

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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TREZANCE HOLY WELL

Karen Dickin, Area Rep for Cardinham, was contacted during lockdown by a member of the public who thought that Trezance Holy Well (HER 1536; Scheduled Monument 31826; SX 1248 6940; Cardinham parish) might benefit from some vegetation clearance. Early in May an opportunity arose to do this and so, with the blessing of the landowner and Historic England, a small work party, including Andrew Langdon, set to work.



Entrance to the holy well before clearance

Photo: Andrew Langdon



After clearance

Photo: Andrew Langdon



Karen surveying the good work

Photo: Andrew Langdon

Although the well is on private ground, the owner allows access and has even placed a very helpful sign near the road. It is best reached on foot because there is no parking available on the narrow road. Not surprisingly, the approach to the well is wet and the ground very uneven.

This is a very interesting medieval monument which cries out for more research. The well is built into a bank on which there was once a chapel. In the 19th century Blight's illustration and plan showed the chapel *'was built into the hillside on the SE side of the enclosure and separated from the well to the east by a 1.2m thick wall. It was said to measure 4.2m by 2.6m, the ends and sides were faced with masonry and the arch of the doorway on the south was well preserved. The roof had fallen in.'*

(https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO10359&resourceID=1020.) Since then the stones of the chapel have been removed.



The well chamber is beautifully constructed.

Photo: Andrew Langdon

WONDROUS CROSS SURVEYED

Brian Oldham (President of Liskeard Old Cornwall Society and CAS Area Rep) reports on a successful search for Newton Cross near St Neot:

The Newton Cross, St. Neot

In August 1937 this badly mutilated Cornish Cross was rescued from its use as a gatepost at Higher Newton Farm on the outskirts of St. Neot village and set on top of a Cornish hedge.



By 1994 the cross had slipped down the hedge and was leaning perilously close to the lane. Farmer Les Higgins, who is on the far left of the July 1994 photo with his grandchildren, was visited by Liskeard Old Cornwall Society President at the time Yvonne Gilbert, who can be seen in the September 1994 photo, and Liskeard OCS member Brian Bawden, on the far right of the July 1994 photo.



Many readers will recognise Andrew Langdon in this photo –second from the right

Between them an agreement was reached to remove the Cross from its precarious position 200 yards east of Higher Newton Farm to a much safer position on a grass bank close to the farm entrance. The work took place in July 1994 and a re-dedication service was held in the September, officiated by Miss Gilbert and the Rev. T. Olivey, Vicar of St. Anietus Church, St. Neot.

The Cornish Times report on the ceremony bore the headline "Wondrous Cross finds the perfect resting place", a reference to "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" being sung on these occasions. After the ceremony Farmer and Mrs Higgins invited the large number of onlookers, mainly Liskeard OCS members, into their farmhouse for a splendid afternoon tea.



G LOCATION . . . Members of the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society recently moved an cross from an overgrown site to a new position at Higher Newton Farm, the home of Mrs Higgins. Pictured at the re-dedication ceremony are Liskeard OCS president Miss Gilbert and the Reverend T Olivey, vicar of St Neot Church.

Photo: John Rapson, Liskeard

On a recent walk along the lanes of St. Neot, the current President of Liskeard OCS, Brian Oldham, had trouble locating the Newton Cross, as his June 2021 photo shows. On a return visit a few days later Brian met Les Higgins, still in residence in the farm but leaving most of the heavy work to his son, who gave the okay to the "Wondrous Cross" having a much needed clean up.



Hidden cross

Photo: Brian Oldham



The cross revealed

Photo: Brian Oldham



Photo: Brian Oldham

More information on Cornish Crosses, including the Newton Cross, can be found in “Stone Crosses in East Cornwall” by Andrew Langdon, 2nd from the right in the July 1994 photo. His books are available from the OCS Federation’s online bookshop at kernowgoth.org.

Report and photos from Brian Oldham

CASTLE DORE SURVEY

Cornwall AONB's exciting Monumental Improvements project (<https://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/monumental-improvement>) is already making a huge difference to some of the county's most important archaeological sites, with much more to follow. Late in April, James Gossip (Cornwall Archaeological Unit and a CAS Area Rep) led a training session for volunteers and Truro College History & Archaeology students at Castle Dore Iron Age hillfort (HER 26690; Scheduled Monument CO122; mainly St Sampson parish but with a bit in Tywardreath, SX 1034 5482). Jacob Parry, who is the Cornwall AONB Activities Officer, organised the day brilliantly, even making sure that everyone was fed with pasties.



Eager volunteers at Castle Dore

Photo: Jacob Parry

James provided expert tuition in a variety of surveying techniques (some of which were rather challenging in the strong wind that swept across the site) and will use the results to update information about this important, and sometimes misinterpreted monument. Once the information is complete, plans can be made about the most appropriate ways to manage it in the future.

Grazing has had the positive effect of preventing the ramparts and ditches from being choked with gorse and bracken. On the other hand, cattle have caused significant erosion in places. Even the Old Cornwall Society plaque (itself a historic artefact now) is in danger of being undermined:



The Old Cornwall Society plaque is looking precarious.

Raleigh Radford's interpretation of Castle Dore as the Early Medieval stronghold of King Mark has been rejected by archaeologists. The evidence of more recent surveys shows this site to have been an Iron Age hillfort. It is situated strategically along a ridgeway lying between the Fowey and Par estuaries (the latter now silted up) and retains very impressive ramparts and ditches.



A section of rampart and ditch that has been less damaged by animals.



James will use the updated survey to identify future conservation measures.



View west towards Hensbarrow and the china clay area. Note the eroded bank in the foreground.

Although parking is very limited, access to the site is fairly easy and it is well worth visiting, not only to see the earthworks but also for the extensive views. It also sits within a Registered Battlefield and was the scene of the final stage of the 1644 Lostwithiel Civil War campaign in which the Parliamentary army suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Royalists, commanded in person by King Charles I. It is hard to say what, if any, modifications were made to the banks during the fighting but this is possibly something that will become evident from the new survey.



PAS-TIMES FOR AREA REPS

Early in May, Area Reps had an online training session organised by our Covenor, Iain Rowe. Francis Shepherd (Historic Environment Record Officer) gave an update on the HER and how it was being used in all sorts of interesting ways, including the use of historic maps to identify previous tree cover in Cornwall – very useful for the Forest for Cornwall initiative (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/countryside/forest-for-cornwall-programme/about-the-forest-for-cornwall/>). Some of the recent ingenious and highly useful additions to the historic mapping website (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-historic-environment-record/>) were outlined in last month's FYOC (see *HERoic Achievement!*).

Tasha Fullbrook, who is Cornwall's new Finds Liaison Officer (FLO), gave an excellent presentation about the Portable Antiquities Scheme which, since its creation in 1997, has recorded over 1.5million finds and over 17,000 Treasure finds, thus greatly expanding archaeological knowledge and understanding in England and Wales.

Tasha explained that she and her fellow FLOs: *'record all human-made archaeological objects over 300 years old regardless of what material they are made from. This includes metalwork, pottery and worked flints and stones. We may be selective in recording finds of later date and best to speak with your local FLO if you're unsure whether your find can be recorded'*.

In cases of Treasure, which must be reported, officers have to undertake a legal process in combination with coroners. Treasure is defined as:

- *Any object over 300 years old and made from more than 10% gold or silver by weight*
- *Two or more gold or silver coins found together (hoards)*
- *Ten or more copper alloy (bronze) coins found together (hoards)*
- *Groups of prehistoric base metal objects (hoards)*
- *Any prehistoric objects (Bronze Age or Iron Age) with any amount of gold or silver*
- *Anything that would have qualified as Treasure Trove*
- *Any items found in association with objects which are Treasure.*

The database on the PAS website (<https://finds.org.uk/>) is breathtaking in its extent and detail. It is well worth setting aside time to explore the site but two features in particular can be mentioned here. Firstly, if you would like to identify objects, the Finds Recording Guides are excellent: <https://finds.org.uk/counties/findsrecordingguides/>. (Of course, if the answer is beyond your grasp, the obvious move is to contact Tasha – details below.) It is possible to search by object by going to <https://finds.org.uk/help/database/topic/id/15>.

You may not have found something but would like to know what has been found in your locality. Clearly, the exact locations of finds are not provided but you can undertake advanced searches, as Tasha explains:

You can also use the advance search by clicking 'Searching our database' on the left hand side tab. This will bring up the option to do more advance searches such as postcode, by map and numismatic information. If you click 'Advanced Search', this will bring up the option to search by different fields that we enter onto a record.

To search by Parish, scroll down to Spatial Details, enter the County, European region, and District (Cornwall should automatically come up when entered in County). Putting in this information will then bring up a list of Parishes and you can select which one you wish to search by. Hitting 'Filter' at the bottom should bring up a list of artefacts found in that Parish.

You can search by Postcode by selecting 'Postcode search', or an area on a map, by clicking 'Search by map'.

The screenshot shows the Cornwall Portable Antiquities Scheme website. The header includes a navigation menu with links: Home, Contacts, Get Involved, Database, Treasure, Guides, News & Events, Publications, Research, Counties, and Forum. The 'Counties' link is highlighted. On the left, there's a sidebar with the 'Portable Antiquities Scheme' logo and a list of links: County Pages, Home (selected), County Blog, Artefacts & Coins, Museums & Groups, and Team. The main content area is titled 'Cornwall Home' and contains a paragraph about the county's archaeological significance, followed by a bulleted list of sites: Neolithic stone circles and burials (Merry Maidens, Stripped Stones, Trevelth and Zennor Quoits), Bronze Age barrows (Ballowall Barrow, Boscawen-Un), Iron Age hill fort (Chun Castle), Iron Age villages (Chysauster, Carn Euny), early medieval stone cross (King Doniert's Stone), medieval castles (Restormel, Pendennis, Tintagel), Elizabethan manor (Trevithick), and tin mines (UNESCO World Heritage Site). To the right of the text is a map of the United Kingdom with Cornwall highlighted in red. Below the map is the text 'County of Cornwall. Attribution: By Nilfanion, CC BY-SA or GFDL, via Wikimedia Commons'. On the far right, there's a 'Search Cornwall County Pages' section with a search bar and a 'Welcome!' message. Below that is a 'Recent Posts about Cornwall' section with a link to 'Welcome to the Cornwall blog! 28th January 2016'. At the bottom, there's a 'Latest Posts from Cornwall' section with a link to 'Welcome to the Cornwall blog!' dated 28th January 2016 by Thomas Flynn, with a small image of a stone object.

If you need to contact Tasha, or wish to learn more about what is being turned up in the county, these are her contact details:

Email: finds@museumofcornishlife.co.uk

Twitter: @CornwallFinds

Facebook: Cornwall Portable Antiquities Scheme

She is based at the Museum of Cornish Life in Helston (<https://museumofcornishlife.co.uk/>) and will be running her first Finds Day there on Friday 9th July, between 10am – 3pm. Appointments can be booked online at: <https://calendly.com/flocornwall/finders-day>. If you would like to take some finds to show her, she asks that, unless they are Treasure, no more than 5 objects per person should be brought. This will allow her to meet as many people as possible. You will need to email her at least a day in advance with details so she can prepare Finds Receipts. Her plan is to move around the county and to hold finds days on the first Saturday in each month. In time, she would like to offer mid-week finds days too. Keep an eye on the links above to learn about these developments.

STONE-STILE SURVEY NEARS ITS FIRST CENTURY

Ian Thompson, of the Milestone Society (<https://www.milestonesociety.co.uk/>), is pleased with the rapid progress being made in the new Cornish Stone-Stiles Survey that he launched very recently. Here is his report:

The survey of Cornwall's legacy of stone stiles has got off to a good start with reports of the first ninety-seven stiles logged and filed. Many thanks to all those who have contributed. Keep up the good work!

At this stage, no attempt has been made to analyse the results, but a preliminary look through does not show any obvious pattern of different designs of stile for different parts of Cornwall.

It seems that the coffin stile, like a cattle grid but made of granite bars, is special to Cornwall, but that there are lots of other ways of allowing people to climb over a Cornish hedge.

As the recorder of the survey results, Ian Thompson would ask that surveyors try to obtain a photograph of each side of a stile and a longer shot to put the stile in context.

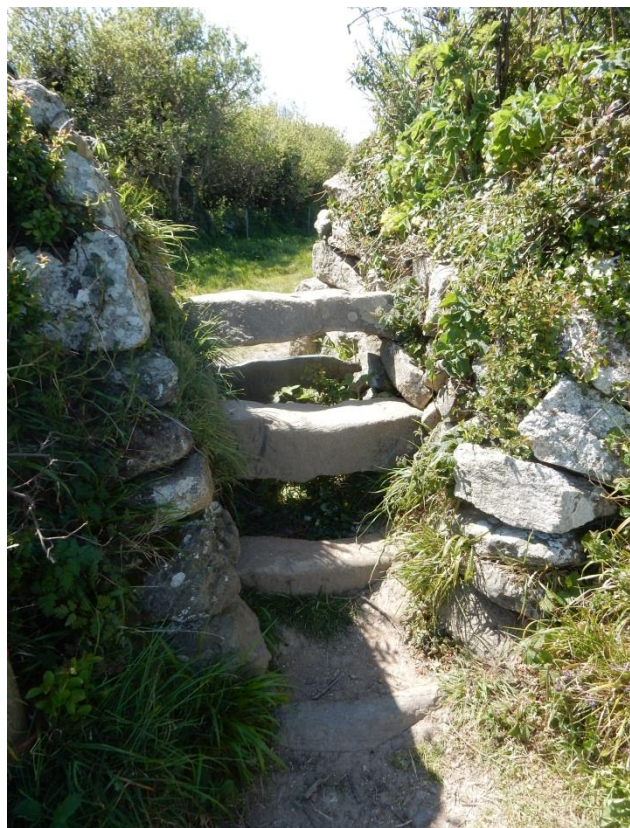
It is important to record the location of the stile, preferably with a grid reference. As reported in last month's CAS, the brilliant Cornwall Council on line map can help with this. Go to 'map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap', enter a place name, then select 'rights of way'

from the menu and click on 'rights of way' to have all the footpaths come up on the map. Clicking on a footpath gives its number, which is very helpful.

The ten-figure grid reference for the arrow 'pointer' is given at the bottom left of the screen, so if you hover the arrow over the location of your stile, you have its grid reference! Do describe the stile. It is not always easy to see from the photos, for example how many steps there are on each side, or how wide the steps are.

How old is a stile? No-one has really got to grips with this, yet. The stile cannot be older than the hedge it crosses, so that could be a starting point. Sometimes the stile had a particular use, for workers walking to a quarry or mine, or for access to a particular farm. This may help with a date for the stile.

The plan is to put the results on the HER and onto that wonderful Cornwall Council map, but that will take some time. Right now, the task is to survey the stiles near you. Please don't worry about duplicating someone else's results. It has not happened yet, but two results for the same stile could give extra data. No two surveyors use quite the same approach.



SW7757 Cubert SW77934 57491 E side

Photo: Linda Miners



SW7757 Cubert SW77934 57491 W side

Photo: Linda Miners

Report by Ian Thompson. Photos supplied by Linda Miners

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, 15th June 2021

