

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

AN UPDATE FROM CORNWALL ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S AREA REPRESENTATIVES

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JANUARY 2018

This month:

PLANNING MATTERS IN CORNWALL – OR DOES IT?

ROLLING STONES IN HAYLE AND ST COLUMB

STONE PUZZLES

UPDATE FROM THE LIZARD

A MUTE STONE SPEAKS

PLANNING MATTERS IN CORNWALL – OR DOES IT?

At its simplest, planning should weigh the wishes of an applicant against the wider interests of society. The latter comprises many factors, one of which should be the historic environment. But is this always happening in Cornwall? The late Pete Nicholas was not only a CAS trustee but also a determined campaigner in the struggle to make sure that the historic environment was considered properly in planning decisions. In 2015, he wrote to Historic England expressing his opinion that this had not been the case in certain decisions in south-east Cornwall, and that across the county, *'Planning Officers in Cornwall now consider that Heritage is no longer one of Cornwall's most important assets but an unwanted encumbrance to its development and that the views and advice of their heritage colleagues can be ignored at will.'* A reply sent to him in May 2015 on behalf of the then CEO of Historic England, Simon Thurley, stated that: *'Historic England shares your anxiety as to whether heritage matters are being given the "great weight" required by the National Planning Policy Framework in Cornish planning decisions, and are concerned about the diminished conservation resource in the principality [sic]. Cornwall Council has been forced to make dramatic cuts to its conservation service in recent years, and we are concerned that Cornwall's Development Control officers neither have sufficient personal conservation expertise, nor do they currently have a satisfactorily-resourced internal conservation department to call upon.'*

Since then, Cornwall Council has made a big improvement by giving three professional archaeologists oversight of planning applications in the west, middle and east of the county. However, Cornwall Council issues over 7,000 planning permissions annually (with, presumably, many more applications), which means that it is completely impossible for this small group to keep an eye on every application, let alone check that developers adhere to planning conditions once permission has been given. Ultimately, the responsibility for making sure that the historic environment is given due weight in decision-making, monitoring and enforcement lies with senior planning officers and elected councillors. So, is planning in Cornwall meeting the requirement in Policy 24 (Historic Environment) of the Cornwall Local Plan that says: *'Development proposals will be permitted where they would sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of Cornwall's historic rural, urban and coastal environment by protecting, conserving and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings'*? Here are 3 cases by way of example to show current challenges and opportunities for the future.

Rock Mill is in the Luxulyan Valley World Heritage Site, south of the Treffry viaduct. In December 2013, permission was granted (PA13/06904) for a holiday cottage to be built within the footprint of a ruin in its grounds, subject to certain conditions. The applicant had consulted the *Friends of Luxulyan Valley* and it was thought the proposals were relatively unobtrusive. There would be a shallow-pitched sedum roof, to reduce the visual impact, and the size of the building was reduced from the original design.

However, as the photograph below shows, the approved design has not been followed. The development differs from the approved plans in a number of ways: the roof is far higher; instead of a shallow-pitched-sedum roof, there is a steep-pitched, slate-hung roof; a substantial area of concrete hard-standing has been built between the dwelling and the road, which does not appear on the original plan; and a gap has been made in the stone hedge on a narrow and awkward stretch of the unclassified road, presumably for vehicular access.



The roof is higher and different than that approved, plus an area of concrete hardstanding for vehicular access has been constructed.

A Planning Enforcement investigation (EN17/01862) looked at the height and found no breach, which was surprising. One local person felt that the matter was utterly unsatisfactory and pressed for another investigation, which is now underway (EN1702310). Consequently, a pre-application (PA17/03363/PREAPP) has been submitted seeking retrospective permission, with some modification, for what has already been built. The Friends of Luxulyan Valley, Luxulyan Valley Partnership, Lanlivery and Luxulyan parish councils, the local planning archaeologist and World Heritage Site officers are closely monitoring what happens.

Why, some people might reasonably ask, make so much fuss about a relatively small building? After all, Cornwall has seen many huge developments recently, often with profound impact on whole swathes of land with great archaeological interest, for example on the outskirts of Newquay and Truro. Why focus on a minnow when there are predatory leviathans about? Not only that, the building will attract tourism, a vital part of the local economy that should be able to take sensitive advantage of the county's heritage assets. Well those expressing concern feel it to be largely a matter of principle. This is, after all, in a World Heritage Site, which is not only marked out for additional protection in both the national and local planning guidance, it also has its own Supplementary Planning guidance (<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/adopted-plans/planning-policy-guidance/cornwall-and-west-devon-mining-landscape-world-heritage-site-supplementary-planning-document/>). This document (dated May 2017), according to Cornwall Council, '*provides advice for all decision makers, developers and the public on ensuring that the responsibilities conferred by this status are fully taken into consideration... and in the preparation and determination of planning applications.*' It makes it plain in Section 4 what is expected of planners, as well as applicants, at both the pre-application and application stages.



The higher roof line has partially blocked the view to the west

It will be interesting to see what happens in this case. This incongruous and intrusive structure has a particular relevance to the setting of the Velvet Path, or Long Drive. This carriageway was constructed in the mid-19th century by the Kendalls of Pelyn and illustrates the changing attitude of our ancestors towards the aesthetics of landscape, not only in appreciation of the natural attributes of steep, wooded hillsides and the fast-flowing river, but also the unique industrial developments being constructed alongside. Something of that juxtaposition of natural and industrial scenery survives, or at least did until this wholly inappropriate construction appeared. If the planning authority is unable to provide sufficient resources to protect higher-status sites like Luxulyan Valley, it must surely call into question the continuation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site inscription. This is considered to be an important test case in that regard.

In the last *From Your Own Correspondents*, Brian Oldham's concerns regarding the important fuse works (see photograph below) at Tremar Coombe near Liskeard were featured.



He passed his concerns about planning application PA18/00308 (seeking the creation of a double motor garage) to the local planning archaeologist and St Cleer parish council. The concerns expressed by various members of the public at the council meeting led to the parish council objecting to the application: *'due to concerns that such development may detract from the OUV [Outstanding Universal Value] of the World Heritage Site for Cornish Mining and that the application does nothing to enhance that value.*

The Chief Planning Officer of Cornwall Council recently issued supplementary planning guidance which clearly identifies the imperative to protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape Heritage Site.

Table 4.1 of the supplementary planning document provides indicative actions (including the consideration of the Historic Environment Record as a minimum requirement of the NPPF) which applicants and planners should apply in the process of submission and consideration of applications. This application appears to have taken no account of that guidance and should not be supported.'

Most people recognise that development and change are inevitable, and often necessary. However, it is necessary for the public, including specialist interest groups like CAS, to insist that the historic environment is considered appropriately during the process of planning. In many cases, this may mean that the proper recording of the feature that is to be destroyed is the only outcome but at least it will have added to our knowledge; in other cases, it may involve partial or full preservation and/or the rejection of applications.

The final planning case is one for the future. It concerns the sadly dilapidated Grade II listed Priory House in Bodmin and the former Athelstan House complex to the south-east.



Priory House, Bodmin

As the next photograph shows, the building has been sold and is the subject of a pre-application (PA16/00381/PREAPP) to convert the building into apartments. Presumably the modern buildings to its rear will also be developed at some stage. This site offers the chance for the Planning department to fulfil the obligations of the Historic Environment policy of the Cornwall Local Plan: *'to sustain designated heritage assets'* and *'take opportunities to better reveal their significance'* since this is the site of Bodmin's medieval priory. So the hope is that not only will steps be taken to repair and conserve Priory House but that there will be archaeological conditions imposed on any development that involves disturbance of the ground surface. The priory was one of Cornwall's premier medieval sites, so an

opportunity for a thorough survey and excavation should be pursued with alacrity. The good news is that the planning archaeologist for East Cornwall is fully aware of the situation.



What does the future hold for this beautiful building and the surrounding area of exceptional archaeological importance?



Following a small-scale excavation of the priory church in 1986 walls were exposed and interpretation boards erected.



The remains of the priory church are in the foreground, so it is likely that the cloister and other buildings were underneath the house and grounds to the south.

It is so sad that the building has been allowed to decay in this way. Nor is this the only such example of neglect in Cornwall. Cornwall Buildings Group has a campaign highlighting 'Dilapidated Cornwall' that is well worth reading, as well as a register of some of the most worrying examples at: <https://sites.google.com/site/cornishbuildingsgroup/buildings-at-risk-register> .

ROLLING STONES IN HAYLE AND ST COLUMB

Perhaps it would be wise to tell any ancient rockers that the headline is a little misleading and this is not a cue for fans of Mick Jagger et al to get over-excited (assuming anyone of that vintage still has the energy) about a Cornish tour. No, these are stories of how two very significant ancient monuments have been rehoused in more sedate surroundings (the parallels with Stones' fans from the Sixties just won't 'fade away', will they?).

Adrian Rodda has reported some very exciting news about the Cunaide Stone in Hayle. This 5th Century Christian burial stone was discovered in 1843 when Henry Harvey set out a park/garden within the promontory fort of Carnsew. Harvey's Foundry Trust gained Scheduled Monument consent to remove the stone and bring it inside the Hayle Heritage Centre. The stone has long been 'at risk' so the move will enable it to be preserved and protected. The full story can be read on the excellent website of Hayle Heritage Centre: <http://www.hayleheritagecentre.org.uk/cunaide-undercover/> and thanks are due to Daisy Culmer, the Collections Officer/Learning and Outreach Officer at the Centre, for permission to use some of their photographs.



Specialist Stone Conservators Kelland Conservation were involved in all stages from excavation to conservation.

Photo: Hayle Heritage Centre



Ann Preston-Jones (Historic England) and Andrew Langdon (CAS and Federation of Old Cornwall Societies) get involved in the heavy, muddy and delicate operation.

Photo: Hayle Heritage Centre

The inscriptions are very hard to read but Tom Goskar's website gives a stunning 3D representation, as well as giving Professor Charles Thomas' translation of the inscription: 'HIC PA/CE NUP(er)/ REQUIEVIT/ CVNAIDE/ HIC (IN)/ TUMULO/ IACIT/ VIXIT/ ANNOS/ XXXIII. Here in peace lately went to rest Cunaide. Here in the grave she lies': <https://sketchfab.com/models/4187d94ed2a44f5dac229f84ec93f8e9>

Not content with heavy lifting in Hayle, Andrew Langdon has been involved with the relocation of the medieval cross base recently discovered in St Columb Major (see *From Your Own Correspondents*, December 2017) from a private garden (with the owner's permission of course!) to the town cemetery, where there is public access. Huge credit for this worthy endeavour must go to Phil Ellery, President of St Columb OCS, who not only helped with re-siting the base, but also arranged for the kind services of the digger driver. Andrew adds that the St Columb Old Cornwall Society is proposing to add a plaque next to the stone stating where it was discovered and its approximate date.



The cross-base is moved from Bridge Hill, St Columb Major.

Photo: Andrew Langdon



The cross-base placed in its new home.

Photo: Andrew Langdon

STONE PUZZLES

Joe Parsons is working closely with Historic England to find a solution to the 'at risk' status of the Scheduled Early Christian memorial stone near Slaughterbridge, which, as his photo shows, is vulnerable to flooding. Quite a tricky puzzle to resolve!



Joe explains that it moved here in 1754, from the nearby river, where it had served as a footbridge known as Slaughter Bridge. The Latin inscription translates as 'Here lies Latinus son of Macarus'. There is also an ogham inscription which reads 'LATINI'. The stone was first recorded in 1602 by the historian Carew, who suggested it bore Arthur's name. For more about the stone, and how to visit it, go to <http://www.arthur-online.co.uk/index.php/the-stone> .

While exploring the parish of St Cleer, Iain Rowe discovered a stone which presents a puzzle of a different kind. He has described it as *'a roadside standing stone with access on both sides to the green lane behind Witheystone Cottages – possibly a re-sited rubbing post or even a menhir! It has a white appearance - due to growth of lichen on the southern aspects. The historic use of the name Whitstone implies it has been white from at least early 1800s'*.



Great Whitstone from the north-west

Photo: Iain Rowe



Great Whitstone from the south-west

Photo: Iain Rowe

It is not currently recorded on the Historic Environment Record but will be in due course. As to what it is – that remains a puzzle for the time being!

UPDATE FROM THE LIZARD

Sally Ealey reported a while back that the Poldowrian Museum (<http://www.st-keverne.com/history/arch/>) had closed. The good news is that it will be established at a new site but it is possible that it won't be ready to open until 2019.

Members may already be aware of the very sad news of the death of Bart O' Farrell. Besides being a gifted artist and enthusiastic dowser, he was a founder member of the Lizard Ancient Sites Network (LAN), which has achieved so much in saving and caring for the area's monuments and sites. He regularly led guided walks for the group and helped to cut back undergrowth and preserve ancient sites. He often attended CAS events and will be greatly missed. More about his life can be seen at: <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/shock-sadness-wizard-lizard-who-994032>.

A MUTE STONE SPEAKS

How are you feeling right now? A little chilly, maybe? Damp from the incessant rain? Down in the dumps and fed up with the lack of sunlight? Well, shame on you – at least you have a roof over your head and dry ground beneath your feet. You are probably better off than poor old Inchs Cross, in Withiel parish, which is struggling to keep its head above water.

I can take it.
The Little Ice
Age was a lot
worse.



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 54*, or send an email to arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk .

Roger Smith, 31st January 2018