

# Lizard Peninsula Heritage Trust

An environmental charity dedicated to the recognition, protection, enhancement and enjoyment of the Lizard Peninsula

Friends of the Lizard 1997-2006

Registered Charity No 1092934

Patron: Jill Morison DL



## Newsletter No 58, January 2014

### Chairman's New Year Message

A Happy New Year to all our members and supporters; I hope that you had an enjoyable Christmas. Our Events Sub Committee is busy organising our events for 2014 and full details of these will be in the April Newsletter. We are always looking for additional copy for the newsletters, so please submit any article, however short, but relevant to the Lizard Peninsula, to David Richardson. We warmly welcome new members so, if you know of anybody who may be interested, please advise a Committee Member so we can contact them with a Membership form. Finally, I hope to see as many of you as possible at this year's events. Apologies that this Newsletter is a little later than usual, but we had to complete re-arrangements for the lunch, set out below; I look forward to seeing many of you there.

*Geoff Blackman*

### Events before the next Newsletter

*(due in April 2014)*

#### Events; Winter/Spring Lunch

Included within this Newsletter are details and booking requirements for our **Winter/Spring Lunch**, that will take place at **The Croust House Restaurant** on Friday 21 March, 12.45 for 1.00pm. For those who would like an easy pre-lunch walk around the Roskilly lakes, & maybe down to the sea at Godrevy Cove, we will assemble on the carpark at 11.15am.

You will see from the enclosed A5 paper that Roskilly's has prepared a very inviting package for us, including at least 3 choices for each of the 3 courses, at an attractive price, including a drink on arrival and tea or coffee after.

You will also see that booking of a place and menu selections, together with full payment, are required in advance, with an absolute deadline of Friday 14 March. The Committee is hoping for an excellent turnout for this event, as has been achieved on similar occasions in recent years.

Advance notice for your diary:

#### Lizard Peninsula Heritage Trust AGM 2014:

Monday 17 November 2014, 7.00 for 7.30pm.

As usual, at Mawgan Village Hall. OS re: SW 702 244.

### Nare Do-Wells



Visiting the NCI (National Coastwatch Institution) station at Nare Point could, at one time, have been highly dangerous, as you might have been greeted in a most unfriendly fashion by having

a German bomb dropped on you. Fortunately, that was back in 1940-44 when the area was cunningly disguised as Falmouth, in order that the real town and docks could carry on unmolested a few miles away. If you will excuse my cribbing from a previous write-up, I can tell you that Ealing Studios were commissioned to build a short stretch of railway track here, together with buildings, bunkers, flashing lights, realistic explosions and blazing oil tanks. It did the trick, and this decoy development had seven bells knocked out of it on more than one occasion, while Falmouth remained unharmed.



Our visit was on more peaceful lines, of course: an enjoyable stroll from Porthallow along the coast path to the station, a tour of the premises from Gill Richardson, a soup-and-roll lunch, then a stroll back again. Gill, together with our Chairman Geoff Blackman, and several other praiseworthy individuals, is one of the volunteers who run the station, and she duly briefed us on its history and present day usage.

The building was actually constructed for torpedo training in 1952, but was taken over for Coastwatch purposes in 1994. The Government, bless them, had stopped funding such schemes, but when a Cornish fishing boat was lost at sea, local people took matters into their own hands, forming a voluntary association and taking turns to keep watch during daylight hours. The first lookout was set up at Bass Point, followed by Nare Point, and there are now 49 in total around the English and Welsh coasts.

The station has an unusually wide field of vision, 290°, and thus needs two people on watch, from 8 to 7 in summer, 8 to 4 in winter. The object is to keep your eyes peeled, especially for small boats, craft adrift from their moorings, idiots in kayaks, etc; the big fellows, such as container ships, oil tankers and Queen Mary 2, can look after themselves, and even if they can't, there is not much that could be done from our shores. The NCI is not part of the Coastguard, but it is linked, and the latter's reports can be heard on the radio here. The NCI volunteers don't use the radio themselves but, if help is needed, they then contact the Coastguard by telephone.

The main features in both rooms are, naturally, the windows, the cleaning of which is one of the staff duties, but the eye is also drawn to radar, large charts, maps outlining submarine-training and firing-practice areas (scary!), a huge telescope and a pair of binocs so powerful that they made my eyes go funny. Careful

notes are kept on log sheets of all sightings, and these sheets then form legal documents, so you can see how careful one has to be. One sighting that is not recorded is the diving displays put on by flocks of gannets, a show which could prove most distracting at first, I imagine, along with dolphins, kestrels, oyster catchers, migrant birds and the Culdrose chaps doing training exercises in their helicopters.

It takes approximately six watches to train a volunteer, a rather fetching uniform is provided, and the whole venture is paid for solely by donations. In 2010 the NCI was presented with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award, a well-deserved pat on the back for such an admirable institution.

A less grand, but equally heartfelt, vote of recognition goes to Gill and Lynda for their superb soup-making skills, something that should be on the menu for every rescued sailor!

*Jane Grierson*

### **Chairman's report to the 2013 Annual General Meeting**

During the last 12 months the Executive Committee has met five times to discuss finances, events, projects, planning and Newsletters. I would like to express my thanks to all Committee Members for their hard work and support. Two new members joined the Committee earlier in the year, namely John and Adele Brazier who have already been very busy!

We have again published 4 Newsletters which I believe members find interesting and informative. We are always looking for additional articles for this and submissions from members on any topic relating to the Lizard Peninsula would be welcomed. If possible, please include good quality photographs. David Richardson has once again done a splendid job on the Newsletter and my thanks also to Jane Grierson for her witty write ups on our Events and her other contributions. We are continuing to encourage members to receive the Newsletter by E-mail. Apart from cutting our costs, it enables recipients to see photographs in their full colour.

Moving on to our Events programme, it has again been very successful. My thanks to Lynda Blackman and her sub-committee for organising the varied and interesting programme and also the event leaders including Tony and Chriss Chatfield, Peter and Sally Ealey, Steve Townsend, Cyril Hart, Tim and Linda Hawkins. The walk around Coverack was a great success as Cyril proved very knowledgeable. My thanks to Peter Wood for arranging Cyril and also to those members who pushed Cyril's wheelchair! The annual Barbecue survived despite appalling weather and I learnt how many people can be comfortably seated in my garage. I hope to see as many of you as possible on our Events in 2014.

As you know, we do have two ongoing projects namely Roadside Artefacts and the Photographic Archive. Progress has been a little slow but we remain committed to them.

I mentioned last year about Planning Applications and the Government's new Planning Policy Framework. There is still pressure on Cornwall Council to allow the building of large numbers of houses and wind farms. We remain concerned about the possibility of mass development on the Lizard while acknowledging the need for sustainable affordable housing. I recognise that many people may be in favour of wind farms although a glance at our Newsletters will reveal my own views about them.

I have already mentioned one or two people to whom I owe thanks for their efforts. May I also thank Lloyd Fletcher and Anne Le Maistre for their generous financial support in previous years. Thanks also to our Patron Jill Morison, Honorary Auditor Tim Hawkins and finally Colin Chapman for our printing.

*Geoff Blackman, Chairman*

### **What a Dive**

Could this be a record – three generations of one family at our AGM? If so, then the Roberts family made two records in one evening, because the talk that David Roberts gave on this occasion must be one of, if not *the*, best we've ever had. The talk took place after our usual convivial gathering, the friendly mood enhanced by generous amounts of wine (also as usual), a fantastic buffet spread (even better than usual) and the charming addition of a new kid on the block, the ten year old Maya, daughter of David. Anne Roberts has been a valued member of the LPHT for years, and her late husband, John, was our treasurer for a number of those. Their son, David, runs the Kennack Diving centre, along with business partner Des, and Maya looks set to follow in her father's flipper-clad footsteps, no stranger to the underwater seascapes of our local coast. First, though, she was given the task of making sure everyone signed in, collecting names and signatures (including forged ones on behalf of spouses who had urgent business to attend to at the bar) from all present, without a trace of nerves or awkwardness, then proceeding to the kitchen to help our team of ladies with the refreshments.

The official business opened the meeting, but I have to say that, these days, it is quite delightful to witness; the facts and figures are enlivened by witty remarks and repartee from the committee, and there is hardly any heckling from the audience.

Then David started his talk, taking the floor while Des manned the projector, and they had a ball. A cannonball, that is, brought for our perusal and weighing in at a lusty 32 lbs, retrieved from the wreck of the *HMS Anson* (part of the Trafalgar fleet but sunk two years later in 1807). David and Des are licensees of three of the protected wreck sites in the UK (63 in all and quite a lot of these, unsurprisingly, around the Lizard. There are 147 wrecks in the two mile stretch between Gunwalloe and Porthleven alone). There is *The President* at the notorious Loe Bar, the only known example of an English East Indiaman; the *Schiedam* at Dollar Cove (which location, incidentally, is not named after piles of shipwrecked treasure, but is Cornish for "two coves"); and the *St Anthony* at Gunwalloe Fishing Cove.

The latter sank in 1527 and is the oldest protected wreck in the UK. She was a carrack, the largest ship of the time, flagship of the fleet and the personal property of King John III of Portugal. The cargo was estimated to be worth at the time £18,800 (4,000 times a man's annual wage,) or £10 million in today's money (10,000 times a Cornish annual wage!). While contemplating these dizzy numerical heights, it is worth noting that the wreck was invisible until six million tons of sand were shifted by a storm in one night, thus uncovering the wreck and enabling David and Des to dive on her - and rather putting in perspective the misdeeds of crafty farmers driving down to some beach at midnight to load a few tons of it into their tractor trailers.

The *St Anthony* was an armed merchant vessel, and the guys have found all sorts of artefacts, including 11 of her 18 anchors, and the 500 year old equivalent of dum-dum bullets. As David wryly remarked, these chaps demonstrated amazing ingenuity for killing people. As fascinating as these facts were, they were exceeded by the pictures of the glorious underwater world just off our shores. Ten foot high kelp wafting gently in the current; all manner of fish, including streaked gurnard; seals; dogfish; jellyfish; basking sharks; and the tiniest, fun-sized cuttlefish you've ever seen. Even sea slugs and dead men's fingers could look charming; as did Maya, weaving her way confidently through the kelp forests.

Really, we could have carried on viewing for the rest of the evening, but a few had to get up for work the next morning and, a first for the LPHT, one young lady had to get up for school. Our thanks to her dad for a great evening, and, as always, to the ladies of Team Cuisine.

*Jane Grierson*

## Valerie Hadley

We are very sad to announce the death of Mrs Valerie Hadley, a long-time member and friend (of The Lizard). Those of you who were lucky enough to enjoy a tour of Valerie's garden and small museum at Poldowrian, close to the coastal path near Coverack (in fact, almost in the sea!) will have wonderful memories of this, her beloved piece of Cornwall. Valerie, and her late husband Peter, made this garden out of a wilderness, with determination, imagination, patience and a deep love of nature. She was passionate about the environment and the preservation and enhancement of all natural beauty. The result is a wonderland, a paradise for gardeners or for those who simply appreciate the peace and beauty of a very special place. Valerie and Peter not only enjoyed the garden themselves, but used it to raise thousands of pounds for charitable causes over the decades.

Valerie was also a talented woodcarver, entirely self-taught, whose artwork again followed a theme of nature and wildlife. One of the highlights of her achievements was the pair of floral woodcarvings she made in 1982 for Elizabeth Johnstone, former High Sheriff of Cornwall. It took Valerie two years, and she produced the most exquisite carvings from a large piece of yew, split in two; one piece depicted the wild flowers of Cornwall, the other cultivated plants.

Valerie's last months and days were spent at home, with a dedicated team in attendance, her bed positioned so that she could look onto the sea and cliffs and garden (where her ashes will be scattered). In the words of her son, John, "During the last two years she sort of slid away from life in a manner almost imperceptible, so that when she gave her last breath it seemed the natural next step to be taking: it felt to me a like a seed pod opening and the seeds blowing gently away. We are grateful that her long, full and generous life ended so gently and gracefully." Valerie leaves two sons – John and Andrew – and five grandchildren. And a magical garden that will be a memorial to her for ever.

*Jane Grierson*

## A De-Light-Ful Day

It is shameful. The Lizard Lighthouse visitor centre has been open for four years or more, and we, living hardly a mile away, have never visited it. That was put right, however, by our Events Committee who tempted thirteen of us there for a visit in early October. We were greeted by Don, our guide whose knowledge of his subject was second to none; his tour lasted an hour, and the facts, stories and legends just kept on coming. The weather, being clear and sunny, was fairly kind to us, except that the wind chill factor was about 30 degrees below zero, so, after the first fifteen minutes of standing outside while Don regaled us, some of us were beginning to hide behind others, to cover our freezing ears, and to wish we'd worn more clothes. Soon, however, we moved into the actual tower, after a while climbing the 51 steps to the top (an especial *Well Done!* to Avril who doesn't do giving up). The view was fantastic, especially on this clearest of days, but even that could not distract us from gazing at the huge light itself, built in 1897 and one of the most powerful Victorian models. If I understood correctly, the light flashes every three seconds, and this flash is bounced back and forth inside the glass slats, gathering momentum until finally it flashes out from the "bull's eye" in the middle. The massive turntable which holds the lenses floats on mercury, which, apparently, can drive you mad eventually, but thankfully this would take a little longer than our one hour tour, so we're OK for now.

Lighthouse keepers were unable get any exercise indoors, so a gallery runs around the outside where the men could walk or run. Don told us, with a straight face, that they had to let their tailors know in which direction they would proceed, since the constant going round in a circle would make one leg stronger than the other, and their trousers had to be tailored accordingly. He swore it was true but more than a hint of the Apocryphal was in the air. Seems to me that it would have been easier to tell the men that they had to turn around and go the other way at half time, but there you are; I wasn't around to give my advice.



I don't know how many words one can speak in an hour, but Don's non-stop attempt at educating us could have filled a very large newsletter or even a small book, and I am not even going to attempt to recount it all. For more hard facts, you could take a look at the website or, better still, take a tour yourself but, to whet your appetite, here are a few more goodies.

The Lizard Lighthouse was the last one to be manned. It is run by a computer in Harwich, with a back-up in London. There are no Keepers any more, just Attendants. The L.L. has the largest engine room in the country (world?), and the largest fog horns in the world. Lighthouse keepers around the country used to hold competitions to see which team could blow the most people off the coast path by blasting the horn as they passed close by, and the winning team (Padstow) took home a crate of whisky bought by the others. A halt was soon drawn to this fun-filled practice, probably because the pedestrians objected, and now the fog-horns are fenced in. I can well remember, however, having to stick my fingers in my ears and go past at a run, when the previous fog horn was doing its duty; if I live long enough, I could become a famous old crone in the village, relating that fact.

The light, which can beam out to 25 miles, is the brightest in the British Isles, and the tower is the fourth tallest in the country. When the second tower was constructed, (a very convoluted history explains why the L.L., unique in the UK, has two towers) a corridor was built to connect the two, and the keepers' cottages were then built around this corridor. Since it had to be kept clear at all times, life was not easy for the keepers' families. That, and the fact that an inspection could take place at any time, meant that the place had to be spotless 24/7. The children even had to keep cloths in their pockets, so that, when they opened a door, they did not sully the brass handle with their sticky little fingers. These days, a thorough clean of all equipment is carried out every three months ... although I did espy a cobweb when I looked through the plate glass cover of the secret passage; I shan't report it to Trinity House, though.

Our lighthouse has more original artefacts than most others, due to the ingenuity of its Cornish keepers backalong. When, as an economy exercise, it was ordered that redundant equipment was to be sold, recycled or just dumped, the men would, when an inspection was due, hide the stuff in homes around the village, then collect it again later. Thanks to their cunning and foresight, we now have some priceless and irreplaceable items of historical interest. Saving artefacts was the least of their skills, though. Saving lives was what their lives were all about, and we owe them a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. There, for once, a serious note on which to end my scribings. Oh but hold on ... mustn't forget the tea and buns we enjoyed afterwards in Polpeor Café. It wouldn't be a proper LPHT outing without that, would it?

*Jane Grierson*

*Visibility: all the way to Lamorna where we could see people waving to us from the cove (well, almost); and, from the tower, a panorama of The Lizard that has to be seen to be believed.*

## Future of English Heritage

In June 2013, the Chancellor announced that the government would be consulting on proposed changes to how English Heritage delivers its services, specifically the management and maintenance of the National Heritage Collection. The consultation on this proposal was published in early December.

We now know that a new charitable arm, retaining the name English Heritage, will be responsible for managing all of the historic sites, while a new organisation called "Historic England" will be created and keep responsibilities for advising on and helping to conserve England's wider historic environment. The new charitable status will give English Heritage freedom to raise funds, with a target of finding £83 million from third parties.

## A Cornish weather collection!

|                |                       |                |             |
|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Kewer / kwedha | weather               | Hager awel     | bad weather |
| Awel           | gale or windy weather | Glaw /gul glaw | rain        |
| Arnewa         | damage by weather     | Twedh          | storm       |
| Keser          | hail                  | Rew            | frost       |
| Kommolek       | cloudy or overcast    | Howlyek        | sunny       |
| Ergh           | snow                  |                |             |

Lynda Blackman

## A mystery? the ship 'Providence' of Liverpool

It is a matter of record that, during 1811, the good ship Providence, of Liverpool, was wrecked on the Manacle rocks. The underwriters were just about to pay the owners for their loss when they received an anonymous letter about the sinking. The contents of the letter are unknown, but was she a 'bit of a wreck' and sunk to get the money-an early insurance fraud? Was the sinking common knowledge among the fishermen and somebody spilled the beans? We just do not know.

For an ordinary person to write a letter to the underwriters took a lot of courage, we can picture them secretly writing, or secretly posting it, making sure that nobody else knew. The letter caused the underwriters to place an advertisement in the Royal Cornwall Gazette for the writer to come forward and explain things a bit more. Did their courage leave them or were they forced to keep quiet? There is no record that I have seen of payment not being made, nor any trial for fraud at a later date.

Tony Hilton

## Turnips, Swedes and Rutabaga

January is a time for warming comfort food made from simple ingredients. I looked in my vegetable store last week and found nearly a whole swede which needed using so it gave me the idea for this article.

In Cornwall we call the said vegetable a turnip, in Scotland they say neeps and in America they call them rutabaga, so some confusion. Another way of describing it is a yellow turnip, but the original word comes from the old Swedish language meaning ram root. In Sweden today the common word is kalroot which means kale or cabbage root. The vegetable is actually a cross between a turnip (white one) and a cabbage that was first mentioned by a Swiss botanist in 1620. He records that it was growing wild in Sweden. Although not widely introduced to Britain until the 1900, it was definitely growing in Royal Gardens in late 1600s early 1700s. In Finland it is a popular Christmas dish known locally as lanttulaatikko, or swede casserole in English. Popular in Scandinavia, it is often served mashed with butter and cream or roast in the oven. We know it as an important ingredient in a pasty and as neeps with haggis for Burns night. An interesting fact I discovered is that it is a component of Branston pickle.

Once cooked and mashed, it can be used in a variety of dishes, as a substitute or part substitute for other root mashes. Mashed with a little butter and pepper is tasty, but also good is roasted with a coating of Parmesan cheese and breadcrumbs. However the recipe, below, is based on a wartime recipe for rissoles which may be good for those of us wishing to eat less meat.

## Wartime Rissoles:

- Leftover cooked swede
- Leftover cooked potatoes
- Leftover cooked meat
- 1 small onion either finely chopped or minced
- Fresh/ dried herbs or ground spices
- Chopped kale, spinach or other greens
- Seasoning
- 1 egg
- Breadcrumbs and beaten egg for coating

Mash the leftover vegetables together & mix well with the meat.

Slice the onion finely and sauté in a little oil until soft and add to the mashed vegetables.

Add salt, pepper and herbs to taste – I like thyme and chives but choose what you prefer. You can also spice it up if you like it by adding crushed coriander or cumin seeds and chili to taste instead of herbs.

Mix in chopped kale or spinach carefully if you are using.

Mix in a beaten egg and place in the fridge for 30 mins to rest.

Shape the mixture into small round patties then egg and breadcrumb the outside.

Keep in the fridge until you are ready to cook.

Either sauté in a pan in a little oil or bake in the oven (spray with a little oil or brush with melted butter) on a greased baking tray until crisp.

Lynda Blackman

## National Trails

The new National Trail website was officially launched last week with new functionality attracting more trail users. One of the features of this website is the ability for the general public to add information that is felt to be either helpful or of interest to National Trail users. This facility allows anyone to add features, facilities or events found within the landscapes.

This site ([www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)) is packed with practical information and new maps for the 15 National Trails in England and Wales, including of course the SW Coast path, offering over 2,500 miles of some of the best walking, riding and cycling.

Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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