



Kenderwi Kernewek *(Cornish Cousins)*

Newsletter of the California Cornish Cousins

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President's Message



Greetings, Cousins!

As I drove north along Highway 49 to Grass Valley for the St. Piran's Day celebration in March I was struck, as always, by the beauty of the California gold country and mused upon how our ancestors must have felt seeing it, in contrast with the Cornish landscape they had left behind them, very

beautiful as well but so different. Everywhere the nodding clusters of sunny daffodils and rampant periwinkle are reminders of those early immigrants bringing a bit of 'ome with them. Brave folk these, men and women alike, to set out into the unknown seeking a better life for themselves and their families.

It won't be long now until we Cousins gather once again for our annual weekend of celebrating our proud heritage, renewing friendships and sharing common bonds. As we gather in New Almaden to learn more of our shared history, we will also explore the contributions of other nationalities who were important members of that mining community,

especially the Mexicans who labored alongside our Cornish ancestors. Sadly, I have just learned that, due to staff changes and scheduling conflicts, our vans have been given away to take a group of Boy Scouts to their camp, so we will no longer be able to go tour the English and Mexican Towns, which I am sure I am not alone in having been very excited about. Immensely disappointing after I had booked in January to insure our dates, but such is life. Instead, we will have a guided walking tour of the town, church and cemetery as well as of the Casa Grande and its beautiful new museum.

Eleanor Kenitzer and the Grass Valley Male Voice Choir are traveling to Cornwall this month, as you may remember from the last issue of the KK. We wish them safe travels and wondrous experiences. I can't wait to hear of their adventures!

In addition to being the current CCC president, I am also the Membership person and in that capacity, I would like to remind all members that annual dues (\$25.00) are payable on May 1st. Thank you for supporting your club.

Kernow bys vykken!

Kitty



Compliments of the members
of the Chorw Breizh, here
June 21, 1915.
For
Mr. B. French,
Los Angeles



Here are some of my family's New Almaden photos:

Left: My great-grandfather Mine Captain Richard Harry at the mouth of the Enriquetta Tunnel, 1905

Below: the New Almaden Boys' Marching Band
My grandfather Bert Harry is 2nd from left



CALIFORNIA CORNISH COUSINS

26th Annual Gathering

Friday, June 2nd -- Sunday, June 4th 2017

NEW ALMADEN

There's still time to register!
The registration form is also available on
our website *californiacornishcousins.org*.

SCHEDULE TO DATE

Friday, June 2nd

- Headquarters for the weekend will be the New Almaden Community Center. Doors open at 4 p.m. for Gathering sign in
- No Host social hour begins at 5 p.m., followed by a buffet dinner at 6 p.m., sharing of stories and histories by New Almaden families

Saturday, June 3rd

- 10:00 a.m. Guided tour of town and the new Casa Grande Museum; return to Community Center for Pasty Lunch followed by Business Meeting (due to circumstances beyond our control, the Park has cancelled our reservation for the vans so we will be unable to go to English Camp as originally planned)
- 5:00 p.m. No Host Social Hour
- 6:00 p.m. Banquet Dinner, Guest Speaker and Cornish Miner William Hick Reenactment by Jim Murch

Sunday, June 4th

- New Almaden Quicksilver Museum in the Casa Grande is open from 10 to 4.



NAME _____

PHONE (incl. area code) _____

No. of Full Registrations @ \$95.00 each _____ No. of Partial Registrations @ \$85.00 (includes everything except the Friday night dinner) _____

No. of Beef Pasties for Saturday Lunch _____ No. of Veggie Pasties _____

Make check payable to California Cornish Cousins and mail to: Pat Carson, Treasurer
11706 W. Alfred Ct.
Boise, ID 83713

ALSO NOTE: If you want display space for any family history-related material, contact President Kitty so she can arrange for display tables.

Stop Oppressing Cornwall

Council of Europe's Warning to Britain



Tintagel Castle is in danger of 'Disneyfication', says a report by the Council of Europe.

The people of Cornwall seem unlikely victims of ethnic oppression. But a report by the Council of Europe has condemned the Government for neglecting the Cornish minority.

The report into the “protection of national minorities” concludes that the UK needs to do far more for its

southernmost county, including reviving Cornish as a language and preventing the “Disneyfication” of such landmarks as Tintagel Castle.

The 50-page study into Britain’s treatment of national minorities raises serious concerns about the plight of the Cornish. The Council of Europe, set up after the Second World War to uphold human rights and the rule of law across the continent, has expressed misgivings over the neglect of a county that is beloved by the rest of Britain for two weeks a year.

The Council of Europe criticises the Government, which recognised the Cornish as a minority in 2014, for scrapping funding of the native language. Just 500 people are thought to be able to speak Cornish fluently, but the Council of Europe wants funding to be reinstated. It even calls on the BBC to broadcast more in Cornish.

The report also expresses concern at a lack of funding for Cornish cultural events, such as St Piran’s Day on March 5, the national day of Cornwall.

Robert Mendick, Chief Reporter

The Telegraph UK, March 18, 2017

Photo Getty Images

Royal Cornwall Museum Survey

The Cornish American History Society is undertaking some audience research on behalf of the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro, Cornwall. The museum staff are looking at what current and potential audiences might want from the museum.

Because the museum tells the story of the Cornish people, both in the duchy and abroad, there is particular interest in hearing the views of the Cornish Diaspora and anyone who feels a connection with the Cornish identity.

If you wish to participate, here is a link to the survey:

<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RoyalCornwallMuseumpublicsurvey/>



Signs of Spring



Flora Day

by Kitty Quayle

Reprinted from the Spring 2012 Issue of KK

May Day Springtime in Cornwall is purely a delight to behold. There are fields of nodding, sunny daffodils, their trumpets lifted to the sky as if to herald the return of the sun. Clotted cream-colored primroses lighten and brighten the shaded banks, mingling with the foxglove and cow parsley in the hedges. Flurries of pearly hawthorn blossoms drift on the breeze like fragrant snowflakes and all the woods are carpeted with Monet-worthy sweeps of sun-dappled bluebells. By the time May arrives, the earth has awakened from her long hibernation with lusty exuberance; the birds are bursting with song to attract a mate, the plants are heavy with perfumed bloom seeking pollination and one can feel one's own blood rising as does the sap in the trunks and branches of the trees. It is no wonder then, that humans have long celebrated with May

Day rituals the return of the fertile, good times of the warm months after the bleak, cold death of Winter.

No one knows when the townfolk of Helston began the Furry Dance, only that it is one of the oldest customs still practiced in the UK. Coming from the Celtic word "feur", meaning "festival", the Furry Dance is performed during the Flora Day celebration, held each May 8th (unless the 8th falls on a Sunday or Monday, when it is held the preceding Saturday). The town is transformed by colorful flags and garlands of the first greens of Spring, traditionally hazel, laurel and sycamore, interspersed with vivid bluebells, snowy hawthorn blossoms and golden gorse.

The Dance is the Main Event The dance is the main event of the Flora Day celebration (not Floral Day, a common mistake, but Flora, the Goddess of Spring) and is performed three times during the day, in the morning, at mid-day and culminating in the evening. The Children's Dance is mid-morning, with the little ones all dressed in white and wearing the symbol of Helston, the Lily-of-the-Valley. The adult dance takes the form of a dignified dancing procession led by the Mayor wearing his chain of office, along a traditional route up Coinagehall Street and through some of the shops, homes and gardens of the town. In front of the Mayor goes the Town Band, striking up the lively Flora



Dance tune which is played from memory as the tune has never been written down. If you've ever walked up Coinagehall Street from the Grylls Monument, you can fully appreciate the lung capacity of the band!

The Furry Dance was originally the dance of the town's gentry, which is why the men perform in full black morning dress and tails, with grey top hats and gloves. The ladies are magnificently attired in their finest full-length ball gowns, long gloves and lavish hats. All of the dancers wear the Lily-of-the-Valley; the men on their left with the flowers facing up, while the ladies have them upside down on the right.

At several venues around the town, performances of the Hal-an-Tow are given. It is a mummer's play of mythical and historical themes in which St. George slays the dragon, St. Piran arrives and lots of disparaging remarks are made about Spaniards, in reference to the 16th century invasion. There is rather a difference of opinion on the translation of the name, ranging from "first of the month garland" to "haul on the rope", so you may take your pick. □



Swans Need Protection on Flora Day



Swan and Bodyguard

A fundraising campaign is underway to protect swans in Helston during Flora Day - by getting them their own bodyguards.

Flora Day attracts thousands to the Cornish town of Helston every May. But the event coincides with swans nesting at Coronation Lake, which can be "very disturbing" for the birds, Helston Town Councillor Dave Potter said. "When it gets very busy, it's very disturbing at that very critical time of the swans' cycle."



A swan checks out its protective cage

Last year a swan laid eggs on the edge of the road, leading to an area being fenced off. Photographer Rebecca Wilbur floated the idea of hiring security to protect them during the event. The council has backed the plan and a social media campaign has raised £310 to cover the cost of employing guards to protect swans and their eggs.

Adapted from the Plymouth Herald UK

Saffron Buns: a Family Easter Tradition

Contributed by Kitty Quayle & Rosemary Gamblin

Our mother June Harry Manly always made Saffron Buns at Eastertime. Here is her grandmother's recipe.

GRANDMOTHER HARRY'S SAFFRON BUNS

The day before, put the saffron to steep: 1 packet (.02 oz.) in 1/4 cup boiling water in a little dish.

Scald 1 3/4 cups whole milk, remove from heat and add 1/2 pound butter to melt as milk cools.

Put 2 pkgs of dry yeast to rise in 1/2 cup warm water with 1 tsp. sugar; stir to dissolve.

Measure 4 cups un-sifted flour, 1 cup sugar, 1 tsp. salt and 2 tsp. ground nutmeg and add to yeast mixture.

Measure an additional 4 cups flour.

Beat 3 eggs well and add to milk when milk has cooled to lukewarm.

Add saffron distillation to yeast, mix well. Add fruit: 2 cups currants or raisins, 1 cup lemon peel or citron peel and 1 T lemon extract (Kitty uses the fresh lemon zest and juice of 2 lemons instead of the citron and extract)

Add the additional 4 cups of flour and mix well. Knead on a floured board until the dough is a nice soft biscuit consistency. Let rise, covered, until doubled. Punch down and shape into rolls. Cover and let rise again until doubled. Bake at 375° for 25 - 30 minutes. Makes 4 dozen.



Cousin Ruth McMaster's grandson Calvin kneads the dough for Saffron Buns.
Photo Ruth McMaster

The Last of the Cornish Packmen

An encounter on a lonely road in the furthest reaches of the English West Country sheds light on the dying days of a once-ubiquitous profession

By Mike Dash — Reprinted from the April 2011 issue of *Smithsonian*.

Before the coming of the railways, and the buses, and the motor car, when it was not uncommon for isolated farms to be a day's walk from the nearest shops, the closest many people got to a department store was when a wandering peddler came to call.

Wheeled transport was still expensive then, and most rural roads remained unmade, so the great majority of these traveling salesmen carried their goods on their backs. Their packs usually weighed about a hundredweight (100 pounds, or about 50 kilos—not much less than their owners), and they concealed a treasure trove of bits and pieces, everything from household goods to horsehair wigs, all neatly arranged in drawers. Since the customers were practically all female, the best-sellers were almost always beauty products; readers of *Anne of Green Gables* may recall that she procured the dye that colored her hair green from just such a peddler.

Over the years, these fixtures of the rural scene went by many names; they were buffers, or duffers, or packmen, or dustyfoots. Some were crooks, but a surprisingly high

proportion of them were honest tradesmen, more or less, for it was not possible to build a profitable round without providing customers with a reasonable service. By the middle of the nineteenth century, it has been estimated, an honest packman on the roads of England might earn more than a pound a week, a pretty decent income for the time.

For several hundred years, the packman was a welcome sight to many customers. “He was the one great thrill in the lives of the girls and

women,” the writer H.V. Morton tells us, “whose eyes sparkled as he pulled out his trays and offered to their vanity cloths and trifles from the distant town.” Indeed,

“the inmates of the farm-house where they locate for the night consider themselves fortunate in having to entertain the packman; for he is their newsmonger, their story-teller and their friend.”

I'm interested here, though, in chronicling the decline and fall of this age-old way of life—for the packman could not survive the coming of the modern world, of course. Exactly when the species became doomed is still debated; in Britain, historians may point to the year 1810, when it became law for peddlers to purchase a pricey annual license in order to carry on their trade. There's evidence, however, that the packmen prospered for at least a little longer than that; census statistics suggest that the really precipitous decline in their numbers, in England at least, dates to between 1841 and 1851, when the total plunged from more than 17,000 to a mere 2,500, a fall of more than 85 percent. Henry Mayhew, whose lively survey *London Labour and the London Poor* is greatest storehouse of information on marginal lives in the Victorian age, noted in 1851 that “the system does not prevail to so great an extent as it did some years back.” Mayhew found that there were then only five packmen and a score of “duffers” and “lumpers” still active in the capital, concluding: “This trade is becoming now almost entirely a country trade.”

What surprises me, given all the above, is that a handful of packmen lived on in the more remote areas of the country as much as seven decades later. They kept trudging along long after the threepenny bus had wiped them out in London and the railway had reached almost every English settlement of any size—for the most part because, even as late as the middle 1920s, there were still places where the roads were more like paths and the hills sufficiently hazardous to be an obstacle to motor vehicles. Here the remnants of the breed survived, like dinosaurs in some forgotten world. They did so mostly on the Celtic fringe: in the Highlands of Scotland, the hills of mid-Wales, and in the furthest reaches of Cornwall. It was in the last of these, sometime around 1926, and somewhere south of King Arthur's fortress at Tintagel, that H. V. Morton encountered the man we might reasonable assume to be the last of the Cornish packmen.

I should pause here for a moment to introduce Morton, who is not often remembered now. He had fought in the Great War, in the heat and dust of Palestine, where he contracted a painful illness and assumed he was about to die. Afflicted by homesickness, Morton “solemnly cursed every moment I had spent wandering foolishly about the world... I was humiliated, mourning there above Jerusalem, to realize how little I knew about England. I was ashamed to think that I had wandered so far and so



Sorry – I couldn't find an image of a Cornishman. This is Ellis the pedlar, a Welsh packman working the villages around Llanfair in about 1885. John Thomas Collection, National Library of Wales

often over the world neglecting those lovely things near at home... and I took a vow that if the pain in my neck did not end forever in the windy hills of Palestine, I would go home in search of England.”

It was in fulfillment of that vow that Morton, some years later, found himself “bowling along” a country lane west of the Lizard, in the most southerly part of Cornwall. Although he did not know it, he was traveling at pretty much the last moment it was possible to tour the country and confidently greet strangers because “a stranger... was to them a novelty.” And in truth, Morton was also a determined nostalgist, who had deliberately followed a route that took him through all the most beautiful parts of the country, and avoided all the factory towns. Nonetheless, his wistful and often funny evocation of a vanishing country remains readable, and we can be glad that his road took him through the lanes south of St. Just, for we have no better account of the traveling packman in his final days than this:

I met him by the side of the road. He was a poor old man and near him was a heavy pack; so I asked if I might give him a lift. “No,” he said, thanking me all the same. I could not give him a lift because the place to which he was going would be inaccessible to “him” - here he pointed to the car.

“To her,” I corrected.

“To she,” he said, meeting me half-way.

This established contact, Morton noted, and the two men sat by the side of the road, shared a pipe of tobacco, and talked.

“How long have you been a packman?” I asked him. I felt the question to be absurd; and it would not have surprised me had he replied: “Well, I began my round, working for Eli of Nablus, general merchant of Sidon, who came over to Britain once a year from 60BC onwards with a cargo of seed pearls, which he swapped for tin. Then when the Romans left I did a rare trade in strops for sword blades.”

“These here fifty years, sur,” he replied.

“Then you must be nearly seventy?”

“Well, I can’t tell ‘zactly,” he replied, “but putten one thing agen another, I b’lieve that’s so, sure ‘nuff, sur.”

“And you still carry that heavy pack?”

“Yes, sur, I carries him easy, though I do be an old man.”

But for all his years and his burden, Morton’s old man remained resilient:

He pulled off the waterproof and, opening his pack, displayed trays of assorted oddments: cheap shaving brushes, razors, pin, braces, corsets, studs, photograph frames, religious texts, black and white spotted aprons, combs, brushes and ribbons. The prices were the same as in the small shops.

“I suppose you’ve had to alter your stock from year to year to keep up with fashion?”

“Yes, ’tis true, sur. When I did

first take un out on me back there waunt no saafety razors, and the faarm boys had no use for hair grease, and now they be all smurt and gay in town clothes.”

This was the Jazz Age—Morton published his account in 1927—and the packman displayed ‘a smirk of distaste’ when invited to display the newest article in his pack: “clippers to crop shingled heads and many kinds of slides to hold back bobbed hair.”

“In the old days,” he said, “you never saw such hair, I ‘sure ee, as you seed in Cornwall, and the girls bruushed it all day loong – and ’twas lovely to see and now they’ve a-cut it arl off, and if you ax me now what I think about un I tell ee they look like a row of flatpolled cabbages, that un do! ‘Tis different from t’ould days when I soold a packet of hairpins to every wummun I met.”

“We fell to talking,” the account concludes, “of the merits of the packman’s profession.” Like all professions, it had its secrets—but the peddler’s view of its most vital skill of all took Morton by surprise. “Ef you wants to make money at this game,” the packman warned,

“you’ve need of a still tongue on your head, sure I tell ee. There was young Trevissey, when I was a chap, who had haaf the fellows from Penzance to Kynance Cove lookin’ for him with sticks, for young Joe just sopped up stories like a sponge sops up waater, but un couldn’t hold it. Well, sur, that chap went from faarm to faarm over the length and breadth of the land tellin’ Jennifer Penlee how young Jan Treloar was out courtin’ Mary Taylor over at Megissey. Sur, that chap went through the land sellin’ bootlaces and spreadin’ trouble like youn ever saw! Before that booy had been on his round more than twice there warn’t a maan or wumman who didn’t know what every other maan and wumman was wearin’ underneath their clothes, and that’s the truth, sur.”

“What happened to Joe?”

“Why, sur, they got to be too fearful to buy a shoe-string from un! ‘Heere’s young Joe comin’ they’d holler. ‘Shut the doeer fast!’ So un went away, and was never seen again in these paarts.”

We meditated solemnly on the tragedy of this novelist born out of his place. The old man knocked out his pipe and said he must be getting along. He refused assistance, and swung his great pack on his shoulders, waved his stick, and made off over a side-track among the scarred ruins of a dead tin mine. They say that this mine, which stretches beneath the Atlantic, was worked before the time of Christ.

The old figure disappeared among the craters, threading his way carefully, tapping with his stick; and I thought, as I watched him go, that he and the old mine were fellows, equally ancient—for the packman was probably here before the Romans—one outdated and dead: the other poor, old, and lonely, walking slowly along that same sad road. □

