

# 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

**Newsletter No 50      January 2012      A special bumper issue for No 50**

Registered Charity No 1092934

Patron: Jill Morison DL

## LHPT Events for 2012 – 2013

A full programme will be included in the April newsletter, but here are 2 advance dates for your diaries:

### **Friday 24 February 2012 (7 for 7.30pm)** **LPHT Annual Social – Dinner at the Ship Inn**

A 2 or 3 course dinner at The Ship Inn, Mawgan-in-Meneage which was opened in April by Greg & Alli Laskey along with their young daughters Ellie and Jessica. Location: Mawgan in Meneage TR12 6AD OS ref SW 708 249

Cost – see enclosed separate page for details and booking. Booking in advance essential. Please contact Geoff Blackman.

### **Tuesday 6 November 2012, 7.00 for 7.30pm**

### **LPHT Annual General Meeting**

Location: Mawgan Village Hall, near War Memorial Roundabout.  
Guest Speaker: David Steele on 'The Art Of Bookbinding.'

### **Note about our budget**

At our AGMs in November 2009 and 2010 I reported that subscriptions would have to increase at the next AGM. However, due to the current economic climate it was agreed at the 2011 AGM that subscriptions should remain at the current 2003 levels for 2012-2013. Please note - *this is only sustainable by frugal expenditure and assistance from members to cut costs.*

### **How to do this!**

1. Pay your subscription by **Standing Order**
2. Agree to allow your subscription to be regarded as **Gift Aid**
3. Offer to receive **newsletters by email**
4. View the subscription rates as minimal and make **voluntary extra payment** (eg £10 for a couple instead of £9)
5. **Remember us** in your will!

***Your assistance, particularly in respect of 1, 2, and 3, would be much appreciated. Forms can be obtained from the Chairman or Secretary.***

David Richardson

## Historic Village Tour – Manaccan

*For the Trust's third visit to an historic village on the Peninsula, a surprisingly large group of LPHT members met in Manaccan, where Derek and Suzanne Carter gave us a very interesting and instructive tour of this village.*



*LPHT Members at the steps to the Church*

We started in the village hall, where Derek had set up a fascinating display of old village photographs, ranging from past village events, historic details of Bosahan (the 'big house' of the village and home of the Graham-Vivian family), old photos of school days, cricket teams and other events, covering a period of 60 years and more. Derek told us that we were standing in what was the original school in Manaccan, occupied from 1824 to 1896, until the present school was built in that latter year. The building had been two storeys at that time, with the boys and girls separated on the two floors. However, it now serves well as the Village Hall.

We were then conducted outside to view the now disused and rather neglected village well, which had been restored to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee year and, in Derek's opinion, should be restored again for the Queen's Golden Jubilee this year!

We then followed our leaders up Rocky Hill, a steep pathway leading up towards the village shop, with explanations that there were once several more shops in

Manaccan, together with other thriving businesses.

Leaving Rocky Hill, we were led into the very fine church, dedicated to St Manacca (early sources say to St Mennaccus & St Dunstan), duly noting the ancient fig tree, famous for growing out of the very wall of the church and known to be well over 200 years old, but probably 300 or more years. This fig tree has to be regularly pruned to stop it pulling the whole of the church wall down!

The inside of the church was admired, with a brief history given, and attention was drawn to the 'Titanium plaque', which was presented to the village to commemorate the discovery of 'Manaccanite', later to be named Titanium. This mineral was first discovered by William Gregor by a stream in Manaccan in 1791. Before leaving the church, Derek took us round the back of the North-West side of the church, where high on the wall of the church is a stone plaque dedicated to the famous Reverend Richard Polwhele, who was the vicar in Manaccan from 1794 to 1805. The plaque is now very worn away, and its protection might be something for the village to consider in this year's celebrations!



*Vicarage Gate*

Halting at the entrance to Vicarage Lane, the original old Vicarage was pointed out - sadly no longer the church vicarage - and Suzanne told us about her family's farm, which had been just behind the Vicarage, although this was buildings only; they lived in a cottage elsewhere in the village, as at that time no residences were down Vicarage Lane, only a track to farmland further on. This was all Glebe (church) land, and no houses were built here until about the 1950s or 60s. Taking the upper road round the church, we headed back to the hall, passing the 'South' restaurant, formerly called Lions's Den'. This building is on the site of the former busy mechanical garage serving petrol, and where opposite had been the village forge, and another mechanic making a good living.

We made our way back down the hill, past the thriving school, and several picturesque cottages, and back to the Village Hall, where we said our goodbyes and thanks to Derek and Suzanne after a very enjoyable event.

*Prue Towner*

*Ed: Next year, we're hoping that our Historic Village tour will be to Cadgwith.*

### **An Art Warming Story**

Who would have thought that an AGM could constitute one of our best evening's entertainments? And it's not because we lead such sad little lives! The LPHT gatherings get better and better, thanks to a team of devoted Committee members who ensure that our minds and our tummies are well fed on the occasion. This year, thanks to our Chairman's new speedy version of reporting, even the official business took less time than usual, leaving us free to enjoy the ladies' scrumptious buffet offerings and a glass or two of wine.

Another treat followed: a presentation by guest speaker Dr Ryya Bread, the curatorial Director of Kestle Barton. Or, to be more precise, Kestle Barton Rural Centre for Contemporary Arts. Still mystified? Well, once upon a time, there was a lovely old farm, deep in the Helford countryside, run by farmer Boaden Lyne. This delightful old character starred in an introductory movie, and his deep Cornish burr and frequent chuckles had us charmed and smiling in response. Boaden retired some 5 years ago, and the farm was sold.

The new owners' vision is for a self-sustaining enterprise centred on a superb art gallery, with three holiday apartments; the old farmhouse is let out on a long tenancy, while woodland and meadows are used for beef, hay, orchards and a newly-planted nuttury. The fields are all subject to environmentally friendly no-chemicals, no-ploughing policies, and the buildings have had attention lavished upon them such as they probably hadn't seen since they were first created. The sixteenth century farmhouse and sixteenth to nineteenth century outbuildings are all Grade II Listed Buildings, so you can imagine that the renovations were subject to extremely strict rules. It follows that anyone (mentioning no names) who doesn't like the tin roofs will just have to accept that they are in keeping with the original. Plus they'll be nice for the cats in summer.

After the introductory film, Ryya took us through a selection of pictures of Kestle Barton, firstly one of herself on the splendid dapple grey cob, Arthur. She has many an early morning ride round the local lanes, and I cannot imagine a better start to the day. Pictures followed of the newly refurbished farmhouse, the outbuildings now converted to high-class holiday accommodation, the woods and fields and the incredible art gallery. This has a new exhibition every month, from paintings to giant mobile fish, and welcomes 50 to 60 visitors a day, even in this out of the way spot.

Best by far in my humble opinion, however, were the beautiful gardens. We have visited them ourselves on a couple of occasions during summer walks to Frenchman's Creek, and found them an oasis of beauty and calm (with an added help-yourself tea/coffee/cake-stop this year). The picture below was taken when we visited in August 2010, just a few months after Kestle opened to the public, but it probably paints sufficient words, if not quite 1,000, to give you a taste of this little haven.



*John & Jane Grierson in the gardens (wearing hats)*

One of the most heartening aspects of Kestle, which Ryya did not have time to enlarge upon, is the fact that some of the farm's large fields are being restored to their ancient field pattern. I hope I'm not infringing any copyrights by cribbing from the web site, but here goes:

*"Small historic fields are being restored from large modern ones by recreating Cornish hedges and hedgerows planted with a wide selection of local trees and shrubs. Within this ancient field pattern, a one hundred and twenty tree orchard of old Cornish apple, cherry and plum varieties has been planted next to a newly created species-rich hay meadow, already a haven for butterflies, bees and grassland birds, as well as spectacular summer floral display of some forty seven different species of flowering plants and grasses."*

What a heart-warming story. Boaden now lives in St Martin village, contentedly we hope, but his simple summing up of his time at Kestle struck a chord. "I was happy here," he said. I can understand why, and am sure that the feeling will live on.

*Jane Grierson*

### Changes in the Trust's administration

Those of you who attended last year's AGM will be aware that we now have a new Chairman. I am delighted to "hand over the reins" to Geoff Blackman who, I know, will enthusiastically, energetically and professionally take the Trust on the next stages of its development. I wish him well and will continue to support him in any way that he asks. We have other changes, too. Colin Chapman has resigned from the Executive Committee due to pressures of several other commitments, but will continue to print our Newsletters and help in many other ways. Prue Towner has resigned as Assistant Secretary, also due to other commitments, but has been replaced by Linda Hawkins who, I know, will be a valuable asset to the Trust's administration. I should like to record my appreciation and thanks to Colin and Prue for their work in support of the Committee, and welcome Linda to her new rôle.

A further modification was approved at the AGM, from a suggestion mooted by John Grierson at the previous year's AGM and subsequently recommended by the Committee. John's suggestion was that a retiring Chairman would, ex officio, become the next President (if willing), and that the existing President would become a Vice President, joining other existing Vice Presidents. I am delighted to take on this new rôle, while mindful of the extremely valuable and learned advice that John provided to me in the past; however, he is still within easy reach when Geoff or I need his counsel. Other positions of responsibility were agreed at the annual "musical chairs" first meeting of the Committee after the AGM. These can be seen in the usual panel at the bottom of the Newsletter's final page

*David Richardson*

### A message from the new Chairman

It is an honour to be elected as Chairman of the Trust but I must first pay tribute to the tremendous work of my predecessor David Richardson. It is a daunting prospect to follow in his footsteps.

Work has already started on our Events Programme for 2012, but we always welcome ideas from our members, so please let us know if you have any suggestions. Details of our next event – an evening meal at Mawgan in February are detailed in this Newsletter and we hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Our last Newsletter referred to the Government's proposed Planning Reforms and we are continuing to follow this matter closely. Negotiations are being led nationally by the National Trust and the CPRE and we trust they will be successful in not allowing supposed economic growth arguments to overrule concern for heritage and environment. I am sure you will be hearing more on this from us in 2012.

I am hoping that during the coming year we will be able to increase our membership numbers. Please advise me of any prospective members and we will ensure information is sent to them.

Also, we do need to co-opt additional Committee members, so please contact me if you would be willing to do this.

Finally, I hope to see you at our Events this year.

*Geoff Blackman*

Email – [geoff.blackman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:geoff.blackman@yahoo.co.uk)

### Seasonal & local recipes

Free food from the hedgerow may be hard to find In January, especially if we have a covering of snow like last year. However, there should be gorse flower buds and these can be pickled, made into syrup, wine or tea but, to be honest, it is not something I have yet tried. I understand that they are available for most of the year, but more abundant and best used in the Spring. I have found a recipe for pickled gorse buds recorded by John Evelyn, a diarist who also wrote eyewitness accounts of The Great Fire of London. His diaries, along with those of Samuel Pepys, form an excellent account of life in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Surprisingly, he also collected recipes, the volume of which may be found in The British Library. I intend to try the recipe for pickled gorse buds and if successful will publish the recipe in the April newsletter when I believe the gorse buds should be good for pickling.

In case we have cold weather in January again there is nothing better than a piping hot bowl of soup to warm you up after a bracing walk. As I am keen to remain seasonal, I have chosen parsnips which are a very versatile, economic vegetable that can even be made into a cake:

#### Spicy Parsnip Soup

Gently sauté one medium chopped onion in a splash of olive oil until soft then add a tablespoon of your favourite curry powder (add more or less depending on your taste) and cook for a further 2 minutes to bring out the flavour of the spices. Then add one large peeled chopped parsnip, a peeled chopped potato (I find it helps to make a smooth creamy soup) and stir round in the spice and onion mix. Then add about a pint of stock (either chicken or vegetable, I like bouillon powder) and gently simmer until the vegetables are very soft. Now puree with a hand blender or push through a sieve to create a smooth soup. You may have to add a little more water or stock if it is too thick or reduce by boiling if too thin. Taste and add seasoning to taste. Serve with a chunk of crusty bread to make a wholesome warming lunch.

*Lynda Blackman*

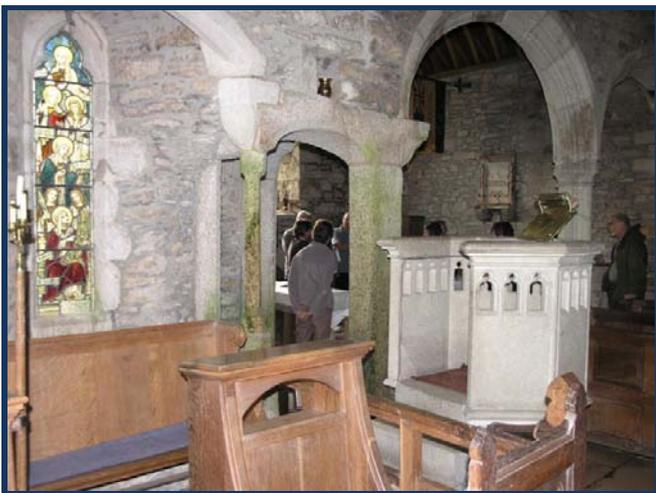
## A Day with Matt Robinson

On a surprisingly dry and mild Saturday in the middle of October, about a dozen members congregated at Gunwalloe Church Cove, some managing to arrive just in time having lingered at home until the end of the Wales v France rugby match. Once assembled, we met the very engaging Matt Robinson, a specialist architect who is also a member of the Trust. Matt led a tour of the tiny church of St Winwaloe, a 15<sup>th</sup> century Grade I Listed Building, with separated tower apparently sprouting out of the cliff which, for centuries, has protected it. He pointed out the many interesting features of the church's construction, particularly early and later-repaired roof timbers and other wooden details, so closely related to Matt's own historic buildings repairs business.



*Gunwalloe Church*

We were due to visit St Corentin's church at Cury next, dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and also a Grade I Listed Building. However, the church could not be opened for us and so we went on to St Mawgan church at Mawgan-in-Meneage – again a Grade I Listed Building, dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century but much restored.



*St Mawgan Church interior*

The church was equally interesting from an architectural perspective, especially when Matt compared and contrasted the features we could see, with those described by Nikolaus Pevsner in the Cornwall volume of his definitive "The Buildings of England" series.

After a stop at the nearby Gear Farm pasty shop, it was onwards to Matt's garden for an alfresco lunch, where we were joined by other Trust members for the afternoon event of the day. Matt took us briefly inside his lovely old house, to see a particularly fine fireplace and original door frame; then, from the outside, we saw the extension and other outbuildings that he had designed and built, using traditional building materials and methods of construction.



*Matt explains traditional cob & thatch construction, Caervallack*

Throughout a tour of the gardens, which in the past has opened for the National Gardens Scheme, he elaborated on some of its many features, including a suspension bridge and seven-sided summerhouse, both of which he had designed and built.

A final highlight of our day was to be a look inside the Aladdin's cave of ideas which is Matt's studio and workshop. We were privileged to be shown both the plans and the model of a Multi-Faith Meeting Place which he has designed and, hopefully, when funding permits, will be constructed at a site near Truro. Truly a "Grand Design".

A thoroughly fascinating and absorbing day was had by us all and our thanks go again to our very own Kevin McCloud!

*Jo Seller*

### **Cornwall Ordnance Survey Maps**

Tony Hilton has produced a series of Ordnance Survey Maps from 1908 on a CD. The areas covered are Helston, Gweek, Mawgan, Helford, Manaccan, Mullion, St Keverne, Coverack, Ruan Minor and Landewednack. They will be of great interest to those wanting to study old maps and the story they tell.

The cost of the CD will be £10, but Tony has kindly agreed that £ 2.50 of this will be donated to the Lizard Trust's funds. Tony will also be preparing more detailed maps of Helston town centre.

To obtain a CD, or for more information, please contact Tony direct on 01326 290629 or by Email at [Hyltonhall@aol.com](mailto:Hyltonhall@aol.com)

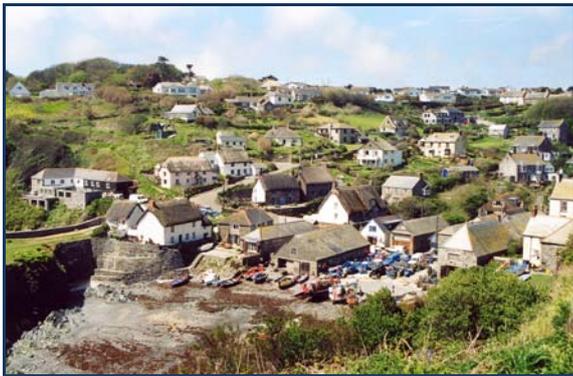
*Geoff Blackman*

## Local Businesses – Nigel Legge

Returning to our series of articles on businesses on the Lizard Peninsula, with particular reference to those that are unusual or have an interesting story to tell, here is Nigel Legge from Cadgwith. In the late summer, our younger daughter plus her family and some friends, stayed at our house while Gill and I were on holiday. As a “thank-you”, they ordered a hand-made willow lobster pot from Nigel Legge and, on our return, Nigel delivered it personally. I was pleased to meet him and we discussed his various activities, subsequently agreeing to submit this item for our Newsletter.

David Richardson

Nigel Legge is a working fisherman from Cadgwith Cove on the Lizard Peninsula who combines his other talents, all of which complement one another, to produce a successful small business.



**Cadgwith, where Nigel lives & works**

Nigel was born into a fishing family from Cadgwith and fished with his father for ten years as a boy and, as a young man, spent six years in the Merchant Navy, then went back to the fishing. For approximately 18 years he served on the famous Lizard lifeboat, with four of them as the second coxswain.

As a 15 year old, Nigel would help his father make willow lobster pots to fish for lobster, crab and crawfish. Steel and plastic pots eventually took over but this skill proved most valuable as, to boost his income, Nigel again began making willow pots to sell for decoration and film props. This particular art will not die while in his skilled hands and he can currently sell all he can find the time to make.



For as long as he can remember Nigel has drawn or painted boats on any scrap of paper, board, canvas, old cupboard doors, driftwood, anything he could lay his hands on.

However, for the past 20 years he has regularly sold his work to a growing band of admirers and takes his work very seriously. That’s not to say he doesn’t enjoy it – it is immediately apparent that his paintings are not only produced with much knowledge and a sense of maritime history, but with joy and cheerfulness.

The art of storytelling will continue with him too. A summer trip from Cadgwith beach in his boat becomes an informative and entertaining lesson covering everything from legends to mermaids to smuggling yarns spiced with Cornish dialect terms for almost anything you care to think of.

Nigel says he is lucky to have this type of job, with the variety, the sea and the fresh air. He is not looking forward to retiring and could do it all over again.

Ann Jeal

Nigel can be contacted by:

Tel: 01326 290716 Web: [www.lobsterpots.co.uk](http://www.lobsterpots.co.uk)

## Anagrams and clues challenge - answers

In Newsletter 49, I set members two challenges; firstly, to solve and submit answers for Derrick Betts’ cryptic clues, related to places on the Lizard Peninsula and, secondly, to suggest alternative anagrams of “Lizard Peninsula Heritage Trust”. To remind you, the two anagrams given by Derrick were:

“The laziest untrained rural pigs”.  
“Prize statue in lush garden trail”.

I am disappointed that there have been no suggestions submitted for the second of these two challenges, but I received three submissions for the cryptic clues competition. Two of these were completely correct, while the third had not quite been fully completed. Accordingly, it seemed most fair to me that the prize bottle of wine should go to Jane Grierson who first submitted a fully correct answer. Jane received this at the AGM.

Here are the answers – I’ll leave it to you to work out how the clues produce each place:

Good seven days (5)	Gweek
Damaged boater (6)	Traboe
Found in the weakest league (6)	Kestle
Man with instrument of torture (8)	Coverack
Man after place of worship (6,4)	Church Cove
Angry general (5,6)	Cross Common
Run around a young person (4,5)	Ruan Minor
Spike Milligan, up and down (9)	Goonhilly
Consecrate drink to begin with (10)	Porthallow
Wash down with gin cocktail (8)	Flushing
Accommodate large horse (6,3)	Housel Bay
Could be top clothing (4)	Gear
Unfinished European supermarket (8)	Poltesco
Crossing place to the underworld, we hear	Helford
Artists after fish (6)	Garras
Almost regret going with an army officer (4,5)	Ruan Major
Killed flower, we hear (8)	Culdrose
Negotiate with husband (6)	Treath
Skylark’s tail always seen in disturbed nest (2,7)	St Keverne
Drink and risk her rollicking (5,6)	Porth Kerris
Starts to knuckle under, giving ground against rival (6)	Kuggar
Article mother cleans badly (3,8)	The Manacles

Any other suggestions for an anagram of our name?

David Richardson

## Our Solar System

Don't worry. I haven't taken a degree in astronomy, and this is not a learned dissertation. You can relax and read on. At the beginning of last October I read my electricity meter, noting the usual depressing tale. Ten days later I read it again and found to my glee that the reading had decreased by twenty units. What could have happened? Was the meter faulty and going backwards? Had Jane had alcopops instead of cocopops for breakfast? Or should she have gone to Specsavers?

None of the above, but it had indeed been going backwards. As you will have guessed, we had just had solar panels installed.



Two months before, John and I knew as much about solar electricity as we did about quantum physics. It was one of our B&B guests who brought the matter to our attention, which just goes to show that the normal breakfast conversation about the day's weather can be useful after all.

Not only did our guest enthuse about this method, but he gave us much relevant financial information, plus a glass of champagne on his wife's birthday. The latter was nothing to do with solar power, but it just shows what nice people they were. (So, remind me; why do I want to give up B&B? Oh yes, it's some of the other guests!)

So, John and I set out on a learning curve, and, to save you having to do likewise, we decided to ask Colin Chapman to write a sensible and informative account of solar energy. Then I recorded some of our own solar journey just for fun, and here it is. First of all, if you are going to Google for representatives to come and talk to you, remember to type local/Helston/Cornwall into the search box; otherwise you will get:

... a large person from Yorkshire, whose knowledge of the subject is in reverse proportion to his mass. I am not size-ist, but he did not even offer to go up the ladder and measure our

roof, and the reason was obvious. He also told us that it did not require sun to make solar energy; daylight would do – even Lizard fog. Wrong on the latter, and vastly over-optimistic on the former.

... a very knowledgeable chap from Devon who will quote you 40% more than anyone else, and who will hover over you with the contract and pen, asking, "How much do I have to quote to get you to sign *now*?" Fortunately we had one more rep to see, so, in spite of Mr Devon's impressive knowledge and almost irresistible offer of knocking £100 off the price if we let him leave an advertising board outside the house, we held off.

.. a charming but manic guy from Dyfed, who was so overworked that he got at least three things wrong, including the size of our roof.



While trying to decide between the above counties, John and I mused that it was odd having no-one from Cornwall in the business. Was there just too much fog to make it worthwhile? John decided to give it one more try, and this time to specify our area, instead of expecting a website postcode to work it out. Up came a list of suspects, and we phoned the nearest. Their rep came round promptly, and was smart, pleasant and knowledgeable. Having ascertained the important details of the house facing south or south west and having no shading, such as trees (on *The Lizard*?) to block the sunlight, he went up into the attic to check our roof's weight-bearing capacity. He also liked horses, from which ensued a long and fascinating conversation between him and me in the loft while John waited below getting more and more puzzled as to what was going on!

A quote was accepted, date was set, deposits paid, and we waited eagerly for the due date. Suddenly a phone call: the solar panels we had ordered were no longer available. Would we be happy with another brand? Yes, yes ... and we waited eagerly once more. Then another phone call: the weather had been so bad lately that they were all behind on their work;

they couldn't get to us for another week. Well, the rain disappeared, the team turned up, did the job efficiently, gave us the paperwork and left.

We gazed in awe at the new machines attached to our utility room wall, one of them a large red box called Sunny Boy. This was the inverter which converted something to something else and had a tri-purpose meter which could be read at any time during daylight hours. Well, it could if you were six foot tall. I'm not, so I had to stand on a stool, singing "*Climb up on my stool, Sunny Boy*," in order to see what was going on. The meter displays three important figures: the amount of electricity produced since day one; the amount produced today; the amount being produced right this minute.

What it doesn't show, of course, is how much money you are making. So, as you've managed to read patiently up to this point, let me tell you. For systems installed before last December, one's electricity supplier – with the government holding a gun at its back - will pay 43.3p for every single unit produced. Sadly for future investors or planet-savers, this has now decreased to 21p. Anyway, this is paid whether you use it yourself or, alternatively, it gets fed into the National Grid. During October, we averaged 7 units a day; during December we were lucky to make that in a week. I will leave you to do the maths.

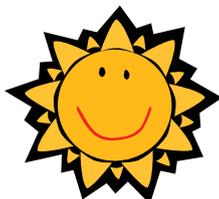
Perhaps I should just say at this point that some critics (not just gov.uk) found the original tariff unacceptably high, remarking that it is the electricity consumer who will eventually pay the tariff, through increased electricity prices. A fair point, but no more relevant than the, say, Tesco customer indirectly paying the shareholders. On the purchasing side, although a solar system is not cheap, you do not have to buy it. You can loan your roof to a company for nothing, and benefit from some free electricity. They leave your roof *in situ*, although they do take the tariff payments; but it might be worth it just to watch that little ole meter whizzing round clockwise. What happens is that, while the panels are generating, your meter *is* going round backwards, and thus decreasing the total that will be read when the meter man comes

to call. So, although you cannot actually store any solar power, you are in effect building up credits and saving on your electricity bill. I will admit to this causing me some confusion at first, because (a) we are on the dual tariff and I couldn't work out whether we should still use our timers to have washing machine, dishwasher, immersion heater, etc., on at night (answer: yes, obviously! *Duh.*) (b) we have an Owl. This is an appliance which is connected to the fuse box, and has a display that sits in our kitchen telling us how many units we are using. I have become accustomed to seeing it lighting up first thing in the morning with something like 0.2 kw, increasing to 0.4 once the computers rev up, and going up to 2 point something when I switch on the kettle, the microwave, etc. You can imagine what a shock it was to suddenly look at the Owl one afternoon and see it register 2.5 kw. Had the timers gone wrong? I spent a fruitless ten minutes checking every appliance in the house before I realised that Owlly was registering the amount of electricity being *generated*. As soon as I bunged a pile of laundry in the washing machine and set it going, the 2.5 dropped dramatically. And, when I climbed up on yet another stool to reach the fuse box (all this solar energy does keep you fit), 'twas then that I saw the glorious sight of our meter going backwards. Yay!

A less glorious sight was a month into the system when Sunny Boy suddenly started flashing his warning lights at me. I almost expected to hear " 'Allo? 'Allo? *This is Night'awk calling ...*" but nothing happened except that the Boy ground to a halt and we had to send urgent phone calls and emails. Still nothing happened because it was Sunday. However, we weren't too worried as, happily for once, it was thick fog and we wouldn't have been making any kwh's anyway. The next day all was put right with a phone call from our solar experts who told me how to flip the trip switch back into position. Why had it flipped off? No idea; these things happen at The Lizard. Once more onto the stool, this time singing, "*Climb Every Mountain .....*"

So, would we do it again? Yes, we would. Even though the feed-in tariff has now decreased for new

customers, one can still save on the electricity bill, and overall it's a better investment than most saving accounts. Only we would make sure the blighters measured the roof again when they offered the replacement panels, because we could actually have squeezed in a couple more. Whatever ... we still have an extra reason to think life sweet when we're on the sunny side of the street.



Jane Grierson

**Comment by Editor,**  
to enable a balanced view:

*While I congratulate John & Jane on their enthusiasm and for completing their installation in time for the higher tariff, there are nevertheless several other factors that householders should take into account when considering an installation. These certainly put me off from the "investment":*

*Although the feed-in tariff has been "guaranteed" and index-linked by the Government for 25 years, so too in Spain where their government has had to revoke that guarantee, due to unaffordability;*

*The solar panels will need to be cleaned periodically and receive other routine maintenance;*

*The panels have a finite life, certainly less than 25 years – manufacturers do not know, or tell, what this will be;*

*There are, statistically, far better ways to invest the installation costs for an improved financial return;*

*They are a "blot" on the roof and on the landscape/townscape generally;*

*Perhaps the most compelling contrary argument is that, very soon, this will become old technology and systems will become redundant as significant scientific advances are made, as they inevitably will. The same applies to wind turbines.*

*These points originate from the very many contrary views that are readily available from surfing the web.*

David Richardson

**The Highwaymen of Goonhilly Downs**

The events of the night of 20th August 1820 had the population of the village of Trease out of their beds. There was the sudden sound of a pistol as William Hancock of Mullion was shot and clubbed from his horse at Bray's Corner where he had been on his way home from Helston market. Then came more shots and the sound of galloping horses, as another farmer, William Jose, together with his wife, fled from the highwaymen on the road. Men with pitchforks and flintlock guns came running, shouting, chasing shadows through the night, but to no avail. But everyone knew where 'the usual suspects' could be found.

In those days Goonhilly Downs was a bleak and deserted place. The road from Helston to St Keverne passed along its northern edge, and around the landmark known as Dry Tree were crude cottages and hovels where vagrants and other unemployed labourers lived at subsistence level. It was widely believed that the unruly occupants of this area of Goonhilly Downs were the source of the cattle rustling and other thefts that had plagued the Lizard in recent years.

At a cottage occupied by the Thompson brothers, a gun was found that had been recently fired.



There were also strands of grey horsehair, that matched that of William Hancock's horse, sticking to an old scythe handle which might have been used as a club. And at another nearby cottage, the occupant John Barnicott was found to be limping, and William Hancock had stated that one of the highwaymen had been injured by his horse. John Barnicott and the two older Thompson brothers were dragged off to the inn at Cury Cross where William Hancock had been carried. As he lay dying he identified John Barnicott and John Thompson as his assailants, but he

was less sure about Thomas Thompson, the third accused. Along with the statement William Jose was to give, it was evidence enough.

In March of 1820, five men stood trial for murder and highway robbery at Launceston Assizes. John Barnicott, aged about 23, and the three Thompson brothers - John aged 17, Thomas aged about 16, and William who was only 14 years old. With them was another sixteen-year old, William Daw, who the Thompson brothers had tried to blame. Today they sound like children, but in those days a male of 14 had come of age, and therefore could be hanged.

Life was hard on the Lizard Peninsula in the early nineteenth century, and probably none of the locals would have shed a tear when the news reached them that John Barnicott and John Thompson had been found guilty and hanged by the neck until they were dead - in the presence of 'a great concourse of spectators', according to the local press. John Thompson went to his death protesting his innocence, blaming William Daw and his younger brothers for the crime. But in those hard times the locals wouldn't have been too concerned about the niceties of the law.

The case against the other accused had been dismissed but, no doubt, there were some who would have preferred to have seen all the suspected highwaymen strung up - including 'Old Mall', the mother of one the boys, who some claimed to be a witch.



The families of the cattle thieves and highwaymen who lived on Goonhilly Downs should be exterminated or packed off to the colonies. There were few in the nineteenth century who did not subscribe to the old adage - bad blood will out.

**This appeared in the Times Newspaper August 22 1820:**

### **Robbery and Murder**

*On Saturday night about half past nine o'clock, as Mr William Hancock, a farmer, who resides in the parish of Mullion, Cornwall, was returning from Helston market on horseback, he was met about two miles and a half from that place by three men on foot, each carrying a musket who desired him to stop, at the same time one of them laid hold of his bridle. Mr Hancock spurred his horse, and the animal trod on the foot of the fellow who held the*



*bridle, and who let it go. One of the others immediately fired and several slugs entered Mr W Hancock's side just above the hip, he immediately fell from his horse and the ruffians came up. They took a new hat which he had bought at Helston, and rifled his pockets in which however he had just 2/-, and otherwise ill treated him and kicked him and then made off leaving him for dead.*



*In this situation he was found by some neighbours, and removed to a house a quarter of a mile from where he was found. About ten o'clock the people in the house heard a shot fired which was followed by the shrieks of a woman, but knowing there were three armed ruffians on the road they did not venture out.*

*This second alarm was occasioned by an attack made by the same villains on a labouring man named William Jose who were also on their way home from Helston Market, and who on resisting the attempt made to plunder them, were fired at by one of the ruffians. The contents of the gun chiefly lodged in some meat which was in a basket that the woman carried on her arm, and was the means of saving her life, she however was dangerously wounded by one of*

*the slugs, a number of which were found in the meat. And her husband also received a slug in the face. The woman's screams induced the villain's to decamp without affecting their object. Jose and his wife were able to reach a neighbouring house, and as they both & Mr Hancock had recognised the robbers. The next morning, Sunday, a fellow named John Barnicoat and two young men, brothers, named John and Thomas Thompson, were taken into custody, Barnicoat was injured by the tread of Mr. Hancock's horse, and the hat that Mr. Hancock has purchased at Helston was found in the house of the Thompsons. They have committed to Bodmin gaol. Mr Hancock died from his wounds he received on Thursday morning.*

**Copied from the Times 11<sup>th</sup> November 1925:  
Charles H How asst Secretary.**

### **Cousin Hugh (Johns) A Cornish Witness and The Truth**

*Cousin Hugh of Cury, near Helston was a principle witness in a case of murder on the main Helston Road in the year 1820. There well known characteristics were seen on the spot, taken before the Helston magistrates and committed to Bodmin assizes. The presiding magistrates impressed upon the witnesses their solemn responsibility seeing that the lives of the prisoners rested on their evidence, and that when brought before the great judge they would have to kiss the bible and swear to speak the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Here we are told, cousin Hugh asked for the privilege of addressing his fellow witnesses, it was said that three Ruffians were seen on the 12<sup>th</sup> of Aug, Sat night, 1820.*

*Dale confessed to being one of the Ruffians, confessing with his dying breathe that he ought to have been executed instead of John Barnicoat.*

*It has been alleged that a man named J. E. Barnicoat of Tregoney was another, whether John Thompson was guilty or Innocent I have not heard either way. I have heard all my life that the witnesses gave false evidence. John Barnicoat did not want to rob anyone as his parents were very well to do people and respected by everyone. You have heard, dears, he said what Colonel*

Sandy's, do say that we have got to go before the great judge, and to kiss the bible and to swear before almighty god to speak the truth. But mind this my dears, we must hang they for if we don't they will kill we.

**Published on the Western Morning Newspapers 1925:**

**Copied from a letter received from a lawyer in Rockhampton, Queensland, Australia. Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> 1925.**

John Barnicoat and John Thompson were executed in Whitehall gaol Devonshire England on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1821 for assaulting, shooting and wounding William Williams Hancock. It is alleged that John Barnicoat was innocent of the crime for which he was hanged. And that a man named J. E. Barnicoat of no relation at all, who it is alleged was the guilty person left England hurriedly for Australia. This person has since died somewhere in

Australia or New Zealand and is presumed to have left the whole of his estate to the family of the hanged man as some amends for the wrong done to them.

**What I shall now copy in was in the Plymouth Western Morning News and Mercury Sept 14<sup>th</sup> 1931. Sent to the paper with other items of news.**

On August the 12<sup>th</sup> 1820 a farmer of Kynance called William Hancock was attacked by two Ruffians at Base Corner, when riding home from Helston market. He died of the injuries he received but was able to name two men Thompson and Barnicoat as assailants apparently the Barnicoat who attacked him was a Tregoney man who had come to Bonython to assist in the harvesting, and another man (farmer) of the same name who had squatted on the downs, at dry tree was arrested and hanged by mistake. It is said that the

real culprit escaped to Australia, and on his death bed bequeathed his property to the family of the Innocent Barnicoat out of remorse.



It seems very strange that such a bit of news should get into the papers after the murder and hanging. It is 111 years and ten months since poor John Barnicoat was executed, yet it seems as though the matter is not allowed to die down. I am doing my level best to clean his name. I live for it, and shall not die happy unless his name is cleared.

Lillian Josephine Rule, Sunday night  
Jan 24<sup>th</sup> 1932.

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## **National Trust Walk – Predannack Airfield**

On Friday 16 September 2011, I took part in a walk organised by the National Trust at Predannack Airfield. This was an opportunity to go inside the airfield perimeter, normally out of bounds to the general public being an MOD establishment. The walk was entitled “Bombers, Beef and Boreholes” for reasons which became apparent later. The walk was led by Justin Whitehouse, the NT Ranger for the Lizard, and aimed to show something of the military uses of Predannack as well as work done by the NT and other partners. Justin was supported by two people from RNAS Culdrose involved with the airfield.

Predannack Airfield was opened in June 1941 and was originally an RAF base used by a variety of aircraft throughout the war. After the war it became a training location for the new RNAS Culdrose base. There is a partnership involving the NT / MOD / Natural England / Cornwall Wildlife Trust for the management of the land which is 50% owned by NT and leased to the MOD, with the other 50% owned outright by the MOD. Within the Airfield, Shelterbox has its training facility, so this site is not just a military establishment. The site is around 860 acres (348 ha) in size.

At the start of the walk, Justin pointed out the various Cornish heathers which will be familiar to those who have attended our previous botanical walks. He went on to speak of the origin of the Victorians' interest in Serpentine rock, following the visit to Kynance by Queen Victoria and her husband Albert. The NT has recently been able to graze cattle on the airfield (some persuasion of the military at Culdrose was required before permission was granted!). NT policy is to reintroduce old breeds such as Red Devons and we were able to view these. One problem they encountered was the lack of water on the site for cattle. This was solved by digging a borehole, the pump for this being solar powered.

Members may have noticed the old derelict aircraft on one part of the site - these are used for training of Culdrose fire crews. They immerse the old plane in jet fuel, set fire to it and then the crews have to extinguish the fire - just like that! There is also an old Sea King Helicopter - two Culdrose squadrons use Sea Kings and can go to Afghanistan. They use the old machine for simulation of an incident where they have made a forced landing in Afghanistan - the crew go into the craft and basically troops from Culdrose then fire automatic weapons at them. However it is done with blank ammunition!! Other aircraft there include old Harriers which had been in Germany and a Canberra bomber.

The “Beef” part of our walk referred to local farmer John Bosustow who works with the NT and has cattle nearby. He has the slogan ‘Beef off the Heath’ and was selling it at Mullion Farmers' Market the following day.

The final point of interest was the ramps which were used by Barnes Wallis in the 1950s to test swing wing aircraft. For more information on this please see my article in the April 2011 Newsletter. I understand that NT organises this visit annually so, if you are interested, look in the NT Local Events Calendar in 2012.

Geoff Blackman

### **Continuing.....**

### **The places we live in and their Cornish meanings**

#### **2. Coverack area:**

Coverack	place of streams
Lanarth	a clearing in the woods
Chynalls	the house on the cliff
Poldowrian	a watering place
Trebarveth	middle farm
Pednavounder	top end of the lane

## Wind and solar electricity generation in the Cornish landscape – Lizard Peninsula landscape characteristics

In order to help understand how best to accommodate wind and solar electricity generation installations in the Cornish landscape, Cornwall Council commissioned Land Use Consultants to undertake an assessment of the landscape sensitivity to onshore wind and large scale solar photovoltaic development. The report ('An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind and Large Scale Photovoltaic Development in Cornwall', Land Use Consultants April 2011')

sets out the methodology for the study and presents a summary of the results.

The main report is supplemented by four Annexes. Annex 1 contains detailed landscape sensitivity and strategy matrices for each Landscape Character Area – these matrices set out a detailed assessment of the sensitivity of the Cornish landscape to wind farms and solar PV developments, including landscape recommendations on the appropriate siting and scale of future development (wind and solar PV) within each of the county's 40 Landscape Character Areas. It also presents a 'landscape strategy' for deployment of each technology in each LCA.

### Landscape Character Areas for the Lizard Peninsula, as defined in the report

#### 1 South Lizard Peninsula - Key Landscape Characteristics

- Gently undulating open upland plateau with low central ridge, falling away to east and west, more steeply near the coast.
- Open and treeless landscape, with extensive areas of Lowland Heathland and rough ground within pastoral farmland.
- Contrasting field patterns of small, irregular, anciently enclosed land of medieval origin and more regular, medium scale, recently enclosed land, fringing the unenclosed rough ground.
- Mainly pastoral improved fields with few arable bounded by Cornish hedges with wind pruned hedgerow trees and scrubby margins.
- Narrow, occasionally steeply incised wooded stream valleys with tumbling streams lined with woodland and little tree cover on the plateau.
- Numerous traces of past human activity on the downs, from Bronze Age barrows to remains of postmedieval peat cutting.
- Military and communications land use and heritage.
- A few coastal villages with isolated cottages and small farms inland.
- High indented cliffs with boulders on shoreline, rocky outcrops on headlands and wildflower-filled coves.
- Sparse transport pattern with many ancient trackways.
- Significant areas of unenclosed rough ground.
- Dramatic coastal scenery and far reaching views.

#### 2 North-East Lizard Peninsula - Key Landscape Characteristics

- Contrasting landscape of open farmed plateau and small hidden valleys.
- Small steep-sided valleys which are very heavily wooded.
- Medium to large, irregular field pattern on the plateau with a smaller, more irregular field pattern in the valleys.
- Plateau and valleys more sheltered and with more tree cover than south Lizard.
- Groups of trees around farms and areas of estate and ornamental woodland planting.
- Mixed farming with Cornish hedges with mature trees on the plateau; mainly pasture, with significant areas of arable and rough grazing.
- Very narrow winding lanes bounded by high Cornish hedges and hedge trees.
- Few nucleated villages and isolated farmsteads with fishing villages at the coast.
- Low indented cliffs and reef rocks with some sandy beaches and remnant coastal heath/ coastal rough ground on the coastal strip.

#### 3 Helford Ria - Key Landscape Characteristics

- Sheltered deepwater ria with a broad river system and feeder creeks.
- Steep sided valleys covered in dense, mature broadleaved woodland.
- Dramatic scenery of varying scale, with extensive river views from higher land.
- Pastoral or mixed farmland with trees on the gently undulating plateau which surrounds the ria, with a medium scale, predominantly mediaeval field pattern.
- Flatter coastal zone to the north of the river, with pasture and rough grazing, cliff habitats and mixed tree groups.
- Bracken and scrub-covered east-facing coastline outside mouth of river.
- Wooded parkland estates (Glendurgan, Trebah); groups of trees and woodland in field corners on the plateau and trees on Cornish Hedges.
- Distinctive groups of Monterey pines which contrast with the broadleaved woodland.
- Dominant intertidal mudflats in the river corridor.
- Clustered settlement pattern with small often isolated farms and nucleated villages along the creeks; lime wash on granite buildings is locally characteristic, as is cob.
- Recreational use of the river by sailing boats with numerous moorings and small quays and significant recreation, tourism and amenity centred on traditional villages.

David Richardson

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