

O.C.S. Summer Fest 2013

Pur lowen ov-vy dhe vos omma hedhyu yn Goel Hav an Kowethasow Kernow Goth hag yma dhe eseli an bagas Kambronn, an degves ha peswar ugens penn-bloedh, an dre Trevithick. I am very happy to be here today for the Summer Festival of the Old Cornwall Society and the 90th birthday of its branch in Camborne, the home of Richard Trevithick.

Yn kuntellow Kernow Goth, y klywir y lavar koth, "Kuntellewgh remenant an temmyn may ny gyll travydh." Yn kynsa lyver-termyn an Kowethasow Kernow Goth, henwys Kernow Goth a vis Ebrel, yn blydhen mil naw kans pymp warnugens, Nance a skrifas adro an devynn tamm-ma mes ev a skrifas adro an spyrys kernewek ynwedh, ow hernewekder ha dhe dhevynna 'ow y witha'. Ytho, yn y dybyans, yma dhe demmyn an spyrys kernewek.

At Old Cornwall meetings, we often hear its motto, "Gather ye the fragments that are left, that nothing be lost". In the first issue of the Old Cornwall Society's magazine, called Old Cornwall, in April 1925, Nance wrote about this fragment quote, but went on to include the Cornish spirit as well, our Cornishness and to quote, 'holding on to it'. So in his view, fragments includes the Cornish Spirit.

But what is Cornishness?

It is all those things that make us different from other races. As my grandmother would say, 'All those things we d'belong to do'. This is far harder to perpetuate than to keep actual physical objects and memorabilia.

So how are we different?

1. Firstly we have our own Cornish language- Kernewek. We can see it written down in the old writings like the Ordinalia, Bewnans Meriasek, Bewnans Ke.

2. We have a

different folklore with King Arthur, piskies, giants.

3. Different music like Bro Goth, Camborne Hill, Trelawny, Fishermans Friends, Crowns, Cornish bagpipes and in 2012 and 2013, Benjad alias Benjamin Larham from St. Austell, won the Pan Celtic Song competition in Ireland.

4. Sports like Pilot-gig racing, Cornish wrestling and Rugby Union. We have to remember that in 1908, the whole Cornish Team represented Great Britain in the Olympics in London and made it to the Final, only to be beaten by Australasia, the best of Australia and New Zealand. So the Cornish team ended up with the silver medal for Great Britain.

5. We have different symbols including the Celtic cross, the Awen, the Cornish chough, our tartans which we proudly wear, and St. Piran's flag which is seen more and more each year, both flying proudly over Cornish buildings and on packaging for Cornish goods because the word 'Cornish' has become synonymous with best quality.

5. The Arts including the Minack Theatre, what a jewel in our cliffs that is. Tristan and Iseult, the Newlyn School of Art, Cornwall Film Festival.

6. Our Festivals: St. Piran's

Day, the Furry Dance, Golowan, 'Obby 'Oss, Maizy Day and Tom Bawcock's Eve.

7. Our cuisine, that's a posh word for what we'd belong to 'ate'! This includes saffron buns,

heavy cake, hog's pudding, Star Gazey Pie, Cornish fairings, Yarg cheese, our Cornish pasties, once survival food but now a tasty lunch for one and all, our Cornish cream with a lovely crust on top; others can't seem to copy the crust somehow which is why they spread the cream on their splits or scones FIRST, under the jam, 'cos tis like butter and best hidden!

How to do we hold onto the Cornish spirit, our Cornish difference and preserve it?

We will do this by promoting our distinctiveness at all times, making it alive, current –in other words, we should express our individuality in the community, for all to see. As Grand Bard on civic occasions I proudly wear the copper plastron I have on today. I have worn it in Wales, Brittany and recently in Australia at functions with our 42 Cornish bards who live there. I make sure it is always shining and can't be missed, especially in this sunshine! People are drawn to stare at it. I have lost count how many times people have come up to me and said, "What's that?" This is my opener for explaining what the Gorsedh is, what a bard is, what it means to be Cornish and what makes us different and distinctive. We are Cornish first and British, in fact Ancient Britons. A Cornish bard in Australia refers to the Saxons etc., as ' Johnny Come Latelies'. I think that sums it up. As I have demonstrated, we have a Cornish culture, a living breathing culture. We welcome people to come and live amongst us and enjoy our Cornish life. Let them not pretend we do not have a culture and try to superimpose their culture on us, because the answer will always be, "No thank you, we have our own culture and 'we've taken a liking, to what we'd belong to do!"

So what is the way forward?

1. Firstly we need to use the language more. The community needs to use simple greetings in Cornish in the street. Let's make it 'cool', as the young ones say, to greet each other with 'Dydh da' instead of 'Hello'. It will mark us out as being different to visitors and incomers. Let's celebrate and promote our difference.
2. We need to continue organising and enjoying our festivals, out in the communities, our customary events throughout the calendar like Maizy Day and hurling. Last year I was invited to so many St.Piran's Day events, I was kept going for a week, from Redruth's procession on the Saturday before, to Liskeard in the following week. Splann o. Brilliant!
3. We need to engage with Cornish Youth. Young people like to push the boundaries, be involved with anti-establishment things. We saw this clearly when we marched against Devonwall and the pasty tax. There were hundreds of young people marching, dressed over all in black and white, or tartan. It's 'cool' to demonstrate against issues we do not agree with. The Cornish have been doing it for years. So let's get more young people on board with us; they like to push the rules. Let's harness that.
4. We need to get Cornish History taught in schools. Mr.Michael Gove, the Education Minister in Westminster, has announced this week that only British history will be taught in his new history curriculum. In the primary school, history will only be taught up to 1066. This is our opportunity to get Cornish History, our Ancient British history, taught in Cornish

schools. Let the Cornish children know their history and their heritage. In Cornwall, we certainly don't want English history taught and passed off as OUR history.

By doing these things, we would be promoting our Cornishness for all to see and informing them that we are different. Latterly our DNA has been tested in Oxford, and it was found that we ARE different. So let's celebrate it. By continually demonstrating our different way of life and celebrating the things that we hold dear, this will inform people who come to live amongst us that this is what 'we'd belong to do here' and more importantly demonstrate to our children that this is what is important to our nation, and this is what needs to be continued by them, into posterity.

Omlowenha agas goel hedhyu. Enjoy your festival today. Kernow bys vykken.

Steren Mor

Bardh Meur Kernow

Maureen Fuller

Grand Bard of Cornwall