

FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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MYSTERY DIGGING ON BODMIN MOOR

Robin Paris is fascinated by Bodmin Moor, especially its archaeology. Recently she has been puzzled, and not a little concerned, to find what appears to be erosion at various cairns on the moor, some of which may have been deliberate. Here are the photos she has taken this year at various locations together with her observations and information from Heritage Gateway.

Brown Gelly

Scheduled Monument 15263: EMBANKED PLATFORM CAIRN WITH CENTRAL MOUND ON BROWNGELLY DOWNS, 680M ESE OF HIGHER GILLHOUSE FARM (HER 1770.02; SX 1946 7281; St Neot parish). The side of this cairn is badly eroded.



Looking towards Roughtor/Brown Willy (visible in distance), and on left, 5th cairn S to N
Photo: Robin Paris



Direct view of scraped edge Photo: Robin Paris

Scheduled Monument 15264: ROUND CAIRN ON BROWNGELLY DOWNS, 825M ESE OF HIGHER GILLHOUSE FARM (HER 1770.03; SX 1958 7272; St Neot parish). Robin feels that this cairn (the middle large cairn, 3rd S to N) 'has had an additional "cairn" added within the cairn hollow, judging by the stones that have been turned/moved (clean/no-lichen faces showing)'.



Photo: Robin Paris



Centre distance Stowes Hill, Caradon Hill Photo: Robin Paris

Caradon Hill

Scheduled Monument 15042: TWO CAIRNS, CENTRED 82M AND 110M SW OF CARADON HILL SUMMIT (HER 1409.01; SX 2722 7067; Linkinhorne parish).

On Caradon Hill (cairn 2 of 4 between masts, SW to NE), Robin suspects there has been scraping or digging. In addition, she noted flytipping: 'unbelievable someone would go to the top of Caradon Hill to dump a paint tray!'



South face of cairn on Caradon Hill looking south-west Photo: Robin Paris



Top of the cairn, looking south

Photo: Robin Paris



Animal or human digging?

Photo: Robin Paris

Scheduled Monument 15042: TWO CAIRNS, CENTRED 82M AND 110M SW OF CARADON HILL SUMMIT (HER 1409.02; SX 2722 7071; Linkinhorne parish).

Robin has spotted that this cairn has two areas that have been eroded or dug, directly opposite each other.



Caradon Hill, looking west towards the main mast Photo: Robin Paris



West facing side, looking to Stowes Hill (dark hill left) and Sharptor Photo: Robin Paris



East facing side, looking to small mast and Clay Country in distance Photo: Robin Paris

Scheduled Monument 15050: TOR CAIRN WITH ADJACENT SUB-RECTANGULAR HUT 650M SSW OF CARADON HILL SUMMIT (HER 1411.80; SX 2696 7018; St Cleer parish)

In this case, Robin found that stones had been 'moved in area of tor, evidenced by exposed clean faces and fresh or dying grass beneath.'



South face, looking to Stowe's Hill centre distance

Photo: Robin Paris



North face

Photo: Robin Paris

Minions

Scheduled Monument 15055: TWO CAIRNS 550M AND 587M ENE OF TREWALLA FARM AND TWO ADJACENT SMALL CLEARANCE CAIRNS (HER 1408.01; SX 2516 7126; St Cleer parish)

Robin observed a 'bowl dug out of cairn side (central area of photo - not easy to demonstrate) and several stones with newly-exposed faces.' She felt that this was likely to have been done by people rather than animals.



Looking approximately north, with Stowes Hill to right

Photo: Robin Paris



The flask shows the depth of the 'bowl'. Stowes Hill in background

Photo: Robin Paris



'A newly-scraped area on the eastern face. Looking southish towards Long Tom and south coast (blue isn't sea). This half of the cairn is more vegetated. The scraping might be the result of burrowing by rabbits.'

Photo: Robin Paris



An accumulated pile of stones and turf.

Photo: Robin Paris



Standing on cairn looking down bank slope

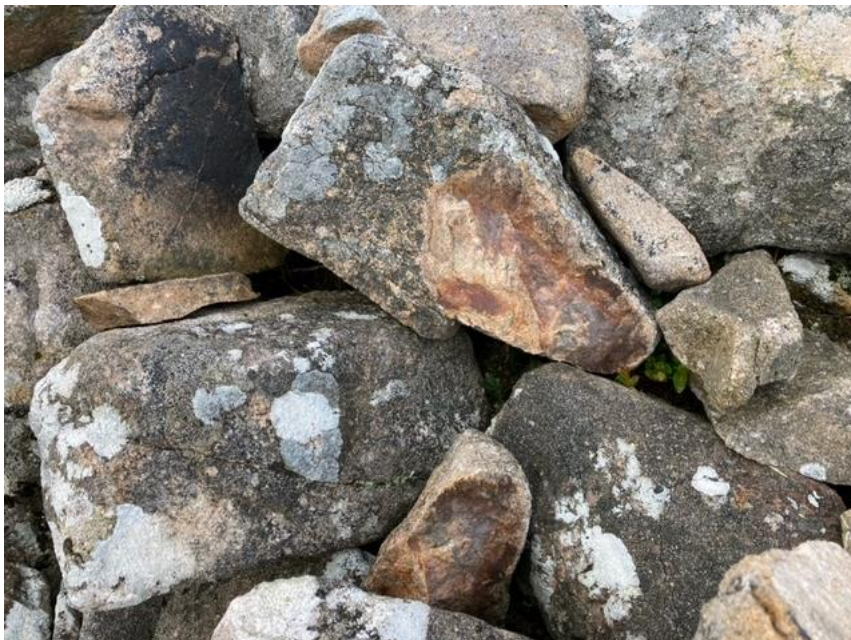
Photo: Robin Paris

Scheduled Monument 15055: TWO CAIRNS 550M AND 587M ENE OF TREWALLA FARM AND TWO ADJACENT SMALL CLEARANCE CAIRNS (HER 1408.01; SX 2516 7126; St Cleer parish)

'Various stones in same area had freshly-exposed faces,' Robin reported, or seemed 'to have been moved' judging by fresh grass underneath. She noted other stones with splits or sheared faces, some having been placed in unnatural positions.



Photo: Robin Paris



Sheared fragment

Photo: Robin Paris



A big stone for a non-human animal to move, and not a natural drop distance from the dug bowl

Photo: Robin Paris

Robin has seen other cairns with similar scrapes, stone removal or damage: 'It's now at four separate sites that I've seen cairns with sides scraped out. At Geraint's [name given informally to a cairn on Craddock Moor] it's on the westish face, directly opposite (aligned with) Rillaton Barrow (chamber on E face); and on the cairn on Tregarrick ridge, eastish side. She adds: 'At Geraint's stones are being split open. Why?'

She often sees stones moved and dropped elsewhere on this part of the moor. These were seen 'as I was coming down from the large cairn on the path to Trewalla ford. This also goes past Wallabarrow which I checked and appeared to have no stones with newly-exposed faces. So either they're carried up from the ford area or down from the large cairn (I call Geraints)'. She counted about 15 of these.



Trail of stones

Photo: Robin Paris

Bodmin Moor has a huge number of prehistoric remains, many of which are protected by Scheduled Monument status, but in such a huge area, and without proper funding for regular surveillance and, where necessary, appropriate repairs, it is hard to tackle the problem of erosion. Robin is not ascribing any particular cause. Some of it may be the result of grazing or burrowing animals. But in the case of larger stones being moved, or split, that cannot be the explanation. In the last year or so, visitor numbers seem to have increased significantly and while the vast majority of people are more than happy to explore and enjoy without causing damage, there will inevitably be a few who cause damage for reasons best known to them. Robin's dedication, expert knowledge of the moor, not to mention stamina, means that these examples of erosion are being brought to wider attention.

MORE LIGHT ON ST EUNY'S WELL CHAPEL

Our next contribution comes from one of Cornwall's newest Bards, Adrian Rodda. Adrian's dedicated contributions to Cornish heritage through poetry, history and archaeology have been recognised by Gorsedh Kernow. He will be welcomed into the College of Bards at a ceremony to be held in Bude on 4th September. (More information can be found at: <https://gorsedhkernow.org.uk/gorsedh-kernow-names-new-bards-for-2021/>.)

Adrian's description of this holy well may well inspire you to visit this magical spot:

More light on St Euny's Well Chapel (HER 28454; SW39973 28907; Sancreed parish)

St Euny is one of the most celebrated of Cornwall's Celtic saints. Traditionally he is accepted to have been a brother to St Ila (St Ives) and St Erc (St Earth) who landed with St Gwinear and about 700 followers at Hayle Estuary from Ireland. (Though one version records that St Ila missed the boat and floated over on a leaf on her own.)

Churches in Redruth and Lelant are dedicated to St Uny. Crowan and Sancreed honour him as well. Merther Uny is said to have had a church to record his martyrdom in Wendron parish.

In Penwith his name is spelt Euny and that is how it is recorded on maps in Chapel Carn Euny, the Romano British Courtyard settlement with the amazing fogou. The settlement is not on the site of the chapel, but the holy well is thought to be. Chapel Carn Euny holy well is actually two wells. The water springs from one and flows through the other well towards the Lamorna Valley. The lower well is well visited, photographed and revered with clouties on the nearby trees. It is obvious that the seven steps down to the water pass remains of the ruined chapel because the entrance is lined by dressed stones, whose curved shape suggest their possible use as window or door frames.



Photo: Adrian Rodda



Photo: Adrian Rodda

Now someone has moved across the path and cut back the plants that have obscured the spring itself. It is still difficult to photograph but there is the suggestion of another curved, dressed stone in its build.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

Now, beware! Visitors to the settlement who walk up from the car park and look for the holy well are often deceived by the near presence of another well. In its way it too marks a miracle. A tree appears to grow out of a rock.



Photo: Adrian Rodda

The grid covers steps down to the water, which is still used by some of the cottagers. Clouties are being hung on the tree nearby.

The best way, in my opinion, to approach the wells and the settlement is to park at Chapel Carn Brea NT car park (SW 38876 28907) on the road from Crows-an-Wra (off the A30 to Lands End) towards Lands End Airport. The car park is just on the left as you flatten out from a steepish climb through a narrow lane. Cross the road and walk along the footpath over Tredinney Down, past an abandoned Clay Pit (Yes, Penwith had some of those too) and through a gate where a sign mentions the new bridle path, Turn down to the trees on your right and there are the wells. Refreshed spiritually and leaving your cloutie (Cornish dialect *Jowd*), walk on to a junction with a wider lane. Turn right and after 30 yards turn left at a sign which confusingly points to Chapel Carn Euny, but is actually the way to the settlement. You will soon come across the rock tree and its well. Continue through the trees and climb over a wall and you are in the settlement. It is about 1 mile and takes me 25 minutes because the path is often wet and always uneven and the views are worth stopping for. You can go back the same way.

Crows-an-Wra means the witch's cross, but that is another story!

TRACKING THREATS TO RAILWAY ARCHAEOLOGY

The last edition of *From Your Own Correspondents* (Issue 55, June 2021) mentioned proposals from Highways England to infill a Brunel-designed railway bridge in south-east Cornwall. *The Guardian* newspaper carried a story showing that it is not a problem confined to Cornwall, with one peer describing the proposals as 'cultural vandalism'. But Transport Minister Grant Shapps has announced a £338 million walking and cycling strategy that might save these structures by incorporating them into new off-road routes. (Some wags might call this 'light at the end of the tunnel' but higher journalistic standards are followed here.) Indeed, there is a possibility that one structure already in-filled with concrete might have to be restored to its original state.

The structure featured in the last edition, (and not identified correctly, although the guesswork was pretty close) is not listed, so apparently it is a non-designated heritage asset. The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf) says, in clause 203, that:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balance [sic] judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'.

If permission was needed from local planning authorities their significance would be taken into account and there might be restrictions. However, it doesn't seem that planning permission is needed. Peter Crispin has been looking into the problem of this threat to historic railway bridges and has discovered that there are others in Cornwall. Notification letters to various planning authorities contain this paragraph suggesting that their permission is unnecessary:

As the structure represents an ongoing and increasing risk to public safety and is owned by the Secretary of State for Transport, so is deemed 'Crown Property', Highways England HRE propose to undertake the support works as permitted development in line with the 'Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 19 Class Q'. Specifically, and for the avoidance of any ambiguity, the works are being undertaken in order to prevent an emergency arising.

This cache of letters (all dated 20th September 2020) to various planning authorities includes proposals to infill certain bridges in Cornwall. They were written by Jacobs of York 'on behalf of our Client, Highways England, Historical Railways Estate (HRE), formerly BRB (Residuary) Ltd... HRE is responsible for the Historical Railways Estate following the abolishment of BRB (Residuary) Ltd. This responsibility is undertaken on behalf of the Department for Transport, who own the structure. Therefore, the structure is crown property'.

STRUCTURE, LOCATION AND PROPOSED ACTION	REASON FOR ACTION	HER
Disused Railway Bridge CAL/21 "Chilsworthy Road" – Infilling works Single span bridge constructed circa 1908. The structure is comprised of longitudinal steel troughing units with steel edge girders. It carries an unclassified road over the trackbed of the former Callington Branch (Gunnislake to Callington) railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SX 419 720.	The structure is subject to ongoing deterioration including substantial section loss of the troughing units.	HER 177993 A bridge carrying the public road over the Callington line. The railway was opened in 1908 as part of the PD&SWJR branch from Bere Alston to Callington.
Disused Railway Bridge LAN/105 "Ridgegrove Road Bridge" – Infilling works A single span bridge likely re-constructed circa 1932. The superstructure comprises two edge girders supporting transverse troughing units. It carries an unclassified road over the trackbed of the former Launceston to Plympton railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SX 336 848.	The structure is in a deteriorating condition with corrosion present throughout.	HER 143735 A bridge carrying the public road over the GWR Launceston branch. The broad gauge line from Tavistock to Launceston opened in 1865.
Disused Railway Bridge NCL/81 "Tregrey Bridge" – Infilling works Tregrey Bridge, a single span masonry arch constructed circa 1886. The former cutting to the west has been infilled up to the structure. It carries a track over the trackbed of the former North Cornwall Line railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SX 181 897.	There are open joints throughout the arch.	HER 177892 LSWR no 81 at 234m 39c. A bridge carrying a farm lane over the line of the North Cornwall Railway. This section of the railway between Tresmeer and Delabole was opened in 1893.
Disused Railway Bridge SGZ 254m 16ch "" – Infilling works A single span masonry arch bridge constructed circa 1846. The structure is in a deteriorating condition with damp and calcite deposits throughout the arch barrel.	The structure is in a deteriorating condition with damp and calcite deposits throughout the arch barrel. There is	HER 178188 Tredown Bridge - A bridge carrying a farm lane over the line of the Cornwall Railway at 254m 31c (not inspected).

<p>There is standing water beneath the structure. It carries a track over the trackbed of the former St Germans to Defiance platform railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SX 391 567</p>	<p>standing water beneath the structure.</p>	
<p>Disused Railway Bridge TNQ 4m 60ch “Goshen Bridge” – Infilling works TNQ 4m 60ch, Goshen Bridge [?], a single span bridge with longitudinal troughing units which are in poor condition. The former cutting to the east has been infilled up to the structure. It carries an unclassified road over the trackbed of the former Chacewater to Newquay railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SW 809 535. [Note: This grid reference is for a bridge near Lanteague, not Goshen, which is near Mithian.]</p>	<p>Longitudinal troughing units which are in poor condition.</p>	<p>HER 178119 Bridge carrying the public road over the line of the Chacewater to Newquay branch. The line from Chacewater to Newquay was opened by the GWR in 1905, and closed to all traffic in 1963. [Named as Lanteague not Goshen on Heritage Gateway. Goshen is closer to Mithian.]</p>
<p>Disused Railway Bridge TNQ 11m 13ch “Lanteague Bridge” – Infilling works TNQ 11m 13ch, Lanteague Bridge, a single span masonry arch bridge constructed circa 1887. It carries an unclassified road over the trackbed of the former Chacewater to Newquay railway line. It is located at approximate OS grid reference SW 748 502. [Note: This grid reference is for a bridge near Mithian, not Lanteague. Is this what they mean by Goshen Bridge?]</p>	<p>The structure is in a deteriorating condition with open joints throughout the arch soffit and spalling stonework.</p>	<p>HER 178078 Mithian - A bridge carrying the public road over the Chacewater to Newquay branch. The line from Chacewater to Newquay was opened by the GWR in 1905, and closed to all traffic in 1963.</p>

Location of bridges to be infilled:



Source:

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

While no-one would question the need to ensure that these structures are safe, it is worrying that they do not have even the most basic protection afforded to non-designated assets that the NPPF provides. If there was a way to make them safe, and to give them a new purpose, as the cycling and walking scheme might do, or even to preserve some of them as evidence of Britain’s important railway heritage, surely that would be a better outcome? Permitted development rights deny even the already limited democratic input

allowed by the current planning system. Perhaps this is a taste of what is to come, should the wish of hardline libertarians to relax all planning controls succeed.

BRIDGE THERAPY

Last month, the recent terrible damage to Helland Bridge (HER 17108; Listed Building II* 67735; Scheduled Monument 15578; SX 0652 7149; Helland and St Mabyn parishes) was reported. It was so bad that the bridge had to be closed. However, repairs have been carried out swiftly and skilfully.



A beautiful repair to the upstream parapet



The bridge is now safe and scenic



The opportunity was used to repair part of the downstream parapet which had been causing concern for a while

It's a place that's well worth a visit but please, if you can, get there by walking or cycling on the Camel Trail!

CARDINHAM CASTLE

Isn't it busy in Cornwall at the moment? Hopefully the visitors have had a great time and we wish them well but, let's be honest, sometimes it is a relief to escape the crowds. So if you fancy a walk packed with archaeology, nature and scenery, why not try the Cardinham and Bury Castle walk described on the *i-Walk Cornwall* website

(https://www.iwalkcornwall.co.uk/walk/cardinham_and_bury_castle)?

The instructions are spot-on, as well as being informative, but for medievalists there is an added bonus once you get to Cardinham Castle (HER 2958; Scheduled Monument CO455: Cardinham Castle; SX 1261 6803; Cardinham parish). This impressive site was once a stronghold of the Cardinan (not a misspelling!) family which owned properties throughout

the county as well as being the original patrons of Tywardreath Priory. Heritage Gateway says:

White Hill, or Cardinham Castle, motte and bailey castle. The motte is sited on the end of a steep-sided spur above a confluence of streams and the bailey occupies the level top of the spur to the south-east. The motte rises 3m above the level of the bailey and is 6m high on the north. The top of the mound has been disturbed through robbing of stone from the keep. The ditch of the bailey is 3.7m-4.6m deep and the counterscarp of the inner bank is about 1.8m high.

It is on private farmland but as part of a recent stewardship agreement between the landowner and Historic England, permissive access has been granted.



Looking across part of the bailey towards the tree-ringed motte. Careful grazing and management by the landowner is benefiting the site.

The site is grazed, as the picture shows, but it is well worth a look.



And for those of you who get jittery at anything that is A.D., here are photographs of a much earlier seat of power, the impressive Iron Age hillfort at Bury Castle (HER1539; Scheduled Monument CO395; SX 1352 6962; Cardinan parish)!



An imposing hilltop position, as seen from the south.



South-eastern section of rampart and ditch



A stunning view of the medieval church from the hillfort

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.

