

## FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

### Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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# APRIL 2022

## Issue 65

## THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

- A DAY WITH THE MASTER
- TROUBLED BRIDGE OVER WATERS
- ST ALLEN CHURCHYARD CROSSES
- FORGING AHEAD
- SHOPPING WITHOUT TEARS

## A DAY WITH THE MASTER

*Adrian Rodda reports on a recent field trip he undertook with Andrew Langdon to look at medieval crosses in his area:*

I had complained in the Area Reps' Online talks on 29<sup>th</sup> March that the building of new time-share lodges at Clowance Estate, Praze an Beeble, had confused me and I could not find the **Binnerton Cross** [HER 29468; Scheduled Monument CO179; Listed Building (II) 65842; SW 6360 3532; Crowan parish]. Andrew Langdon, who has written so many books and guides on Cornish Crosses, offered to help me search. We met on 7<sup>th</sup> April and Andrew gave me the whole day.

Having registered with Reception we set off in the direction where we had both individually found the cross before. It was still there, but the environment around it had changed

drastically. From three directions it was invisible in the trees and bushes, but from one, off an unpromising rough track which led to a dump, the bushes had been cleared and the cross accessible. Andrew wondered why the estate management had not made it a feature of interest for their tourists.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

Andrew had explained in "Stone Crosses of West Cornwall Series 5" that the **Binnerton Cross**, once situated at a crossroads, had been rescued from a mine watercourse by Rev. Molesworth St Aubyn, and set up on the estate. It is supported by a half cross base discovered in Gwinear Parish. In true West Cornwall style the cross displays a figure of Christ on one side and a cross on the other.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

There are two other "rescued" crosses on the estate. **The Bold Gate Cross** [HER 29523; Scheduled Monument CO179; Listed Building (II) 65841; SW 6353 3476; Crowan parish], once a crossroads waymarker, had been taken to Clowance circa 1850 and by 1880s had been set up on a small island in the estate lake. Neither of us felt capable of rowing to the island and getting ashore to view it. There is no obvious landing place since shrubs and small trees had grown down to the water on all sides. We knew that it was just inside the bushes and trees near to the west bank of the island. But it was not visible. We failed to find a groundsman who might have been able to report on its condition. I had landed in 2011 with help of friends and found the ground

immediately around it had been clear of growth, but it had still not been visible from the shore. This is the picture from then. I have a better camera now.

The most visible cross on the estate is the **Nine Maidens Downs Cross** [HER 35175; Scheduled Monument CO179; Listed Building (II) 65832; SW 6336 3490; Crowan parish] which has been set up at the edge of a lawn disturbingly close to a parking place for the nearest lodge. The parking space had been covered in flint chips and there was a deep rut into the gravel where a car had not got a good grip. I had brought to the attention of the management some years before the danger of a car reversing into the cross and suggested a

buffer or moving the parking space some distance. Nothing was done and now we had the threat of flints propelled into the cross by a skidding car. Better do another letter! It is a majestic cross without a figure of Christ but with intriguing patterns and motifs in the shaft. These are described in detail in Andrew's Book.

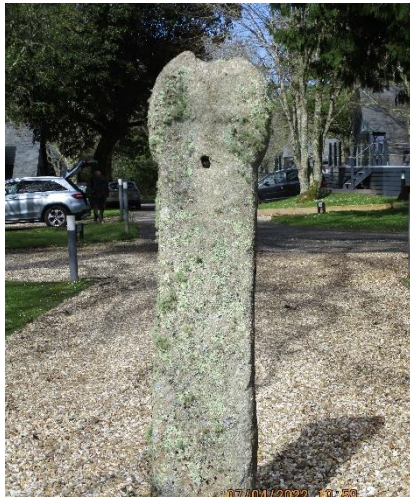


Photo: Adrian Rodda



Photo: Adrian Rodda

While we talked about “rescued” crosses I asked Andrew why there were no crosses on the Tehidy Estate. He explained that there had been a **Tehidy Cross**, which was removed to Crewkerne, Somerset, on instructions of Mr Bassett when Tehidy Estate was sold in 1916. The land agent, Charles Everitt, had also removed the **Roskear Cross**, which had sat in his own garden, to Crewkerne. This cross is now lost. The Tehidy Cross stands over the grave of Mrs Bassett in Stockbridge, Hampshire. Andrew's extensive research is listed in “Stone Crosses in Mid Cornwall” under the heading “Cornish Crosses in Exile”.

We then moved on to **Gwithian Parish Churchyard**, where I wanted Andrew's opinion on the safety of a leaning cross amongst the graves [HER 105798; Scheduled Monument 30412; SW 5863 4124; Gwinear Gwithian parish]. He thought it was safe enough with probably plenty of its shaft being buried in the ground. He thought this cross was *in situ* with later graves building up around it.





Photo: Adrian Rodda

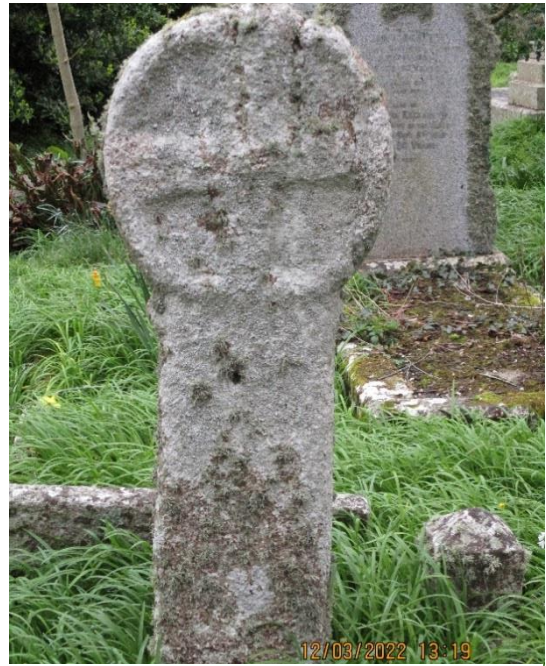


Photo: Adrian Rodda

Andrew was pleased to see the **Marigold Cross** carved on a stone thought to have come from the now buried St Gothian's Chapel. It is inside the church [SW 5863 4126] and we caught just the right light to photograph it.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

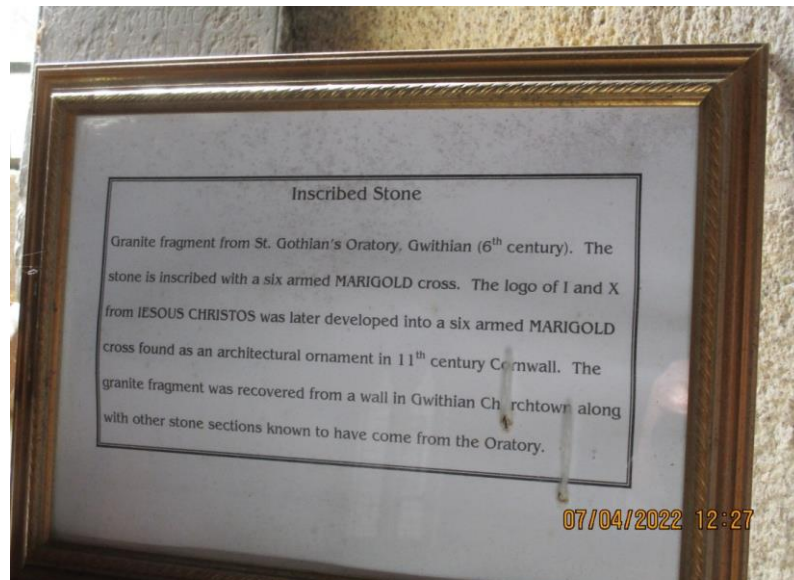


Photo: Adrian Rodda

We finished our day with a visit to the newly erected **Reskajeage Cross** [HER MCO57026; SW 6002 4189; Camborne parish], where Andrew told me its history and how it was restored by Camborne Old Cornwall Society. It was good to see it being revered with flowers in its new hedge space on a minor road at SW6002 4189.

It had been a privilege to spend a day with Andrew and to learn so much about my local monuments. His guide books are published by the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies and are available from them or from Cornish Bookshops. Every CAS member would appreciate at least the one for their own area.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

**Text and photos: Adrian Rodda**



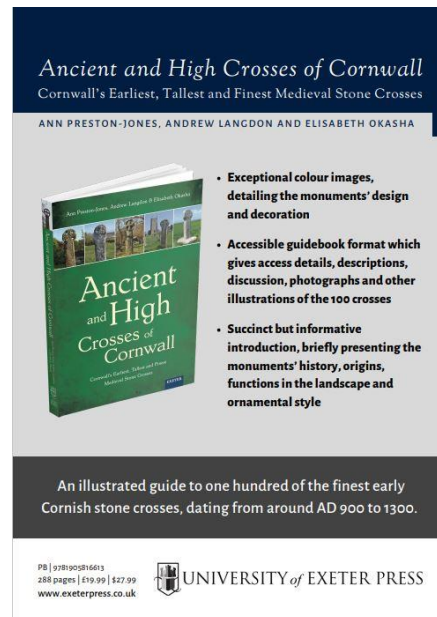
## POSTSCRIPT

In addition to the Cornish Crosses series of books mentioned by Adrian, there is also the highly recommended volume written by Andrew, Ann Preston-Jones and Elisabeth Okasha:

### ***Ancient and High Crosses of Cornwall***

### ***Cornwall's Earliest, Tallest and Finest Medieval Stone Crosses***

Ann Preston-Jones, Andrew Langdon and Elisabeth Okasha (Exeter University Press, ISBN 9781905816613) Paperback £19.99 or EPUB (9781905816620) £19.99



## TROUBLED BRIDGE OVER WATERS

Robin Paris chanced upon an intriguing clapper bridge while walking recently in a picturesque spot near St Breward.



Side view from upstream. Feather and tare on nearest clapper stone edge.

Photo: Robin Paris

The bridge crosses the River Camel and is part of Public Footpath 535/3/1 linking Penrose Burden and Higher Lank Farm.



View from north of river

Photo: Robin Paris



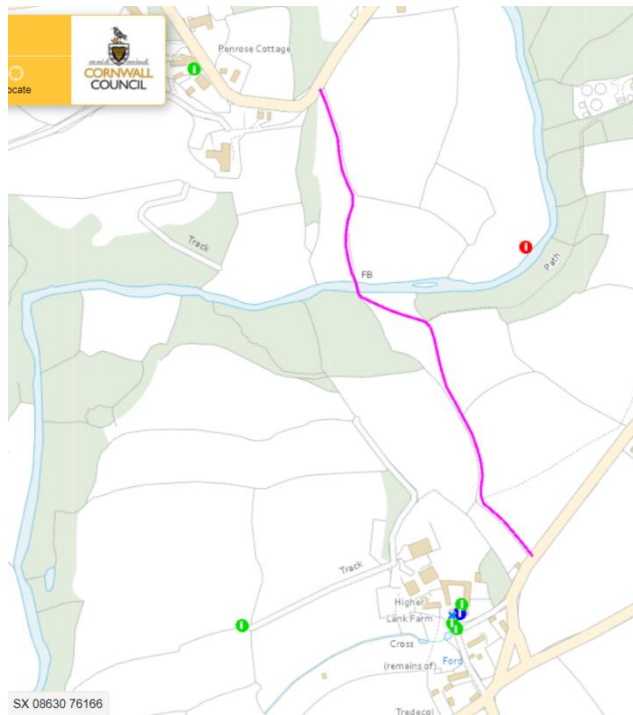
View from S of river. Stone stile to left of tree, path now bypassing it! Hence need for iron stile on bridge that end (at a guess).

Photo: Robin Paris

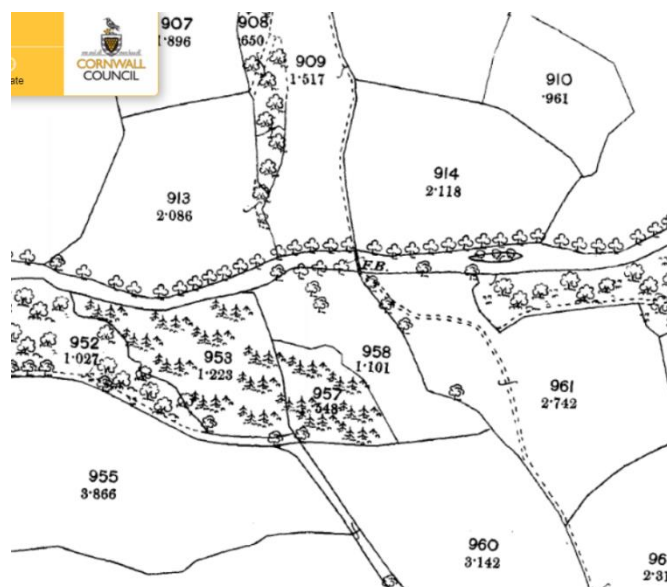


Robin examined the bridge closely, noticing the signs of tare and feather stone-splitting techniques on some of the stones. Wanting to learn more, she consulted the excellent Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Record

(<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/strategic-historic-environment-service/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-historic-environment-record/> ). To her surprise, the clapper bridge was not on the record although the footbridge is marked:



Robin intends to send information so the bridge can be entered on the register. The online mapping did allow her to do some more research, so she went to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey map (Epoch 1: 1875-1901) which showed the bridge in place:





We are incredibly lucky in Cornwall to have online access to the tithe maps (circa 1839) but the bridge doesn't seem to be marked:



It is possible to compare the modern and old map by changing the transparency so there is no problem in finding the location:



So it rather looks as if the bridge was erected at some time in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Quite possibly it was an essential link for people needing to move between Penrose Burden and Higher Lank for their daily activities (possibly including quarrying) rather than for leisure. Although it forms part of a public footpath it does look as if it might need some care and attention, as Robin's photos show:



Here are broken rails, bit forlorn and rusty. But chained!

Photo: Robin Paris



Rail post holder and another up by far broken stile. Abutting stone looks dislodged? Worn moss shows the bridge is used. Photo: Robin Paris

## ST ALLEN CHURCHYARD CROSSES

Area Rep Tracy Dearing has recently submitted reports on three crosses in the little-visited churchyard at St Allen. Monitoring reports by Area Representatives cover all sorts of features, with Scheduled Monuments being given the highest priority. This system means that information can be fed to the Historic Environment Service and Historic England. Happily, Tracy found these lovely crosses to be in a satisfactory condition.

**Wayside cross in St Allen churchyard, to the east of the church** (HER 32071.30; Scheduled Monument 29207; Listed Building (II) 417818; SW 8225 5059; St Allen parish)



Photo: Tracy Dearing

Tracy's report noted:

*'Wheel headed cross found buried at St Allen churchyard, and re-erected in 1930. One of three scheduled monument crosses located within a few meters of the south elevation of the church. This cross is located immediately to the east of the south porch adjacent to the gravel path that leads from the car park access to the church. The cross stands over 2m high including the base added in 1930 which was part of a former cider press. The cross is distinctive because it leans outwards away from the church.'*



**Wayside cross in St Allen churchyard, to the east of the south porch** (HER 32071.20; Scheduled Monument 29206; Listed Building (II) 63902; SW 8224 5059; St Allen parish)



Photo: Tracy Dearing

Tracy's report noted:

*'Wheel headed cross deliberately buried at St Allen churchyard, re-discovered and re-erected in 1912. One of three scheduled monument crosses located within a few meters of the south elevation of the church. This cross is located within the L formed by two sides of the church walls with a gravel path running around the church isolating the cross on a small grass island.'*

**Wayside cross in St Allen churchyard, near the south wall of the tower** (HER 32031; Scheduled Monument 29208; Listed Building (II) 63901; SW 8222 5059; St Allen parish)

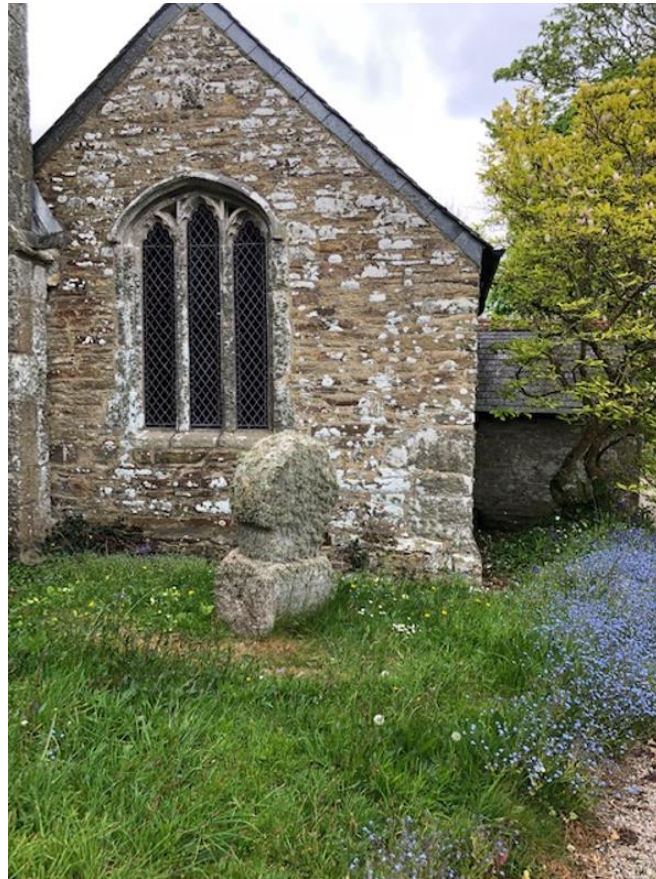


Photo: Tracy Dearing

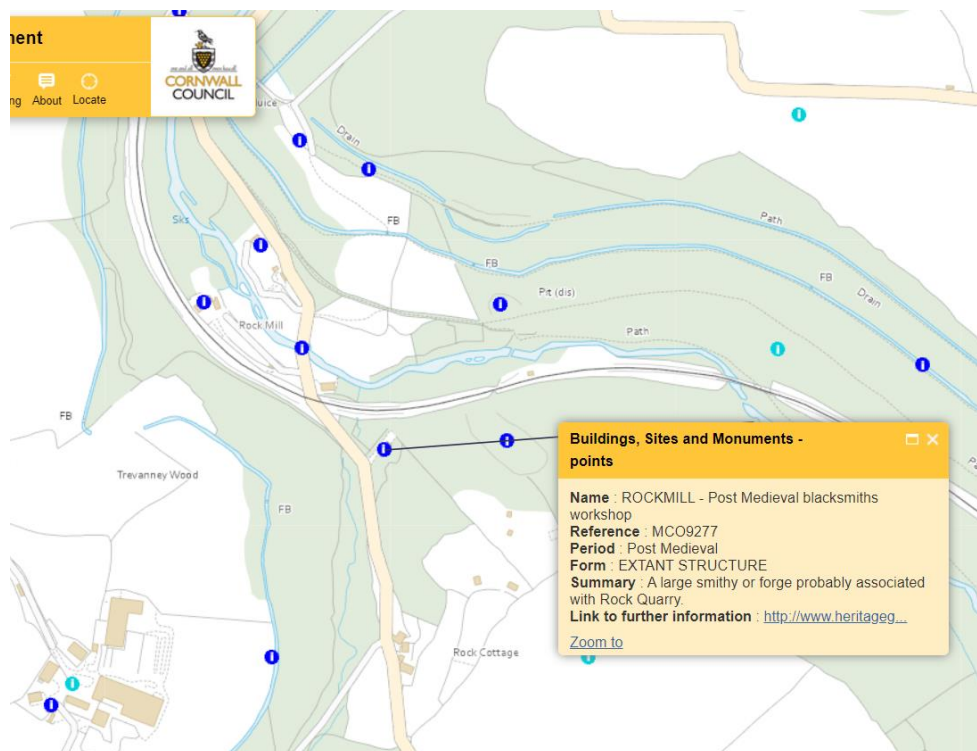
Tracy's report noted:

*'Wheel headed cross found in use as a step at Trefronick farmhouse and moved to St Allen churchyard in 1911. One of three scheduled monument crosses located within a few meters of the south elevation of the church, this one to the west of the entrance porch. In 1911 the cross was mounted on a new base inscribed with the words "This cross taken from Trefronick was presented and erected here by Obed Lanyon, of this parish 1911". Mr Lanyon was the farmhouse owner.'*

According to *Ancient and High Crosses of Cornwall* (Preston-Jones, Langdon and Okasha, 2021, University of Exeter, page 242): 'Although not in one of the granite areas of Cornwall, St Allen nonetheless has a good collection of granite wayside crosses.' Visitors will also be able to see the remains of two more crosses inside the church, the base stone of one has been converted into a font. There is also a decorated 13<sup>th</sup> century grave slab to be seen.

## FORGING AHEAD

An area of woodland, including a ruined blacksmith shop, on the fringe of Luxulyan Valley has recently been acquired by local residents Ria Taylor and Tony Spinks. They have run the adjacent Acorn Glamping and Camping site (<https://acorncampingandglamping.co.uk/>) for years and are very keen to promote biodiversity, as well as to conserve and protect the special archaeological features of this part of the World Heritage Site.



The HER entry (HER 9690; SX 0580 5679; Luxulyan parish) refers to the structure as 'A large smithy or forge probably associated with Rock Quarry. It would appear to be of late C19 date and probably incorporated an office at the SW end.' John Smith's survey of Luxulyan Valley (*Luxulyan Valley Project, An Archaeological and Historic Survey*, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 1988, page 88) includes a measured plan of the building and this reference to the quarry and smithy:



*'Also known as Lower Bottoms, or Cottage quarry...A large smithy and office for the quarry stands beside the public road...'*

Sadly, this has been the location for fly-tipping for many years, so one of the first jobs Ria and Tony had to do was to clear it all up. Anxious not to harm the structure and associated features, they have been in close touch with the World Heritage Site, Friends of Luxulyan Valley and archaeologists who undertook the survey of the Valley. Having cleared out the rubbish, and some of the surrounding vegetation, they have revealed some intriguing features.



Looking SW towards the public road. The smithy is the first room with the quarry office beyond.

To their delight, once debris and rubbish was taken out of the office, a beautifully made stone floor was revealed:







The forge is to the left

Now that the structure has been revealed, Ria and Tony are carrying out work to enhance biodiversity (including planting native tree species nearer the road) but wish to conserve the structure. It is their wish to hold forest schools in the woodland and to engage the community as much as possible.



Two hearths have been uncovered inside the forge





Various artefacts were uncovered inside the forge

One great surprise was the discovery of what seems to be the metal framework of a truck, perhaps one used on the tramway in the Valley.



One of the oldest tramways in Luxulyan Valley led to this quarry, so the building and its surroundings make up a significant section of the industrial heritage. The Archaeological Survey explains that: 'It is notable that all the major quarries in the Valley save one have direct connection to the Tramway system. The history of deep quarrying for granite in the Valley therefore belongs to the period ca 1845 to the early 1900s, when the demand for



high-quality local stone was eroded by cheaper imports from Scandinavia' (John Smith, 1988).

The work being carried out so lovingly by Ria and Tony will not only allow us to improve our knowledge of local quarrying but will be of great benefit to the local environment and the community.

## SHOPPING WITHOUT TEARS

Out of town retail parks and the increase in online shopping have led to many of our historic town centres undergoing a steep and very concerning decline. Nonetheless plenty of people still visit local shops. For some this is a necessity and for many it is actually a pleasure. But what about those of us who are obliged to go on shopping trips but who don't enjoy browsing in shops – or, let's be honest haven't a clue about the shiny, sophisticated products offered for sale in many establishments? Fear not, help is at hand for the reluctant, bored, perplexed and foot-weary shopper. And it comes from an unexpected source: the Historic Environment Service.

This service (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/strategic-historic-environment-service/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-historic-environment-record/> ) has already given us a bountiful, ever growing online mapping site stuffed with information, including old maps and aerial photos. But, incredibly, there is now more. Under cover of night these lovely people have sneaked on to their site a huge section on historic shopfronts and signage:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/historic-shopfronts-and-signage/> .

This is what they are up to:

*Historic shopfronts are important features within our historic towns and contribute greatly to their character and appearance. Unsympathetic new shopfronts and unsightly signage can all too easily destroy the special character of these settlements. The Cornwall Shopfront Design Guide was approved on 15 September 2017 as a Cornwall Council guidance document. It gives general advice on the design of new shopfronts and is intended to be used as a reference to improve the quality of new shopfronts and signs.*

*Special appendices could be produced over time for selected towns and villages to complement the Shopfront Design Guide. These can be produced by local Council's or partnerships and give information on local distinctiveness. An appendix has already been produced for St Austell. If you are interested in producing an appendix to the Shopfront Design Guide for your town or village please email us at [HER@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:HER@cornwall.gov.uk).*

If we take as an example the Camborne Shopfront Study (carried out by the Cahill Partnership in 2004 for Kerrier District Council) there is a huge amount of information about the history of retail activity in the past, as this extract shows:

Table 1 - Analysis of Trade Directories, Camborne, 1830-44 1791 1830 1844 Bakers 4  
 Bankers 1 Beer seller 3 Bookseller 2 2 Bootmaker 5 Butcher 1 6 Dressmaker/ milliner 3 3  
 Earthenware Eating Houses 2 Grocer/draper/ Druggist 10 Grocer/Tea dealer/ Druggist 1 9  
 Inns/hotels 3\* 3 Ironmonger 4 4 Linen/Wool drapers 6 Mercers 3 Merchant 4 Milliner/  
 hatter 2 Post office 1 Saddler/Harness 4 2 Shopkeeper 12 17 Straw hat makers 2 3 Surgeon  
 /apothecaries 2 Tailor 3 10 Taverns/public houses 2 3 3 Watchmaker 1 3 TOTALS 8 63 81

There is information about surviving shopfronts and signs, as well as sound advice about incorporating features into future developments of the area.

There are 3 shopfront studies, for Camborne, St Day and Tuckingmill, as well as shopfront design guides for Newquay, St Austell and Hayle.

So shopping for the unwilling need no longer be a torture, at least in these places. Download the information and while others on your shopping expedition are searching for the cheapest baked beans or perusing the latest XYZ from Silicon Valley, you can examine the shopfronts and travel back in time – just watch out for those e-scooters though!

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* 58, or send an email to [arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk](mailto:arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk).

Roger Smith, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2022





