The Cornish Association of Victoria Inc.
Ballarat Branch

A.C.N. A0008 264A

December 2026 Newsletter

Onen hag oll

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Wishing all our readers a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New year

Dates to Remember

Saturday 5th December - Lunch at The Grand in Dana Street. Please let Keith Lanyon know if you are coming - 0411 512 160 - no later than **28th November** - please also tell Keith of any allergies or dietary restrictions.
A traditional Christmas Lunch of two courses and tea and coffee will cost $42.50.
This must be ordered with Keith.
If you wish to order à la carte, the menu can be found here and can be ordered on the day:
https://restaurantguru.com/The-Grand-Ballarat-Australia/menu

Saturday 6th February 2027 at 2.00 pm - Robyn and Arthur Coates will share photos and stories of their trip to Cornwall, England and Scotland during September/October of last year.

Sunday 7th 2027 March - we will be celebrating St Piran's Day with a church service at 10.00 am at Skipton Street, followed by lunch at the Flying Horse and the possibility of an activity in the afternoon.
More details in the February newsletter.

Advance Notice

Kernewek Lowender - 10th-16th May 2027 on the Copper Coast of South Australia - Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina.

Last Meeting - 3rd October - A Pirate from Penzance

The October speaker was our own historian, Jenny Burrell who spoke about Captain Stephen Hutchens, her distant relative
(I am grateful for this information supplied by Jenny).



Stephen is remembered in St Pol de Léon's Church on a large stone tablet mounted high on the wall. It was placed there by Louis Lucien Bonaparte, a relative of Napoleon Bonaparte and the Vicar of Paul in 1882.

The inscription in Cornish was written by John Boson on a memorial to Captain Stephen Hutchens in Paul Church, Cornwall.

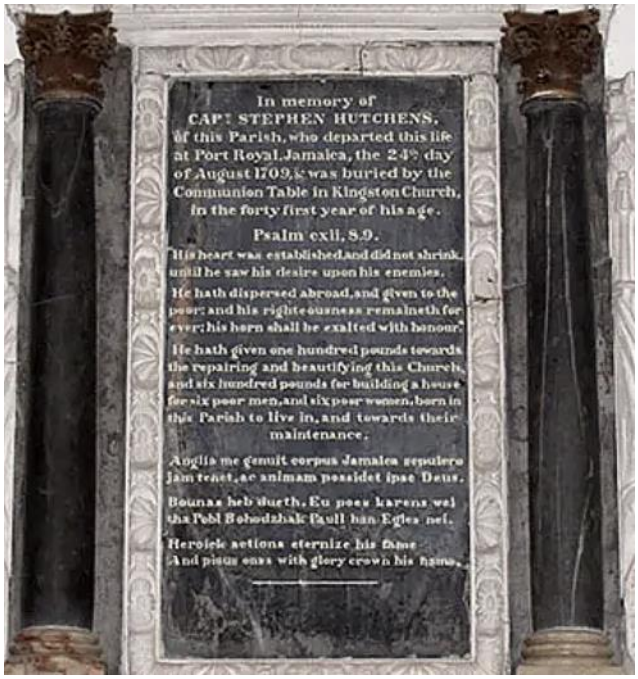
In memory of Capt. Stephen Hutchens (c1660-1709) of this Parish, who departed this life at Port Royal, Jamaica, the 24th day of August 1709, & was buried by the Communion Table in Kingston Church, in the forty-first year of his age.

Psalm exii, 8. 9
"His heart was established and did not shrink, until he saw his desire upon his enemies, He hath dispersed abroad, and given to the poor: and his righteousness remaineth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour."
He hath given one hundred pounds towards the repairing and beautifying this church, and six

Normally meetings are held on the even months at Skipton Street Uniting Church Hall, cnr Darling and Skipton Streets, Ballarat.
Meetings begin at 2.00 pm and are followed by a shared high tea.



hundred pounds for building a house for six poor men, and six poor women, born in this Parish to live in, and towards their maintenance.



Anglia me genuit, corpus Jamaica sepultura j Jam tenet, ac animam possidet ipse Deus.
"England bore me, the grave in Jamaica now holds my body, and God himself possesses my soul."
Bounas heb dueth, Eu poes Karens wei tha Pobl Bohodzhak Paull han Egles nei.
"Eternal life be his whose loving care / Gave Paul an almshouse and the church repair."
Heroic actions eternalize his fame And pious care with glory crown his name

Website for Cornish translations:
wiki.kernowlingo.com https://wiki.kernowlingo.com/w/index.php?title=Memorial_to_Capt._Stephen_Hutchens

During the reign of Queen Anne 1702-1714, Captain Stephen Hutchens was licensed by the government of the day to raid French and Spanish ships, thus making him a privateer rather than a pirate.

Out there on the high seas, at the time it seemed to be a free for all to seize bounty from the Americas, especially Spanish gold bullion.

The Hutchens' Almshouses are located in Mousehole Lane, Penzance, Penwith, Cornwall TR19 6TY.

There is a commemorative slate tablet on the exterior wall which begins with this Latin inscription meaning: "from the blessings of the leader"

Stephani Hutchens 1709
Arma Virum
qe Cano
r
Vigil

[The stone mason, being unfamiliar with the text and the meaning, had to correct the name of Virgil by adding the 'r' as a superscript.]

These are the first words of the Aeneid, an epic Latin poem by Virgil (70-19 BC)
Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris Italiam fato profugas Lavinaque venit Litora - multum ille et terris factatus et alto Vi superum, savae memorem Iuonis ob iram.
That is... Arms I sing, and the man, who first from the shores of Troy came Fate-exiled, to Italy and her Lavinian strand Much buffeted he on flood and field by constraint Of heaven and fell Juno's unslumbering fire.

So, singing the praises of Stephen Hutchens, a war hero who has given a fortune, through the church, to build these houses for the poor.

More information can be found on freepages.Rootsweb.com Life, Times and Influences of CAPTAIN STEPHEN HUTCHENS of PAUL, nr Penzance, Cornwall. Researched by Raymond Forward at The Public Record Office, Kew

Stephen Hutchens did not marry and had no children, but he had brothers living in and around the villages of Paul, Mousehole, Newlyn and Penzance.

Dedicated family history researchers have pointed out how I am related to the good captain but it was too complex to remain in my memory.

Spelling variations include HEWCHINS (1662 Will Paul); HUTCHINGS (1675) St Buryan; HITCHINS (1836, 1837 births at Saint Erth, 1840, 1842 births at St Just in Penwith); HITCHINGS (1847 shipping to South Australia); HUTCHENS (1856 rate books, Parish of Springhill, District of Creswick).

My Hutchens family settled in Newlyn, Victoria in 1854, having come aboard the Aboukir in 1847 to Port Adelaide and north to the Burra Burra copper mining area.

At the mine, John Hutchens was a groom tending to the needs of the work horses.
On his farm at Forest Hill he was breeding prize wining Percherons.
My father's mother, a much loved Nanna of 22 grandchildren, was Hilda Hutchins (1895-1968).

I have been fortunate enough to travel to Cornwall three times, in 1998, 2006 and 2014.

Jennifer Burrell
Hutchens descendant

A couple of Christmas tales from
Popular Romances of the West of England; or, the drolls, traditions, and superstitions of old Cornwall.
Collected and edited by Robert Hunt, FRS
Second series. London: John Camden Hotten, piccadilly. 1865.
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/59033/59033-h/59033-h.htm#heading74

Christmas Eve in the Mines
On Christmas-eve, in former days, the small people, or the spriggans, would meet at the bottom of the deepest mines, and have a midnight mass. Then those who were in the mine would hear voices melodious beyond all earthly voices, singing, "Now well! now well;" (see below) and the strains of some deep-toned organ would shake the rocks. Of the grandeur of those meetings, old stories could not find words sufficiently sonorous to speak; it was therefore left to the imagination. But this was certain, the temple formed by the fairy bands in which to celebrate the eve of the birth of a Saviour, in whose mercy they all had hope, was of the most magnificent description.

Midsummer-eve and new-year's day and eve are holidays with the miners. It has been said they refuse to work on those days from superstitious reasons. I never heard of any.

"Now well! now well! the angel did say
To certain poor shepherds in the fields who lay
Late in the night, folding their sheep;
A winter's night, both cold and deep.
Now well! now well! now well!
Born is the King of Israel!"

Oxen Pray on Christmas Eve
I remember, when a child, being told that all the oxen and cows kept at a farm, in the parish of St Germans, at which I was visiting with my aunt, would be found on their knees when the clock struck twelve.
This is the only case within my own knowledge of this widespread superstition existing in Cornwall.

Brand says,
"A superstitious notion prevails in the western parts of Devonshire, that at twelve o'clock at night on Christmas-eve, the oxen in their stalls are always found on their knees, as in an attitude of devotion; and that, (which is still more singular,) since the alteration of the style, they continue to do this only on the eve of old Christmas-day.

An honest countryman, living on the edge of St Stephen's Down, near Launceston, Cornwall, informed me, October 28, 1790, that he once, with some others, made a trial of the truth of the above, and, watching several oxen in their stalls at the above time,—at twelve o'clock at night,—they observed the two oldest oxen only, fall upon their knees and, as he expressed it in the idiom of the country, make 'a cruel moan, like Christian creatures.'
I could not, but with great difficulty, keep my countenance: he saw, and seemed angry, that I gave so little credit to his tale; and, walking off in a pettish humour, seemed to 'marvel at my unbelief.'

There is an old print of the Nativity, in which the oxen in the stable, near the Virgin and the Child, are represented upon their knees, as in a suppliant posture.
This graphic representation has probably given rise to the above superstitious notion on this head."

"The Cornish Christmas Bush"
From the Old Cornwall Christmas Anthology - compiled by George Pritchard

In Cornwall the tradition of hanging up the "Bush" goes back to a pagan festival celebrating the Winter Solstice.

The construction of the bush is a memento of the practice of human sacrifice practiced by the Celts before the coming of Christianity.

Great cages of withies (willow stems) were fashioned in the likeness of the gods and into

these human victims were crowded and at midnight on the solstice eve they would be burnt as an offering to the solar deity in order that he might furnish the god with renewed power to rejuvenate the soil.

So the "Bush" just like the ‘obby ‘oss (which in tradition was also made of withies) is a celebration of the coming of the sun god and new life.

With the introduction of Christianity the tradition was adapted by the first Christian missionaries who just like the Bards before them would cut Holly, Ivy and Mistletoe bushes using a bronze sickle and then bless the cuttings before handing them to the people who would take them home to make the bush.

Now the bush was used to celebrate the new life that had come with the birth of the baby Jesus. So like many of the old traditions yet another was used by the church as a way of letting the people continue to use the old practice of their new faith.

Method
Use willow canes to make two hoops.
Fastened these one inside the other to make a ball shape.
Decorate the hoops with Holly, Ivy and Mistletoe which were believed by the old ones to have magical powers as they stayed green when everything around them was dying.
Wrap the holly and the ivy around the hoops and fasten an apple inside the top and hang the mistletoe below the hoops.

On Solstice eve 20th of December, secure the bush to the ceiling and taking great care, fastening a red candle inside the bush and light just before midnight then form a ring and dance under the bush welcoming the rebirth of the God of Light.

Make sure you extinguish the candle before leaving the room.



West Briton, 12th January 1849.
An Emigration Marriage:

A letter from Devonport says:
"A young woman, aged 22, a servant, being taken ill of typhus, was removed to the workhouse at Devonport, where by attention she soon recovered.

After her restoration to health she expressed a desire to emigrate to Australia if the guardians would advance the sum of £2.10s., which is necessary to be paid to the Emigration Society for outfit previous to sailing, and which money is returned them on disembarking; and the guardians having received a most satisfactory character of her from the governor of the workhouse, they agreed to do so; and she accordingly went to the office to inquire about her passage.

Whilst waiting there, however, she was accosted by a respectable person, who asked her business, and if she were going to emigrate.

She replied in the affirmative, when he rejoined, "So am I; and if you have no objection I'll marry you previous to sailing."

She replied that she was obliged for the offer, but thought it was very extraordinary and premature, seeing that he knew nothing about her; upon which he remarked that he liked her honest countenance.

At length the matter was most seriously entertained, and she referred him to the service she had lately left.

He at once started off to the address, and received such a satisfactory character, that on returning he immediately purchased the license, and they were married on Christmas-day.

It may be added, that previous to the wedding he spent £20 for his wife's outfit, paid her passage, and returned the £2.10s. to the guardians with many thanks".

The Rose and a husband
If a young lady will, on midsummer-eve, walk backwards into the garden and gather a rose, she has the means of knowing who is to be her husband.

The rose must be cautiously sewn up in a paper bag, and put aside in a dark drawer, there to remain until Christmas-day.

On the morning of the Nativity, the bag must be carefully opened in silence, and the rose placed by the lady in her bosom.
Thus she must wear it to church.

Some young man will either ask for the rose, or take it from her without asking.
That young man is destined to become eventually the lady's husband.
Robert Hunt (quoted previously)

From Margaret Ann Courtney – *Cornish Feasts and Folk-lore*
In some parts of the county, it is customary for each household to make a batch of currant cakes on Christmas-eve.
These cakes are made in the ordinary manner, coloured with saffron, as is the custom in these parts.

On this occasion the peculiarity of the cakes is, that a small portion of the dough in the centre of each top is pulled up and made into a form which resembles a very small cake on the top of a large one, and this centre-piece is usually called "the Christmas."

Each person in a house has his or her especial cake, and every person ought to taste a small piece of every other person's cake.

Similar cakes are also bestowed on the hangers-on of the establishment, such as laundresses, sempstresses, charwomen, &c.; and even some people who are in the receipt of weekly charity call, as a matter of course, for their Christmas cakes.

The cakes must not be cut until Christmas-day, it being probably "unlucky to eat them sooner."

(Geo. C. Boase, Notes and Queries, 5th series, Dec. 21st, 1878.)

Christmas Eve Drink
At the plentiful supper always provided on this night, (Christmas Eve) egg-hot, or eggy-hot, was the principal drink.
It was made with eggs, hot beer, sugar, and rum, and was poured from one jug into another until it became quite white and covered with froth.

Pies
A sweet giblet pie was one of the standing dishes at a Christmas dinner--a kind of mince-pie, into which the giblets of a goose, boiled and finely chopped, were put instead of beef.

Cornwall is noted for its pies, that are eaten on all occasions; some of them are curious mixtures, such as squab-pie, which is made with layers of well-seasoned fat mutton and apples, with onions and raisins.

Mackerel pie: the ingredients of this are mackerel and parsley stewed in milk, then covered with a paste and baked. When brought to table a hole is cut in the paste, and a basin of clotted cream thrown in it.

Muggetty pie, made from sheep's entrails (muggets), parsley, and cream.

"The devil is afraid to come into Cornwall for fear of being baked in a pie."

Squab pie
Then in parts minutely nice
Soft and fragrant apples slice
With its dainty flesh, the sheep
Next must swell the luscious heap
Then the onions savory juice
Sprinkle not with hand profuse
—A gentleman of Bodmin, 1846

Pendeen-St Just
There is a curious Christmas superstition connected with the Fogo, Vug, or Vow (local names for a cove) at Pendeen, in North St. Just.

"At dawn on Christmas-day the spirit of the 'Vow' has frequently been seen just within the entrance near the cove, in the form of a beautiful lady dressed in white, with a red rose in her mouth.
There were persons living a few years since who had seen the fair but not less fearful vision; for disaster was sure to visit those who intruded on the spirit's morning airing."

(Bottrell, Traditions, &c., West Cornwall, 2nd series.)

Wassailing
The following is an account by an anonymous writer of a Christmas custom in East Cornwall:
"In some places the parishioners walk in procession, visiting the principal orchards in the parish.
In each orchard one tree is selected, as the representative of the rest; this is saluted with a certain form of words, which have in them the form

of an incantation.
They then sprinkle the tree with cider, or dash a bowl of cider against it, to ensure its bearing plentifully the ensuing year.

In other places the farmers and their servants only assemble on the occasion, and after immersing apples in cider hang them on the apple-trees.
They then sprinkle the trees with cider; and after uttering a formal incantation, they dance round it (or rather round them), and return to the farmhouse to conclude these solemn rites with copious draughts of cider.



Request for assistance
Val Goldsworthy from Melbourne has sent me this photo and she has no idea why it is amongst her collection and she is asking if anyone has this person - William Arundell Paynter - in their family tree who could help her.

Facts we know from using the Cornwall Online Parish Clerk, the 1851 census and SA BDM:

William Arundell Paynter
baptised 25-Dec 1812
Parish Circuit Or Chapel Redruth
Father Forename Richard
Mother Forename Thomasine

Siblings -
1806 Redruth John
1808 Redruth Andrew Johns/John
1811 Redruth Elizabeth

In 1851 - the family is living at Gwennap - William is aged 32 with Sophia aged 29 Catherine 8, Emily 5, John 2 and Samuel ?months
Two children were born in South Australia - Edwin Joseph 1865 and Edith Sophia 1867-1907
Sophia Paynter died in 1894 in Adelaide.

If this rings any bells with anyone, please contact me and I will put you in touch with Val.



Christmas WORD SCRAMBLE

LEF
EWTREH
ALCROS
ACKCRES
ETNLIS
FITGS
AASTN LCSAU
CASODONTRIE
GNESEIGTR
CTSSMIRAH
NOOTPHIRE
IKSNSOTCG
ITNDOTIAR
EVFEITS
GIRDEGNRBAE
LREEBOITNAC
PORDULH
AKRTCNCREU
EITMNST
OIIPSTAENT
TARS
LLYJO
RREEEIDN
STGHIL
STEMILOTE

Cornish Snippets

Seal back in pool after successful eye surgery
A seal has been given the all-clear by vets to return to his friends in an animal sanctuary following successful cataract eye surgery, staff say.

The Cornish Seal Sanctuary in Gweek, Cornwall, said resident seal Jarvis had made the move back to his home pool very easily and was settling back in well with Bo and Buddy.

Jarvis was rescued in 2016 with cataracts in both eyes and underwent a operation in October from a specialist eye vet on his right eye.

The sanctuary launched a fundraiser for costs to operate on both eyes and give him a chance to see again, and raised more than £15,000. Bosses previously said they been hoped he might undergo surgery on his left eye in 2027.
https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqp83n253xvno

Mum chuffed to spot TWO wallabies in the road on the way to work
A mum has expressed her excitement at spotting not one but two wallabies hopping around a Cornish town where multiple sightings have been made since the early summer.
A loose red-necked wallaby has been repeatedly sighted roaming across various locations in and around Liskeard since June 2026, sparking much local excitement.
Back then, a worker first filmed the wallaby hopping through the Liskeard Business Park, sparking initial local surprise.
After a period of quiet, local bakery owner Scot Weller spotted the animal jumping down Dean Street and the town centre again in the early hours of one day in August.
https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/mum-chuffed-spot-two-wallabies-11237779

Harry Potter producers use grower's giant cabbages
A grower was surprised to be contacted by producers of a new Harry Potter TV series asking if his giant cabbages could used for the show.

Nathan Mitchell, from St Day, near Redruth in Cornwall, said he was contacted by producers of the HBO Harry Potter series after a friend of his in Wales recommended him.
Mitchell has been growing giant fruit and vegetables for more than 10 years, and has competed in national competitions.

Mitchell said his biggest cabbage weighed 56lb (25kg) which came fourth in his first National Giant Vegetables Championship in 2022.
He said he competed this year with a smaller pumpkin, about 40lb (18kg), which came third.
2026 has been difficult for growers due to the hottest summer on record.

Work is under way for the show, with reports it is due to be broadcast from 25 December.
https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5gm0my1m1vdo

Duchy tenants may have to buy farms or leave as Prince William plans sell-off
Plans by the Prince of Wales to sell off up to 20% of the Duchy of Cornwall could see more tenant farmers across England asked to buy their farms or move out.

Up to 40 farm holdings across Devon, Cornwall, Herefordshire and the Midlands could be affected by the sale, according to the Tenant Farmers Association (TFA).

Locals say talks over the future of nine farms on the Bradninch estate in Devon have already caused "distress" for some tenants who fear they cannot afford to buy.

A spokeswoman said the Duchy could not confirm the total number of tenants affected by the ten-year sale plan but told the BBC the estate was "supporting them through the process with care and respect".

The Duchy, which covers around 51,800 hectares (128,000 acres) in 19 counties, plans to use the £500m raised from the property and land sale over the next decade to invest in local communities, affordable housing and environmental projects.

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cwm242plggldo

First female Dean of 970-year-old cathedral
The appointment of the first female Dean of Exeter Cathedral has been announced by Downing Street.

The Very Reverend Arwen Mary Folkes, currently Vicar of St Mary-the-Virgin in Eastbourne, is due to start in her new role in Devon on 9 May 2027.

Folkes was born in Barnstaple in North Devon and baptised in Bideford, before growing up at the **Lizard Lighthouse in Cornwall**, where her father was one of the last live-in lighthouse keepers for Trinity House.
https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cq0ldlyj6g4ko

Hundreds of seagrass shoots found in estuary
More than 430 seagrass shoots have been discovered in the Fowey Estuary, giving conservationists hope that one of the UK's most important marine habitats can be brought back to Cornwall's waters.
The new growth was recorded across 50 patches of seabed during summer surveys carried out by Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

The findings come despite fears the restoration trial might not succeed when only six seedlings had emerged by the end of April.

Volunteers collected seagrass seeds from a donor meadow in Torpoint in autumn 2025 before planting them in the estuary.
The seeds remained buried through the winter before beginning to grow in spring.

The project is part of Seeding Change Together, a partnership between Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Seasalt Cornwall that began in 2022.

Earlier work involved some of the trust's first attempts to restore seagrass meadows in Cornwall's estuaries, with volunteers collecting and planting thousands of seeds while researchers tested different restoration methods.

Seagrass, which may not look remarkable, is often described as the sea's equivalent of a woodland, said the trust.

It provides shelter and nursery grounds for fish and other marine life, helps improve water quality, locks away carbon and reduces coastal erosion.

The trust said mainland Britain had lost up to 92% of its seagrass meadows over the last century. Previous research highlighted by the project found seagrass could capture carbon up to 35 times faster than tropical rainforests.

The restoration effort has not been without setbacks.
In the Helford Estuary, algal growth appeared to wipe out planted seedlings at one site, although three plants were later found to have survived and had started spreading.
More seeds are due to be planted in the Fowey Estuary and Helford Estuary, with further monitoring planned for spring 2027.

https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ck1wvx3r9rgeo

Christmas Riddles
Where do snowmen go to dance?
Answer: The snowball

Why do mummies like Christmas so much?
Answer: Because of all the wrapping!

What kind of bug hates Christmas?
Answer: A humbug

What's the name of the best elf singer?
Answer: ELFis Presley

What do you call Santa when he goes down a chimney with a fire at the bottom?
Answer: Krisp Cringle

Jumbled Word Answers

LEF	elf
EWTREH	wreath
ALCROS	carols
ACKCRESR	crackers
ETNLIS	tinsel
FITGS	gifts
AASTN LCSAU	Santa Claus
CASODONTRIES	decorations
GNESEIGTR	greetings
CTSSMIRAH	Christmas
NOOTP HLRE	North Pole
IKSNSOTCG	stockings
ITNDOTIAR	tradition
EVFEITS	festive
GIRDEGNRBAE	gingerbread
LREEBOITNAC	celebration
PORDULH	Rudolph
AKRTCNCREU	nutcracker
EITMNST	mittens
OIIPSTAENT	poinsettia
TARS	star
LLYJO	jolly
RREEEIDN	reindeer
STGHIL	lights
STEMILOTE	mistletoe