

Winter Festival at Wadebridge

Merv Davey pipes in the banners

[http://www.oldcornwall.org/winter%20fest%202009/Piping%20in%20the%20banners%2014%20November%202009%20\(11\).WAV](http://www.oldcornwall.org/winter%20fest%202009/Piping%20in%20the%20banners%2014%20November%202009%20(11).WAV)

Almost 200 members of Old Cornwall Societies from as far afield as Penzance in the west, Mullion in the south, and Torpoint in the east, braved stormy weather to meet at Wadebridge in the north for their Federation's Winter Festival at the Town Hall.

The afternoon's events got off to a lively start with a parade of the Societies' colourful banners led around the hall by the Gorsedh's piper, Merv Davey of Withiel, and Charles Skinner of Redruth bearing the Federation's banner. This was followed by the traditional roll call of the Societies in attendance.

Helen Richards, President of the Wadebridge Old Cornwall Society extended a welcome to their town.

The Federation's newly-installed President, Terry Knight of St Agnes spoke of the forthcoming 90th anniversary of their movement in 2010. It will be celebrated at St Ives next year with the Gorsedh taking place there. Par Old Cornwall Society will be celebrating its 60th anniversary by hosting the Federation's Summer Festival in July. Several other Societies will be celebrating landmark 'birthdays' too, illustrating the movement's great success.

A fascinating talk, on the theme of witchcraft, conjurors, cunning folk, charmers and ghosts in Cornish folklore, was given by Jason Semmens, originally of Camborne, and now a Museum Curator in Horsham, Sussex, who had travelled to Cornwall for the occasion. He drew on the extensive resources compiled by the late Mr William (Bill) Paynter of Callington, and emphasized the value of the records created by Old Cornwall members over decades. It prompted enthusiastic questions from those present. The Federation published his book about Paynter and his work as "The Cornish Witch-finder" in 2008, and it is finding a ready audience.

After tea and saffron buns, members were greatly entertained by Withiel couple, Merv Davey - on banjo - and his wife Alison - in full period costume - with a rousing selection of Cornish dances in imitation of Harry and Carrie, a duo who lived at St Blazey in the early 20th century. Mr Davey is the Folk Song & Music Recorder of the Federation and well-known in Cornish musical circles.

A vote of thanks was offered by the Federation's Deputy President, Andrew Langdon of Truro, and the Festival closed with the singing of "Trelawny".

Our thanks to Pauline Hope for the photographs and recordings of musical items