

## Messach a'n Bardh Meur / Grand Bard's Message

*My a wayt agas bos ow kortos salow ha nyns owgh hwi klav gans an virus Covid-19 yn bys koynt ma omenysektek hag omdennans.*

*18ves mis Ebrel o an jydh ordennys rag omguntel yn Porthbud-Strasnedh rag an Solempnita Gwarnyans. Yn gwettha prys awos an studh lemmyn nyns o possybyl. My a vynn grassa dhe'n Mer Porth Bud-Strasnedh, Bob Willingham, ha'y kessedhek a oll aga ober gwrys rag henna. Pur dhiswaytus o bos res y dhilea. Yth esen vy ow mires yn rag yn hwir dhe vos dhe Borth Bud rag an Gwarnyans gans berdh erel a'n Orsedh.*

*Yn eur ma ny wodhyn ni mar fydh possybyl synsi agan Esedhvos ha Solempnita Bardhek yn mis Gwynngala. My a wra gul ervirans, wosa kewsel gans eseli Konsel an Orsedh ha kuntelles kessedhek leel Porthbud-Strasnedh, pan vydh moy a gedhlow a-dro dhe'n studh yn termyn a dheu.*

*Yma govenek dhymm hwath dos dhe Borthbud-Strasnedh Ses a vis Gwynngala rag an Solempnita Bardhek arag an Kastel, rann an Esedhvos. My a wor bos pubonan ena owth oberi yn tiwysyk may hyll bos an hwarvos sewen.*

*My a wra nowedhi pubonan yn messach diberthys a-dro dhe vis Gwynngala, kettooth hag ervirys yw. Yma govenek godhvos moy yn diw po teyr seythen.*

\*\*\*\*\*

I hope that you are all staying safe and have managed to stay clear of the Covid-19 virus in the current strange world of self isolation and self distancing.

April 18<sup>th</sup> was the day planned for our gathering in Bude for our Proclamation ceremony. Unfortunately, because of the current situation that was not possible.

I would like to thank the Mayor of Bude/Stratton, Bob Willingham, and his committee for all the preparations they had put in place to make the proposed event a success. It is very disappointing that it had to be cancelled. I had been really looking forward to being in Bude for the Proclamation along with my fellow Bards of Gorsedh Kernow.

As I write this we do not know if we will be able to hold our Esedhvos of Cornish Culture including the Bardic Ceremony in September. I will make a decision on this, in consultation with Gorsedh Council members and the Local Organising Committee in Bude/Stratton, when more is known about how the situation will be in five months' time.

I do still hope we may be able to come to Bude/Stratton on 5th September for the annual Gorsedh Kernow Bardic ceremony at the Castle as part of the Esedhvos Festival of Cornish Culture. I know that everyone there has been working hard to make the event a great success.

I will update everyone in a separate mailing as soon as we have made a decision about September. I hope to know more over the next couple of weeks.

*Mellenek, Bardh Meur Kernow*



### **STOP PRESS!**

**Gorsedh Kernow ceremony in Bude 2020 postponed until September 2021. Further information in a following letter from Bardh Meur**

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Bardh Meur and cup winners 2019

## Gorsedh Kernow's Holyer an Gof Publishers' Awards

Many Bards will be aware of Holyer an Gof and know that entries are usually read and reviewed between March and June, with the Awards ceremony in July. Well, Covid-19 has meant the closure of our 'sorting office', Kresen Kernow, and other libraries and the imposition of social distancing and reality of self-isolation mean that our reviewing of this year's sixty-six submissions has now ground to a halt. The planned Awards evening (our third in the Royal Cornwall Museum) has of course also been put on hold. As soon as restrictions

have been lifted, *Mab Melinor Gwan*, Gareth Parry and I will assess the situation, re-allocate books that still require reviews (each book needs at least three reviewers) and set the process in motion again. Since November will see the beginning of the new Holyer Year, we're planning to work as fast as possible, announcing nominees and winners before the end of 2020. It may be that – time and space allowing - we can have a combined 2020/21 ceremony in July 2021, but that decision is still in the future. Fingers crossed.

*Gwylan Gernow, Pat Parry*



## Pewasow Gorsedh Kernow 2020 / Gorsedh Kernow Awards 2020

This year's Gorsedh Kernow Awards have received the highest number of adult nominations and submissions in recent years, After positive coverage of the awards scheme on Cornish-language radio and television, BBC Radio Cornwall, and in other media, the awards received sixty nominations and submissions by the 31st March deadline. We were also pleased to receive a good range of entries in the children's and young people's categories despite the obvious impact of recent events on schools.

New specialist adjudicators have joined the awards panel in reviewing the nominations and we anticipate informing successful nominees of the decisions in the early summer. We must, of course, wait to see what will happen about current social-distancing restrictions before we can decide whether an awards ceremony can be held this year.

Acting Awards Secretary, Tamsin Spargo.



## *Ow kovhe Crenner , 1917—2020 / Remembering Wella Brown, 1917 - 2020*

**Crenner**, Wella Brown, died, from age rather than illness, on Good Friday 2020, aged 102. He was born on 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1917.

There is much that can be written about Wella and his long life and my short remarks will not be enough to tell it in full in any way. There are others who knew him well and over a long time who would want to share their thoughts and memories as well. Kesva an Taves Kernewek, the Cornish Language Board, plans to commemorate his life once the coronavirus pandemic is over.

Since he was a Quaker in his beliefs and a man of peace, perhaps few among us know that he was a soldier in the British Army in Palestine between the two world wars. Afterwards he became a teacher and for the Cornish world, this is the role in which we remember him.

As well as teaching full-time in school, Wella prepared evening lessons for his classes in Launceston and Saltash for decades and hundreds of students succeeded under his wise eye and kindly tolerance. He kept a record of the names of his students; many of them followed him into the world of the Cornish Language.

Wella studied Cornish in depth and he was a celebrated linguist. He also understood Breton and Arabic. When he started to teach Cornish there was not a lot of Cornish spoken but Wella urged his students always to remember that using the spoken language was very important, along with understanding the roots and grammatical structure, following the rules as well as possible and aiming at correct pronunciation.

From his studies and his lessons came at last in 1984 our foremost grammar book, *A Grammar of Modern Cornish*, collected and written by him, published by Kesva an Taves Kernewek and re-printed in 1993 and 2001.

Wella was a bard of the Gorsedh and a member of the Gorsedh Council for many years. He served as both Secretary and Treasurer of the Kesva. Wella was the chief examiner for the Kesva, accessed grants for publications and introduced the first Cornish language GCE exam. His three books in the series *Skeul an Yeth* are still a wonderful resource for beginners and fluent speakers alike.

Wella continued to teach Cornish in evening class in Saltash up to his 99<sup>th</sup> year! His lessons were always lively and full of knowledge and laughter. Wella was a teacher in a million, but above all he was a family man, discreet, wise, kind, loyal and patient. Our thoughts are with his widow, Liz, his three children and his many descendants. Thank you Wella, my teacher, my colleague, my friend. Rest in peace.

*Gwas Conoc, Graham Sandercock*



## ***Kan rag Kernow Yowynk—Gorsedh Youth project***



*Following a suggestion for a Gorsedh Youth Festival, which triggered a grant from the Government funding for language and culture in Cornwall, Myrgh Melingoos, Amanda Harris, put together a project inspired by the annual Kan rag Kernow Cornish language song competition but aimed at celebrating language and history in schools through writing and music. Bardh Meur spoke at the event for Gorsedh Kernow This report is taken from The Writers' Block newsletter.*

The Writers' Block, Cornwall Music Education Hub and Kresen Kernow collaborated in January 2020 on an exciting new project. Kan Rag Kernow Yowynk (Song for Cornish Youth) was a project designed to provide children from five Camborne schools a unique insight into their heritage and the opportunity to write and perform songs inspired by this.

The project was based at Kresen Kernow, Cornwall's new archive centre in Redruth and revolved around their temporary exhibition on John Couch Adams, a nineteenth century farmer's son from Launceston who went on to (nearly) discover Neptune.

Journalist and author Becca Gregson and award-winning performance poet Taran Spalding-Jenkins, both from The Writers' Block, Camborne, worked with the children to help funnel the themes, emotions and history of John Couch Adam's story into the student's very own poems. Musicians Matt Douglas and Patrick Bailey from The Music Hub then visited the schools to help the students turn their words into song.

Incorporating creative writing, Cornish history, music and pop-up performances from John Couch Adams, Kan Rag Kernow Yowynk allowed these students to creatively explore their local history. The project culminated in a final performance of the completed songs at Kresen Kernow; a chance for the students to take part in Cornish history and add their voices as the Cornish youth.

### **Kovheans /**

### **In Memoriam**

#### **Wella Brown, *Crenner***

Saltash. He was initiated at the Merry Maidens in 1971 and died on 10th April 2020 at the age of 102. He was a former judge on the Gorsedh competitions committee and a Gorsedh Council member.

**John Henry David Parker *Den Prasow***. Penzance. He was initiated at St Just in 1998 for proficiency in the Cornish Language and died on 18th March 2020.

**Christina Chesterfield, *Gwylan*** She was initiated in 1970 and was the wife of former grand Bard *Gwas Costentyn*, John Chesterfield, who died in 2018.

**Elizabeth (Liz) Lane, *Maghteth Bal Du***. She was initiated in Torpoint in 2014 and passed away in late March

## Ow Kovhe Den Pras / remembering John Parker

John H D Parker, *Den Prasow* was born in Ilford on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1929. After obtaining a degree in economics at the LSE he spent many years teaching maths, later becoming a schools inspector. Working in Kenya he learnt Swahili and he wrote of his time there in *Kenya Interlude*, published in 2015.

Later, working in Exmouth, he met his wife Shirley. They had both become members of the Exeter Operatic Society. She said he had the most beautiful voice. They moved to Cornwall in 1994, and John began learning Cornish almost straight away. He also taught Mathematics and Latin and wrote, over the years, many books on both subjects as well as in Cornish.

After becoming a Bard in 1998 he started teaching Cornish through KDL and in 2002 started the Gulval class. The very first student to become a Bard was Esther Johns. Sarah Tresidder, Trevor Smitheram and Penny Norman followed afterwards. Last year John and I tried to work out how many Language Bards he had taught, and he counted about 10, though there may be more.

He wrote short stories in Cornish, which were used in class as a teaching aid. We were encouraged to act, and from there the regular Christmas pantos started. Later they became written by the students/ex students. Because the performances were usually during Christmas, a choir was started to sing Carols. That choir (*Keur heb Hanow*) is still going. So many of our songs were translated by John, we will miss his abilities greatly.

John retired several times. We gave up giving him retirement gifts after the third! In fact, he only truly retired last June when his last student Wella Morris took and passed his grade 4 examination. However, he was still translating and checking scripts. On the day he died he rang Steve Penhaligon from his hospital bed only a couple of hours before, to apologise because he was not able to check the *An Nowodhow* (the news) script that week.

John celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last July at the Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens where he shared the story of this life with us all. As Shirley said "he had done everything he wanted to do." Esther Johns remembers his generosity, particularly when she was on her own bringing up a family of 4 children and his thoughtfulness when he saw something that might be of interest to her.

John Prowse remembers his sense of humour, particularly when giving students homework - such as translating Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* or *Henry V's speech before Agincourt*, or bizarre colloquial sentences to test their grammar.

So, it was a sad day on 18<sup>th</sup> March when we lost a good friend, teacher and family member. John was a true gentleman, man of God and of great importance to not only his students but to Cornwall yn tien. Rest in peace gentle man knowing that you will always be in our hearts and minds. Thank you for all you gave us, our language, our confidence to use it and so much more.

Compiled by *Palores Tavosek*, Sarah Tresidder, with contributions from *Mab Menweythoryon John Prowse*, *Pennhelyk Steve Penhaligon* and *Tam Steren Esther Johns*



## Lyther-Nowodhow / Newsletter

News and information for the next issue, covering May, June and July, should be sent to [news@gorsedhkernow.org.uk](mailto:news@gorsedhkernow.org.uk) by 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

If you have an email address and would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please tell the Membership secretary, David Holman on [Membership@gorsedhkernow.org.uk](mailto:Membership@gorsedhkernow.org.uk). You will also then receive the occasional interim postings which go only by email.

## Sodhogyon Nowydh / New appointments

Gorsedh Kernow is glad to announce two new appointments.

Following the call for nominations earlier this year, we can now announce that *Gwythvosen*, Jenefer Lowe, has been appointed as Deputy Grand Bard Elect.

In addition, *Karores Lyvrow*, Kim Cooper, has been co-opted on to the Gorsedh Council. Kim is the head of the Cornish Studies Library at Kresen Kernow in Redruth.

## Ow hwilas Elowen / Seeking Miss Petchy

Matthew Clarke, who produces the Cornish language television programme *An Mis* and Radio *an Gernewegva*, is looking for any memories, pictures, film and items of information concerning *Elowen*, Joan Petchy, who was an important figure in the Cornish language revival for a special edition of the programme.

If you have any information, please send it to Matthi on [pennlorwydh@hotmail.com](mailto:pennlorwydh@hotmail.com) or by post to 29 Vyvyan Court, Pendarves House, Pool, Redruth.



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