

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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TRAUMA AT TREWORNAN

Andrew Langdon tells the story of yet another local bridge that has suffered severe damage as a result of a vehicle hitting it.

Trewornan Bridge – Another bridge closure

Following the significant damage again to the medieval bridge at Helland in December 2021, which still remains closed to traffic, it is with great concern that I report on the severe damage to Trewornan Bridge [HER 26212; Scheduled Monument CO375; Listed Building (II) 67667; SW 9874 7428; St Minver Highlands parish] following an accident early in the morning of Sunday 15th May 2022. This incident at Trewornan puts even more pressure on Cornwall Council's bridge engineers who are fighting a continuous battle to protect our ancient bridges. As one bridge is repaired another is damaged, through careless driving, or over-large vehicles attempting to cross.



Downstream view of Trewornan Bridge in 2015

Photo: Andrew Langdon

The four-arched bridge at Trewornan carries traffic across the Amble River and salt marshes of the broad valley on the B3314 road from Wadebridge towards St Minver at NGR SW 9874 7428. The bridge also links the parishes of Egloshayle on the south-east bank with St Minver on the north-west; it takes its name from the Domesday Manor of Trewornan, now an 18th century country house on the St Minver side of the river.

The multi-span bridge was built during the late 18th century and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 1004484 as well as being Listed Grade II No. 1143055. The Cornwall Historic Environment Record (HER) number is No. 26212.

Even though it is only 230 years old, Trewornan Bridge was built in medieval style. According to Thomas (1999, 1) 'this design coupled with its location has ensured that the bridge has become a significant landmark....'. Henderson (1928, 119) noted that Trewornan Bridge 'was perhaps the only bridge built in Cornwall after the Reformation that is worth going to see'.

Our history books credit one Rev William Sandys, vicar of St Minver, with building the bridge, as the Rev John Lovibond was credited with building the medieval bridge at Wade-Bridge, although of course these gentlemen were the enablers and organisers of the bridge projects and not the actual stone masons who physically constructed them.



Upstream view of Trewornan Bridge showing large section of parapet missing

Photo: Adrian Langdon

Up until the late eighteenth century the road from Wadebridge passing Burniere (another Domesday Manor) in Egloshayle parish stopped at Lane End at the Amble River and those who wished to venture across the creek to St Minver parish and beyond forded it, either on foot or on horse-back. However with its salt marshes the broad valley crossing was a dangerous one, particularly when the tide was coming in or going out. Several people lost their lives making the crossing.

During the later 1780s a group of gentlemen from St Minver and district became concerned about the loss of life while fording the Amble creek and proposed that a bridge should be built. They also realised the advantages a bridge would make for those with land and properties in either side, saving them time when travelling to Wadebridge or crossing the river Camel to travel west.

The Reverend Sandys arranged a voluntary subscription towards a fund for building a bridge and formed a Trust to arrange and manage the building project. In February 1790, the Trustees set out Articles of Agreement with Edmund Moon, a stone mason from Calstock, and his son Richard to build a stone bridge across the Amble River for the sum of £392 (KK. X337/1). The contract stated that construction was to take place between February and November 1790. Although the original plan (KK X337/3) was to build a three arch bridge with long causeways, there must have been some amendment needed to the plan as the bridge was eventually constructed with four arches and finished in 1791.

The four slightly-pointed arched bridge is built of rubble stone and consists of five piers with cutwaters on either side and pedestrian refuges above. The voussoirs of the arches are built of dressed slate stone and have a chamfered string course following the line of each voussoir on both the upstream and downstream sides. The piers also have horizontal string courses at the impost levels on either side, from which the arches spring.



Wall of pedestrian refuge hanging over the edge of the bridge

Photo: Adrian Langdon



Damage to the spandrel wall as far as the voussoir

Photo: Adrian Langdon

The parapet and refuge walls are also of rubble stone, with the top of the walls finished with pitched stone. Most of the low parapet walls have been replaced over the years due to previous vehicle damage.

The bridge is approximately 51 metres (167½ feet) long and 3.46M (11ft 4ins) wide. The parapet walls are 0.54 metres (1ft 9ins) high and 0.38 metres (1ft 3ins) wide.

Local people have suggested that the vehicle which damaged the bridge was a road sweeper, although this has not been confirmed. The vehicle appears to have been travelling from the Wadebridge end of the bridge and came in contact with the upstream parapet wall above the first arch, between the first and second pier. Here the parapet wall has been scraped throughout its length, some 6.1M (20ft), leaving a crack between the wall and the deck of the road, while the upper part of the wall, which is finished off with pitched stone, also has fine cracks in it.

The vehicle then hit the second refuge wall, leaving it hanging over the edge of the bridge and completely destroyed the parapet wall above the second arch, between the second and third pier including the third refuge, all the stonework being pushed over and down into the Amble river, a length of approximately 11M (36ft). The parapet wall over the second arch has also been damaged below the level of the parapet wall, right down the voussoir and taking out part of the spandrel wall.

The bridge was inspected and deemed to be structurally unsafe for vehicles and was closed on Sunday 15th May until further notice.



Demolished pedestrian refuge and parapet wall. Photo: Adrian Langdon

The bridge which carries the B3314 road to St Minver and around to Port Isaac, St Endellion and Delabole is also the main tourist route to the resorts of Rock, Damyer Bay, Trebetherick and Polzeath and this road closure is causing a great deal of inconvenience for both local people and tourists who use this route daily.

The main official diversion route is via Delabole and Camelford and down the A39 through the Allen valley, however much of the local traffic has been taking the country lanes through Chapel Amble and over the Amble river at the bridge at Penpont, causing the area to be grid-locked at times.



Trewornan Bridge closed. Photo: Adrian Langdon

References:

Henderson, C. G. & Coates, H. (1972) *Old Cornish Bridges and Streams*, D Bradford Barton Ltd Truro, 1st edition 1928.

Thomas, N. (1999) *Trewornan Bridge Cornwall: Archaeological and Historical Assessment*, Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Truro.

Kresen Kernow X337/1 Articles of Agreement for building Trewornan Bridge.

Kresen Kernow X337/3 Plan for a three-arched bridge at Trewornan.

Text and photos: Andrew Langdon

Andrew is not just an expert on crosses, his book, *WADE-BRIDGE: Notes on the history of the fifteenth century bridge* (Federation of Old Cornwall societies, 2012) won the Holyer an Gof 2013 trophy. It is on offer at: <https://kernowgoth.org/product/wade-bridge-by-andrew-g-langdon/>.

TROUBLE AT TRETHEVY

Adrian Rodda recounts a recent visit to East Cornwall where he found evidence of people not showing the respect towards historic monuments that they should.

Trouble at Trethevy Quoit



Photo Adrian Rodda 2010.



Photo Adrian Rodda, 2010. Note the height of the soil around the support stones.

On 10th May I took an artist friend up to gain some inspiration from the dramatic prehistoric monuments in the Minions area. After King Doniert's Stone we sought out Trethevy Quoit, the biggest and most impressive dolmen in the Duchy [HER 17337; Scheduled Monument 15003; SX 2593 6881; St Cleer parish]. All was not well. Someone had been digging the floor of the chamber and widened access to it through the portal stone's "doorway" by digging away the soil on the support side and exposing more of the base of the support.

You can see from this photograph how much lower the floor of the chamber is than the remnant of the mound outside it. More worrying is the exposure of more of the once buried support, which is traced in the colours. An area of green algae sits above a soiled area, presumably recently covered in earth.

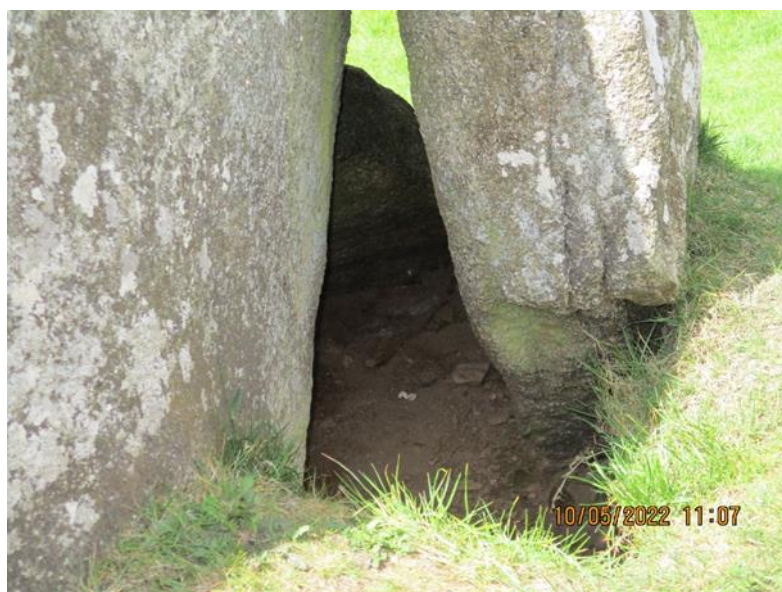


Photo Adrian Rodda, 2022.

A regular dog walker told us that it may have been done by local “kids” who play there often. She had frequently cleared away stones from this area which the “kids” had tried to lob through the hole in the capstone. This may or may not be inspired by the custom of throwing stones onto the statue of Mary Magdalene on the outside of Launceston Church. At least they did in Charles Causley’s Day and he recalls that the reward for getting a stone to lodge on the statue was a suit of new clothes before the year was out. I wonder what superstition these “kids” had dreamed up about the hole in the capstone.



Photo Adrian Rodda

That evening I alerted EH, CHT, HER, Andy Jones of CAU, Uncle Tom Copley and all. All replied the next day. Apparently EH and CHT were sending a work party to address erosion at the monument and at the Hurlers. Both activities required Historic England consent, which had been obtained for 31st May and 1st June.

A clash of attitudes at Stowes Pound.

Then on to the Hurlers and a slow climb up to Stowe’s Pound [HER 1401; Scheduled Monument 15071; SX 2578 7247; Linkinhorne parish] via the Cheesewring. The tower of stones builders had been active again and we caught a couple who were raising two in the accessible part of the wall near to the Cheesewring. I explained that it was a scheduled monument and protected and nothing should be interfered with. They were resentful, being quite proud of the balancing act with several stones.

My artist friend, who was too tactful to join in the discussion, did not agree with my explanation that it was a “frozen landscape” which should be kept as close to its original appearance as possible and not looted or altered. She argued that it was a “living landscape” and as such was fair game to change and use as part as an artistic statement. She would not move a bird’s nest, or fill in a badger set, why could she not feel the same respect for a monument? She would not have pushed down a standing stone in the Hurlers’ circle, or dug into Rillaton Barrow. Why was the bank of stones different? Obviously, as with the tower builders, she could not comprehend the significance of the details in such an extensive monument. Does this not support the need for an interpretation board at the site to outline the scheduled area, show a plan of the pound and explain its history? Having a warning down in the car park is not enough. Can’t we campaign for the installation of a board on the hill like the ones at Trethevy Quoit and King Doniert’s stone? How else are we to represent our point of view to people who do not understand the “Frozen Landscape” ambition?

I kept a sneaky watch on the tower builders waiting for them to leave so that I could kick down their towers. They were watching us and a battle of wills ensued to see who would leave first. I lost; probably they lived nearer. Two towers built on the wall which divides the “sacred” space from the lower area, were just asking to be kicked over. But the wall here is so potentially ankle breaking I did not dare attempt it. However, I did suggest to Win Scutt, who is leading the work party at the Hurlers, that he might have someone more agile and brave.

By the way, we had very tasty pasties in the Minions Post Office: the crust was so thin that they did not lie heavy at all or make walking uphill more challenging. Their cakes were good too!

Text and photos: Adrian Rodda.

For more information about Trethevy Quoit and other sites owned or managed by Cornwall heritage Trust, go to: <https://www.cornwallheritagetrust.org/visit/our-sites/>. The rest of their website is well worth looking at too.

MARKE OF THE PAST

Brian Oldham (CAS Area Rep and President of Liskeard and District Old Cornwall Society) has been investigating a little known feature relating to the former Liskeard and Caradon Railway.

Transshipment Structure at Marke Valley Mine

The remains of this substantial store, one of only two still evident alongside the Liskeard & Caradon Railway network, doesn't have its own entry in the HER, but is mentioned in the entry for the Marke Valley Mine; 'there is no trace of an incline that connected the internal tramway system to the L. & C.R., but a transshipment structure survives at SX27757175'. The store quite clearly appears on the 1906 OS map with the suggested incline alongside its West wall, leading downhill to the complex of three engine houses. Coal and other goods arriving by rail would have been transported from the store down the incline. Whether ore was carried on the uphill return journey is unknown, as the Marke Valley Mine was already at the peak of its production when the L. & C.R. branch line opened in 1877 when other transport arrangements would have been in place for some time.



From the Marke Valley Branch of the L. & C.R. only the top 0.5m on the South wall can be seen. Photo: Brian Oldham

On further investigation the size of the store remains come as a surprise as all that can be seen from the disused rail track is the top 0.5m of the South wall, often missed completely when the bracken is high. This is the point where the railway wagons would stop and be unloaded in to the store at roof level possibly by a chute or winch mechanism. A short

scramble down the railway embankment reveals that that South Wall is in fact 3.3m high and store measures 12.8m x 7m with walls 0.5m thick.



The size of the store comes as a quite a surprise after scrambling down the bank. Photo: Brian Oldham

The side walls slope down to meet the 1.8m high North wall suggesting the possibility of a sloping roof. A gap in the North East corner, where metal gate hinges protrude from the ends of North and East walls, was the location of the gated or doored entrance. A line of granite blocks averaging 0.6m x 0.35m and 0.2m above ground may have been used to keep goods off the often damp earth, there is no evidence of a man-made floor.



Internal side of the South wall revealed to be 3.3m high. Photo: Brian Oldham



0.5m thick North wall showing metal gate hinge. Photo: Brian Oldham



Line of granite blocks possibly to keep goods off the unmade floor, showing the North Easy corner entrance. Photo: Brian Oldham

Text and photos: Brian Oldham

FREEDOM OF HIS PARISHES

In *Freedom of the Parish*, his affectionate portrayal of his home parish of Pelynt, Geoffrey Grigson showed a depth of local knowledge that most of us can only dream about. Such was his sensitivity to his location that crossing the parish boundary into Pelynt ‘nothing marked the point where the foreign parish ended and my own parish began – nothing, that is, but a sudden increase of familiarity between the high earthen hedges tipped with sycamore and hazel, but here, suddenly, on each return, I was in my territory.’ Knowing his patch meant he could identify ‘those features scarcely noticeable to a foreigner, which might be no more than a gateway, or a bare space grown over with silver-weed on which the road metal would be dumped, or a bend, or a nook in the green hedge. Nook, bend, rise, corner – each of them might have a name in local, more exactly parochial, usage, that no maker of ordnance survey maps has ever recorded’ (*Freedom of the Parish*, Geoffrey Grigson, Phoenix House, 1954).

There are many people who, like Grigson, know every square inch of their territory, not just what is there now, but the innumerable, complex layers of the past. The more experienced Area Reps, like those who have contributed to this and other issues of this newsletter, are good examples. One such is Richard Heard. His home parish is Kilkhampton but he also represents Bude-Stratton, Jacobstow, Launcells, Marhamchurch, Morwenstow, North Tamerton, Poundstock, St Gennys, Week St Mary and Whitstone in the quiet, spacious, stunningly beautiful north-east of the county.

On 15th May, Richard led a walk for CAS from Kilkhampton to Duckpool. A report of this fascinating walk will appear in a future CAS newsletter but it is worth noting that the CAS walks programme, now being organised by Pete Herring, provides opportunities to join local experts as they interpret the Cornish landscape.



Richard explaining that the quiet by-way in the background would once have been a major route to and from Stowe House and estate.

Richard is one of the most experienced CAS Area Reps and has been involved in numerous archaeological investigations, including those at Duckpool. Over the years he has also campaigned vigorously for the protection of significant features in his parishes. Like Geoffrey Grigson, he can explain the origin, significance and history of every 'Nook, bend, rise, corner' in his district.



A cache of pottery finds in the ruins of a water mill.

There are still parishes in Cornwall in need of an Area Rep, plus Area Reps in need of support, so CAS members are invited to join the network. Alternatively, there will be many more chances to benefit from the expertise of experts like Richard in walks and online talks given by CAS Area Reps. Discovering and seeking to unravel the complexity of local landscapes adds greatly to the richness of life.

SETTLEMENT STUDIES

Many of the most popular archaeological sites are in the countryside, with their intrinsic interest enhanced by an attractive rural setting. Fair enough. But it would be wrong to overlook the fascinating stories that can be discovered by visiting Cornwall's towns and villages. Modern shopfronts of plastic, glass and metal can be monotonous and uninspiring but look above, at the upper floors and a building's past can suddenly become much more interesting. And there are walls, alleyways, odd structures, and numerous other features too, often rather puzzling, yet crying out for investigation.

One way to learn more is to use the superb website of the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Historic Environment Service, where numerous studies of our urban areas can be found:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment/conservation-and-environment-protection/strategic-historic-environment-service/appraisals-and-surveys/>

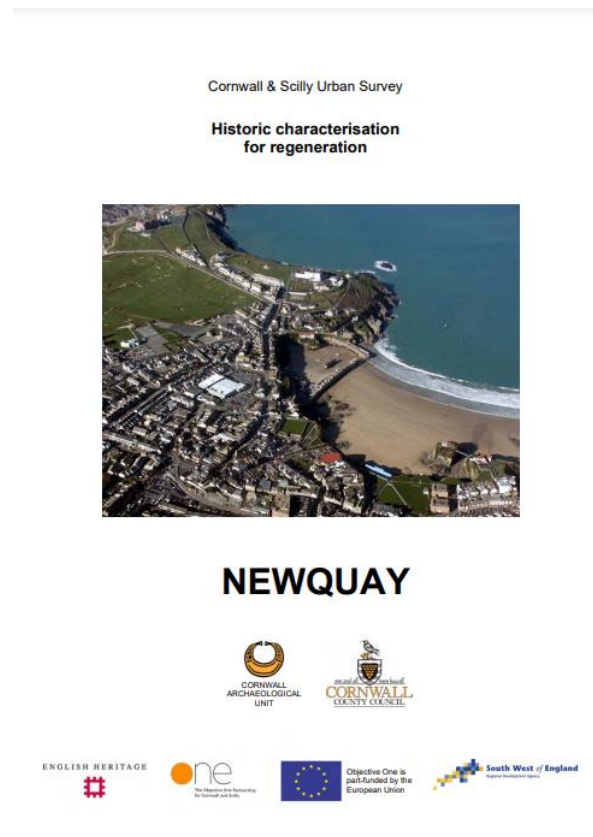
By using the interactive map it is possible to access reports produced for the Cornwall and Scilly Urban Surveys and Industrial Settlements Initiative as well as Conservation Area Appraisal reports.

Settlement Studies Interactive Map

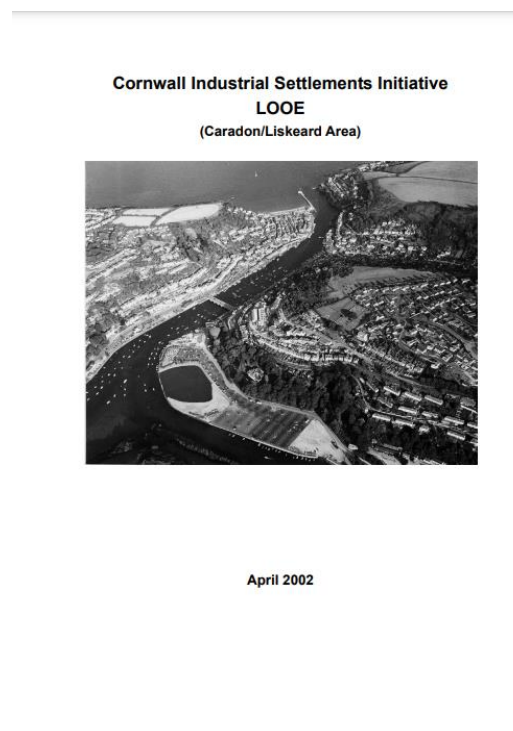
- Green outline - Conservation Area Appraisal report available
- Red outline - No Conservation Area Appraisal report currently available for this area
- Purple outline - Cornwall and Scilly Urban Survey
- Blue outline - Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative



These are not dull or jargon-heavy. Rather they are highly readable, contain copious maps and photographs, and are highly recommended.



All Cornwall's major towns are covered by the Urban Surveys



The Industrial Settlements Initiative covers a wide range of settlements, large and small.

Anyone keen to explore our fascinating built heritage will also enjoy reading about the work being done by the Cornwall Buildings Group. It aims to ‘stimulate interest, appreciation and knowledge of good building in Cornwall, and to encourage the erection, protection, repair and recording of such buildings’. Its website is well worth investigating:

<https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/home> . Paul Holden, former Chair of the Group, is the case officer for the Cornish Buildings at Risk project, which is a 3 year programme funded by Historic England and Cornwall Heritage Trust that began in 2020. The register and Paul’s blog and newsletters can be found at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/buildings-at-risk-register> and

<https://buildingsatrisk.wordpress.com/> .

HENGE HEADLINES

It isn’t often that prehistory hits the headlines but in May Castilly Henge featured in the national and international press, and on social media, radio and television. Following the programme of scrub clearance last winter, organised by Pete Dudley of Cornwall Archaeological Unit and Ann Preston-Jones of Historic England, it was possible to undertake a topographical and geophysical study of this monument.

Without doubt the hard work, often in wet and windy conditions, of the volunteers (many from CAS) was worthwhile because the survey, led by Dr Olaf Bayer of Historic England, showed that there was once a stone circle within the henge. No-one had suspected this. Charles Thomas had led an excavation on behalf of CAS in 1962 but, with the limited techniques available then, was unable to reveal the secret history of the site (see <https://cornisharchaeology.org.uk/volume-3-1964/>).



Drone footage of the henge. The high land and spoil heaps of Hensbarrow are in the distance. Photo: Historic England.



Volunteers mark the positions of the stones. The hills of Bodmin Moor are just visible in the distance. Photo: Ann Preston-Jones

The report will be published later this year and should be publicly available. It should be noted that the henge is on private land with no rights of access.



Dr Olaf Bayer with the results of his survey. Photo: Ann Preston-Jones.



Olaf being interviewed for Radio Cornwall. Photo: Ann Preston-Jones.

The henge is on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register because of the problems of vegetation but a new grazing arrangement has been agreed which will hopefully improve matters.

CARADON CAPERS

The members of Caradon Archaeology group walk regularly on Bodmin Moor. Brian Oldham has sent photos of a recent excursion:



Area Rep John Hanns rocking and rolling on Rough Tor

Photo: Brian Oldham



Evidence of wedge and groove granite splitting on Rough Tor

Photo: Brian Oldham



Door hinge on the Holy Well below Little Rough Tor

Photo: Brian Oldham



Area of the Neolithic Bank investigated by the 'Time Team' Photo: Brian Oldham

Happily, most of the monuments inspected on the day gave no cause for concern. However, it may be necessary for Iain Rowe's footwear to be placed on the Heritage at Risk Register:



Temporary repair job for Area Rep Iain Rowe

Photo: Brian Oldham

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, 18th June 2022

