

The Cornish Association of Victoria Inc. Ballarat Branch

A.C.N. A0008 264A

October 2019 Newsletter

Onen hag oll

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Saturday 5th October - Alan Ballard will share photos from a trip to Cornwall. If it is a cold day we will be meeting in the Church Vestry, so don't be deterred by the weather.



idea for the Celtic groups of Ballarat to be brought together to organize some activities. He was most disappointed that during the recent Heritage Weekend there was no mention of the Cornish Mining or St John of God hospital.

Brian has been the President of the Melbourne Celtic Club for ten of the last nineteen years; was a Melbourne City Councillor for some years and also a Councillor and Mayor of the City of Essendon.

From its beginning in 1887, the Celtic Club's reason for existing was to unite, regardless of creed or Australian party politics, men who sympathized with Ireland's aspirations for Home Rule.

In those early days the Celtic Club not only sponsored various social events but also some political events; many related to Irish issues. It was a time when many Australians were looking to being independent of England. In Melbourne, in the late 1880's, many people without Irish ancestry supported Ireland's aspiration for self-government.

As a result, the Club was called the "Celtic Club" rather than "Irish" for the specific intention of providing a meeting place for those people who supported the Home Rule Movement. The membership over the years has been representative of practically all Celts — Irish, Welsh, Cornish and Breton, however the majority is Irish or of Irish descent.

The Celtic Club is meeting temporarily in North Melbourne whilst its new premises are being

Saturday 7th December -

Christmas Luncheon at the Barkly Hotel at 12 noon for 12.30 - cost \$32.50 please ensure you tell Lorice Jenkin at the meeting if you intend being part of the Christmas luncheon.

Last year was a wonderful occasion and let's make this year's a good day too.

August Meeting

It was a bitterly cold day for our August meeting and we did well to muster those who attended. Many of our members were unwell or in warmer climes.

We were also most grateful to the Skipton Street Church for allowing us to meet in the warmth of the Vestry.

Brian Shanahan, the President of the newly formed Irish Association of Ballarat, was our speaker.



Brian has recently moved to Ballarat and is keen to establish a group interested in the Celtic Nations.

He was inspired when travelling around France to form the Celtic group and thinks it would be a good

Meetings are held on the even months at Skipton Street Uniting Church Hall, cnr Darling and Skipton Streets, Ballarat. Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and are followed by a shared high tea.



constructed - hopefully by the end of 2020. they will occupy the lower four floors of a 48 storey building in Queen Street.

There are seven recognized Celtic Nations as represented on the Celtic Nation Flag - Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, Isle of Man and Galicia (northern Spain). Parts of the northern Iberian Peninsula, namely Cantabria, Asturias and Northern Portugal, also lay claim to this heritage



The Nations represented on the Flag are:
Galicia (top left - white with blue stripe)
Ireland (top middle - green, white and orange)
Scotland (top right corner - blue and white cross)
Cornwall (middle right - black with white cross)
Isle of Man (bottom - red with three legs)
Wales - (bottom - red dragon and green and white)
Brittany - left middle - black and white)

The symbol in the middle is a triskele - a very old symbol used often by the Celts. Though it predates Christianity in the Celtic countries, some Christians prefer to think of it as symbolising the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Like the triquetra or 'Trinity knot', a related ancient Celtic symbol, the triskele is also considered to represent the triplicities of mind, body, and soul or the three domains of Earth - earth, sea, and sky. These symbols are often seen on Graves,



Vale - Elva Jean Murray

Written by Elva's daughter Colleen.



Elva Jean Coffield was born and lived in Ballarat for her first 30 years and after moving away to Melbourne, Camperdown and Hamilton returned to spend her final 35 years. Her connection to Cornwall was through her maternal grandparents - Charlotte Sophia Maddern who married Edward Penna in Penzance, Cornwall. I'm unsure when they travelled to Australia and settled in Ballarat but certainly Elva's mother, Nellie Penna was born in Ballarat.

Elva lived on a small farm on the Spring Road near where the White Swan Reservoir is today. She went to Glen Park School and when she left school she worked as a mother craft nurse till she joined the Air Force during the last years of the Second World War.

She married Ronald Murray in 1945 and had four children - Colleen, Val, Denise and Neville.

The family moved to Melbourne for a few years and after the family had grown and married, Ron and Elva moved back to the country, to a dairy farm in Camperdown.

It was a big undertaking in their middle years but our mother took to it with gusto especially enjoying calving time.

The industry changed and to stay on the land they needed to double the herd and the property. At their time of life, they decided it was too much. They moved to Hamilton for a few years but unfortunately the marriage was struggling and Elva made the decision to move back to Ballarat.

She bought a house in Pleasant St and she was very happy there in familiar surroundings. She was in her late 80's when she decided to down-size and moved to *Midlands* in Doveton Street.

In April this year, it became obvious Elva was becoming confused and needed care and moved to Creswick Nursing Home.

She spent a few happy weeks there being well cared for with her family visiting frequently.

She died peacefully in the early hours of 18th July 2019 aged 94 years.

Elva always enjoyed her garden, embroidery, knitting and spinning, cooking treats for her grandchildren, a cuppa and a chat with friends.

She is survived by her four children, thirteen grandchildren and twenty-three great grandchildren.

Elva was a member of the Cornish Association for ten years and regularly attended our meetings.

We will miss her quiet disposition and cheery smile.

Mt Pleasant

As most of you will know, Mt Pleasant is a southern suburb of Ballarat, between the Yarrowee Creek and Sovereign Hill precinct.

By 1852, the township of Ballarat had been proclaimed, having been surveyed in late 1851 by the Victorian Government Surveyor, William Urquhart. The main town settlement was along Main Road (the road to Geelong). The area was over populated, muddy, unsanitary and unhealthy with ever present illness and very possibly a few cases of typhoid. There was much rowdy behaviour, gambling and drunkenness and it was not an ideal environment for families.

To escape the squalor and rowdiness, a group of Cornish folk settled at Pleasant Mount, in 1853 and the area soon became known as Mount Pleasant. This area was unspoilt by mining, was on a hillside and with some trees – a far nicer and cleaner environment to live and rear their families and more importantly away from the unruly atmosphere along Main Road.

A strong sense of community developed and with worship very important to the Cornish, who were mainly Wesleyans, it was not long before a place of worship was needed.

In 1854, a collection was undertaken to purchase a tent (20 feet by 12 feet with 6 feet high walls) and this was erected near the corner of the current Barkly and Morton Streets.

In March 1855, a Denominational School opened in the tent. The tent proved to be unsatisfactory for the conduct of lessons and the tent school closed in October 1855.

Classes were moved to a slab walled building (corner of Tress and Morton Streets) with a canvas roof which served as the Church, Sunday School and Day School. This was 30 feet long and 18 feet wide. There were 60 pupils on the roll with an average attendance of 44. By 1856 there were 75 pupils.

In 1857, a new Church building was opened and this was used for the School. It became too small for the school and a purpose built building was opened in 1874 with William Henry Nicholls as the Headmaster.

As mentioned in the last newsletter a brochure about the historic areas of Mt Pleasant has been produced.

One of these is Mount Pleasant Reserve which also has the Tent School Tree - it is on the corner of Barkly and Morton Streets.

The Mt Pleasant Reserve was the site of the Mt Pleasant Gardens proposed in 1858 and eventually developed, fenced and gated by 1870. It was an alternative to the Botanical Gardens by Lake Wendouree, which was a long distance to walk.

Sadly the Gardens deteriorated and during the 1930s Depression, the area was excavated to form the present Sports' Ground.

Located on one corner of the Reserve is the Tent School Tree, marking the site of the first day school in Mt Pleasant.

The tree was planted in 1932 by two former students - William Oringe and Charles Curnow Phillips.



Charles Curnow Phillips was born in Cornwall in 1845 to Robert and Sarah Phillips. Sarah Curnow and Robert Phillips had married at St Ives in 1843. Robert was a widower, his first wife Susan Martin had died in 1842, after three years of marriage.

Robert and Sarah's first born son also called Charles Curnow Phillips had died in 1844.

Robert, Sarah, Charles and another son Robert sailed to Australia as Assisted Immigrants arriving on 11th February 1849 aboard the Ship *Labuan*.

Robert and Sarah had three further children - all born in Ballarat and who all died very young. Francis John (1855-1855 - aged 8 months); Francis John (1856-1857 - aged 4 months); and Martha Jane (1859-1863 - aged four years)

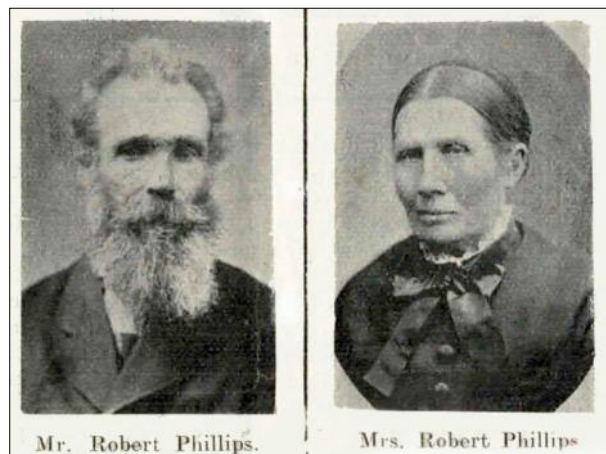


Photo of Robert and Sarah Phillips - The Spectator - July 1905 - in the possession of Robyn & Arthur Coates

Nathan Spielvogel, in his papers, gives a very detailed report of the life of Charles C Phillips, particularly his early life, written in 1937 and I quote from the Spilevogel Papers:

I was born in Cornwall in 1845.

In 1849, my parents came out to Australia and settled in Geelong. When Dad heard about the finding of gold near Buninyong, he came up here.

That was in September 1851, leaving Mother and the children in Geelong.

Every six weeks he walked to Geelong to see his loved ones and to sell the gold he found.

In August 1852, he brought us all up to Ballarat and made a tent home on Clayton Hill. This was really a canvas house, with a good earthen fireplace and was quite comfortable.

Dad was one of the lucky ones. Early in 1854 he was one of party of eight men who got £750 each in a few weeks from a shallow hole where the Humffray Street State School is today.

Later on he was not so lucky. He was one of a party that put down a shaft near where the Eastern Railway Station is today. After working there for some weeks he did not like the-prospect and sold his share for £130. A few weeks later the Welcome Nugget, Ballarat's greatest prize, was found in this mine.

I was a nine year old lad, when on the morning of 3rd December 1854, I was awakened by the sound of guns being fired. I jumped out of bed and was off to see what was doing. Dad grabbed me and threatened to kill me if I moved all day out of the tent.

But when his back was turned I ducked away to the Eureka and watched the diggers carrying away their dead. I poked - about and saw them being buried just behind where Farmers' Bacon Factory is today.

It was a dreadful sight to see them being buried without coffins. I shall never forget it.

When I was eight years old I got my first job. In those days parties of diggers took up two or three "Shows". They worked one and got boys, like myself, to mind the others. This was called "Shepherding".

All I had to do to earn my two shillings a week was to sit by the mine till some diggers tried to "jump" it. Then I ran full lick to my bosses. They would hurry back and there would be fists and blood flying while I stood out of danger and cheered lustily.

In the interview he mentioned that he attended school briefly and was able to read and write but knocked about doing various jobs before gaining employment as an Engine Driver at the South and Extended Mine.

When he was about twenty he decided that he needed to re-educate himself and went to W H Nicholls, the Head Master at Mt Pleasant State

School and began studying at night.

He must have done well in his studies as after two years of study, he was appointed as a teacher at Rocky Lead/Rocklyn State School where he worked for the next thirty five years.

In 1873, Charles Phillips married Philippa Jane Hicks, daughter of George Hicks and his wife Jane Jenny.

George and Jane Hicks and their family had lived at Kenwyn in Cornwall and arrived in South Australia aboard the Ship *Baboo* in 1848.

Travelling with them was George's brother Elisha and his wife Ann.

Supposedly Phillipa Jane was born on the journey somewhere in the vicinity of the Indian Ocean.

Jane and George Hicks arrived in Victoria from South Australia aboard the Brig *Champion* embarking from Adelaide on 22nd April 1852.

Travelling with them were their four children -

*Ann who married James Hicks Eustace

*Mary who married John Vawdrey

*Thomas who married Elizabeth Martha Caddy

*Philippa who married Charles Curnow Phillips.

They lived in Geelong also for some time before settling at Mt Pleasant.

Phillipa and Charles Curnow had six children:

Charles 1873- 1958 married Alice Conder and lived in Ballarat

Arnold 1876-1952 married Vera Fienberg and lived in Geraldton WA

Martha 1878 - 1958 married Thomas Oates and went to live in New Zealand

Their last three children Percival (1880 -1881), Edgar (1884-1887) and Evelyn (1889-1893), pictured to the right, all died when young.



Mr. C. Phillips.



Mrs. C. Phillips.

The Spectator - July 1905 - in the possession of Robyn and Arthur Coates

Philippa Jane Phillips died on 12th September 1924 at Rocky Lead and is buried at the Mt Prospect Cemetery.

(Philippa Phillips is the great, great aunt of Arthur Coates)

Charles Curnow Phillips died on 14th May 1937 and is also buried at Mt Prospect Cemetery.

On his death, there were many articles written in the press across Australia as he was one of the last people who had seen the action of the Eureka Stockade.

Mr. C. C. Phillips

The death has occurred of Mr. Charles Curnow Phillips, aged 92 years, of Rocklyn, who claimed to have been the last surviving witness of the Eureka Stockade. Mr. Phillips when aged nine years was living with his parents at Eureka Hill when he heard the first shots fired on December 3, 1854. Disregarding his parents' instructions, he had rushed to the scene and arrived in time to see the troopers renewing their attack which captured the stockade, and to watch the removal of the dead.

Born at St. Ives, Cornwall, in 1845, he was aged four years when his parents arrived at Geelong. From there they travelled by dray to Ballarat, where his father became a digger. Mr. Phillips joined the Education service and was head teacher at Rocklyn for 34 years until his retirement. For some years he was secretary of the Smeaton Agricultural Society. He leaves two sons and one daughter.

Argus (Melbourne, Vic: 1848-1957)
Monday 17 May 1937 page 4



Photo from Billions of Graves

CORNISH SNIPPETS

St Piran's Oratory

In the last newsletter, I wrote about the skeletons being discovered at St Piran's Oratory.

My friend Eileen Carter, who lives in Cornwall, has a Facebook Page called *Perranzabuloe Post*.

A few years ago, Eileen gave Arthur and me a tour of the Oratory with Maureen Fuller.



Eileen Carter, Arthur Coates, Maureen Fuller



Robyn and Arthur Coates @ Oratory

With Eileen's permission, I share from her *Perranzabuloe Post* pages.

St Piran part I

As we all know, the legend is St Piran came to Cornwall on a millstone.

There is another mystery.

It has been suggested that he carried a small altar stone in his hand - this would resemble a tiny mill stone.

Another theory is that he came in a coracle, a round little circle of willow frame covered in stretched leather. Who did he come with? - I think I go for the suggestion that he came with St Finian and other priests of the Shannon.



MAN WALKING DUNES STUMBLES UPON TREASURE:

Christopher Cotty Jenkin was walking the dunes and came to a spring, he stopped to drink, then looked up and saw a gable end exposed on the summit of a dune. This caused great excitement in the parish as it was known that

somewhere among this great acreage there lay buried for centuries the ancient church of St Piran.

At last in this year, 1789 it was revealed to its people.



St Piran: Part 2

In 1789, the oratory gable end was exposed from the sand.

It had been buried for hundreds of years and the location seemed lost forever.

Why had it suddenly appeared after all this time?.

What force had moved the sand?.

Could it be violent gales or massive rain storms?

Another mystery connected with St Piran you

would think.

At this very time the second church of St Piran was experiencing the impossible task of keeping the church from being overwhelmed with sand.

The last marriage had taken place there in 1776 and a bullock walked into church, because it was impossible to close the door.

The cause of all this distress was that the miners had drained the stream because of their underground workings and without that tiny ribbon of water, the huge dunes had crept forward to overwhelm the church, thus lowering the level behind the onslaught.

In a letter written to the Editor of the *West Briton Newspaper* on September 1835, William Michell wrote from his address, Ponsmore Cottage, Perranporth:

Sir

I have just removed the sand from the oldest Church in this parish, which appears to have been overwhelmed by it, according to tradition, supported faintly by records, 500 or 600 years ago.

This church is probably one of the most ancient every laid open, and wants nothing to render it complete as when first erected, except its doors and windows.

The length of the church within its walls is 25 feet; without, 30; the breadth within 12½ feet; and the height of the walls the same.

At the eastern end is a neat altar stone, covered with lime, 4 feet long, by 2½ wide and 3 feet high.

Eight inches above the centre of the altar is a recess in the wall, in which probably stood a small crucifix, and on the north side of the altar is a small door way, through which the priest must have entered.

The chancel was exactly 6 feet; leaving 19 feet for the congregation, who were accommodated with stone seats, 12 inches wide and 14 inches high, attached to the west, north and south walls of the nave.

In the centre of the nave, in the south wall, is an extremely neat Saxon arched doorway, highly ornamented, 7 feet 4 inches high, by 2 feet 4 inches wide. The keystone of the arch projects 8 inches, on which is rudely sculptured a tyger's head.

The floor was composed of sand and lime, under which bodies were unquestionably buried; the skeletons of two having been discovered.

It is very remarkable, that no vestige of window can be found, unless a small aperture of inconsiderable dimensions, in the south wall of the chancel, and which is 10 feet above the surface of the floor, should be considered one.

It must therefore be presumed that the services must have been performed by the light of tapers.

Around this interesting building lie thousands of human bones exposed to desecration; the winds having removed the sand in which they were deposited.

If this description should appear of sufficient interest, to obtain a place in your columns, it is at your service for that purpose.

I am, Sir, yours very truly

William Michell

William Michell was a Truro merchant and he decided to try and help the little oratory. He recorded everything so perfectly.

After William Michell's letter came the excavation, but where are all the details he describes?

This photograph was taken in 1900 and the oratory appears robbed of so much.



Where are those items now?

Cattle roamed the dunes in those days and iron railings were put up to prevent damage to the oratory.



However this merely invited the cattle to use the railings as a rubbing post and this cause more stones to fall from the walls.

The oratory was once again left to its own fate.

After being plundered and damaged by cattle, it was in a pitiful and fragile state.

Luckily at that time, people did not consider going for a walk on the dunes.

So, it was left alone suffering neglect as was the second church.

Mining was all around.

It would be more than a hundred years before anything was done to help the little oratory.



An illusion of how the oratory would have looked in St Piran's time.

How much better it would look without the hideous block walls around it now. Heritage England will not let us take those down and replace with something more in keeping,

would you believe, even they are grade 2 listed?

They say it's part of history.

Photo shows concrete blocks



Kresen Kernow Opens its doors

Kresen Kernow (Cornish for Cornwall Centre) in Redruth is Cornwall's new archive centre.



It is home to the world's largest collection of archive and library material related to Cornwall.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cornwall Council, it opened on Wednesday 11th September after an Open Day on Saturday 7th September.

Photo - Kresen Kernow Facebook Page

Cornish explosives factory given extra protection

An explosive factory integral to Britain's First World War efforts has been given protected status.

The National Explosives Factory near Hayle, has been awarded protected status by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, on the advice of Historic England.

The factory was planned by Oscar Guttman (1855-1910), a Hungarian industrial chemist and engineer, using the most up-to-date technologies of the time. Guttman's design and construction of the factory, with different manufacturing processes carefully planned across three separate areas, is thought to have been the most elaborate and technically advanced project in Cornwall until the Goonhilly satellite station was built in the 1960s.

The National Explosives factory was located in Hayle due to its proximity to the mining and quarrying markets which required the dynamite, and also as a workforce already existed in the town.

The factory's workforce was drawn almost exclusively from Hayle and provided work at a time when the engineering works were declining and unemployment was growing.

Women worked at the factory from the start, mainly making dynamite cartridges.

In 1889 the factory employed 175 people, but during the First World War this number increased to over 1,800, the majority of them women.

Three matrons were employed specifically for their care.

The site is enjoyed by walkers on the South West Coast Path and is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



It is managed as a nature reserve by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

Photos and story from *Cornwall Live*

Tintagel Bridge Opened

After much controversy, a new multi-million pound footbridge which links two parts of Tintagel Castle in Cornwall has opened.



The 70-metre steel bridge has been built by English Heritage at a cost of £4 million.

For the first time in more than 500 years, the two separated halves of the castle are joined.

Spanning a 190-foot gorge and with a very narrow gap in the middle, the bridge follows the line of the original route – a narrow strip of land, destroyed by erosion – between the 13th-century gatehouse on the mainland and the courtyard on the jagged headland or island jutting into the sea.

The historic crossing that was named in Cornish *Din Tagell* meaning “the Fortress of the Narrow Entrance”.

The medieval scholar Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote that this land-bridge was so narrow that “three armed men would be able to defend (it), even if you had the whole kingdom of Britain at your side”.

Legend has it that the King of Britain, Uther Pendragon – transformed by the wizard Merlin into the likeness of the Duke of Cornwall – stole across this passage way into the castle where he spent the night with the Duke’s wife, Ygern, who later gave birth to the future King Arthur.

That crossing vanished in the 15th or 16th century. English Heritage has restored the crossing, replacing the original rock, earth and grass with a footbridge of steel, local Cornish slate, and oak.

Tintagel's new footbridge in numbers

- 2 independent cantilevers - each approximately 33 metres
- 40mm gap in the centre
- 57 metres above sea level
- 47.5 tonnes of steel
- 40 000 local Delabole slate tiles, hand cut from a quarry just 3 miles from Tintagel
- 140 metres of oak

About 250 000 people visit Tintagel Castle each year and the new footbridge will help to reduce congestion and provide a step-free route onto the island.

Photo and story from *Cornwall Live*

New Bards installed at St Just in Penwith

- Mary Ann Bloomfield, Botallack, for promoting the Cornish element in community arts
- Richard Cawley, St. Mawgan, for services to Cornish wrestling.
- **Greg Drew, South Australia, for promoting the knowledge of mining technology and his commitment in the Cornish Diaspora.**
- Rev. Julyan Drew, Newlyn for a lifetime’s promotion of Cornwall.
- Rosie Fierek, Gunnislake, for promoting the Cornish element in community arts.
- Ronald Hogg, Newlyn, for research and promotion of local history in Newlyn.
- Michael Jenkin, Bodmin, for promoting Cornish identity at home and overseas.
- Kate Neale, Porthcothan, for promoting the revival of Cornish music in Cornwall and the Diaspora.
- Paul Phillips, Helston, for being an outstanding promoter of the Cornish dialect.
- Gwenno Saunders, Cardiff, for services to the Cornish language through music and the media.
- Colin Short, St. Austell, by examination in the Cornish language and continuing service to Cornwall.
- Kathy Wallis, Rillaton, for being an enthusiastic promoter of Cornish folk arts.

A short ceremony for Rev. Julyan Drew was held in June as sadly his death was imminent.

Articles and Cornish Snippets may be sourced from the Cornwall Council, BBC Cornwall, Pirate FM News, Falmouth Packet, Cornwall Live,