

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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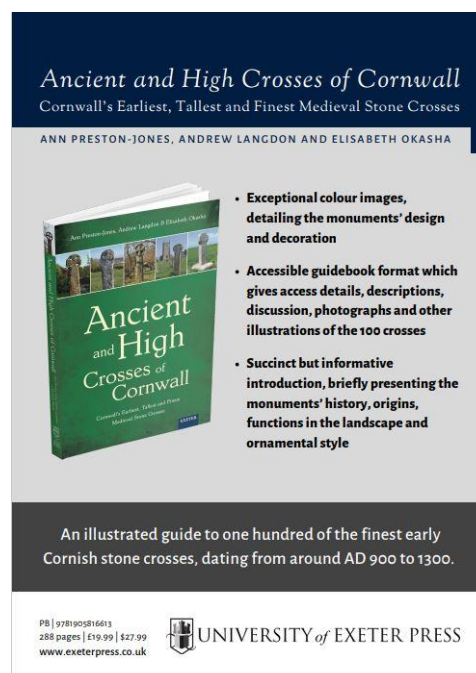
Issue 57

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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THE EARLIEST, TALLEST AND FINEST

Wonderful news for book lovers! Just published is this beautifully illustrated, authoritative and affordable book that will inevitably find its way onto the bookshelves of everyone who is interested in the history and culture of Cornwall. Stone crosses are amongst the most distinctive features of the Cornish landscape and this single-volume guide provides not only a discussion of the main types but also explains their purpose and historical background.



Two of the authors of *Ancient and High Crosses of Cornwall* will be very well known to CAS members: Andrew Langdon and Ann Preston-Jones. Their expertise, not only in the area of crosses and stone sculpture, but also in the general history and archaeology of Cornwall, makes them ideal guides for the reader. The third author, Elisabeth Okasha, Professor Emerita of the University of Cork, is an internationally renowned expert on early medieval inscriptions. Andrew's series of books on Cornish stone crosses is a very well known and much-used reference, while *Early Stone Sculpture* (volume XI of the British Academy's *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*) by Ann and Elisabeth was published in 2014 to great academic acclaim. The authors felt that there was a place for a single-volume, affordable book on the subject, incorporating the latest thinking. There can be no doubt that they have succeeded brilliantly. In a beautifully produced, handily sized volume (credit here to the University of Exeter Press), they give an historical overview, as well as explanations of inscriptions, types of crosses and their functions. If you have ever been puzzled how dates can be given, you will find the answer here. The glossary is especially welcome, while the chapter on the work carried out in the past by antiquarians shows how thinking on the subject has evolved. (By the way, you don't have to be called Langdon to study crosses but it certainly helps!) Not every Cornish cross is mentioned. To have done that would have required the readers to have strong arms and quite possibly a wheelbarrow to carry such a detailed volume. Instead, the authors have picked their top 100, nearly all of which are accessible to the public. Presumably the process of deciding which crosses were in, and which out, was fraught and it is hoped that the debates were calm and forgiving! The photographs deserve special mention. How often have you visited a cross but struggled to make out the features? It's so frustrating to know that inches from your face there is a carved figure or design, quite possibly the crowning achievement of the carver's career, but all you can see is lichen or stone crystals. The authors have thought of that and have used ingenious lighting to reveal all. For example, the details of the Biscovey cross-shaft at St Blazey are shown clearly – a revelation to those who have visited it in sub-optimal light.



The Three-Hole Cross, Egloshayle, one of the crosses that first sparked Andrew's curiosity as a school boy
Photo: Andrew Langdon

Publication is timely for those of us thirsting for medieval archaeology. On October 30th this year members of Devon Archaeological Society and CAS will be able to enjoy their biannual Joint Symposium which this time will be on the theme of *Church Archaeology from c AD 1000-1550 in South West Britain*.



**Whitecross near Wadebridge. Another cross that led to Andrew's interest in the subject.
Photo: Andrew Langdon**

As the authors demonstrate, crosses are not just works of art; they were meeting places and boundary markers, as well as sources of inspiration, revelation and reassurance. By learning more about them we take one more step into understanding our history.



**Boswarthen Cross, Madron
Photo: Andrew Langdon**

Ancient and High Crosses of Cornwall
Cornwall's Earliest, Tallest and Finest Medieval Stone Crosses

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

LESS IS MORE

In the March edition of *From Your Own Correspondents* Iain Rowe described his efforts to clear the vegetation engulfing Redgate Cross (HER 17260; Scheduled Monument 24253; St Cleer, SX 2277 6858). Despite his hard work the cross was still obscured by an incredible collection of metal signs.



A cornucopia of clutter masking the cross.

Photo: Iain Rowe



Now Redgate Cross is visible.

Photo: Iain Rowe

When he visited the site recently Iain was delighted to see that most of the signs had been removed and the base for the new bus shelter was ready. He extends his thanks to Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew Langdon for their persuasive efforts in getting this junction tidied up.



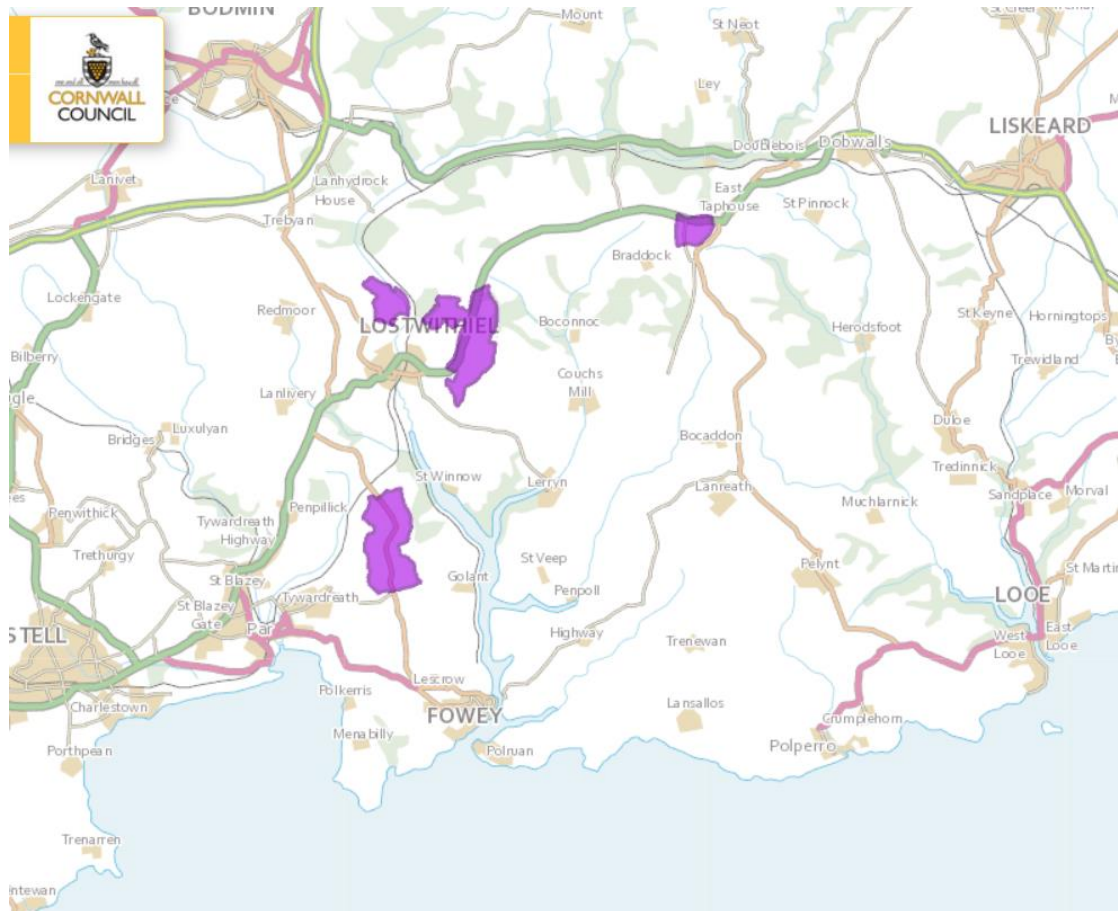
Photo: Iain Rowe

And all this just goes to show that less visual distraction means more appreciation of this wayside cross.

A CASUALTY OF WAR

Imagine a time when this country was ruled by a reckless leader, with most wealth in the hands of a powerful minority, Parliament sidelined, the authority of the law deliberately eroded, Scotland and Ireland in turmoil, and the population split down the middle on ideological grounds. Now I don't know what date sprang to your mind but I was thinking of 1642 – when else?

The bitter Civil War between the forces of King and Parliament which began in August 1642 was finally brought to an end when King Charles I was executed nearly 7 years later. Cornwall was not untouched by the conflict. The Lostwithiel Campaign of 1644 resulted in a humiliating defeat for Parliament and contributed to a sharpening up of strategy that was to lead it to eventual victory. Some of the area that was affected by this wide-ranging campaign is now a Registered Battlefield.



The Registered Battlefield is shown in purple

Source:

https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=3&xcoord=209391&ycoord=56461&wsName=CIOS_historic_environment&layerName=Registered%20battlefields

Very briefly, Royalist armies, led by the King, Prince Maurice, Ralph Hopton and Sir Richard Grenville, trapped Parliament's army in the 'Cornish mousetrap', an area bounded by Lostwithiel in the north, Fowey to the south and the Par and Fowey rivers to the west and east. Bad weather prevented a seaward evacuation and the fighting culminated in pouring rain at Castle Dore when the Parliamentarian leaders slipped away to safety leaving the infantry to surrender. Inexplicably, the Registered area does not include the east side of the former Par estuary between St Blazey Bridge and Tywardreath, which saw significant fighting, as proved by metal detectorist John Andrews and Natasha Ferguson, formerly of the Centre for Battlefield Archaeology at Glasgow University.

One site within the protected zone, near Boconnoc estate, is now a haven of peace: St Nectan's or St Nighton's Chapel (HER 29011; Listed Building (II*) 60628; SX 1283 5998; St Winnow parish).



According to Heritage Gateway:

The chapel is dedicated to St Nectan or Nighton ... Pounds says St Nectan's is a medieval chapelry of St Winnow, which had distinct limits before 1400 but which has not survived as an ecclesiastical entity ... According to Gover, the earliest reference is dated 1270 when it was known as 'Capellae Sancti Nictani' ... During the siege of Lostwithiel in 1644 the tower was battered down to its lowest stage ... The chapel has undergone considerable rebuilding and restoration yet contains a number of medieval features. In 1825 the building was extended with a cast iron arcade and a chancel was erected in 1864. This had become ruinous by 1947 and the building was closed in 1971. The C19 extension was then removed and the C15 south aisle retained and restored...



The stump of the tower is the result of the Civil War campaign



Carved stones from the tower dislodged by artillery have been placed by a side gate to the chapel yard.



The cross in the chapel yard is a Scheduled Monument.

On Wednesday 21st August 1644, the Royalist army moved towards Lostwithiel, taking Restormel castle on the way. The diary of Royalist officer Richard Symonds has this entry which gives an idea of the manoeuvrings in the vicinity of the chapel:

‘Towards night the body of the King’s foot gott into the closes on the hills of the left and right side of the playne that goes down to Listithiel, and in the night planted many pieces of our cannon. That hill on the left hand neere the chapel of St Neeton’s in the parish of St. Twynoe, was commanded by a commanded party of about 1000, led by Colonel Apleyard. The hill opposite was kept by Prince Maurice his army’ (quoted by Stephen Ede-Borrett in *Lostwithiel 1644: The campaign and the battles*, The Pike and Shot Society, 2004).

On a warm summer’s day it is hard to believe that such a peaceful spot was once on the front line of a conflict that split the nation; a silent witness and victim of death, misery and destruction.

ST WENEPPA’S CHURCHYARD

Dave Coole has just joined the team of CAS Area Reps. Recently he has been exploring some of the historic tombs in the churchyard of St Weneppa’s Church in Gwennap (HER 19330; Listed Building (I) 63210; SW 7388 4010; Gwennap parish). The church itself was much altered in Victorian times, is on a site of early medieval origin and has medieval features. When people visit churches the building often receives all the attention and the churchyard only gets a cursory glance. But that is a mistake because the tombstones and other churchyard features have stories to tell. Dave was keen to investigate some intriguing chest tombs in this churchyard.

6 CHEST TOMBS 3M WEST OF CHURCH OF SAINT WENAPPA (Grade II Listed Building 1140942)

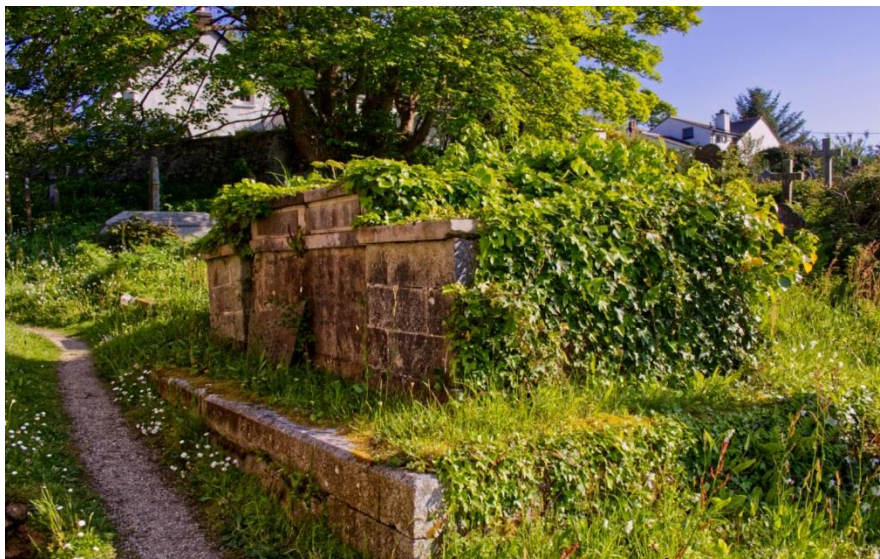


Photo: Dave Coole

Listing description: 4 linked chest tombs and 2 to north. Early C19. For Sampson family. Mostly granite ashlar. Group of 6 chest tombs set within granite border, originally with railings. All orientated west to east. 2 chests to north are very low with torus moulded lids. Those to south have 2 identical chests, north and south, of granite ashlar and plain lids flanking 2 later identical taller chests of stuccoed brick. Incised inscription at east end to: Mary, wife of Benjamin Sampson, aged 36, and Nicholas Sampson, died 1813, aged 11.

CHEST TOMB TO ALFORD FAMILY AT ABOUT 15M SOUTH OF CHURCH OF SAINT WENAPPA
(Grade II Listed Building 1136500)



Photo: Dave Coole

Listing description: Chest tomb to Alford family at - about 15m south of Church of Saint Wenappa GV II Chest tomb. Early C19. Granite ashlar sides, slate lid within granite border. Rectangular on plan orientated roughly west to east. Projecting lid has cavetto and bullnose border. Slate slab has incised lettering with inscription to: John Alford, died 1828, aged 72; Elizabeth wife of John Alford, died 1811, aged 72; Elizabeth Bawden and Richard Harvey Bawden, died 1879, aged 79.

GROUP OF 3 CHEST TOMBS AT ABOUT 45M NORTH OF WEST END OF CHURCH OF SAINT WENAPPA

(Grade II Listed Building 1136506)



Photo: Dave Coole

Listing description: Group of 3 chest tombs at about - 45m north of west end of Church of Saint Wenappa GV II 3 chest tombs. Late C18 and early C19. Granite ashlar sides and slate lids. Each chest is rectangular on plan and orientated west to east. Chest to south has granite border to lid with robust angled torus moulding and incised slate set within and inscription to Loveday Laynten, died 1795, aged 33 and Richard Harvey, died 1799, aged 38. Chest to north has side of 3 ashlar courses and plain incised slate lid to: Philippa, daughter of Michael and Jane Williams, who died in her infancy; Michael Williams, died 1821, aged 51, and Jane Williams, died 1813. Chest to east of this has sides of monoliths; granite border to lid with cavetto cornice, and incised slate within, inscribed to: William Simmons, died 1793, aged 47; Thomas Simmons, died 1840, aged 73, and others.

CHEST TOMB AT ABOUT 27M NORTH OF MIDDLE OF CHURCH OF SAINT WENAPPA

(Grade II Listed Building 1312769)



Photo: Dave Coole

Listing description: Chest tomb at about 27m north of - middle of Church of Saint Wenappa
 GV II Chest tomb. Early C19. Granite ashlar walls with freestone lid. Rectangular on plan, orientated west to east. Lid has cavetto and torus moulding to lid border and incised inscription to: Agnes, daughter of Collan and Agnes Bawden, died 1811, aged 4; Collan Bawden, died 1816, aged 48, and 2 others with indecipherable names but dates of 1807 and 1841.

When tombs become overgrown, or when the lettering fades, much social history can be lost. The Cornwall Online Parish Clerks website (<https://www.opc-cornwall.org/index.php>) is a treasure trove of information produced by dedicated local historians. The section devoted to Gwennap has little information about most names on these tombs, except for one: Collan Bawden. The Collan named on this chest tomb (you guessed, he wasn't the only

Collan in the family) lived in St Day and was was buried on 6th September 1816. (Collan Thomas Allen Bawden, our man's son, died of inflammation in Falmouth in 1841 aged 34 and was buried in Gwennap. Possibly his name is one of the two indecipherable names on the tomb.) Collan (1768-1816) seems to have married Agnes Tucker on 13th November 1800 in Gwennap (he was a bachelor, she a spinster and a minor, both of the parish). According to the transcription of the burial record little Agnes was buried on 12th January 1814 (not 1811 as the Listing suggests). She had lived in St Day for her fleetingly short life. And as for Agnes the mother (and wife of Collan), it seems she remarried: on 11th February 1817 the widow Agnes married Stephen Harpur, also of Gwennap parish.

You see, with a resource like the online parish clerk's website and the monuments in a churchyard (if legible and clear of vegetation), a past world opens up. It would be possible to go on (and on and on, I know!) but before we leave the Bawdens of Gwennap there is one other document on this site (transcribed superbly by Tony Bennett) which appears to be the will of Collan's father, also a Collan. It is a complex document but it tells us much of the locality and its economy. Collan senior was buried on 1st November 1769; his will was proved on 1st June 1770. It would take a sharp legal mind to fully comprehend this document and distil it into a clear, concise summary. Sadly, *From Your Own Correspondent* can't afford a lawyer, so this rough summary will have to do:

Land held at: 'the Woolcocks otherwise Dingles Tenement in St Day'; Tretheveris in the Parish of Kenwyn; a field 'in the Parish of Kenwyn aforesaid ... called Berry come bonnee Field'; a field in the 'Parish of Kenwyn called the Down Field' (possibly leased from Lord Falmouth); 'Leasehold Estates in or called Mynhear in the Parish of Gwenap aforesaid and Trefula in the Parish of Redruth.'

House: 'my New House in St Day aforesaid with the Bed completely furnished in which I now lye and also the other Bed furnished on the same room and the use of the Hanging Press in the same room and the other Goods therein and also two Iron Potts, three Pewter Dishes and six Pewer plates and such other Goods as shall be convenient and necessary for her use.' Attached was a 'little Meadow adjoining to the backside with the new Stable and half the Powder House with the use of the necessary House ... and also one half of the House now a (word deleted) shop in which Stephen Smith formerly lived and such part of the Town place and Garden.'

Economic interests: 'my two Stamping Mills scituate and being in the parish of Kenwyn aforesaid with the appurtenances and also all that my Stamping Mill in Carrarack in Gwennap aforesaid together with my Burning house in St Day Mannor which I have lately built together with one half of all such Tyn and Tyn leavings as shall be at any stamping mills at my decease (the same to be appraised by two indifferent persons if not returned together And also one Moiety or half part of all such Tyn Bounds and all the Tyn and Copper adventures shop and household goods which I shall dye possessed of And also one moiety or half part of all such Tyn Stuff Copper Oar and other Mettalls that shall or may be

at Ball or Stamps at my decease And also all such Corn Hay Corn Cattle and implements of Husbandry.'

The Collan Bawden memorialized on the chest tomb was clearly the son of a man engaged in farming and mining. Did he continue the family business along with his elder brother John? The 1841 census records a John Bawden (possibly a descendant) who was a farmer living in Fore Street, St Day. Was this Collan's 'new house in St Day'? And are the other chest tombs in the churchyard connected to people doing well from mining interests?

DON'T LOOK DOWN! ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE EDGE

Adrian Rodda reports the vertigo-defying effort to rescue the ruinous St Levan's Cell and Chapel (HER 28304; Scheduled Monument CO1057; SW 3811 2191; St Levan parish):

The excavation is under the direction of James Gossip from CAU and has been organised by Laura Ratcliffe - Warren of Penwith Landscape Partnership. The building is at the edge of the cliff above Chapel Cove. It has been overgrown and partly buried by tumbled rocks from above for many years and has been difficult to interpret. James's team have from 13th Sept to 1st October to clear the site and to record it before the cliff erodes away and carries it to the beach below. In the picture you can see the back wall of the cell at the west end, a dividing wall between the cell and chapel and at the lip of the cliff remains of the east wall of the chapel. They will have to rope up to dangle over the cliff to look for remains of the south wall which has already tumbled in places. The builders had used the natural outcrops where possible and built their wall between them.



Extreme archaeology

Photo: Adrian Rodda



Not for the faint hearted!

Photo: Adrian Rodda

The site itself is not accessible to the public but is easily viewed from the diverted coast path above it and from the steps going down to Chapel Cove. Drive to the Minack theatre and past its entrance to St Levan's Church. Park in the field (£3) and cross the road to follow the sign to the coast path. You will come to St Levan's Well, follow the path towards a new wooden bridge and you will get your first sight. If you come on a Monday or Friday Adrian Rodda will be there to explain the progress and tell a few legends of St Levan. While down there, drive on to St Just and visit the church to see the Selus stone [below], which may be a memorial to Seleven himself.

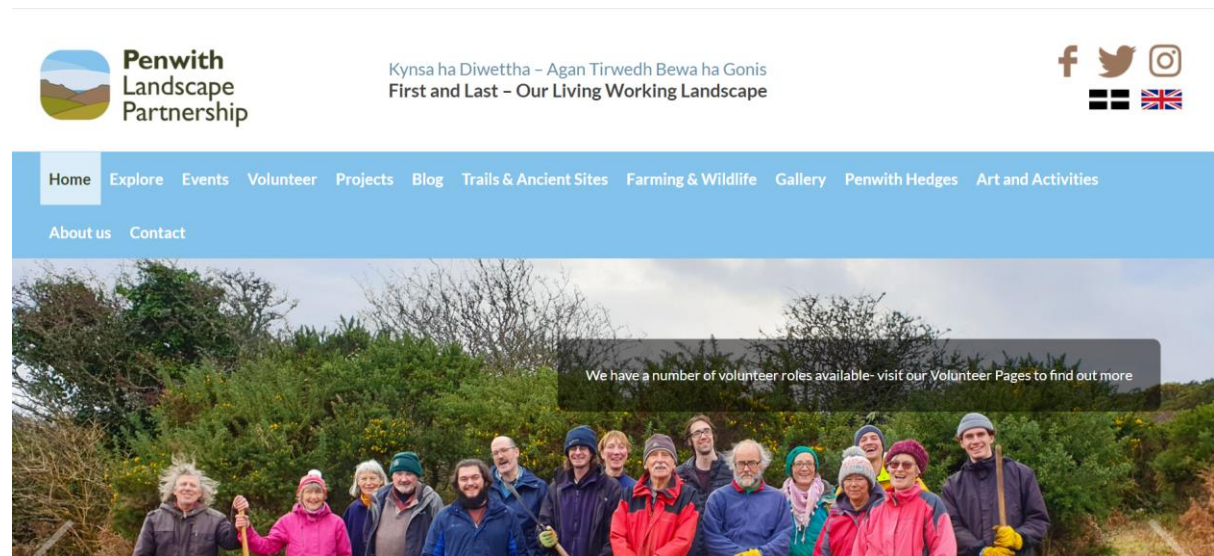


Photo: Adrian Rodda

Text and photos: Adrian Rodda

You can find out more about the exciting Penwith Landscape Project on its website at:

<https://www.penwithlandscape.com/>



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, 21st September 2021

