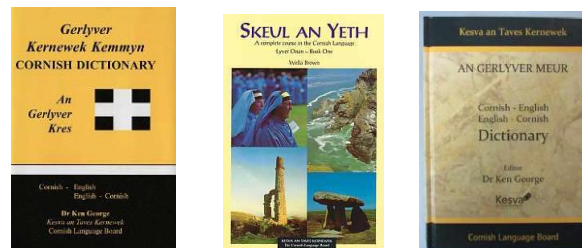


## Cornish Language Group Beginners Program

### Dyskans Onan (Lesson One): Introduction

#### About this program

This program is in the version of the Cornish language called '*Kernewek Kemmyn*' or '*Common Cornish*'. This version of Cornish is based on the language used in the period centering around 1500 CE, the '*golden period*' of Cornish literature. The modern spelling is phonemic, where the pronunciation of each word is accurately reproduced in the spelling. The argument goes that that once the system is grasped, reading Cornish is quite straightforward. Yer right! This program reflects the work of Wella Brown's: '*Skeul an Yeth: Steus dhien a'n yeth Kernewek*' (Lyver Onan) translated as: '*Language Ladder: A complete course in the Cornish language*' (Book 1). It's available as a free download at: <http://www.kesva.org/sites/default/files/documents/Skeul%20an%20Yeth%201.pdfson> 1 The Cornish Dictionary used is Ken George's: '*Gerlyver Kernewek Kemmyn – An Gerlyver Kres*' (1993) and the later version: '*An Gerlyver Meur: Cornish-English, English-Cornish Dictionary*' (2009)



#### Different versions of Cornish

'*Kernewek Kemmyn*' (Common Cornish or KK) is a variety of the revived Cornish language. It was developed, mainly by Ken George, from what was called '*Unified Cornish*' in 1986. It takes its inspiration from medieval sources, particularly Cornish passion plays. It uses phonemic rules relating spelling to pronunciation. The '*Standard Written Form*' (*Furv Skrifys Savonek* or *FSS*, but often referred to as *SWF*) was introduced in 2008. FSS is the standard spelling system for use in public life (such as welcome signs) and also in schools. However, there are currently more books and other written material available in KK, but these two versions are very similar anyway e.g. **dynargh** and **dynnargh** for '*welcome*'. In 2008 a survey indicated that KK users made up more than half of all Cornish speakers. 73.9% of '*competent and frequent*' writers of Cornish used KK. Other Cornish speakers, however, chose to continue using '*Unified Cornish*' (*Unyes*), developed by Robert Morton Nance. Some, like Nicholas Williams, supported a redeveloped '*Unified Cornish*' as '*Unified Cornish Revised*' or UCR. Others supported a version of '*Unified Cornish*' as '*Kernowek Standard*' (Standard Cornish or KS). There are a number of websites that pronounce words in '*Unified Cornish*' or even other versions. Be careful that you try and find the sites in KK. We will prepare a list of these for a future meeting. If you are as confused as we are you could also learn '*Modern Cornish*' (Kernuack Nowedga) sponsored by Richard Gendall. We will stick with '*Kernewek Kemmyn*' (KK).

**Consonants:** are pronounced as in English but the following should be noted:

- **DH:** pronounced '*th*' as in the English word '*with*' – Example: '*Dydh da*' which is pronounced as '*Dith da*' (Good Day). The '*i*' can be elongated to **almost** an '*ee*' sound – hence some say '*Deeth da*'.
- **GH:** pronounced, when at the end of a word, like the Scottish '*ch*' in '*loch*'. When between two vowels or in the groups '*lgh*' and '*rg*' it is a strongly stressed '*h*' as in the English word '*aha!*' – Example of GH use: '*Gorthugher*' which is pronounced as '*Gorthooher*' (Evening). The **GH** at the end of a word is pronounced as '*ch*' as in '*loch*' or as in the German '*achtung*', so it **almost sounds like a 'g'**, but not quite.

- **HW:** is so written to preserve the influence of the 'h' as in the English word 'when' – *Example: Hweg* which is pronounced as 'Wheg' (Dear).
- **TH:** pronounced 'th' as in the English word 'thin'
- **YW:** In the middle of a word the sound is illustrated in the name **Pythywwar**. **Pyth yw war** is pronounced **Pith ee war** and means 'What is on' in English. It is used for the name 'Watson' as in Dr. Watson in Sherlock Holmes. **YW** on its own has the sound similar to the 'ew' sound in the English word flew. The **YW** is then pronounced as in 'you' in English.

**Vowels:** should be pronounced as follows:

- **A:** The sound is as in 'bat', but only when followed by a doubled consonant e.g. **dannvon** (which means to send). It is sounded more as in 'father' but not quite so long when stressed e.g. the first syllable of **bara** (pronounced as **bar-a** which means 'bread' in English).
- **E:** When followed by a doubled consonant or in an unstressed syllable, the sound is as in English 'bet' e.g. **penn** (head in English), **tiek** (farmer in English). When followed by a single consonant or stressed it has the same sound but lengthened as in French "tête" or "frêne".
- **EU:** the 'eu' as in French 'peur', which might be pronounced as 'purr' in English.
- **I:** Sounds as EE in 'beet' e.g. **gwir**, pronounced as **gweer**, which means 'true' in English.
- **OE:** This is pronounced as in the 'oa' of the English words 'boat' or 'toe', or even as the French word 'eau'. For example: **boes** is pronounced as **bows** and this means 'food' in English.
- **OU:** the 'oo' of the English word 'boot'. For example: **gour**, pronounced as **goor**, which means 'husband' in English.
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- **U:** the 'u' of French 'tu'
- **Y:** pronounced 'i' as in the English word 'system' – *Example: 'Dydh da'* is pronounced as 'Dith da', which means 'Good Day' in English. Another example is **bys**, which is pronounced as **bis** meaning 'world' in English. When followed by a vowel the sound is as in English e.g. **redya**, pronounced as **redya**, which means 'to read' in English.

*Note: See 'Tips, Tricks and Cheats to help you pronounce words in Cornish' for more details.*