.

CARADON ARCHAEOLOGY

Caradon Archaeology has issued a programme of events for the New Year. Check with their website or Facebook page where final dates have not been given.



SAM (Scheduled Ancient Monument [monitoring]) **Stroll**

Caradon Archaeology

9:00 Sunday 20th January: Craddock Moor

Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712.

Caradon Archaeology AGM

19:30 Tuesday 5th February (TBC)

Darite Village Hall

SAM Stroll

Caradon Archaeology

9:00 Sunday 17th February: Marke Valley & Wheal Jenkin Mines
Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712.

SAM Stroll**Caradon Archaeology**

9:00 Sunday 17th March: Kit Hill
Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712 to car share to site or
see you in the lower car park 9:20'ish

Bo Foaks Memorial Walk

9:00 Saturday 13th April: Treworgey, Highwood and the Liskeard &
Caradon Railway.

Meet Stuart House Cafe, Barras Street, Liskeard. Where you can order a
lunch to be ready on your return.

SAM Stroll**Caradon Archaeology**

9:00 Sunday 12 May: Garrow Tor
Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712 to car share to sit

Dartmoor Daunder**Caradon Archaeology**

Saturday 18th May 10:00 start - day walk on western fringes of Dartmoor
details t.b.a.

Leader: Peter Crispin

SAM Stroll**Caradon Archaeology**

9:00 Sunday 9th June: Bowthick
Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712 to car share to site.

Festival of Archaeology**Caradon Archaeology**

10:00 Saturday 13th July: South Phoenix & Phoenix United Mines.
Meet Minions Heritage Centre Car Park SX 262 712.

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 55*, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk.

A Happy New Year to all readers!

Roger Smith, 31st December 2018