

The St Agnes Cuckoo

Now they St Agnes boys noticed that the cuckoo was always there in summer and one said to the others, "If we can keep that there cuckoo 'ere then we shall 'ave summer the whole year 'round".

Next thing, they spotted a cuckoo in a field and they crept in and started to build a hedge around it. Well, the old cuckoo seemed quite happy at first but then he must have run out of food because he up and flew off, just skimming the top of the hedge as he did. "There," said one of the boys, "one more dob 'n we'd 'ave 'ad 'n!"

John Kinsman's referred to the story in a book dated 1921

"Some humourist reported that he had seen some miners at St Agnes building a hedge round a cuckoo, so that it could not fly away, and that when the bird escaped one exclaimed that had they built one turf higher success would have been assured."

M H Bizley also referred to the story in his book 'Friendly Retreat' published in 1955

The men of St Agnes noticed that when the cuckoo was uttering its curious call, summer was nigh high. "If," said the men of St Agnes, "we can build a hedge about the cuckoo and keep him, then shall we have summer time all the year round". Although they built their hedge as fast as possible the bird took wing and flew away. "There now!" exclaimed the disappointed hedgebuilders, "If us had put on one daub more, us would have kep' en in!" This is one of many variations of the story, in all of which the poor St Agnes men are held to ridicule.