

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.

JUNE 2022

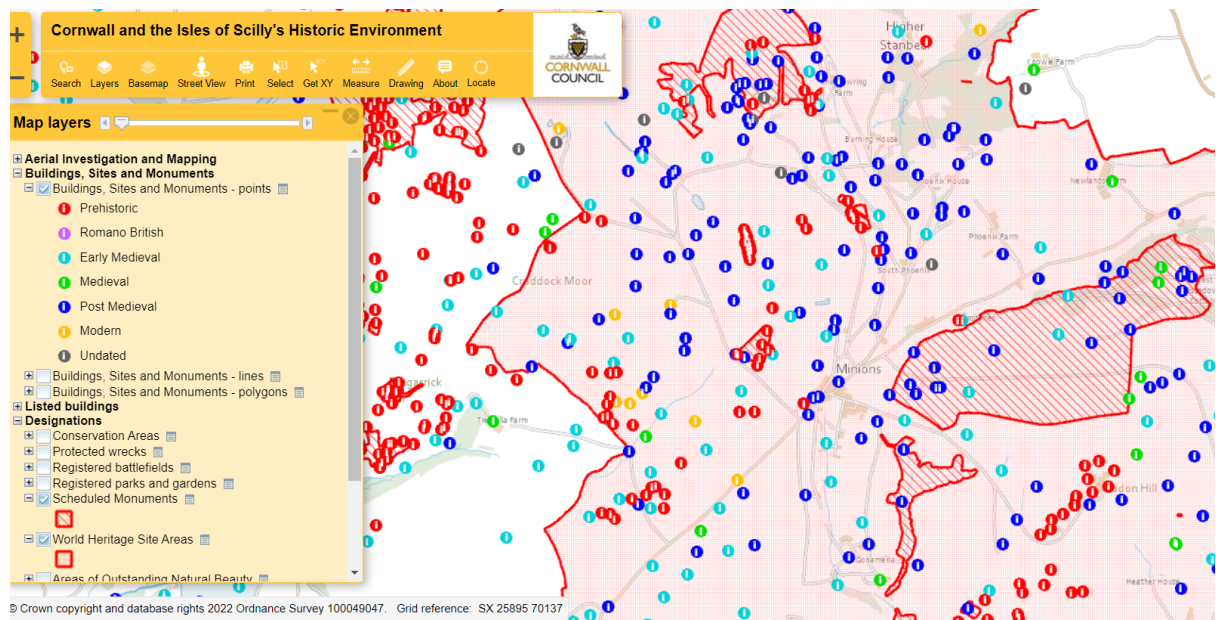
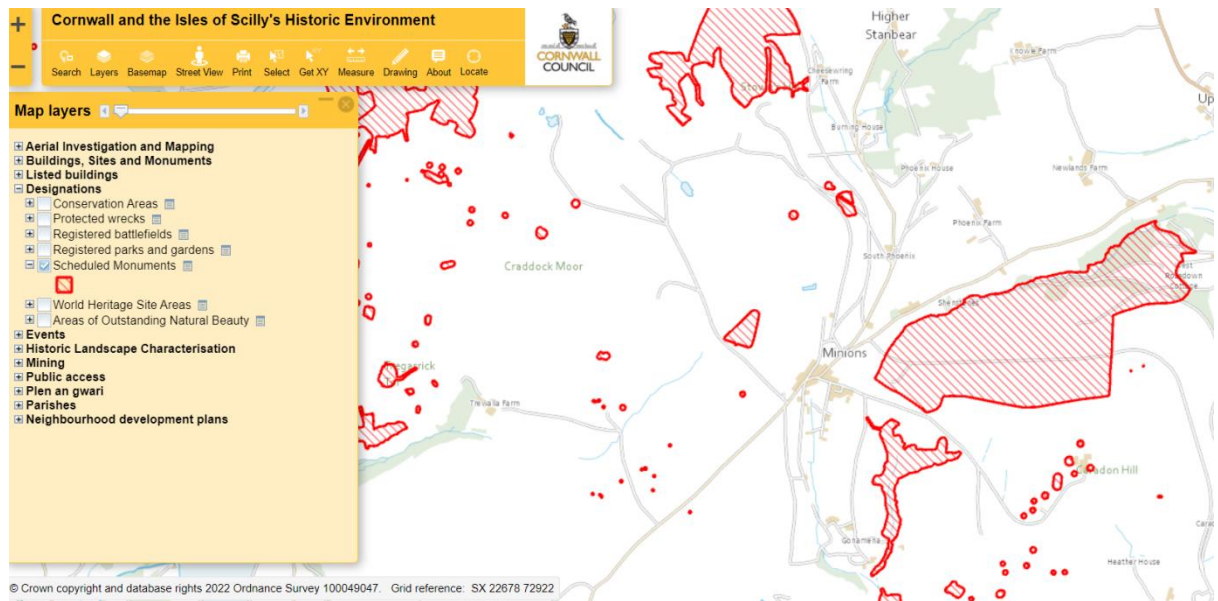
Issue 67

THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

- **DIRTY DEEDS NEAR MINIONS**
- **YEW OR NON-YEW?**
- **TREWORNAN REPAIRED**
- **QUAKER WROTES**

DIRTY DEEDS NEAR MINIONS

The Minions area is one of the most archaeologically significant in Cornwall, with abundant evidence of human activity from the Neolithic period right through to modern times. As the following maps show, large areas have been Scheduled, much is part of a World Heritage Site, while the Historic Environment Record almost groans with the weight of entries.



Little wonder that there are many people who regularly visit the area and who are on the alert for any nefarious activity. And, sad to say, that is just what has been observed lately. Many pieces of turf have been dug and loosely replaced. Initially, the attention of concerned

locals was caused by signs of digging between the western car park at Minions and the Hurlers. The first clue was a round piece of turf in the car park.



It didn't take long to find the associated hole nearby. Why the turf was removed and brought to the car park is a mystery. The next photo shows another hole that had been dug and the turf roughly replaced:



A further 10 or 11 holes were found in the area north-west of the car park, although no disturbance around the Pipers or Hurlers was found. It looked like a fairly systematic digging operation. A possible explanation is that the digging was carried about by rogue metal-detectorists.



Hole dug between the car park and the Hurlers

Even if the activity was outside the Scheduled area, it was inappropriate and possibly illegal. But it would be wrong and unfair to throw blame at all detectorists. The vast majority would be absolutely furious to see this sort of thing being done in a sensitive area like this. Not only are detectorists likely to obey the law and follow the code of practice (see <https://www.ncmd.co.uk/code-of-conduct/> for example), many are in contact with the Portable Antiquities Scheme's Finds Liaison Officer in Cornwall, Tasha Fullbrook. As a result, valuable knowledge about our past has been gleaned over the years and, through the PAS website (<https://finds.org.uk/>), is available for us all to see. But, as in many walks of life, a tiny number will flout laws and codes.

Further digging has been spotted near Long Tom cross (HER 1410; Scheduled Monument 15164; SX 2554 7055; St Cleer parish).



Hole near Long Tom with turf replaced

Fortunately, the Devon and Cornwall Police Force gives heritage crime a high priority and PC Julian Fry was very concerned by these reports. Consequently increased attention is being paid to this area, and other sites on Bodmin Moor, and notices like these have been erected.



So, if you see signs of digging, as shown in the previous photos, or suspect other heritage crime, this is the advice from the police:

Rural affairs

Devon & Cornwall Police
Rural Affairs

Working in partnership to protect rural communities

Heritage crime

What is it?
Heritage crime is any offence which harms the value of heritage assets and their settings. Heritage assets are sites which are considered to have value to the heritage of England, are important to our history and give a social and economic benefit to our communities.

What do you need to do?
Reduce heritage crime with simple crime prevention measures. Land owners, rural businesses and members of the public should be vigilant reporting any suspicious activity to the police noting vehicle details and descriptions.

How can you prevent this?

- Identify the heritage assets in your area, be vigilant and aware of the threat.
- Owners and managers of heritage assets should assess risk using the Historic England heritage asset risk assessment tool www.historicengland.org.uk.
- Raise awareness and extend sense of community ownership.
- Carry out appropriate prevention with good management and measures such as restricting access, tactical planting, CCTV and lighting.
- Heritage asset owners and managers should liaise with the Devon & Cornwall Police Rural Affairs Team.
- Anyone able to offer information relating to heritage crime is asked to email 101@dc.police.uk, call 101 or Call crimestoppers anonymously 0800 555 111
- Join Devon & Cornwall Alert, Watch schemes and local social media groups so that you can find out what is happening in your area.

YEW OR NON-YEW?



On a balmy evening in June a gathering was held at the centre of Cornwall. Lanivet churchyard has long been regarded as the county's geographical centre; although the claim of one local that it is also the centre of the world awaits verification.

The subject of the meeting was the magnificent medieval cross to the west of the parish church of St Nivet. Cornwall Archaeological Unit's successful Scheduled Monument Management programme, led by Pete Dudley, and in partnership with Historic England, has

carried out work recently on various important sites in Mid - Cornwall, including the cross. (HER 105914; Scheduled Monument 28444; SX 0391 6420; Lanivet parish). It has this description in the Historic Environment Record:

‘...elaborately ornamented, possibly as late as 13th century...situated close to the west of the church. It is about 3.0m high, 0.5m wide at the head, 0.45m wide at the base, thickness 0.2m to 0.3m. It is an exceptionally tall and well carved cross; the shaft has scrollwork on all faces and the cross is pierced and well made but distinctly off square; it was cemented badly to the shaft, which spoils the appearance somewhat ...The monument was included in the Schedule on 11/11/1954 and the scheduling updated on 18/1/1996.’

Unfortunately, the cross is being harmed by the adjacent yew tree, so is included in the Heritage at Risk Register for 2021:

SITE NAME:	Churchyard cross in Lanivet churchyard, 5 metres west of the church, Lanivet		
DESIGNATION:	Scheduled Monument, 2 LBs	LIST ENTRY NUMBER:	1014229
CONDITION:	Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems	TREND:	Declining
PRINCIPAL VULNERABILITY:	Scrub/tree growth	NEW ENTRY?:	Yes
OWNER TYPE:	Religious organisation	CONTACT:	Ann Preston-Jones 07917 642388

Experts Andrew Langdon and David Atwell were asked to produce a report and as part of the process they presented their findings at this open event and sought people’s views about what to do.

Andrew and David gave excellent talks to explain the situation and led a walk around the churchyard, which has another wonderful cross as well as other very interesting features. One option for the cross west of the church would be to chop down the tree, not something that would be done lightly, or without potential controversy, especially since churchyard yews can themselves be ancient in origin. However, there are yews and yews. Ingenious detective work by the pair involved looking at old photographs, which demonstrated that this particular yew only appeared around the 1920s, making it old but far from ancient. Not only that, it is an Irish yew. The Irish yew is a new kid on the block, relatively speaking. It was discovered in County Fermanagh in 1780 and soon became popular as an ornamental specimen, especially in churchyards. The Woodland Trust website gives tips on how to distinguish it from the Common yew (*Taxus baccata*):

[https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/irish-yew/#:~:text=Irish%20yew%20is%20an%20evergreen,common%20yew%20\(Taxus%20baccata\).](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/irish-yew/#:~:text=Irish%20yew%20is%20an%20evergreen,common%20yew%20(Taxus%20baccata).)

The consensus of those present was that the tree should at least be trimmed or possibly be removed. Should either of these options be chosen it will be necessary to obtain permission in the form of a Faculty from the Diocese of Truro: ‘A faculty is required for all repairs,

maintenance and changes to a church or its contents...' (<https://trurodiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Faculty-Applications-info.pdf>)

TREWORNAN REPAIRED

*Like other local authorities, Cornwall Council gets battered by storms of criticism, often unfair and ill-founded. It is, after all, **our** council, run by members **we** can elect, carrying out services for **us**. It is not any council's fault to be starved of funds by Westminster politicians for ideological reasons. So here's a piece of good news, an example of speedy, skilled action to solve a problem. Last month, Andrew Langdon described the damage to done to Trewornan Bridge near Wadebridge. Here he describes the repairs that have been carried out. Well done, Cornwall Council and Cormac!*

Trewornan Bridge repaired

Following the closure of Trewornan Bridge on Sunday 15th May 2022, the minor roads around the immediate area became grid locked, as local residents used minor roads through Lower, Middle and Chapel Amble to arrive at their destination. Although a one-way system through these country lanes was suggested, it was impossible to implement as many tourists and delivery vans were using satellite navigation, and being able to reverse was the most important requirement. The official diversion route was via Delabole, Camelford and down the Allen valley A39 to Wadebridge, putting an extra 10 or 12 miles on to each journey.

Following a Structural Survey of the damaged bridge on Monday 16th May, and an inspection by Historic England the following day, Cornwall Council realised that the bridge needed to be repaired quickly as with the tourist season beginning and the Platinum Jubilee celebrations imminent, the traffic hold-ups were only going to become rapidly worse.

By the end of the first week, scaffold had been erected across the marsh, spanning the river, and the first job was to retrieve all the stonework which was lying in the Amble River and on the marsh. Once this was completed, work started on repairing the damage using existing and new stone.



Scaffolding erected on the upstream side of Trewornan Bridge. Photo: Andrew Langdon

Throughout the second week a team of stonemasons carefully rebuilt the spandrel walls and parapets replicating the existing style and using lime mortar. The team did an excellent job, enabling the bridge to be reopened to traffic on Friday 27th May 2022. Some commentators suggested that these stonemasons should be immediately deployed to complete repairs at Helland Bridge.



Low parapet walls rebuilt in the same style. Photo: Andrew Langdon



Parapet wall and spandrel renewed from the voussoir upwards. Photo: Andrew Langdon



Pedestrian refuge rebuilt above the cutwater. Photo: Andrew Langdon.

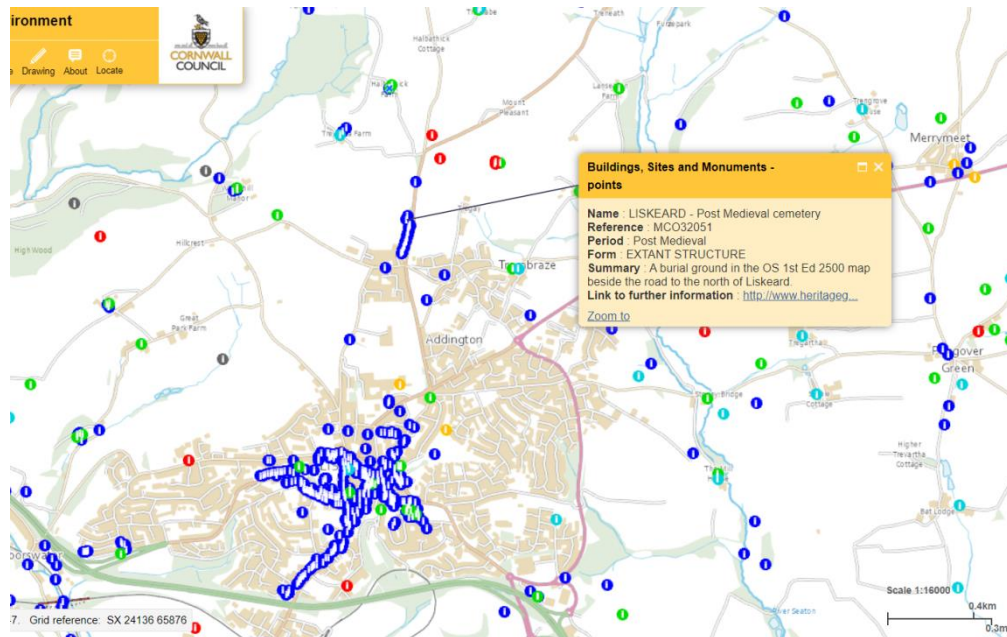


Repairs completed, bridge reopened. Photo: Andrew Langdon.

Report and photos: Andrew Langdon

QUAKER WROTES

Brian Oldham (CAS Area Rep and President of Liskeard and District Old Cornwall Society) is asking for information about historic graffiti found on a wall of a Quaker cemetery (HER 137832; SX 2538 6577; Liskeard parish) in Liskeard.



Source: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/strategic-historic-environment-service/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-historic-environment-record/>

Brian explains: 'They were uncovered by workmen removing ivy from the wall to the right of the entrance to the Quaker cemetery at Halbathick, on the St Cleer Road, Liskeard, a few weeks ago, ready for a stability report. We have a transcript of the headstones, but none of the letters match the names on the headstones. The only possibility is that the 'SS' could be for Sweet & Son who carved two of the headstones in 1895, the date on the scratched on the wall.'



Three lines of carving to the right of the entry gate.

Photo: Brian Oldham



Top line

Photo: Brian Oldham



Middle line

Photo: Brian Oldham



Bottom line

Photo: Brian Oldham

If anyone can help to identify 'SS' or the identities of any of these initials, Brian would love to hear from you at: contactbrian@btinternet.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* 58, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk.

Roger Smith, 12th July 2022

