

The Cornish Association of Victoria Inc. Ballarat Branch

A.C.N. A0008 264A

June 2024 Newsletter

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Saturday 1st June 2024 - Annual General Meeting - the speaker will be Brian Rollason, President of the Cornish Association of Victoria. The Annual Election of Office Bearers and Committee will take place during the meeting. Office Bearer Positions:

Chairperson Vice-Chairperson

Administrative Secretary

Treasurer

Saturday 3rd August 2024 - a speaker from the Chinese Australian Cultural Society Ballarat will share information about the Chinese in the development of Ballarat

Saturday 5th October 2024 - TBA

Saturday 7th December 2024 - Christmas Luncheon at the Grand in Dana Street

Agan Kernow

The book is available for purchase by CAV Members, relatives and friends. This is a 262-page book of 76 stories by 51 authors from across the Cornish diaspora.

The purchase price is \$25 - speak with Robyn Coates to purchase a copy.



Vale - John Mildren

20th October 1932 - 25th April 2024

John was born in Colac to parents Malcolm Edmond and Verona Alice (m/s Healey) Mildren. John's father was a policeman.

The Mildren family were from the Parish of St Keverne on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. William and Grace Mildren (great, great grandparents of John) arrived in SA in 1856 and travelled to Victoria, settling at Staghorn Flat near Beechworth.

John attended school in Geelong and later studied at the University of Melbourne and Texas A&M University.

He became a teacher, later rising to senior lecturer and head of department at Ballarat College of Advanced Education.

In 1957, John married Denise Rasmussen and together they had six children.

One of their daughters, Bridget, died in 1978 and sadly, his wife Denise died in 2007.

John was elected as the Federal Member for Ballarat from 1980, during the Hawke government years, until 1990.

John Mildren joined the Cornish Association of Victoria in January 1988 and was member 102.

Following a meeting organized by Eleanor Chisholm in June 1988, the Ballarat Branch was established. Foundation members were Eleanor Chisholm, Val

Normally meetings are held on the even months at Skipton Street Uniting Church Hall, cnr Darling and Skipton Streets, Ballarat.

Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and are followed by a shared high tea.



D'Angri, Lillian Dell, Glynis Hendrickson, Ian and Marilyn Jennings, Joy Menhennet, John Mildren, Brian and Stancie Mullins and Lenice Stuchbery.

John became a Ballarat CAV committee member (1988-1992); was vice president (1992 and 1997-1999) and became President (1992 -1996 and 1999-2014). His knowledge of Cornwall was immense, and he was a very good storyteller.

The John Mildren Award was created in 2011, by the CAV, for outstanding service in promoting Cornwall and Cornish activities in Victoria and the inaugural recipient was John Mildren.

John was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the 2018 Australia Day Honours, "for service to the Parliament of Australia, and the community of Ballarat."

John remained intensely interested in Cornwall and became a great friend to many members. His efforts in promoting Cornwall were outstanding and his friendship will be greatly missed.

John's funeral was held at St Patrick's Cathedral with many members of the Cornish Association in attendance.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QIA-Gm3cN8

Our thoughts are with his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

(reprinted from the May CAV Newsletter)







With Bill Phillips on the occasion of the presentation of the John Mildren Award; St Piran's Day Pasty and waiting at Flag Raising Ceremony.

Vale - William Ernest Allan Allen - 'Bill' 8th February 1934 - 25th April 2024

Bill Allen joined the Cornish Association in October 1988 and was vice-president of the Ballarat Branch for several years.

He was born in the Penzance hospital, in Cornwall, and lived with his mother, Muriel, and maternal grandparents William and Ellen Matthews, on a small farm at Tredavoe, a small hamlet/village west of Newlyn.

His father Ewart Orlando Allen was serving in the Royal Navy, until he was first demobbed in 1939 and then after the 2nd World War in 1945. He had one brother Percy.

Bill went to primary and secondary school in Newlyn and later attended Penzance Newlyn School of Art where he excelled.

As a child he enjoyed roaming around the old tin mines and 'pirate' caves around West Cornwall.

He played Rugby for the Penzance Pirates team, was a member of the Penzance YMCA, enjoyed ball room dancing, completed his apprenticeship as a carpenter, and then served two years of National Service with the Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry in Bermuda.

On returning home from National Service, in 1956, he emigrated to Australia, to marry his fiancée Joyce Hart who had emigrated with her family and was living in Ballarat. They married in 1956 and had two children - Peter and Penny.

Joyce died in 1990 following a stroke whilst recovering from a broken leg.

Bill worked all his life on the Victoria Railway as a Carpenter and served thirteen years in the Army Reserve.

He was a keen fly fisherman and a life member at Ballarat and a member of the Masonic Lodge and the RSL.

For many years he has lived in Kyneton with his partner Jackie Gander.

His service can be found here: https://tjscottandson.com.au/tribute/-NwMq3F885PEXw6wOVRq

April Meeting

Robyn Coates showed Slides of St Piran's Day Celebrations in Ballarat, Cornwall and Canada and of St Piran's Oratory in Cornwall.

To celebrate St Piran's day, we had a Church Service in the Skipton Street Uniting Church. The congregation always make us so welcome. It was a heritage type service with old Methodist Hymns and was followed with Morning Tea in the Hall and then lunch at Craigs Hotel.

Craigs began its life as Baths Hotel.

Thomas Bath was born in Penair, near Truro and came to Ballarat in the early days of the goldrush. He began in Geelong as a butcher. He then went to other areas before coming back to Ballarat.

Our next visit was to St Paul's Anglican Church on Bakery Hill. St Paul's dates to 1854. Tent services were held by the first resident Anglican clergyman on Bakery Hill in the general area of the current church.

Dr Anne Doggett has written a history of St Paul's and shared some of the history of the Church with us. Her main focus was on the stained glass window by Ballarat artist David Taylor Kellock and unveiled in December 1962.

It depicts Jesus asking Peter, "who say ye that I am" and Peter replying "thou art the Christ."

It may have been designed by Kellock's wife as her name appears in part of the window.

The window was presented to the church by the family of James Hicks Eddy and wife Mary Jane Lovell. Both were born in Cornwall and were married in the church in 1864.

Following a look around the church we had afternoon tea.

Thank you to Sue Lanyon.

Then we were off to Ballarat Central Uniting Church where David Pratt greeted us and shared with us some of stories of former parishioners with a Cornish connection.

Many had not seen a church with a balcony. Val D'Angri also told us about a series of stained Glass windows that came from Humffray Street Methodist Church that was sold to the Greek Orthodox Church. When sold Val arranged for the windows to be moved to Lydiard Street church.

Robyn then shared with us information concerning St Piran's Oratory and this can be found at: https://www.cornishvic.org.au/latenews.html

Wendy Benoit

May Festivals in Cornwall

1st May - Padstow - 'Obby 'Oss Festival

The 'Obby 'Oss festival takes place on May Day, 1st May, every year.

Two separate processions make their way around Padstow on circuits that take about twelve hours to complete.

Each procession represents a different half of the town's community - those supporting the Red 'Oss and those supporting the Blue 'Oss.

Supposedly, only those whose families have lived in Padstow for at least two generations are permitted to take part in the processions.

Each procession contains an 'Obby 'Oss - an hobby horse consisting of an oval frame covered in black oilskin, which has a small horse's head in the front with a snapping jaw.

This is led by an individual known as the Teaser, who is dressed in white and carries a painted club. The procession also contains a group of white-clad individuals, with red/blue scarves/sashes, some playing accordions and drums, and a huge crowd following all singing.

At times this tune becomes a dirge, at which the 'Obby 'Oss sinks to the ground and lies flat. When the chorus becomes triumphant again the 'Oss rises and continues along the procession.











8th May - Helston - Flora Day and the Furry Dance

This festival takes place in Helston and is one of the oldest British customs still practised. The earliest mention seems to be in a letter to the Gentleman's Magazine for 1790 where the writer says,

"At Helstone, a genteel and populus borough town in Cornwall, it is customary to dedicate the 8th May to revelry (festive mirth, not loose jollity). It is called Furry Day".

The Gentleman's Magazine 1790, Vol 60, p. 520

The Furry Dance takes place every year on 8th May (except when the date falls on a Sunday or Monday - Monday being Market Day - when it is the preceding Saturday).

In Helston, 8th May, is called Flora Day, and the term furry probably derives from the Cornish language: fer, "fair, feast".

It is a celebration of the passing of winter and the arrival of spring.

The Hal-an-Tow, which takes place on the same day, is a kind of mystery play with various historical and mythical themes.

The Hal-an-Tow Pageant starts at St John's Bridge and is performed at seven locations around the town.

Characters include Friar Tuck, Robin Hood, Saint George, and Saint Michael.

The Hal-an-Tow song welcomes the coming of summer.

It contains disparaging references to the Spaniards, probably referring to the Spanish raid on Newlyn in 1595



The schedule of the day is: morning dance at 7.00 am the first performance of the Hal-an-Tow pageant at 8.30 am with the last completed by 9.30 am, children's dance traditionally at 10.00 am, midday dance at noon, and evening dance at 5.00 pm. Of these, the midday dance is perhaps the best known: it was traditionally the dance of the gentry in

the town, and today the men wear top hats and tails while the women dance in their finest frocks.





Photos are from cornwalllive.com

Children's Dance can be viewed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zC1NiK8kGw Mid-day dance:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68m5wpcMScA Evening dance:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL-sZX7huDw Hal an tow:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRIxZ7QkrpE

Some tidbits regarding these two festivals

from Popular Romances of the West of England collected and edited by Robert Hunt [1903, 3rd edition] - from a CD - Cornwall 60 Old Books and 8 Parish Registers

MAY-DAY

THE first of May is inaugurated with much uproar. As soon as the clock has told of midnight, a loud blast on tin trumpets proclaims the advent of May. This is long continued.

At daybreak, with their "tintarrems," they proceed to the country, and strip the sycamore-trees (called May-trees) of all their young branches, to make whistles.

With these shrill musical instruments they return home. Young men and women devote May-day to junketing and picnics.

It was a custom at Penzance, and probably at many other Cornish towns, when the author was a boy, for a number of young people to sit up until twelve o'clock, and then to march round the town with violins and fifes, and summon their friends to the Maying.

When all were gathered, they went into the country, and were welcomed at the farmhouses at which they called, with some refreshment in the shape of rum and milk, junket, or something of that sort.

They then gathered the "May," which included the young branches of any tree in blossom or fresh leaf. The branches of the sycamore were especially cut for the purpose of making the "May-music."

This was done by cutting a circle through the bark to the wood a few inches from the end of the branch.

The bark was wetted and carefully beaten until it was loosened and could be slid off from the wood.

The wood was cut angularly at the end, so as to form a mouth-piece, and a slit was made in both the bark and the wood, so that when the bark was replaced a whistle was formed.

Prepared with a sufficient number of May whistles, all the party returned to the town, the band playing, whistles blowing, and the young people singing some appropriate song.

The Day Song

Awake, St. George, our English knight, For summer is a' come O, and winter is ago; And every day God give us His grace By day and by night O!

Where is St. George, where is he O?
He is out in his long boat all on the salt sea O!
And in every land O! the land where'er we go,
And for to fetch the summer home.
The summer and the May O,
For summer is a conic,
And winter is a go.

Where are the French dogs that make such boast O? They shall eat the grey goose feather, And we will cattle roast O! And in every land O! the land where'er we go, The summer and the May O

Thou mightst have shown thy knavish face! Thou mightst have tarried at home O! But thou shalt be an old cuckold, And thou shalt wear the horns O; The summer and the May O.

"THE FURRY "- HELSTONE

THIS ancient custom, which consists in dancing through the streets of the town, and entering the houses of rich and poor alike, is thus well described:

On the 8th of May, at Helstone, in Cornwall, is held what is called 'the Furry.'

The word is supposed by Mr Polwhele to have been derived from the old Cornish word fir, a fair or jubilee. The morning is ushered in by the music of drums and kettles, and other accompaniments of a song, a great part of which is inserted in Mr Polwhele's history, where this circumstance is noticed.

So strict is the observance of this day as a general holiday, that should any person be found at work, he is instantly seized, set astride on a pole, and hurried on men's shoulders to the river, where he is sentenced to leap over a wide place, which he, of course, fails in

attempting, and leaps into the water.

A small contribution towards the good cheer of the day easily compounds for the leap.

About nine o'clock the revellers appear before the grammar school, and demand a holiday for the schoolboys, after which they collect contributions from houses.

They then fade into the country (fade being an old English word for go), and, about the middle of the day, return with flowers and oak-branches in their hats and caps.

From this time, they dance hand in hand through the streets, to the sound of the fiddle, playing a particular tune, running into every house they pass without opposition.

In the afternoon, a select party of the ladies and gentlemen make a progress through the street, and very late in the evening repair to the ball-room.

A stranger visiting the town on the eighth of May would really think the people mad, so apparently wild and thoughtless is the merriment of the day.

There is no doubt of 'the Furry' originating from the 'Floralia,' anciently observed by the Romans "on the fourth of the calends of May."

The song

Take the scorn and wear the horns
It was the crest when you were born
Your father's father wore it
And your father wore it too

Robin Hood and Little John Have both gone to the fair-o We shall to the merry green wood To hunt the buck and hare-o

Chorus

Hal-an-Tow, jolly rumbelow
We were up long before the day-o
To welcome in the summertime
To welcome in the May-o
For summer is coming in
And winter's gone away

What happened to the Spaniards
That made so great a boast-o?
They shall eat the feathered goose
And we shall eat the roast-o

God bless Aunt Mary Moses With all her power and might-o Send us peace in England Send us peace by day and night-o

(sung only at St John's Bridge)

Madron and Trafalgar

In the May CAV Newsletter, there is an article about a British sailor, Lieut John Lapontiere who was given the task by Rear Admiral Collingwood to take dispatches to England after the Battle of Trafalgar, to inform the Admiralty about the victorious win in the sea battle over the French and the death of Admiral Nelson.

After the battle, a topsail schooner HMS 'Pickle, under its captain (Lieutenant Lapenotiere), set sail from Trafalgar for Falmouth to dispatch the traqic news.

However, it passed fishermen in Mount's Bay who were told of Lord Nelson's death, and they immediately made for Penzance.

It was only a short distance from the shore to the Assembly Rooms (now the Union Hotel) in Chapel Street, and legend has it that Mayor Giddy was banqueting there.

He immediately delivered the shattering news from the minstrel gallery and also led a procession to Madron Parish Church (the Mother Church of Penzance), where a memorial service took place and the Nelson Banner was paraded for the first time.



The verse on the banner reads:

'Mourn for the Brave, the immortal Nelson's gone, His last Sea fight is fought, his work of Glory done'.

Keen to again hold a memorial service, it was in 1946 that a former naval chaplain and the then vicar of Madron, the Reverend Michael Hocking had the idea of instigating what has become an annual Trafalgar Day commemoration.

At the service held on 27th October 1946, so many wished to attend that it had to be relayed outside, while recordings were made by the BBC. For many years the event has taken place on the Sunday nearest to 21st October, with civic dignitaries and naval personnel past and present still marching through the village.

A band plays, salutes are taken and everyone present honors one of England's most popular heroes.

HMS Victory had been badly damaged in the Battle of Trafalgar.

It was towed to Gibraltar for repairs before then carrying Lord Nelson's preserved body to England where, after lying in state at Greenwich, he was buried at St. Paul's Cathedral on 9th January 1806.







Cornish nursery marks 40th birthday at RHS Chelsea

A Cornish garden nursery will celebrate its 40th birthday in style this week at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

The team from Burncoose Nurseries at Gwennap, Cornwall has been no stranger to Chelsea success. Since 1984 it has amassed 27 prestigious gold medals and has only missed one show, in 2021, due to Covid-19.

Burncoose was officially opened in March 1984, with six employees, a single phone line and a caravan for an office.

Now the business said it employed more than 40 people and its website gets more than 1.5 million hits a year.

But medals at The RHS Chelsea Flower Show have become a regular event, with

27 Golds

14 Silver Gilts

3 Silvers

2 Bronzes

2020 'Plant of Year' award for Viburnum 'Kilimanjaro Sunrise'.

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn0376ym6kpo

Rainforest could be restored over 50 years

There are "exciting" plans to restore an ancient rainforest in Cornwall over the next half century. Cornwall Wildlife Trust said there are only small patches remaining from a much larger rainforest at West Muchlarnick Farm near Looe.

It wants to restore "one of the most biodiverse ecosystems back to Cornwall" having been gifted the 150 acres (61 hectares) in 2002.

The trust called it an "exciting chance to restore this important habitat to a site in Cornwall". The project would extend rainforest cover on the farm from about 8.4% to an estimated 87.2%. Rainforests have a "huge potential to store carbon in the trees", so can contribute to the fight against

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv2dmjrndlgo

climate change, the trust said.

Smoking costs Cornwall over £150 million a year

Cornwall Council commits to the Government's ambition for England to be smokefree by 2030. Smoking costs Cornwall over £150 million a year on average, with 47,950 adults believed to be regular smokers. The stark figures were announced as Cornwall Council committed to the Government's ambition for England to be smokefree by 2030. Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) estimates that smoking cost Cornwall £151.2m in 2022/23 through lost productivity (£118.3m), the cost of providing healthcare (£17.3m) and social care (£12.3m), and the cost of smoking-related fires (£3.3m). It is estimated that 10.3 per cent of the Cornish population smokes.

The council's Conservative Cabinet recently welcomed new legislation to raise the age of the sale of tobacco, restrict children and young people's access to vapes and introduce new fixed penalty notices of £100 for selling tobacco and e-cigarettes to underage young people.

Existing legislation is to be amended to introduce a ban on disposable vapes.

https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/smoking-costs-cornwall-over-150-9272300

Tourists may have to start paying 'Cornish tax' to visit the county

Malcolm Bell, the Chief Executive of Visit Cornwall, has voiced his support for a 'Cornish tax' on tourists visiting the region. However, he believes that other parts of the South West which are also popular with tourists should also implement such a tax.

Bell, who is a native of Cornwall with family roots dating back to the 1700s, can 'certainly envision' the introduction of a tourist tax in the future.

He thinks it 'could work', but insists that Cornwall shouldn't be the only place to introduce it - neighbouring holiday hotspot Devon should do the same.

He also stressed the importance of not rushing the decision, to ensure that the funds raised are properly invested and the tourism industry doesn't suffer as a result.

The decision needs careful consideration, involving businesses and other partners, according to Malcolm.

He revealed that discussions are already underway with the Cornwall community foundation and National landscapes, south west coastal paths.

Malcolm has highlighted that the UK is already one of the highest-taxed visitor economies in Europe, second only to France.

He pointed out the impracticality of a Cornwall-specific tourist tax.

Cornwall's popularity as a holiday destination is evident from the staggering number of visitors it receives, with a committee report indicating around four million holiday visits and approximately 12 million day visitors annually.

This influx, Malcolm suggests, indicates a desire among tourists for well-maintained local environments, which could benefit from a tourist tax aimed at protecting the region's natural beauty and wildlife.

https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/tourists-start-paying-cornish-tax-9250323

Cornwall planning: Statue honouring hundreds of Cornish fishermen is a step nearer

A planning application has been submitted to place an 8ft bronze statue in St Ives to honour the hundreds of fishing folk who have lived and worked in the town.

The Mariners' Memorial, designed by renowned local sculptor Tom Leaper, will overlook St Ives Bay if approved.

In 1844 a total of 400 pilchard fishing boats operated from the port of St Ives employing 735 fishermen, with a further 100 engaged in other types of fishing.

In order to accommodate this huge fishing fleet, a series of earlier improvements to the harbour were made including the construction of Smeaton's Pier in 1770.

It is now hoped the memorial will be placed on the terrace known as The Castle at the end of Smeaton's Pier, becoming a landmark destination in the town.

The St Ives Mariners' Memorial Group was formed last year with the objective of constructing a memorial to celebrate the town's maritime heritage. After months of preparation, consultation and the analysis of different potential sites around the town, final designs have now been submitted to Cornwall Council's planning department.

https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/cornwall-planning-statue-honouring-hundreds-9240950

Plans for National Trust estate refused

Councillors have voted to refuse planning permission for a new car park and pedestrian crossing at a National Trust property near Falmouth.

The charity said its plans for Trelissick House and Gardens at Feock were designed to stop queuing cars blocking the access road.

The managing director of the neighbouring King Harry Ferry Company said the proposed narrowing of the B3289 and crossing would cause "massive delays".

At a planning meeting, nine councillors voted to refuse, one voted against and there was one abstention.

The trust's plans included increasing the existing car parking spaces and building a new 225-space car park in order to have 524 spaces in total, the Local Democracy Reporting Service said.

The new car park was proposed to be built on Dicky Lane, on the opposite of the road, with a pedestrian crossing to the main house and gardens.

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clkew94jpyno

Eden Project's 1,400 trees to thank marathon runners

The Eden Project has planted 1,400 trees to thank every runner who took part in the Eden Marathon and Half Marathon last October.

They are made up of several native species and ages such as oak, field maple, alder, silver and downy birch, hawthorn, wild cherry and crab apple. The planting initiative, originally began in 2022, serves as an enduring tribute to marathon participants.

The endeavour also builds upon funds raised for individual charities.

A total of 2,500 trees have been planted for the Eden Marathon to date.

The Eden Project Estate consists of woodlands and hedges, wildflower meadows, and significant botanical collections, laced by public footpaths, cycle routes, and bridleways used by the Eden Marathon on its multi-terrain courses.

The Marathon tree planting is situated in a 5-acre area which historically was part of a disused china clay works and therefore at one time would have been fairly devoid of ecological diversity.

This successful event, co-hosted by the Eden Project and St Austell Running Club, is in its 14th year. It attracts competitors from across the globe, who relish the challenge of its multi-terrain courses and take pleasure in the award of a beer, pasty, and a themed medal at the finish line.

This year's Eden Marathon and Half Marathon will take place on Sunday, October 20.

https://www.falmouthpacket.co.uk/news/24319810.eden-project-plants-I-400-trees-thank-marathon-runners/

Council fills 500 potholes a day after record number

More than 500 potholes have been filled across Cornwall a day, the council has said.

Cornwall Council said due to prolonged heavy rain over the last six months it has led to a record number of potholes on Cornwall roads.

It said Cornwall Highways, which manages a 7,300km network on the council's behalf, has more than doubled the number of crews working on the roads.

The council also announced it would invest £14.5m into road resurfacing and highway maintenance to prevent potholes from forming.

The authority explained deep potholes on a road carrying heavy traffic would be repaired quicker than a shallow pothole on an unclassified rural road. It added the more urgent potholes were repaired across 42 hours, while others posing less concern would be repaired within 28 days.

In 2023 and 2024 crews repaired more than 72,500 highway defects which included potholes, cracked road surfaces, broken manhole covers and damaged or blocked gullies, the council said.

Network manager for Cornwall Highways, Steve Bayley, said efforts were being made to keep up with the constant demands, adding crews were out in all weathers to carry out repairs.

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqvnvnxg97vo