

# Winter Festival at Wadebridge Town Hall

Saturday 13th November 2010

Around 200 members of Old Cornwall Societies throughout Cornwall gathered at Wadebridge Town Hall on Saturday 13th November for their annual Winter Festival, to be welcomed by the strains of accordion music provided by Mark Hawken of the local Old Cornwall Society.

At 2:00pm the banners of attending societies led by the Federation's banner-bearer, Charles Skinner of Redruth, were piped into the hall by its Music and Folk Song Recorder, Merv Davey of Withiel. The splendidly colourful parade attracted loud clapping from those present.

The President, Terry Knight of St Agnes, then read the roll call, with members of each Society standing in turn to signal their presence to their companion Societies' members. Mr Knight welcomed members to the Festival and promised an afternoon of celebration of the music, dance and dialect so keenly collected and recorded by Old Cornwall Societies in past decades, and being collected still.

Proper Job, a group of singers from Camborne to St Agnes area led by David Oates of Camborne Old Cornwall Society, began proceedings with an excellent selection of popular Cornish songs, including some from the Barber family of St Ives. Mr Oates also read a highly amusing dialect tale from the many written by the renowned Camborne writer, the late Herbert Lean. Both music and dialect were received with resounding applause.

Immense hilarity was prompted by a number of humorous and typically-Cornish yarns told by John Bennallack of St Wenn, a member of St Columb Old Cornwall Society. Mr Bennallack has a CD available of a selection of his tales, and has raised over £10,000 so far for charitable beneficiaries.

Alison Davey of Withiel then introduced Tan ha Dowr (Fire and Water), a youth dance group she trains, remarking that the performances to be seen had all been based upon Old Cornwall-recorded dances. The girls, dressed in striking black dresses decorated with colourful motifs, introduced each dance, and gave stirring and energetic life to the proceedings with their beautifully executed performances. Members were clearly impressed, giving them a very enthusiastic reaction.

After a break for tea and a saffron bun, catered by Wadebridge Old Cornwall Society, and the customary raffle, Proper Job took the stage again and led members in singing some Cornish Christmas carols, and Mr Oates read another Herbert Lean tale.

Robert Evans, President of Pentewan Old Cornwall Society and Deputy President of the Federation, gave a vote of thanks, remarking on how good it was to be able to enjoy the real sounds, sights and words of Cornwall's culture. Everyone sang Trelawny and a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon drew to a close.



