

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

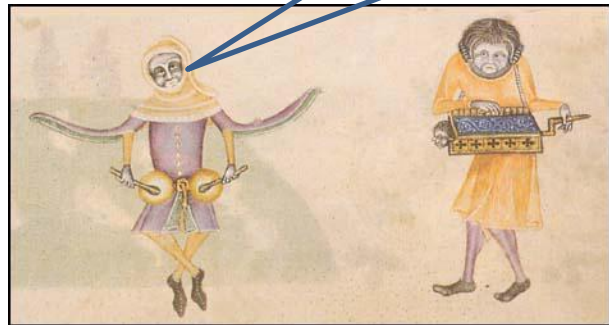
Any opinions or errors in these articles are those of the authors and must not be assumed to be those of Cornwall Archaeological Society.

APRIL 2020

Issue 41

*Times have been difficult, so
here is a free musical gift to
cheer you up:*

Sumer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweþ sed
and bloweþ med
and springþ þe wde nu
Sing cuccu



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

- LOCKDOWN MISCELLANY
- PENVENTINNIE ROUND: THE RISK INCREASES
- BRIDGE PROBLEMS OLD AND NEW
- MYSTERY PITS ON TRENCROM HILL
- ENRICHING WORK IN LISKEARD
- FEOCK HOLY WELL
- MANY WAYS TO GO FROM REPERRY CROSS

LOCKDOWN MISCELLANY

The recent excellent weather would normally mean that Area Reps would be visiting monuments and sending in reports to the Historic Environment Record officers at Kresen Kernow and to also to Historic England. Unfortunately, that has become very difficult with the lockdown. However, some have been able to take photos during their daily exercise and here is a selection from various parts of Cornwall:

1. The Rocks, Treslothan, Camborne

Adrian Rodda, when not writing the poetry for which he has become so well-known, has been enjoying walks near Treslothan (Camborne, SW 6509 3839), where, amongst the profusion of bluebells, this very impressive menhir can be seen:



Photo: Adrian Rodda

Adrian writes: *'The area is known as "The Rocks" but this is the only one standing upright. It must be firmly rooted as stone cutters have taken off a big flake from one side. There is also a deep drill hole on the dorsal side. It may have been an attempt to take off more flakes or a hole to accommodate gunpowder for a pyrotechnic display. Possibly it was simply someone trying out a new drill.'*

Heritage Gateway notes that it *'is an ancient moss-covered irregular-shaped granite stone about 6ft tall which may be a prehistoric standing stone or menhir.'*



Photo: Adrian Rodda

2. Pencalenick obelisk, St Clement, near Truro

Andrew Langdon and Ann Preston-Jones have sent this report about a little-known feature near Truro:

On more than one occasion during the Covid-19 lockdown, our one burst of exercise of the day has been to walk out along the A390 road from Truro, past the Tregurra eastern park & ride and down the new cycle path towards Tresillian. Along this path, just after Woodcock Corner and before the thatched Pencalenick Lodge is an entrance into the Pencalenick woods. This is part of the Duchy of Cornwall woodlands and there is a permissive pedestrian access. Following the track, almost parallel with the A390 and above the Lodge, it meets the old carriageway drive leading over 'Devil's Arch' bridge, linking the grounds of Pencalenick House (no public access), across the old road from St Clement to Tresillian.

Before reaching the bridge, one can turn up right (west) to a small copse of trees known as the Rookery, where one will discover a 35 foot high granite obelisk. The obelisk bears no inscription and is said to have been erected by one of the Vivian family, previous owners of Pencalenick. The obelisk is noted on the Historic Environment Record (No. 168405,

MCO44438) at SW 8526 4560. However the reason why the obelisk was set up is far from clear.

One story is that the monument was set up to mark the burial place of 'Woodcock', a famous old horse which dropped dead pulling a stage coach on the road between Truro and Tresillian at 'Woodcock Corner' a bend in the road at SW 8463 4619.

Another story, recorded by Pett, is that it was set up by Mr Vivian to commemorate his survival after the floor collapsed in his house and he had to grab the mantel-piece to save himself from an early demise.

These seem unlikely stories, though. It is more likely that the obelisk was erected as a landscape feature within Pencalenick's parkland, and although trees have grown up around it, it is likely that originally the monument would have been in a clearing so that it could be seen from the house – a prominent feature on the hill top. It is noted by Gilbert in 1820: 'On a pleasing elevation which faces the house stands a handsome freestone obelisk'.

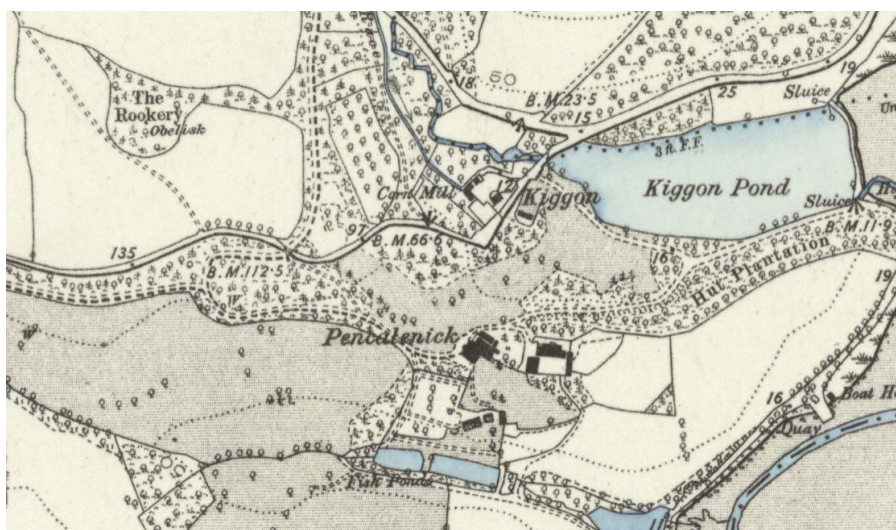
Obelisks became popular as features in landscaped gardens and parks during the 18th century, probably as young men from wealthy families took the grand tour and saw similar obelisks in Rome. The obelisks in Rome came originally from Egypt where they were set up before tombs; these extraordinary obelisks were monoliths of granite, unlike the ashlar used for the British copies. The Pencalenick obelisk is possibly 18th century; the Vivians purchased Pencalenick from the Foot family in 1758. A much larger obelisk was set up on the carriage drive to Boconnoc in 1771 (123ft high) and the tallest in Cornwall is a 19th century obelisk at Bodmin Beacon at 144ft (44M).

References

Historical Survey of the County of Cornwall, C. S. Gilbert, II, 1820, 823.

The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall by Douglas Pett 1998.

'The Strange story behind a secret 35ft monument in Cornwall most people haven't ever seen' by Lee Trehwella, *Cornwall Live*, 16th January 2018.



25in inch Ordnance Survey Map 1880 shows Pencalenick, prior to the modern mansion being built with the obelisk at the top left of the map.



The Rookery seen from the old road near Devil's Arch

Photo: Ann Preston-Jones



The obelisk surrounded by trees in the Rookery

Photo: Andrew Langdon



Andrew at the obelisk

Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

Report and photos by Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew Langdon

3. Quaker meeting-house, Come-to-Good, Kea

Sheila James has sent in this photo of the beautiful Society of Friends' meeting house at Come-to-Good in Kea parish (SW 81279 40322):



Photo: Sheila James

It is Grade I Listed. According to the Listing it was built in 1710 using funds raised by Quaker subscribers and: 'In spite of the C20 porch on the west end, this little meeting house has been remarkably unaltered since the C19 and still retains much of its original character and fabric.' Sheila's photo was taken in 2018 shortly after the thatch had been replaced and the walls painted.

4. Cast-off stone, Bodiggo, near Luxulyan

Things that tell us about the past may be large or small, Listed or overlooked, prominent or hidden, highly significant or humble. This next feature is definitely at the modest end of the spectrum besides being quite common. Nevertheless it takes us back to the days when laden, horse-drawn carts lumbered around our roads and lanes, often to the detriment of the hedges. This is why stones were sometimes placed against the hedge to protect them from cartwheels. I am grateful to Martin Karkeek and Malcolm Gould for drawing this example, situated in the hamlet of Bodiggo (SX 04446 58735), to my attention.



Photo: Malcolm Gould



Photo: Malcolm Gould

Carts and wagons were a common sight until the middle years of the twentieth century when motor vehicles replaced them. Cast-off stones were essential to protect buildings as well as hedges and can be seen in urban settings as well as in the countryside. Malcolm has provided the following photo from the China Clay History Society archive to give some idea of the size of these vehicles.



1 Photo: Brian Oldham

Photo: Malcolm Gould/The China Clay History Society

Damage to Cornish hedges is still common, usually a consequence of the massive tractors and trailers that use lanes designed for smaller vehicles. This is such a shame because many of these hedges date from late medieval times and are an important landscape feature, in addition to their value as wildlife habitats.

5. Millstones, Linkinhorne parish, Bodmin Moor

Brian Oldham discovered these unfinished millstones just before the lockdown. He writes: *'I almost tripped over these beauties while risk assessing a walk for Rosedean House Surgery Walking Group before the lock down. The walk itself was a casualty of the lock down so the Group will have to wait until 2021 to see the mill-stones.'*



Photo: Brian Oldham



Photo: Brian Oldham



Looking south-west with Sharp Tor on the horizon
Photo: Brian Oldham



Looking NW with Bearah Tor Quarry in background
Photo: Brian Oldham

6. St Keyne's Holy Well

Iain Rowe managed to visit St Keyne's Holy Well (St Keyne, SX 2482 6021) on one of his permitted daily excursions.

Heritage Gateway has this to say about this Listed Building:

St Keyne's Well is one of the most famous of English holy wells, having been popularised in song and verse in the 18th and 19th centuries, including a sketch and ballad in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1799 ... The well is celebrated for its healing and other powers and has many legends associated with its patron saint ... In 1891, the well was in a very dilapidated state, the arch tumbling to pieces ... It was restored in 1963 by Liskeard Old Cornwall Society ... so that it is now said to have "no architectural interest" ... Listed, and described as a small granite well-house with a stone gabled roof and arch with segmented head. A standing shaft with small relief cross is in the low relief adjoining well ... The OS suggest that the cross shaft is modern ... It is uncertain how much of the well was rebuilt during restoration in 1963.

Iain's photographs really capture the atmosphere of a day in spring. He noted the abundance of ramsons and it isn't difficult to imagine the smell of garlic just by looking at his pictures.



Photo: Iain Rowe



Photo: Iain Rowe

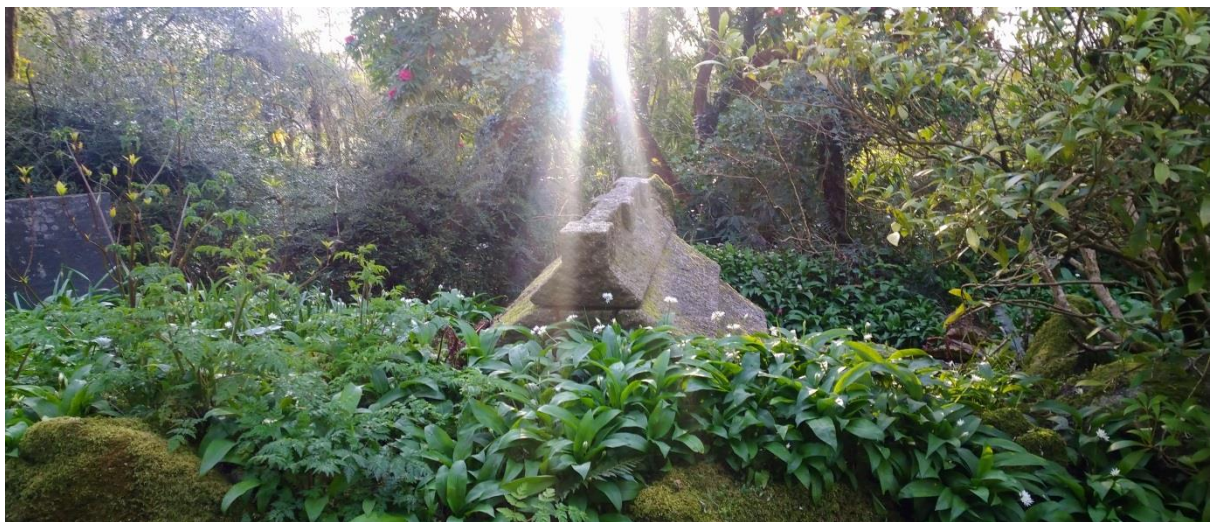


Photo: Iain Rowe

7. St Thomas's or Priory Bridge, Launceston

Peter Crispin has sent these photographs of this 15th century packhorse bridge in Launceston. According to Heritage Gateway, it was: 'built in the C15 to link the Priory with the town of Newport. It is a fine example of a medieval packhorse bridge, and is rag-stone built, with five low arches of Polyphant stone, with broad cut-waters between them. There is no parapet, and the roadway has a cobbled surface 2m wide with copings of granite. The heavy iron guard-rails along the side may be C18 ... It is a Listed Building grade I ... Alongside the bridge is a wide, paved ford.'

Peter took this photo on one of his daily exercise walks:



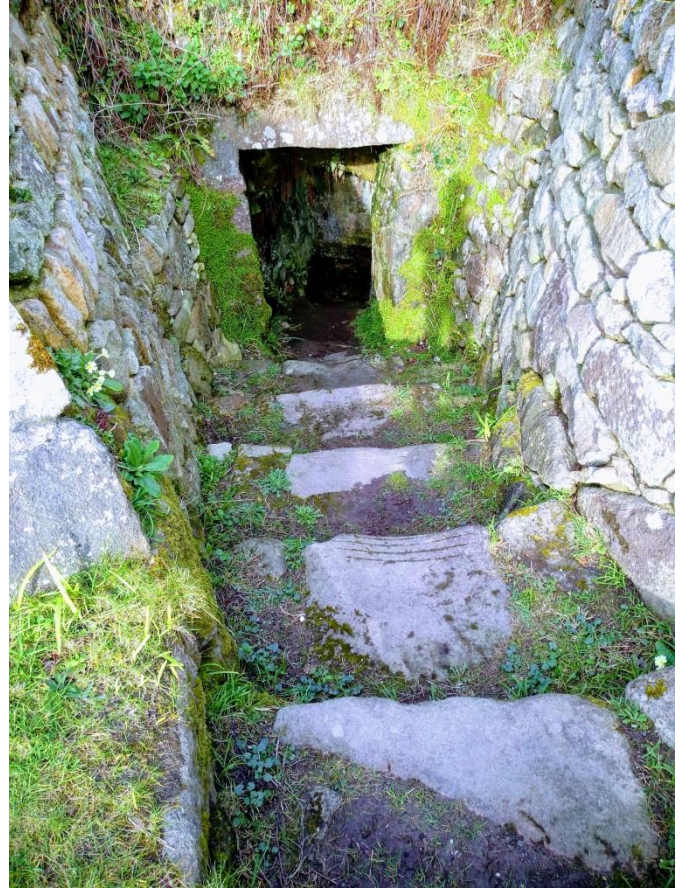
Photo: Peter Crispin

Peter adds: 'I think the old photo must be pre-1908 as I've a photo dated 1908 (from a different direction) which shows the lamp standard in the middle of the bridge, which of course isn't there on this photo.'



8. Adit, Tregonning Hill, Germoe

Having ventured on an eastward journey some rather slack editing practices now transport us considerably to the west. Veronica Summers has sent photographs and details about an intriguing adit situated on the south side of Tregonning Hill, between Balwest and Ashton (SW 5999 2938).



Photos: Veronica Summers

This is an intriguing feature, with the worn steps reflecting many years of use. However, there is a link to the very earliest days to what was to become Cornwall's most important industries, that of china clay. The information on the plaque provided by Cory Environmental Trust and Cornwall Council tells the story:



Photo: Veronica Summers

PENVENTINNIE ROUND: THE RISK INCREASES

In his 1946 essay, 'Politics and the English Language', George Orwell lamented: 'Most people who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way...' but at least he was spared the 'Newspeak' employed by the modern developer. A case in point is Langarth Garden 'Village', a planned settlement which is intended to house between 8,000 and 10,000 people on the edge of Truro! Surely the word 'town' would be more accurate? Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew Langdon provide this account of an archaeological feature that is already at risk and which faces additional problems when the development goes ahead.

One of the monuments that we have seen on our daily constitutional is Penventinnie (or Governs) Round. This almost perfect round sits on a spur of land above the River Kenwyn, just below Treliske Hospital and it is clearly visible from nearby Penventinnie Lane. When we walked by, it was being quietly grazed by a flock of sheep with their lambs. Despite its perfect appearance from a distance, the round is on the Heritage at Risk register because its banks are inhabited by a thriving badger population. However there may be an even greater

risk in the near future. Truro's new 'Langarth Garden Village', whose plans were put out to local consultation last autumn and further unveiled in March, will be built on land close to the round and the round will become part of the associated recreational area. One wonders what the impact will be on the monument once the sheep are gone and the setting is transformed. The second of the links below suggests that it may become part of 'Broadway Park'.

<https://www.piratefm.co.uk/news/latest-news/3059082/langarth-garden-village-plans-unveiled/>

<https://truro.nub.news/n/garden-village-masterplan-reveals-how-it-could-develop-over-next-25-years>

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/langarth-garden-village/>

<https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/new-image-shows-entire-plan-3930351>



Air photo of the site from Cornwall Council's HER mapping



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones



Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

Text and photos: Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew Langdon

BRIDGE PROBLEMS OLD AND NEW

On 17th April, new Area Rep John Hanns reported the latest damage to Hellandbridge (Helland and St Mabyn parishes, SX 0652 7149). Despite being a Grade II* Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument, this fine 15th century bridge is damaged frequently, a situation that is only likely to be solved by the imposition of robust traffic management measures, as has been used at Respryn.



Photo: Mark Hollow



Of course, motor vehicles have always had the potential to be destructive and this is shown by a photo of Respryn Bridge that Brian Oldham found recently in his archive:



Photo: courtesy of Brian Oldham

MYSTERY PITS ON TRENCROM HILL

On 20th April, CAS received disturbing reports of small, oblong pits having been dug on the summit of Trencrom Hill. The hilltop is in Ludgvan parish and is thought to have been the site of a Neolithic hilltop enclosure, and later, an Iron Age hillfort (https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO91&resourceID=1020). It is a Scheduled Monument, so any unauthorised digging is forbidden.

The purpose of this digging is unknown. Those who have been able to visit are convinced that the holes have been dug with tools and that this is not the work of animals. One possibility, and it is no more than that without evidence, is that it is the result of illegal metal-detecting. Responsible metal-detectorists follow a Code of Practice and wouldn't

dream of digging in such a place; in fact, they would be swift to condemn any rogue elements. The Portable Antiquities Scheme states:

*Anyone **metal-detecting** and removing objects from a **Scheduled Monument** will be committing an offence under the Archaeological Areas and Ancient **Monuments Act** 1979. There may also be acts of criminal damage associated with these activities.*

Source: <https://finds.org.uk/getinvolved/guides/guidancelandowners>

It should be emphasised that responsible detectorists are motivated by a genuine interest in the past and report their finds to their local Finds Liaison Officers. As a result, there have been many wonderful discoveries which have added greatly to archaeological knowledge. To learn about some of these finds, the PAS database is well worth searching: <https://finds.org.uk/database>. Sadly, Anna Tyacke, who has served as Cornwall's PAS Finds Liaison Officer for many years, has recently left this post. Let's hope that Cornwall Council and the British Museum can find someone to carry out this role as soon as possible; otherwise, Cornwall's heritage will lack a vital strand.

Cornwall Ancient Sites Protection Network (CASPN), Historic England, Cornwall Council and the National Trust (the site owner) are aware of this activity. Monitoring is taking place within the limits of the lockdown.

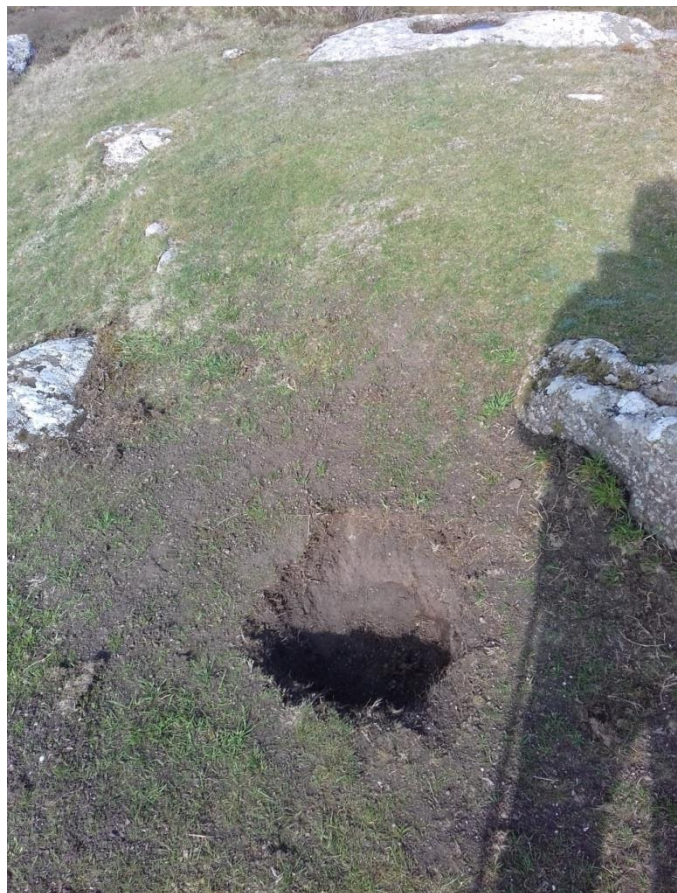


Photo: John Moss

If you suspect heritage crime of any sort, do **not** approach those carrying it out but you can report it by following this advice from Historic England:

[Call 101 to report crime](#) and other concerns that don't require an emergency response, such as:

- When property has been stolen or damaged and the suspect is no longer at the scene
- If you suspect unlawful metal detecting is happening in your neighbourhood
- To give the police information about crime or anti-social behaviour in your area

101 is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Source: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/heritage-crime/report/>

ENRICHING WORK IN LISKEARD

Brian Oldham is Area Rep for Liskeard and has been able to continue to monitor buildings close to home. Not only that, in this report he tells us how he has added to Historic England's online archive of photos in a process known as 'Enriching the List'

[<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/>], which is accessible to us all.

As CAS Area Rep' for Liskeard and living in the town, my daily exercise during Lockdown takes me past numerous Listed Buildings from milestones to mansions. Last week I selected 5 Grade II Listed Inns for reports to the HER team and posted photos of them on Facebook, in case friends and family were interested. There were plenty of likes and comments including this one from Sam Barnes (Listing Adviser at Historic England): "I jolly well hope you're enriching the List with these!!"

Sam gave a fascinating talk at a recent Area Reps' meeting encouraging us to "enrich the List". To confess, I did not and, in hindsight wish I had, as I've found using the process surprisingly rewarding. Following Sam's instructions, I registered as a contributor to the Historic England List and now I'm able to contribute with comments and photographs in just 3 minutes after completing a Report for the HER. The response from HE is the rewarding bit; an appreciative email arrives after a couple days to confirm the List has been enriched by Brian Oldham! Also, you know a real person has looked at your contribution as one email explained why car registration numbers must not be in photos (GDPR). If you haven't done so already, I'd recommend you get registered and get into the habit of submitting a 3 minute enrichment to HE after your HER report. As you'll know, the List is not just for Listed Buildings, but there's a shortage of Cairns and Hut Circles in Liskeard town centre!

Anyone can do this by going to: <https://historicensland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list/> where the following instructions can be found:

Enrich the List with your images, insights and secrets of England's spectacular historic places.

How to get started

You can add contributions to historic places on the National Heritage List for England:

- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Protected Wreck Sites
- Parks & Gardens
- Battlefields
- World Heritage Sites

You can **register**, **log in** and **add contributions** from any of these list entries. So find a place special to you to get started:

[Use the map to find listed places near you](#)

[Search the List](#)

Here are the pubs Brian's photographed recently, plus snippets from his background research:

1. The White Hart



Photo: Brian Oldham

In Nov. 1844 Elizabeth Miners, 21, stole silver spoon from The White Hart and was jailed for 6 months.

2. The White Horse



Photo: Brian Oldham

In 1873 William Waddington lodged at The White Horse and recruited 600 Cornish miners to break the strikes in Lancashire coal mines.

3. The Albion



Photo: Brian Oldham

In July 1856 Daniel Venning of the Bay Tree Hill Brewery purchased The Albion for £280.

4. The Barley Sheaf



Photo: Brian Oldham

In Sept. 1883 George Whelp, a tramp, was jailed for 4 weeks for stealing 3d (old pence) from The Barley Sheaf.

5. The Old Stag (formerly the Railway Hotel)



Photo: Brian Oldham

Henry Rice designed Old Stag, then The Railway Hotel, was opened in 1859 to coincide with the opening of the Plymouth to Penzance main line.

Report and photos by Brian Oldham (CAS Area Rep and President of Liskeard Old Cornwall Society)

FEOCK HOLY WELL

It is very difficult for Area Reps to visit many monuments at the moment, unless they are very close to where they live. Sheila James lives near Feock Holy Well and in the following account she gives an overview of her visits to the site since 2013:

Saint Feock holy well and village pump (HER 38441, 38441.1) are located beside a track close to the centre of Feock village. According to the HER, the well has medieval origins but was remodelled in the late 19C or early 20C. The cast-iron pump and bucket stand is a Grade II listed structure. The pump stands at the top of a bank and the well is down below, built into a field wall at the bottom of the slope. There is a flight of steps between the two.

When I first visited the site in November 2013 the pump was in a good state of repair, but the well building was overgrown with ivy and other weeds. The steps at the bottom of the slope had completely disappeared under the layer of leaf mould, see Figs 1 and 2.



1. October 2013 Photo: Sheila James



2. October 2013 Photo: Sheila James

My next visit was in May 2015. On this occasion the pump and steps were hardly visible amongst the long grass and early summer flowers. However, the pump structure seemed ok and after carefully negotiating the steps, I found the well house too was unchanged, see Figs 3 and 4. The state of the steps was clearly hazardous for anyone wanting to visit the monument, so the parish council was notified.



3. May 2015

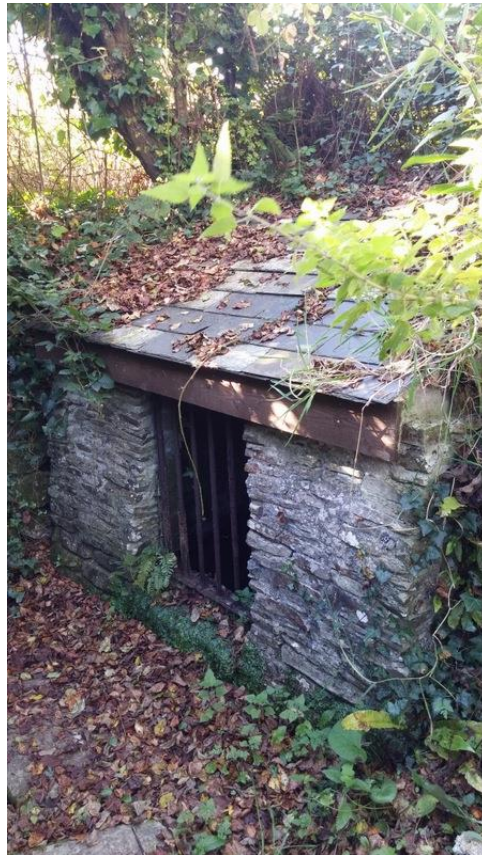
Photo: Sheila James



4. May 2015

Photo: Sheila James

The next visit was in October 2018, and I found the site much improved. The grass had all been cut back, the pump and bucket stand had been completely cleared of weeds. The steps down to the well were easily visible and clear right to the bottom. The well building had been tidied up a bit and some of the ivy removed. Even an information post had been placed on the bank beside the pump, see Figs 5 and 6.



5. October 2018 Photo: Sheila James



6. October 2018 Photo: Sheila James

The monument is just about within walking distance from my home, so on March 26th I walked over to Feock for another visit. The spring growth of grass and flowers is beginning to encroach on the pump and steps again, the bottom step has disappeared under a layer of wet leaves and the well house is festooned with ivy, see Figs 7 and 8. This is clearly a seasonable problem. The parish council cut the grass verge after the flowers have seeded. After that, a quick visit with a pair of secateurs will sort out the well house. Clearly the best time to see this monument is in the early autumn after it has been tidied up. Let's hope that by this autumn we will be able to get out and about again to visit our historic sites.



7. March 2020

Photo: Sheila James



8. March 2020

Photo: Sheila James

Report and photographs by Sheila James

MANY WAYS TO GO FROM REPERRY CROSS

Since 1776, travellers reaching the lonely spot of Reperry Cross (SX 0464 6331) in Lanivet parish have benefited from a guidestone directing them to various destinations: Lostwithiel, Bodmin, St Austle [sic], St Columb; but a link with Woking in Surrey was never suspected...until now.



In the bottom photograph the medieval cross can be seen in the background. (All photos were taken during permitted daily exercise!)



Completely out of the blue, a message was received in April by the CAS secretary from Amanda Burgon of Woking, who had found this object among a pile of rubble in her garden:



Photos: Amanda Burgon

The stone is about 7 inches tall and weighs about 729 grams. While there is little doubt about the object it is modelled on, the reason for making it is a bit of a puzzle. Ian Thompson of the Milestone Society (<https://www.milestonesociety.co.uk/>) was intrigued by this discovery of what appears to have been a souvenir of the distinctive Reperry guidestone. Fortunately, Andrew Langdon had come across the practice of miniature carvings of medieval crosses and has offered this possible explanation:

Throughout the 20th century there has been small cottage industries hand carving souvenirs in stone for the tourist trade, particularly on the Lizard and in Penzance, these were usually made from Serpentine stone. They made everything from miniature lighthouses, ash trays, stone crosses etc. There are still a few workshops operating on the Lizard. An elderly man at Tintagel was carving miniature 'Celtic' crosses during the 1990s and selling them in a gift shop in the village – a little piece of Cornwall to take home. These miniature model crosses have turned up all over the country, and there are examples in museums in Truro and Penzance. See two examples attached, both of which are 7ins high.



I believe your stone is just a souvenir from Cornwall, the guide post at Lanivet is well known, and perhaps this was a special commission for someone, or there may be other copies which have not survived. I believe the stone would have slotted into a little base of the same material (see photo of the crosses), so that it could stand up, in a similar way to the stone crosses. I don't see the point of carving such a stone, if it could not stand up and be admired. These miniatures were not always exact copies, and depended on the stone carver's skill and were often carved from illustrations or photographs rather than on site at the original. Your stone could date from the 1920s or 30s or later.

So far, Amanda hasn't located the base but apparently there is plenty more rubble to sift through. She may be able to bring this very unusual object down to Cornwall for closer examination when travel restrictions are lifted. One thing is for certain though: Amanda has

always wanted to be an archaeologist and I think we can safely say that with this discovery she has achieved her ambition.

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

Roger Smith, 8th May 2020

