



NEWSLETTER

August 2021

Our Place on the Internet
www.cornwalllocalhistorians.co.uk

Email us at
calhnewsletter@gmail.com

Letter from the Chair

I have never had a ride on a fair-ground 'Roller Coaster' but I imagine it is a bit like our present life. Our anticipation began to rise as most of us got our second jab, but now we seem to be plummeting down again as the new variant takes hold. In these uncertain times it is very difficult to plan ahead and yet people need to know about events well in advance. Do we organise a meeting that involves hiring a village hall only to find the Government has put restrictions on the numbers of people who can attend? If we organize an outdoor meeting, what do we do about 'comfort stops' and what happens if it rains? Most outings involve expenses for the society and if nobody turns up or numbers are very limited, the society can find itself out of pocket. As far as our Autumn and Spring Conferences are concerned, the hotel at Newquay now requires us to let them know several weeks in advance exactly how many people will be attending and they will not accept late bookings or cancellations after the closing date (except under Government directives), which again makes for some hard decisions by your committee. When we send out the booking form for an event, we calculate what our expenses will be for

Continued overleaf

AUTUMN CONFERENCE 2021

SATURDAY, 30TH OCTOBER, 2021

the Kilbirnie Hotel, Narrowcliffe Road,
Newquay TR7 2RS.

Contrasts & Similarities: Cornwall and Devon

10:30 a.m. Reception & Coffee

11:00 a.m. Todd Gray *"Looters, Slavers, Blackshirts & Benchends."*

12-30 noon. LUNCH

2:30 p.m. Oliver Padel *"Contrasts & Similarities": Place Names in Cornwall & Devon.*

3:00 p.m. Peter Herring *"Finding Cornwall & Devon along the Tamar."*

4:00 p.m. TEA

Due to a request from the Kilbirnie Hotel, **we are unable to accept late bookings for this event**, nor will the hotel give refunds unless it is due to Covid restrictions.

Booking forms to be received **no later than Saturday, 18th, September 2021.**

Spring Conference: 26-27 February, 2022.

A provisional booking has been made. **Theme:** celebrating forty years of the Cornwall Association of Local Historians and looking to our future.

that event and then divide the total by the number of people we expect to attend. This gives us an average cost per person, but if only a few people book, we could find ourselves out of pocket or in a position where we need to cancel the event due to lack of interest. No member likes to book for an event too far in advance, but in the past, we have been in a position where late bookings could often be accepted or refunds sent for cancelled bookings. In the case of events taking place at the Kilbirnie Hotel at Newquay, this is no longer the case, and no bookings will be accepted after the closing date. So, if you plan to come, you need to make sure your booking form and payment arrive with the event organizer before the closing date. I believe the hotel will refund anyone who is unable to attend due to being in official Covid isolation, but other than that, it will be up to you to find someone to take your place if you can't come.

The other week, we held a Zoom committee meeting at which all the above pros and cons were discussed and it was finally decided that we should go ahead with organising two meetings later this year. The first will be in the St Columb area and will be organized by our new outings secretary Lyn May (see booking form). It is particularly significant that our first outing since Covid will be in St Columb, as this was the home town of the much loved and staunch supporter of CALH, Bill Glanville, who sadly passed away earlier this year. I am sure she will be with us in spirit on the day, chivvying us along in her efficient but always smiling way. She will be greatly missed by all who love Cornwall as much as she did.

The second event, the Autumn Conference, will take place at the Kilbirnie Hotel in Newquay and is the one we had to cancel last year. (See booking form for details). This event will only be able to take place if

sufficient numbers of you book, and will be subject to Government rules at the time.

Like many of you, I am taking my time coming out of lockdown and am still cautious as to where I go and who I mix with. I have been to the hairdressers twice since April (that's more than in normal times) and have also started attending church services. Our new vicar is full of ideas of how to get new people to join us and a few weeks ago we had a pet service on the village green with lots of dogs, two horses, two rabbits and a couple of guinea-pigs!! Although we had to respect social distancing, we were able to take our masks off and join in the hymns which was lovely. His next idea was to hold a Scarecrow service, which again was a great success.



I had just thrown away an old pair of overalls when I decided to have a go at making my very first scarecrow. So, as so often happens when I throw away a piece of clothing, I think I really past it into the bin, I dived and rescued the overalls, which I now think I will put back on their hook in the hall when I dismantle the scarecrow as they should do as a standby for a few more years.

Letter from the Chair continued

It was only when I had finished making the scarecrow that I realized it had an uncanny resemblance to me in winter garb!!! What do you think?

Our new vicar also wanted to celebrate Trelawny Day this year (we had cancelled it last year). He planned a shortened version of the event with a 'bring your own' picnic tea in the churchyard, followed by a short service and shortened concert by Pelynt Male Choir. As we were worried about numbers if it should rain and we need to use the church, we only notified the Trelawny family, Liskeard and Looe Old Cornwall Societies and people in the local area, that it was taking place.

Fortunately, the sun shone all day on 30th June and we had a lovely time, although I found it hard not to go up to people, I hadn't seen for two years and give them a big hug. To take my mind off hugging, I kept busy selling the newly revised edition of the Bishop Trelawny booklet. (Needless to say, I will be bringing them to our Newquay conference in October).



The event was a great success and it was wonderful to hear 'Trelawny' ringing out across the village once again. It made me feel that there was light at the end of this very long tunnel after all. Stay safe and I hope to see you in the autumn.

Your Chairperson, Carole Vivian

Tel: (01503)272309

A Symposium on Women in the 1920s

**Saturday 18 September 2021,
10.30 to 15.30**

Exeter Central Library (if Covid-19 restrictions permit) or by Zoom

The 1920s were heavily overshadowed by the Great War. Women's experience of the war meant that life would never be the same again. At the same time there was a positive sense of progress and change with new opportunities opening up in public and professional life. The programme for the day includes a keynote speech from Professor Maggie Andrews, and group and individual presentations on topics ranging from women's new opportunities in politics, south west craftswomen, to the lives of women in an urban slum.

For more information contact Julia Neville, j.f.neville@btinternet.com or go to the Devon History Society website, [Symposium on Women in the 1920s - Devon History Society](#)

AN ALL-DAY CALH OUTING

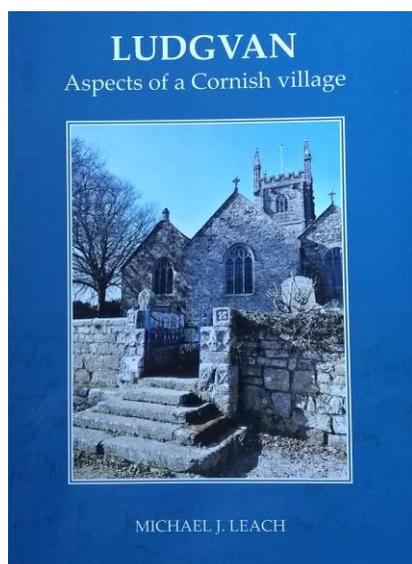
to:

**Hill Fort, Castle- an-Dinas,
St. Columb Major
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23,
2021.**

Payment must be received by CALH at least 7 days prior to this event. Booking form and registration details enclosed.

Organiser: Lyn May

**A NEW BOOKLET ABOUT THE HISTORY
OF LUDGVAN AND ITS ANCIENT
CHURCH**



Ludgvan. Aspects of a Cornish village written by CALH member, Michael Leach, will appeal to everybody who has an interest in Cornwall and its sometimes stormy past.

The booklet looks at less well known aspects of the village, like: the settlement's name; why the church silver disappeared in the 1550s; what happened when the Roundheads occupied the parish in the 1640s and the significance of the mysterious and ancient inscribed stone found in a house in the village. The booklet's author, Michael Leach, is a local resident and a member of the Cornwall Association of Local Historians.

In full colour with 28 illustrations, this A5 booklet is available from the **Ludgvan Parish Office, Murley Hall, Ludgvan. TR21 8EY** price £6.00, including postage. Cheques payable to Ludgvan Parish Church. Tel. 01736 741067 (Tues-Fri, 10 am – 12 noon)

mountsbaychurchoffice@btinternet.com

**THE COURTNEY LIBRARY HAS
REOPENED – RESEARCHERS WELCOME**

After such a difficult eighteen months, it is a relief that we have now been able to reopen the Courtney Library.

Initially, access for researchers will be restricted to **WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS** (10-1 & 2-4pm). **By appointment only**

Email: RIC@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk

Tel: 01872 242786

TUESDAYS will be temporarily reserved for staff to continue urgent collections work including the rationalisation of the Library's extensive holdings of printed books and periodicals.

After the 19th July and the lifting of the government's legal Covid-19 restrictions, it is hoped that all library users will nonetheless continue to consider the need for caution when working in the library in a space shared with others. Therefore, hand sanitisers, safe seating distances, face masks (use encouraged) and an appointments system, will be in place for the foreseeable future.

Access to the library for non-RIC Members will be (as previously) via a *Library Research Pass* (£4.50p a day) obtainable on arrival at the Reception Desk in the foyer.

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It will be a pleasure to welcome you back.

Angela Broome, BA(Hons); Regional & Local Hist.Cert. Librarian & Archivist.
Courtney Library & Cornish History
Research Centre
Royal Institution of Cornwall
River Street, Truro
Cornwall, TR1 2SJ

Members' Snippets

The Demise of Jessie Carkeet Davey & children

Jessie Carkeet was born and raised in Rilla Mill, the second youngest of 10 children of Copper Miner John Carkeet and his wife Julia. At least 3 of her brothers were also Copper Miners.

Jessie married Tin Miner William John Davey in 1877 when they were both 18 years old. They settled in the Liverscombe area of Rilla Mill and in 1881 had 2 daughters, Charlotte (3) and Harriet (10 months). Big changes had occurred by 1891.



Charlotte Davey (13) was a scholar in the Deaf and Dumb Institution in Topsham Road, Exeter, along with 43 others aged between 7 and 15. There were 9 staff and Charlotte was registered as Deaf and Dumb.

In her book, *The Married Widows of Cornwall*, Lesley Trotter names Jessie as "the only explicit reference in any Cornish census returns to a miner's wife. In the same year in Liskeard Union Workhouse is Jessie Davey (32), Harriet (11), James (9), Lilly (6) and Charles (5). Jessie's situation is given as Wife of Copper Miner (deserted). reference in any Cornish census returns to a miner's wife in extreme poverty". As there is no trace of her husband William in the English censuses since 1881, it is highly likely that he was part

of the great Cornish Diaspora, particularly as a William Davey, born in England in June 1860, appears in the 1900 census for Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Obviously, he left no provision for the family he left behind.



Liskeard Union Workhouse, staff & inmates

In the Liskeard Workhouse on the 24th April 1891, there were 102 inmates and 4 staff (Master, Matron, Porter and Nurse). Jessie at 42, in 1901, is widowed and employed as Cook for the 83 inmates in the Clarence Place Workhouse, Plymouth.

Harriet (20) is also a Cook, for the Trood family in Spriddlestone House, Brixton St Mary. Lilly (15) is in Service with the family of the Tamar Manure Works Manager, John Abbott (*see painting of Tamar Manure Works Canal p. 77*) and Charles (16) is apprenticed to Timber Merchant Samuel Snowden in Yealmbridge, Plympton St Mary. No further record of James unfortunately, perhaps emigrated like his father?

Brian Oldham

Wartime Memories of Mawgan Porth

My childhood home was at Mawgan Porth, and I don't remember much before World War 11 (I was Wartime Memories of Mawgan Porth in 1937).

When the war began, there was a real fear that the Germans would invade Cornwall and use it as a base for the occupation of England. Airfields were set up at St. Eval (RAF) and St. Mawgan (ASAF). Mines were laid in the sand-dunes. There was a concrete bunker by the bridge and a high barrier of scaffolding poles and barbed wire right across the beach.

My parents ran the Bridge House Cafe, and although there were no tourists, the airmen would come down to Mawgan Porth during their free time to eat at the cafe and play bar billiards. We, as children, would greet Americans with 'got any gum chum?' I might add that, when the cafe was spring-cleaned, hard lumps of chewing gum were found stuck underneath all the tables, which had to be pried off with a knife.

Catering supplies for the cafe were rationed, just as families were. Apparently, it was the norm to receive about half of what we actually needed! Cafes were not allowed to serve more than two courses, but again, we solved that by serving soup in a mug, and calling it a drink, so that you could have a main course and pud as well. Not bad for five bob (25p), which was the maximum that could be charged for a meal. The mugs were thick brown ones, as wartime economies prohibited the manufacture or sale of anything trivial like coloured or decorated pottery.

Again, there were no luxury foods and we were thrilled by our first taste of ice cream, chocolate biscuits and bananas when the war finally ended.

Joanna Raymond-Barker.

Of Privies & Piggeries, Lakes & Leats in 1850s Launceston

I echo Carole Vivian's recommendation to look at the sanitary reports for your area. Lawrence House Museum's Monograph by Jake Jackson and Jim Edwards is on just this topic. It is a vivid description of sanitary conditions in Launceston in the 1850s, the state of the streets and living conditions in the houses. The Inspector's Report describes the layout and streets of the town, his interviews with local officials including the Mayor D Thomson, Mr. Lawrence, surgeon at the Workhouse, Mr. Brooming, the police officer, and a summary of the town's finances. He goes on to give considerable detail of the sanitary conditions he found, with quotations for local named individuals. For example, Richard Robbins, living in Church Street, states: *'My own house. Condition: no back door, no water-closet, or drain of any kind. My next door neighbour's house rather worse, he having a small privy-drain which comes from a public house next it, running through his shop within three or four inches of the surface. This has before now got choked up and has overflowed . . .'* Mr. Joseph Short draws attention to: *'a slaughter-house attached to a dwelling house occupied by Mr. Sutton, in Fore-street, where from 20 to 30 bullocks, sheep, and pigs are slaughtered weekly, and no water on or near the premises. I believe the place never to have been washed since it became a slaughter-house . . .'* The Inspector, Mr. George Clark, concludes his Report with his recommendations about what should be done to remedy the situation. The final section is an account of what happened after the Report and the various attempts to improve Launceston's water supply. Copies of all 25 Lawrence House Museum monographs are available from the Museum website

lawrencehousemuseum.org.uk/home/monographs-other-publications most at a cost of £4.00.

P.S. Thanks to all who provided information for the LHM Project to produce profiles of Launceston People of the 'middling kind', those who were the backbone of the community but whose history tends to be lost.

Carol Bunbury

Cornish Butcher's Cows go Walk about at Easter!

During Easter week, eighteen (18) Red Ruby cows, (formerly known as North Devons), owned by Mr James Kittow, (Farmer/Butcher) at St Blazey, Cornwall broke out of their paddock and went walk about!

The cattle were later located walking through the Nineteenth Century, 5 miles (1.073 meter) long tunnel cut in 1896 by the Great Western Railway to convey China Clay from the Par Dries to Fowey Docks. The railway tract was later lifted and the tunnel then used by Imery's as their Private Road to Fowey Docks.

Duncan Paul Matthews



Cattle Market, Looe Station c 1925.

Photo submitted by Carole Vivian



Tamar Manure Works Philip Mitchell 1862

Imagining the Black Death

Further to Carole's 'Letter from the Chair' in the previous Newsletter, our present COVID experience is the nearest we have approached to the reality of the medieval Black Death; yet it is difficult, in this age of sanitation, advanced medicine and the NHS to enter the circumstances and mindset of those times, when most of the long list of things we take for granted and rely upon were unheard of and unimaginable.

The plague became endemic for long centuries after the Black Death; and an accepted hazard of life when most diseases were incurable and not understood. In towns, there might be regulating ordinances; and the only public service provided in epidemics was burial. In Westminster in 1585, nobody was to take plague victims indoors; and where a death occurred had to isolate for 21 days. There was no mention of sustenance or relief (Felix Barker, 'Westminster, 1585', *History Today*, June 1985).

Herman Hesse's novel *Narziss und Goldmund* (1930) tries to enter this world, with its description of a journey through a plague-ridden Rhineland. But this is fiction. For Cornwall, John Hatcher (*Rural Economy and Society in the Duchy of Cornwall, 1300-1500*) attempts a reconstruction of the experiences of individual communities through Duchy manorial records; but this only deals with consequences, not the suffering. Others have charted the spread of the disease as a wave sweeping across Europe; but the local effects are lost, and individual cases disappear.

We cannot project our own experience into the very different medieval world. Instead, we must strip away all the things that we have acquired and have become, and situate ourselves in the culture we are studying; assessing it not by our standards and beliefs, but by theirs – as far as they can be known and imagined.

John Durring

Stiles and Strawberries at Wicca Farm, Zennor

On June 30th, Penwith Local History Group welcomed members and guests to an outdoor event at Wicca farm, with the focus on stiles and boundaries.

Members began the afternoon with a short and informative tour of the eight stiles on the farm and nearby, collecting details for the CALH project along the way. Next, the visitors settled down to watch a demonstration of stone-splitting by Rose Nankervis, who showed how the traditional 'feather and wedge' process can efficiently separate a useful gatepost from a lump of granite. Within fifteen minutes or so, all that was needed was a spot of finishing off – and the use of a tractor to drag the new post into position.

Jean Nankervis then gave a fascinating short talk about the stiles and farms in the Zennor area. The farm boundaries originated in the Bronze Age, and are an almost unique survival. The stiles are of more recent date and contained cattle within the fields while allowing human access.

A cream tea in the sunshine finished off the afternoon in style, and members – many of whom had not met face to face since March 2020, enjoyed it all immensely.

Penwith Group

Stone Stiles in Cornwall – A Survey

The number of reports received so far is fast approaching two hundred. There are a lot of stiles out there! Here is just one.



Photo: Lanteglos, Jenny Mann.

Reports will be put forward for inclusion on the Cornwall's Historic Environment Record (HER). Images are also written up for submission to the Geograph national database.

The vital bits of information needed include a labelled photograph of each side of the stile and a wider contextual photograph, grid reference (from Sat Nav or from the 'map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap'), a description of the location and of the stile, and, if you can, some measurements.

Cornish stone stiles are individual, unique and recorded nowhere. If you would like to record and photograph your local stiles and submit them to Ian Thompson (i.thompson029@btinternet.com) before the end of 2021, they will be credited to you and added to the Cornwall Stone Stile Survey.

Ian Thompson

VOICES FROM THE G.7 JUNE, 2021

Here the views from a couple of people who were in the area. A fuller article will appear in the next CALH Journal.

My grandson was thrilled to meet Jill Biden & Carrie Johnson at the Minack. But my friend Deborah worried that the media coverage was impacting already rocketing house prices.

Ros Prigg, Carbis Bay