

# FROM YOUR OWN CORRESPONDENTS

## Updates from Cornwall Archaeological Society's Area Representatives

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## FEBRUARY 2021

Issue 51

### THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

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### KEEPING WITHIN BOUNDS

Andrew Langdon (Federation of Old Cornwall Societies and CAS Area Rep) has been getting daily exercise walking around Truro but, not content with exercise alone, been using this for some intriguing detective work:

#### **Boundary and marker stones in Truro**

Although the borough of Truro dates to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, there are no old boundary stones marking either the boundary of the borough or town, however a few old stones of interest still survive within the city, despite the huge amount of development which has taken place over the last 100 years.

Boundaries have always been a contentious issue and some of the earliest documents in Record offices are often about boundary disputes. Even today, disagreements about boundaries are commonplace and frequently end in litigation. In the past, boundary stones were often erected after a dispute, or to prevent a dispute about landownership and rights to the land. Boundary stones have been set up in Cornwall to mark many types of boundary including, personal, manorial, parish, borough, district and mining interests.

In Truro, the few which survive can be identified as private, manorial and parish bound stones.

### Alverton/Tremorvah boundary

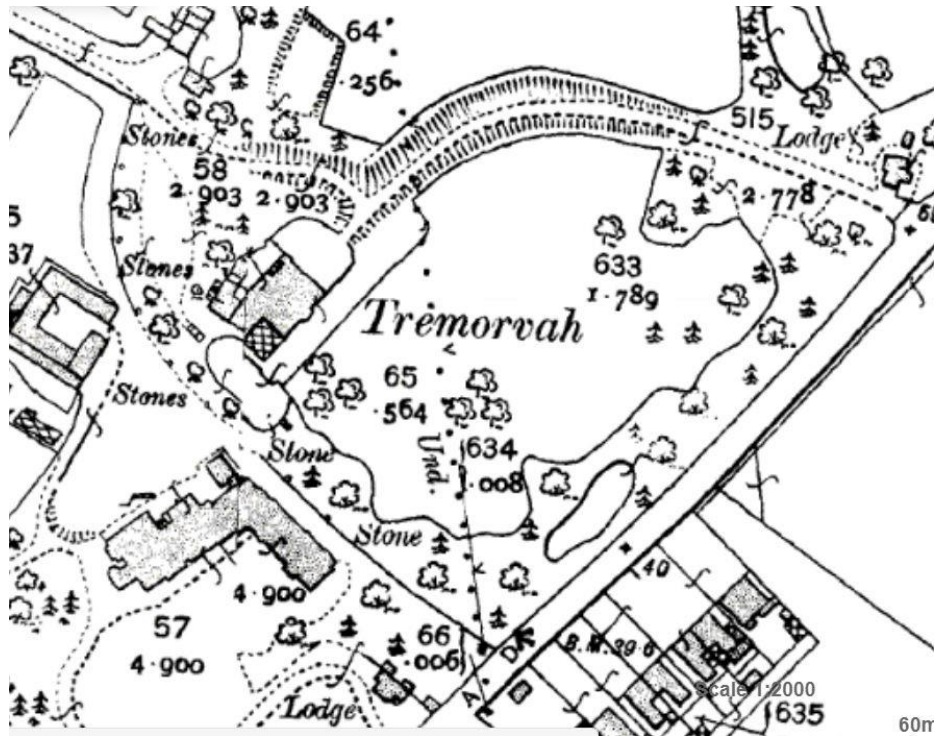
On the 1907 25in OS map for Truro, a line of boundary stones is indicated dividing the grounds of Alverton Manor and Tremorvah House; several are still shown on modern maps of the area, although only one of these stones is publicly accessible.



Alverton Manor was built in the early 1830s by William Tweedy as a family home, and later in 1883 it was purchased by the Order of Epiphany, a convent of Anglican nuns. In 1984 it was converted into a hotel.



The neighbouring Tremorvah House was built in the Italianate style in 1845 by Philip Prothero Smith, four times mayor of Truro, as a family house. The house was demolished in 2015, although its lodge still survives.



On the Ordnance Survey map is a line of boundary stones, annotated as **stone** or **stones**, following the boundary between the two properties. The boundary stones are not shown on the 1881 OS map and were presumably set up at the time the Order of Epiphany purchased Alverton.



Although eight of these boundary stones are marked on the modern map, only one is publicly accessible. This boundary stone is at the south western end of Tremorvah Wood Lane at SW 8314 4527, adjacent to a small electricity sub-station. The square-sectioned granite boundary stone is 0.44 metres high and 0.18 metres square, has a large **T** for Tremorvah on its east face and an **A** for Alverton on its west face. The remaining stones are shown in the grounds of Alverton and neighbouring modern properties.

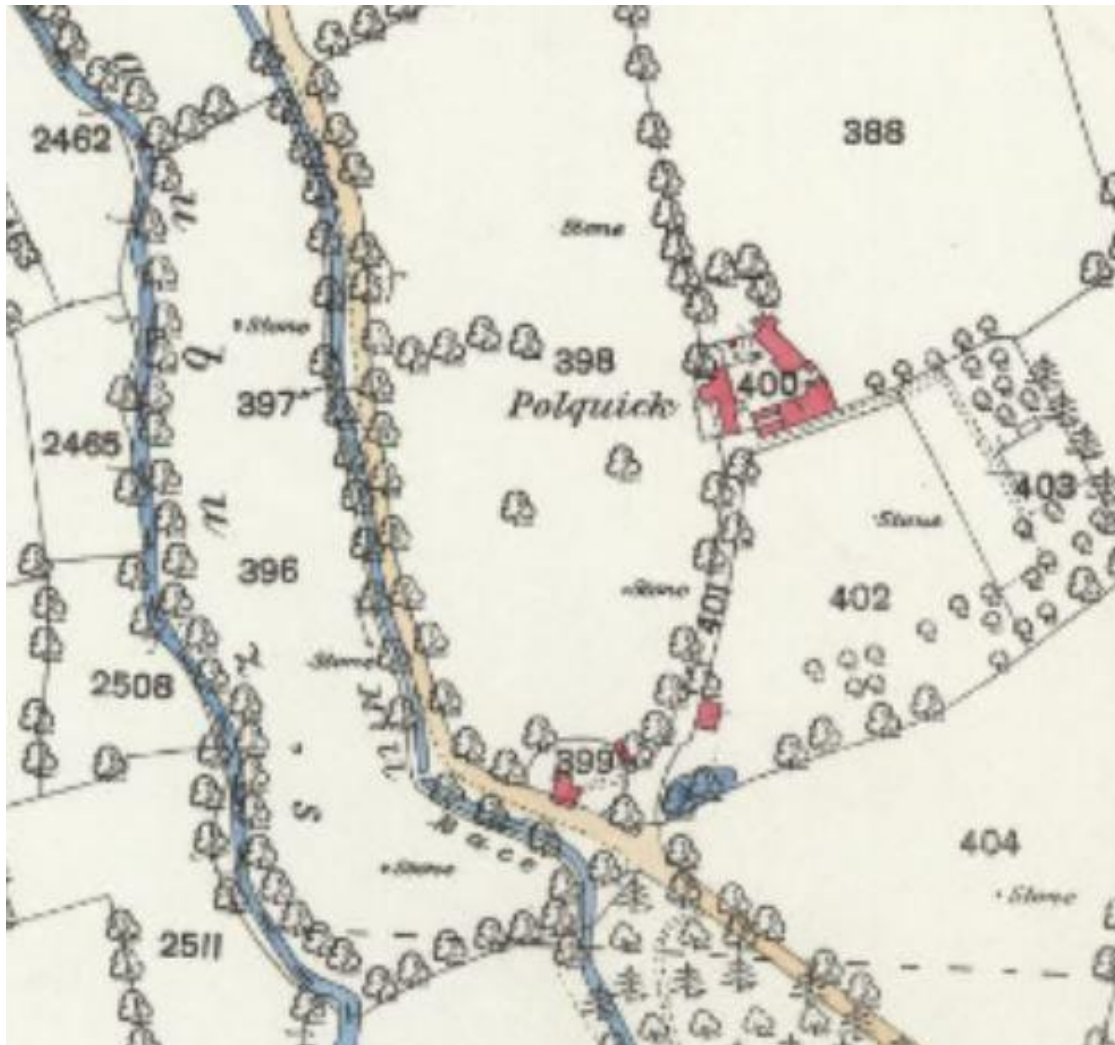
#### Daubuz Moors/Polquick

At SW 8250 4581, at the western end of the nature reserve at Daubuz Moors, in the middle of a field opposite Polquick Cottage, stands a large carved stone with a pointed pyramid-style top. The stone measures approximately 1.6 metres, and is almost square in section. It leans slightly to the north and may be used as a rubbing post for animals. It looks like a boundary stone, yet has no markings on it or evidence of re-use. The 1880 25in OS map for the area shows a total of seven stones in the adjoining fields around Polquick. Surprisingly, each one of these stones stood in the centre of the field, yet if they were created as boundary stones, one would expect to find them on the boundary of the fields. No further stones in this group appear to have survived and were probably removed for gateposts or rubbing posts elsewhere.



The granite post stands in a private marshy field adjacent to the river Allen, which here forms the parish boundary between Kenwyn and St Clement. This series of stones is close to but does not follow the parish boundary. Their origin and use remains something of a mystery.

The 1880 Ordnance Survey 25in map shows seven stones marked in the adjoining fields to Polquick and must have once been connected with this property. The stone which survives is shown on the bottom left of the map.



#### Enys bound stones

Daubuz Moors nature reserve was formerly owned by Lewis Charles Daubuz, a French Huguenot, whose family also owned the tin smelting works at Carvedras in the city. Later the moors passed into the ownership of the Enys family of Enys, Penryn, who presented the eastern end of Daubuz Moors to the people of Truro in 1977.



A block of granite set into the entrance gateway to Daubuz Moors has a large **E** carved on it to represent Enys land. This can be seen at the entrance off Moresk Road facing east, below a sign stating 'No horses'.



The Enys family owned land and property in Truro, including the Old Mansion House on Quay Street, which was their town house. Also at Quay Street is another Enys boundary stone marking the entrance to Enys Quay on the river Allen. The large letter **E** with serifs is deeply cut and well carved. The stone is close to the Old Ale House, beneath a modern building called Wendron Stoves; it faces south and is situated at SW 8280 4479. It measures 0.46 metres high with a width 0.26 metres and a thickness of 0.15metres.

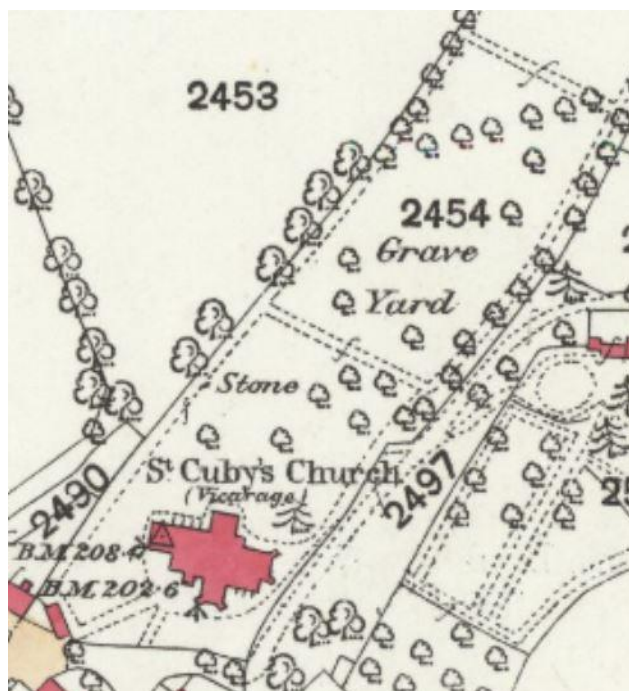


Further Enys boundary stones can be found on either side of the cemetery at Kenwyn, marking an extension of the cemetery. On the western side of the cemetery is a round-headed granite post, part way along the western path at SW 8197 4589. It is shown on the 1880, 1907 and modern Ordnance Survey maps. It is 0.66 metres high, 0.32 metres wide and has a thickness of 0.2 metres: the top half of one face has been dressed and displays a letter **E** for Enys and faces east.

The stone almost opposite on the eastern boundary of the cemetery is deeply buried, with only its top now visible. It is also round-headed, and is now only 0.2 metres high; it is 0.25 metres wide and has a thickness of 0.23 metres. A large letter E can be seen on the face of the stone representing the Enys family and Estate. This stone does not appear on either the 1880 or 1907 OS maps, probably because it was almost buried and hidden from view.



In 1816, Francis Enys conveyed one customary acre, part of Church Close and part of Catcher's tenement to the vicar and churchwardens of Kenwyn to extend the cemetery, and it appears likely that these stones mark this land. Reference: Kresen Kernow EN/288.



Text and photographs: Andrew Langdon



## TREKELLAND BRIDGE SAGA – THE LATEST

Susan Boggis has sent photos of the recently repaired Trekelland Bridge (Lewannick/SX 3004 7984. HER 6940). Cormac has once again carried out swift, skilful and effective repairs. But so vulnerable is this lovely structure to road traffic that further damage is, sadly, to be expected. So enjoy these these images while you can.



Photo: Susan Boggis



Photo: Susan Boggis



Photo: Susan Boggis



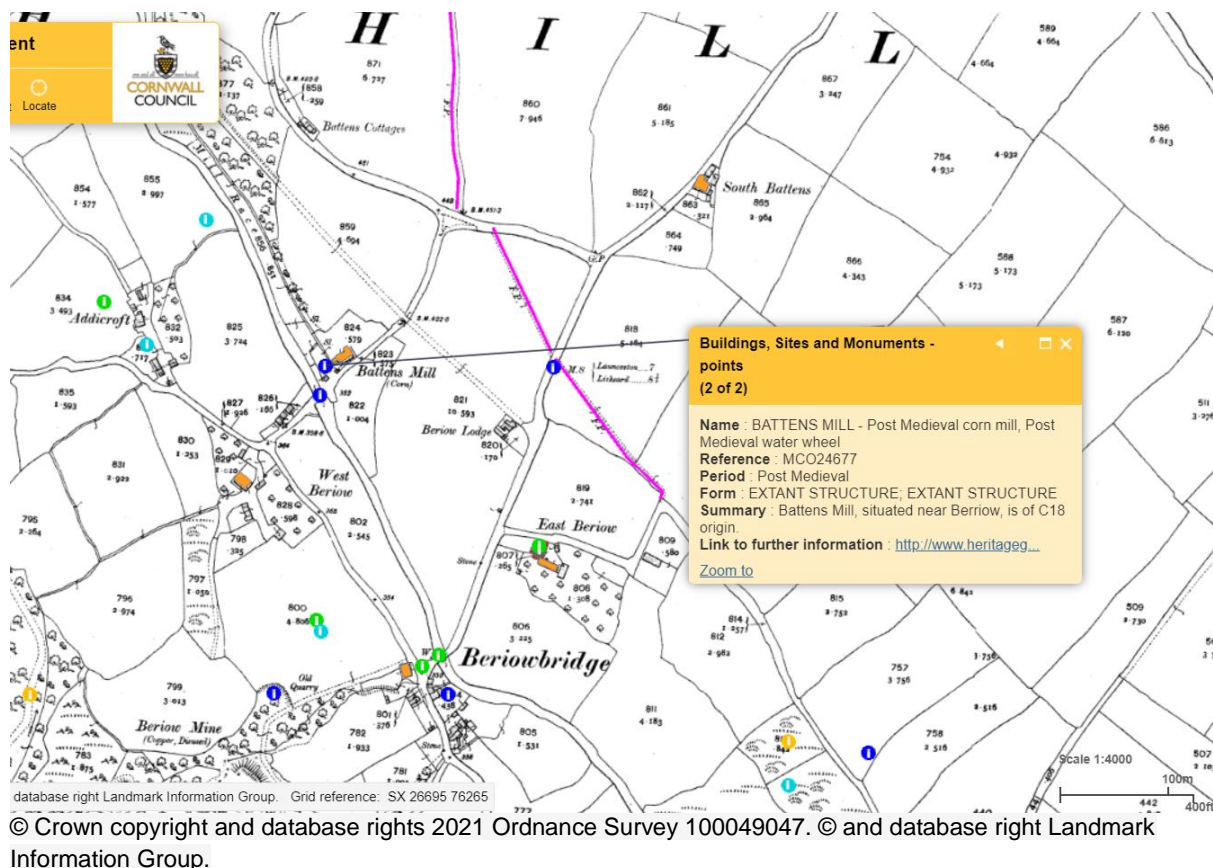
Photo: Susan Boggis



Photo: Susan Boggis

## BATTENS MILL

Susan Boggis has been looking at an ancient water mill in North Hill parish. With the permission of the owners, she has taken some pictures of Battens Mill, near Berriow Bridge (HER 17545; North Hill; SX SX 2720 7594), once part of the Trebartha Estate.



1906-08 OS basemap and information:

[https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=8&xcoord=227245&ycoord=75892&wsName=CIOS\\_historic\\_environment&layerName=Access%20land%20\(right%20to%20room\):Public%20Rights%20of%20Way:Listed%20buildings:Buildings,%20Sites%20and%20Monuments%20-%20points](https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=8&xcoord=227245&ycoord=75892&wsName=CIOS_historic_environment&layerName=Access%20land%20(right%20to%20room):Public%20Rights%20of%20Way:Listed%20buildings:Buildings,%20Sites%20and%20Monuments%20-%20points)

According to the Listing, this Grade II\* former corn mill is thought to date back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, or even earlier, although numerous alterations have been made over the centuries. Heritage Gateway gives the following summary:

*Battens Mill, situated near Berriow, is recorded as extant in the North Hill parish checklist (b6). In 1809 it is recorded by the OS as "Bondwalls Mill" ... and by the 1st Edition 1:2500 this had been amended to "Battens Mill". A field visit by King in 1978 revealed that the mill wheel and machinery had been removed. The house is one room deep with a room either side of the main door. The front porch has a datestone on a finely finished granite pillar, inscribed "IT" on one capital and "1702" on the other. There is a fine granite door surround with stable*

doors and small mullioned windows (h1). The site was Listed grade II\* in 1989 by English Heritage, including an overshot water wheel.

(Source:

[https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Single.aspx?uid=MCO24677&resourceID=1020](https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MCO24677&resourceID=1020)



Photo: Susan Boggis



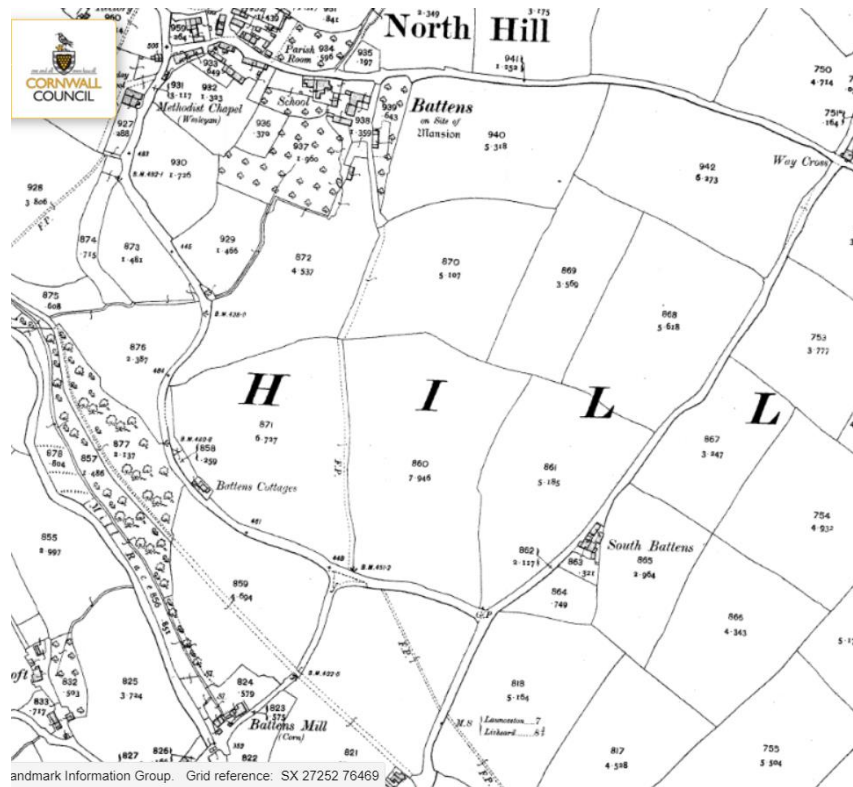
Photo: Susan Boggis



Battens Mill and mill house

Photo: Susan Boggis

The route between Battens House, in North Hill village, and the mill can clearly be seen on this extract from the OS map of 1906-08:



Battens (HER 17485; North Hill; SX 2734 7652) is on the site of an earlier mansion. According to Heritage Gateway, it was the ancient seat of the Vincent family and its entrance bears the inscription 'C.F. Vincent Anno Domini 1581'. Possibly the mill was part of this family's estate.

The mill machinery has gone and the building is silent. Just looking at Susan's photos makes you want to know more about the mill and its history. As Geoffrey Grigson wrote in 1954 of the vanished mills of Pelynt parish: 'The green-haired wheels have long been stationary, the wooden cogs no longer softly around in the low houses...it is fair to say that all water-mills have outlived their age, which was pre-industrial and mediaeval...' (*Freedom of the Parish* by Geoffrey Grigson, Phoenix House Limited, London, 1954). In farming parishes like North Hill, the mills would have been vital to the economy as well as gathering places where news and gossip would have been exchanged. In Kelly's Directory of 1893, for example, two millers were recorded as operating in the parish: William Babb at Bathpool and Richard Halls at Battens Mill (<http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p16445coll4/id/170947/rec/2>).

Maybe, as efforts are made to use more green energy and reduce food-miles, local corn milling will revive, but for the moment Geoffrey Grigson's lament for our lost mills still stands:

'In my childhood in East Cornwall, we could still enjoy excellent bread, crusty and crisp bread, from wholemeal flour ground a few miles away between the stones...That is only one of a dozen reasons for regretting that the millstones clack now in so few valleys.

*The miller's moss-green wheel mid rot,  
An' he mid die an' be forgot.*

In less than two hundred years, less than a hundred, editors of Chaucer may have to put a note in the Reeve's Tale to explain what mills were, and hoppers, and even millers' (Grigson, 1954).

North Hill is a beautiful parish and the presence of the past in its buildings, fields and earthworks is never far away but according to some that is not the only presence. A spectral black dog with great shining eyes, or a man carrying wood on his back, are sometimes glimpsed between Battens and Darley Ford. It is said to be the ghost of Vincent Darley, who lived at Battens until his death in 1764 who walked this route whatever the weather. Well, this newsletter is about archaeology not the supernatural, so if you would like to read more, go to Liz Berg's version of the tale at: <https://www.mazedtales.org/content/stories/darley-dog>. Those of you who prefer reality might enjoy the attractive and informative of the North Hill History Society: <http://www.northhillhistory.co.uk/index.htm>.

## NEW VIEWS OF ST STEPHEN'S BEACON

Issue 49 (December 2020) included a piece about St Stephen's Beacon near Foxhole (HER 20651; St Stephen-in-Brannel/SW 9597 5452) which prompted two readers to very kindly share two very different images of the site.

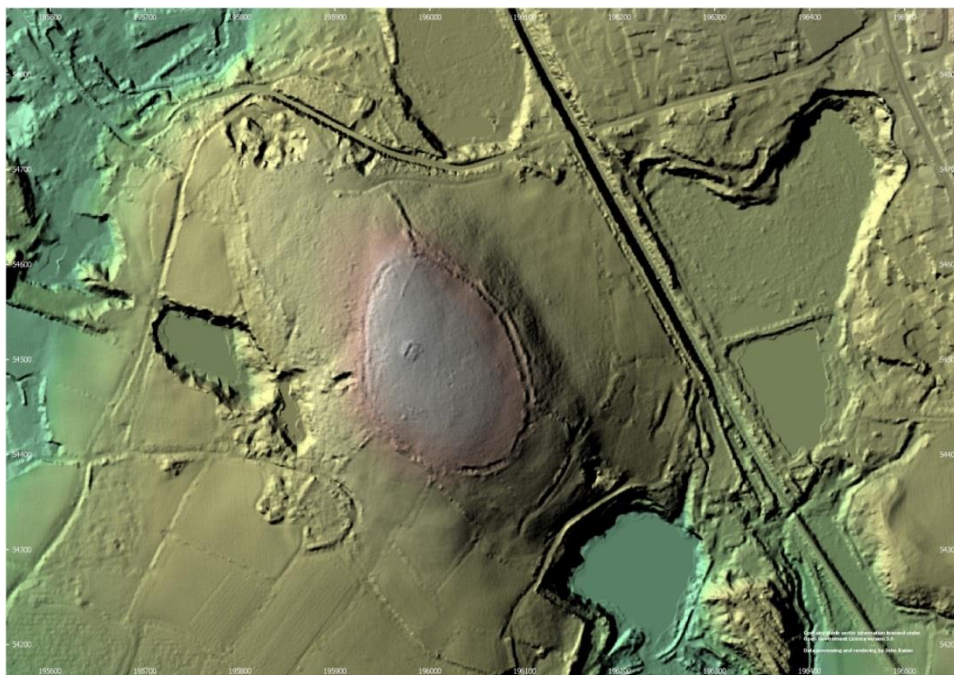
Malcolm Gould of the China Clay History Society and Luxulyan Old Cornwall Society came across this image of the hilltop, presumably in the days before it was designated as a Scheduled Monument:



Motorbike scramble event on the Beacon

Photo: The China Clay History Society

John Rainer is a CAS member with incredible expertise in extracting information from Lidar data. He sent this image in which the hilltop enclosure can be easily identified:



Contains public sector information licensed under Open Government Licence version 3.0. Data processing and rendering by John Rainer.



## CALM FOLLOWS STORM



Bude Storm Tower

Photo: Richard Heard

Issue 50 included a report by Richard Heard about the threat to the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'Storm Tower' at Compass Point near Bude (HER 170311; Bude-Stratton; SS 2004 0634). It had been moved at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century because of erosion but it seemed as if the threat had returned recently.

Very good news has been received from Ann Reynolds, Cornwall Council Senior Archaeologist. A Bude Storm Tower working group, led by Bude Town Council, with support and funding from Cornwall Council, has been seeking solutions to the problem for over a year. Huge progress has been made. Initial surveys have been conducted and finance will be sought from the National Heritage Lottery Fund as well, as a crowdfunder appeal. More details about the Save Our Storm Tower campaign can be found here:

<http://budeandbeyond.co.uk/save-our-storm-tower-a-plea-from-the-town-council/> .

## ECHOES OF THE QUARRYMEN



A pink granite variant called Luxullianite (other spellings are used)

In case anyone walking around Luxulyan has forgotten that it is a granite area, this stone outside the school gives a useful reminder. For centuries, moorstone in the form of large natural boulders was used for building, for example in the parish church.



Moorstone boulders are still abundant but deeper quarrying developed from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Large quarries continued until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century but most were unable to compete with cheaper imported stone, although the last quarry only ceased operation in the 1990s.



**Large boulders are a feature in many fields still.**



**Luxulyan Quarry ceased operation in the 1990s. Part is now a SSSI. There is no public access.**



Sign to what is still called the 'quarry road'.

The legacy of quarrying is still easily traced. Granite buildings, such as the Treffry Viaduct, are well known but granite from the area has been used widely in a wide range of structures and can be identified by its large feldspar crystals.



The Treffry Viaduct and aqueduct, built between 1839 and 1842.

But there are other, humbler, clues to the products of the quarry men. In John Smith's report on the Luxulyan Valley Project he quotes Tom Luxon 'the last surviving stonemason in Luxulyan':

'Back years ago there was quite a number of places that men seem to have got in and they grabbed the stone here and there and made a bob or two, but not as their permanent job,

maybe working Saturdays. Making these here mill stones, pig troughs, bird baths and all things like that. They also made sundials and if they saw a decent bit of stone by the side of the road they'd go for it and cart it away in a horse and cart, carry it where they lived and knock it out. This was going on for about twenty years when times were hard. It was a really hard life. But of course they were good men, good workers and they knew what they were doing.'

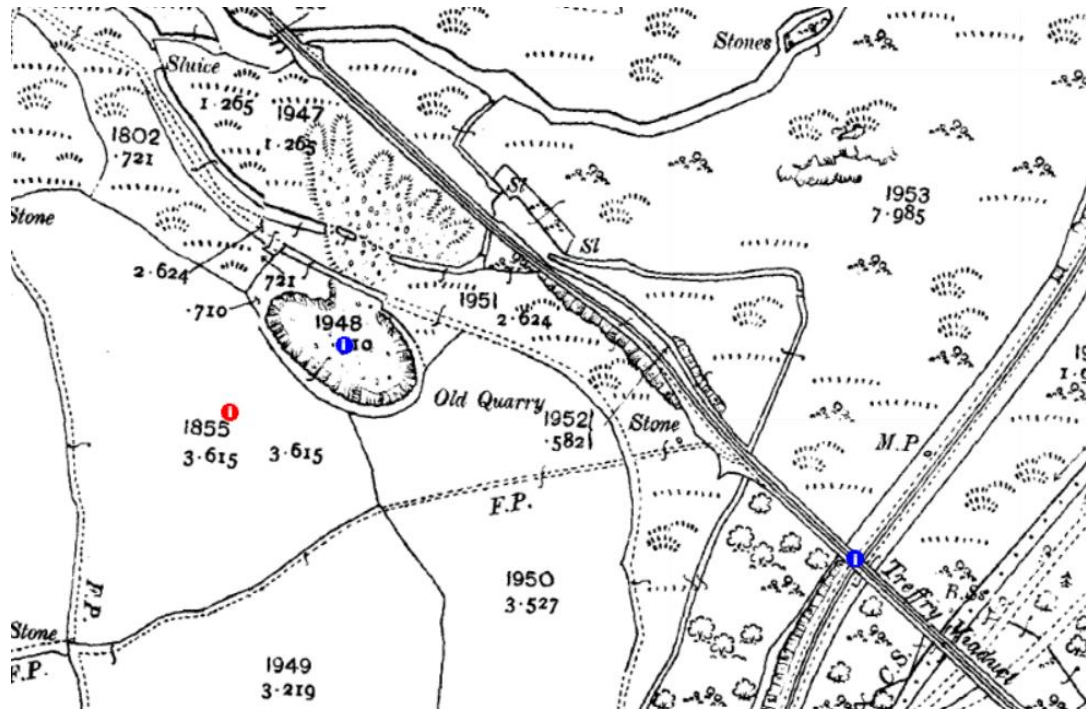
(From: *The Luxulyan Valley Project: An Archaeological and Historical Survey*, John Smith (Cornwall Archaeological Unit 1988. A link is available from the website of the Friends of Luxulyan Valley: <https://www.luxulyanvalley.co.uk/the-valley/arch-survey/> .)

The bigger quarries, like Carbeans, Colcerrow and Luxulyan Quarry itself are not accessible to the public but some of the smaller ones are.



Rock Mill Quarry

An intriguing example is Cam Bridges Quarry. John Smith and his team couldn't find documentation for this small quarry so gave it this name; Heritage Gateway also refers to it as Tregonning Quarry (HER 57852; Luxulyan; SX 0541 5729). The OS map for 1906-08 shows the quarry and finger dumps (see blue dot in map below), as well as the Carmears Leat (which flowed on through the Treffry aqueduct and originally powered a waterwheel for the incline plane to Pons Mill) and Treffry's tramway. A public footpath runs through the site and despite heavy vegetation growth it is possible to see these features.



Cam Bridges quarry, 1906-08 OS map

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[https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=9&xcoord=205414&ycoord=57309&wsName=CIOS\\_historic\\_environment&layerName=Buildings,%20Sites%20and%20Monuments%20-%20points](https://map.cornwall.gov.uk/website/ccmap/?zoomlevel=9&xcoord=205414&ycoord=57309&wsName=CIOS_historic_environment&layerName=Buildings,%20Sites%20and%20Monuments%20-%20points)



The footpath uses a causeway to cross Cam Bridges quarry



This finger dump 'bridges' the (now dry) Carmears leat so the quarry and leat could co-exist.

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The tramway system, bridges and incline planes not only facilitated the operations of the quarries but needed local granite to be constructed in the first place. The next photo shows a granite sett on the Rock Mill Quarry Tramway (HER 9100; Lanlivery; approximately SX 0689 5622).



Dealing with large boulders or extracting granite from quarries requires strength, precision and patience, all the more so in the early days of hand-drilling:

“...blasting was undertaken to open up the joint and loosen the block from its bed, black powder being used for the purpose. Two holes were drilled in the block, powder was tamped into them with a wooden rod, and then fired by either electricity or a safety fuse. Before the days of compressed-air drills, this initial drilling had to be carried out by hand. Three or four men were employed, one holding a rod and two delivering blows from heavy sledge hammers. These steel rods were up to 18ft long and 4in diameter and had to be held and twisted by two quarrymen after each double blow from the hammers.

‘After a large block was loosened it had to be cut into smaller pieces for lifting. This was done by drilling a line of small holes about 3in depth, putting two steel ‘feathers’ into each one, and driving a steel-wedge plug between them. Then starting at one end of the line, the quarrymen would tap each plug once, repeating the process three or four times until the rock was split by the gradual tightening of the wedges.’

From: *Industrial Archaeology of Cornwall* by A.C. Todd and Peter Laws (David and Charles, 1972).

Granite setts appear to be little more than crudely squared lumps of granite but that is deceiving because producing standardised objects from granite was a demanding task. In his survey of Luxulyan Valley, John Smith quotes from the contract for the building of an early tramway:

‘All rocks met with in forming the line may be cleaved into blocks of 2 feet by 1ft 6ins and from 9 and a half ins to 12 inches thick except every 5<sup>th</sup> block which shall be 2 feet square for which the takers shall receive the same price as paid for all the other blocks which may be required for the line. The blocks shall be well bedded and the bed for the saddle [to hold the rail] shall be parallel with the bed of the block, two holes to be bored 5 inches deep’ (John Smith, 1988, page 108).



Granite setts on the tramway near Luxulyan



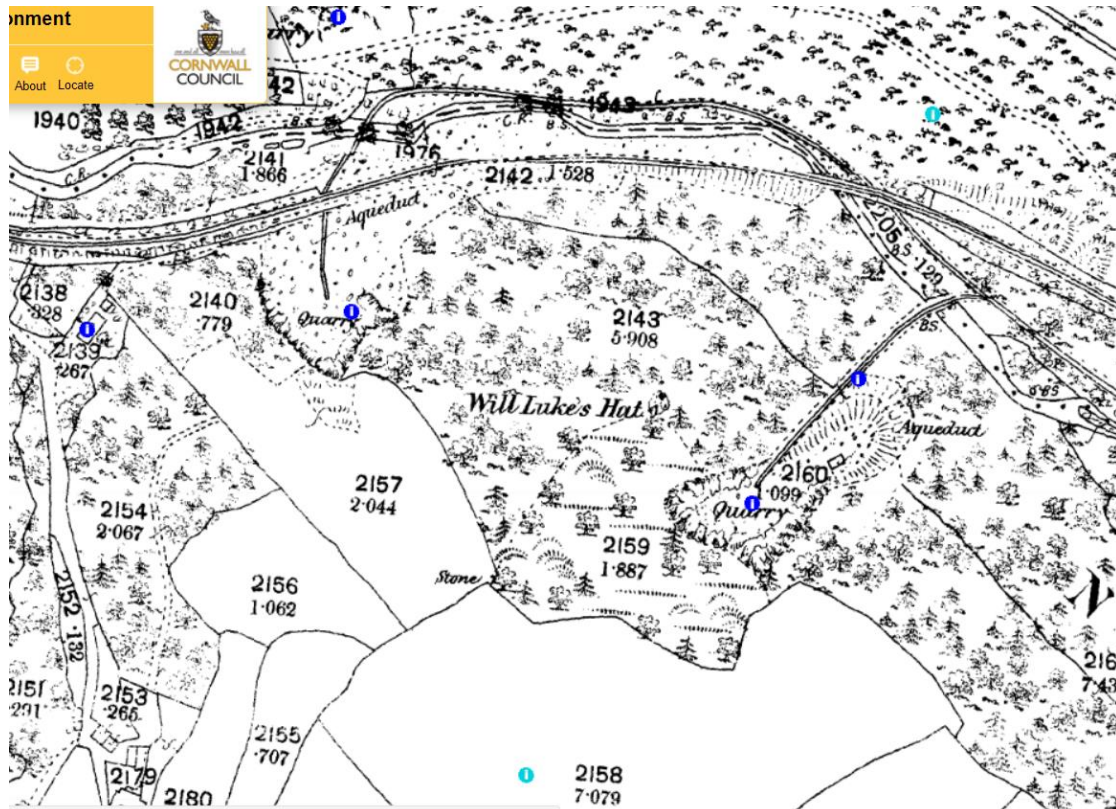
The line of granite orthostats in the next photo is to the left (north) of the Rock Mill Quarry tramway and represents a late 19<sup>th</sup> century form of hedging that is not uncommon in the area.



Unsurprisingly there were accidents and fatalities. For example, on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1886, the Royal Cornwall Gazette reported:

‘On Saturday morning a serious accident occurred at one of Messrs. Freeman’s granite quarries between St Blazey and Luxulyan. The men were blasting rock in the usual manner, and, having lit the fuse, retired under the bridge of the Cornwall Minerals railway for shelter until after the explosion. Unfortunately, however, a large piece of stone weighing half a ton was blown with great force over the incline, down which it rolled, in its course striking a wall and then rolling through the archway where the men were standing. The men seeing their coming danger, tried to avoid it, but a lad named Varcoe, of Rosemelling, was fearfully crushed, one leg and thigh being broken, and other parts of his body dreadfully cut and bruised. Charles Ley and John Ley, father and son, of St Blazey, also received severe cuts, as did a man named Tuck, of Tywardreath Highway. Several other men were knocked down, but fortunately escaped with only a few bruises. The lad Varcoe and others were taken to the offices on the works, where Drs S.S. Davies and W.Pace attended as quickly as possible. The two Leys and Tuck were conveyed to their homes, where they are now progressing favourably. The poor lad Varcoe lingered about two hours, when death put an end to his suffering. No blame is attached to anyone.’

Exactly where did this tragedy occur? In the following extract from the OS map of the 1880s there are 2 quarries, each of which has two blue HER dots; the western quarry is Rock Mill Quarry, with Orchard Quarry to the east. The Cornwall Minerals Railway (now the Par to Newquay Atlantic Line) is visible to the north of both quarries.



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Near Orchard Quarry the railway is carried over the river on a viaduct. Possibly the quarrymen might have sheltered behind one of the piers.



The next photo shows a clapper-style bridge across the Par River, and beyond that, an incline plane leading to Orchard Quarry (HER 9275; Luxulyan; SX 0610 5672). The railway viaduct is out of sight and to the right.



However, the Rock Mill Quarry tramway passes under the Cornwall Minerals Railway into the quarry and shelter under this bridge looks more appealing, which makes this quarry the more likely accident scene.



Looking south towards Rock Mill Quarry with the CMR bridge in the foreground.



Looking north from Rock Mill Quarry towards the tramway which passed under the CMR.

It is easy to overlook how events like this must have affected families and the local community. The burial records show that William was only 14 when he died. The entry from the 1881 census shows a large family that relied on quarrying:

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8,Rosemelling,1,John Grose Varcoe,Head,M,42,,Stone
Cutter,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,Elizabeth J. Varcoe,Wife,M,,43,,Crowan Cornwall,,
,,,John Varcoe,Son,S,18,,Stone Cutter,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,Richard Varcoe,Son,,15,,Stone Cutter,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,Emily Varcoe,Dau,,,14,Scholar,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,Louisa Varcoe,Dau,,,12,Scholar,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,William Varcoe,Son,,8,,Scholar,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,Philip Varcoe,Son,,7,,Scholar,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,Mary Sarah Varcoe,Dau,,,4,,Luxulyan Cornwall,,
,,,James Varcoe,Son,,1,,,Luxulyan Cornwall,
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Source: Cornwall Online Census Project: <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~kayhin/82289.html> .

Another accident, still referred on occasion by local people, was self inflicted. Explosives were not always handled with care, so accidents occurred. The burial register includes this for 1872:

*Frederic Edwards, Chollow [Challow], December 12 1872, 20. Killed by explosion of dynamite.*

This appears to have been the result of drying gunpowder in a cottage at Challow, north of Luxulyan village.



Challow. The explosion that killed Frederic Edwards occurred in the cottage second in the row from the road.

But quarrymen's lives did not lack fun. To simulate the sound of church bells, metal jumpers (rock drills) would be placed in holes made in boulders and struck. Tom Luxon recalled:

'I'd love for you to hear about half a dozen of those jumpers, you mightn't believe it, it was beautiful. The blacksmith used to tune 'em up, get 'em different sounds, different weights. Years ago here, some of them that were stone people: if there was a wedding they would have half a dozen of they to ring instead of bells. It was beautiful.'

Quoted in *The Luxulyan Valley Project: An Archaeological and Historical Survey*, John Smith (Cornwall Archaeological Unit, 1988).

The following photo shows holes drilled in a boulder close to the village. It is not known if these held metal jumpers as described by Tom Luxon, or were merriment holes, filled with gunpowder, sealed with a clay plug and lit with a fuse to celebrate some special event. The

holes are not in a straight line as might be expected if the boulder was being split. (Size 8 boot for scale – we have to have some certainty in this matter!)



Quarrying has ceased in the area, the skills of the quarrymen have been forgotten, and the quarries have become rich habitats, but the archaeological evidence is not hard to discover.

**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](mailto:arearep@cornisharchaeology.org.uk) .**







