

The Carrick Argus

Supporting Carrick u3a – sharing members' interests and news

Issue no 108

December 2025



Raindrops

by Marion Purvis

An entry for the 2024 Photography competition

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Editorial

First of all, a huge thank you to those members who came forward to entertain you all at our second **Showcase**. What an amazing array of talent we have in Carrick u3a, with singers, musicians, dramatic recitals and a couple of comic interludes, not to mention a whole selection of groan-worthy jokes from the compère, there was plenty for everyone. Thanks must also go to the support team, Mike, Ric, Ray and Mark, it was a great team effort. Well done all. Adrian kindly took many photos of the proceedings which will be posted on our successful Facebook page.

It's been a busy year for the committee, with quizzes, a ceilidh and a cream tea all helping to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Carrick u3a, as well as our ongoing commitment to keep Group Leaders up to date with our administrative system, Beacon, and providing EDI training. Some of us attended summer fairs in local villages to help to raise our profile, and we had an interesting experience at the Stithians Show, trying to hold down a gazebo in what felt like a force 10 gale. Let's hope for better weather next year. We are always looking for new members to join us, remembering the mantra '*many hands make light work*', so if you think you could offer some of your time to support us, please speak to any member of the committee.

Following the announcement in last month's Argus of the death of **Ian Searle**, our former Chair, I am pleased to include a tribute to him by **Janet Mitchell**, Leader of the Falmouth Creative Writing Group of which Ian was a member, along with one of his pieces '**Adam and Eve**' which he wrote during his time with them. It illustrates very well Ian's intelligence and dry sense of humour.

As this is the last edition of the Carrick Argus this year, may I take the opportunity to thank all my contributors over the last twelve months. This magazine would not exist without you. If anyone has been inspired by their offerings and would like to send something in next year, I would love to hear from you. The Argus is by the members, for the members, and the more variety we can provide the better.

Thank you also to the readers, I hope you have enjoyed what has been provided this year. I hope you have a lovely peaceful Christmas and wish you a healthy and happy 2026. The next edition of the Carrick Argus will be out in New Year

Sue Hutt
Editor

Ian Searle



Memories from the Falmouth Creative Writing Group

We were all saddened by the news of Ian's death. We were, of course, aware of his increasingly poor health and failing eyesight. He had not been an active member of the group for a while, but kept in touch. We were all glad to hear that he managed to continue his career as a novelist - several of us remember how pleased he was when the first was published, and his determination to keep writing was extraordinary.

Some of the more recent members of the Group never met him, others only fleetingly, as it became impossible for him to get around. Those of us who knew him recall a very intelligent, kind and encouraging man, with a great, and sometimes a little sly, sense of humour. He enjoyed an occasional teaching role, running writing workshops for the group. His criticism was always constructive, thoughtful, understanding and valuable.

His experience and knowledge of the u3a and life in general was impressive - he seemed to have answers to any questions at his fingertips. One group member who knew him from pre-creative writing days has happy memories of his contributions to the Christmas shows. His loss leaves a big gap in the Falmouth writing group and, we know, in the u3a itself.

Janet Mitchell

Just one last short story from Ian for your enjoyment

Eve, Adam & the Serpent

God looked at his creation and was quite pleased with it, especially the two human beings. He had deliberately created them young, just old enough to go forth and multiply. He had made it clear that they were free, as all the birds and bees and animals in Eden were, and there was only one rule: they were not to eat the fruit from the Tree of Life.

Eve and Adam were happy. Eden was a perfect place, not too hot, not too cold. The animals and insects danced around them. There were no shrubs or bushes with thorns to scratch. It never occurred to either of them that they were naked.

One day Adam was startled by a hissing sound. It came from the branches of a nearby tree. A smooth skinned snake looked down at him.

'You look hungry,' said the snake. *'Here, have an apple,'* and it stretched out, picked a lovely green fruit and swung down to offer it to Adam. Adam bit into it and thought: *'How delicious!'*

He asked the snake for another one and ran with it to find Eve. Eve took the fruit without asking where it came from. She too thought it tasted wonderful. As they munched, juice running down their chins, they both grinned with pleasure.

'Adam,' said Eve, *'why don't you cover yourself up? Most of your body is beautiful, except for that bit there'.* She pointed. *'The same goes for you,'* said Adam, grabbing a large fig leaf.

They both experienced a new emotion, embarrassment. It made them blush, so they held one another close, each looking over the shoulder of the other. They felt another strange emotion, a mixture of uncertainty, anticipation and desire.

'Why did you eat that apple?' asked God. *'Adam gave it to me,'* said Eve. She did not want to take the blame. *'I got it from a very kind serpent that you created,'* said Adam, joining the blame game.

And so began all the troubles of humankind: disobedience, lack of judgement, self-awareness and self-indulgence as well as deceit. And thus, it was that **politics** was born.

Ian Searle



Adam & Eve cover up

Image courtesy of biblestoriesforkids.org

Eating Out and About in Carrick

I am actually reluctant to tell you about this place, but if you live in **Falmouth**, you may already be enthusing about this tiny tapas bar and deli on Trelawney Road. Situated well away from the town centre locals love it and wish it were their secret treasure, but sadly Trip Advisor and Facebook have put paid to that, so now you must usually arrive early to get a table.



Run since 2007 by husband and wife team Bev and Tim (*'When it stops being fun, we'll stop doing it'*), it was revived and refurbished after enforced closure in the Covid years and the tiny interior and courtyard now feels like a down-town bar in **Seville**. The food and drinks are Iberian with Italian and Greek additions, the music redolent of **Paris** in the 30's, the atmosphere definitely continental, warm, relaxed and somehow rather exciting.

The tables and seating are comfortable despite the small space, a blackboard offers a mix of tapas and main dishes and the twinkling bar boasts an impressive array of authentic wines, beers and spirits from which Tim skilfully concocts cocktails, pours generous tumblers (*YES-so sensible!*) of house wine and uncorks specialist beers.

Settle at a table by the bar or wander into the courtyard where you can sit beneath an olive tree that flourishes in a large pot bedecked with fairy lights - a favourite spot for groups sharing a larger table. This is a place where you can happily spend the early evening drinking with friends - generous tumblers of house wine at £6.50 - the varieties of exotic beers - nibbling at shared

platters of hams and cheeses, this is a seductive alternative to the pub pint of beer and bag of crisps.

We ordered the daily specials, happy to wait for Bev to do her magic in the tiny kitchen. Nothing is cooked until ordered, so we enjoyed the wait with a pre-prandial drink and plate of olives knowing that the pan-fried cuttlefish in cream and wine and the genuine chorizo and beans would be fresh and delicious, small but perfectly formed. Which is a good description of **Provedore** – Damn! I've let the cat out of the bag – now you too can find your way to this gem of a place.



There is no booking - and fortunately the winter months are quieter and regulars can easily get a cosy seat. Why not join them and imagine you have taken a trip to **Malaga** without the guilt, effort and expense of a flight from **Newquay**?

Opening hours at the moment (*Check their website*) 5pm - 8pm.

Tapas - £3.50 - £9

Mains (quite small) - £12 - £14

Side dishes £9.00

Puddings (*usually just one daily special*) £7.50-

Drinks- Cocktails - £8.50

Wine - £6.50 /glass - £28 /bottle

Beers- - £4 - £12

And a variety of coffees and non-alcoholic drinks.

Winter is finally here and after an Indian Summer of al fresco dining we now hanker after warm hospitable hostelries with open fires and substantial meals.

Good pub lunches are hard to beat and a Sunday Carvery is a welcome release from the kitchen and usually good value, so I'm going to briefly review two of the many excellent hostelries that we are blessed with in Carrick.

The **Fox and Hounds** at **Comford** with its splendid array of flowery hanging baskets outside and a glowing wood stove inside is an inviting pub that we have often visited in the past. We called there yesterday and the atmosphere was still warm and cheerful and we settled in with a pint of excellent local ale to look at the menu.

The menu now shows sophisticated additions to traditional pub favourites, but Good Grief! how the prices have soared! £20 for fish and chips! Scampi at £19! Sunday carvery at £21 (*though you have the option of smaller portions at less*) Ham and eggs, burgers etc. all at Michelin prices – in a local pub this is a bit much to swallow.



Courtesy of the Fox & Hounds website

If you are an ardent dog owner you may be won over by the special doggy menu (£1.50 for dog treats – steak at £7.50!) but being unhampered by four footed friends this was no enticement for us, so with time to spare we hurriedly left to lunch at the well-loved and trusted **Royal Standard** in **Flushing**.

This pub has everything going for it, loved by the villagers (*even more so since the sadly mourned Seven Stars was appropriated by the locally unpopular Harbour House Restaurant*) it provides imaginative tapas style dishes, a changing daily menu of mains and well-kept local ales. Timothy and Bradley, the two young men in the kitchen, are excellent chefs, who create fresh daily specials

and also organise weekly evening feasts - Outdoor Pizzas in the summer, Curry nights and very popular Sunday Carvery in winter.



Courtesy of the Royal Standard's website

The Royal Standard has seating outside with views across the harbour to Falmouth and visitors sometimes arrive using the Flushing Ferry - a delightful short journey to put you in the mood for a typical Cornish Pub meal at very reasonable prices.

We shared a large burrata and tomato salad, then I opted for an excellent Spanish Fish Stew full of plump mussels, prawns and white fish in a rich tomato and pimento sauce (*all the dishes are served with bread, butter and oil which is not charged*) and the hungry blond waded through a rack of ribs with all the trimmings, delicious and very hearty. No room for the daily special pudding!

Prices for the tapas dishes - £4.50 - £8.95

Mains - £8.95 - £12.95

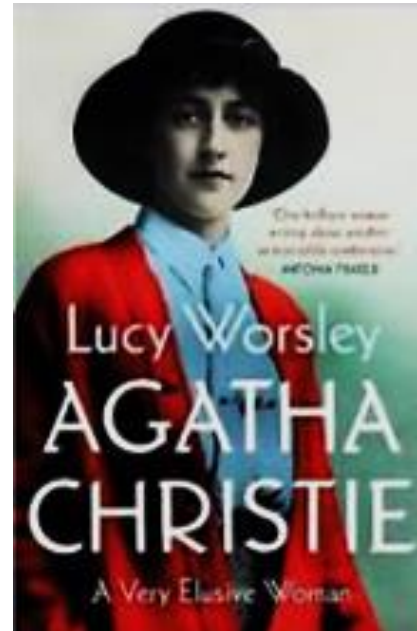
Drinks at normal pub prices.

L.W

Images of the Provedore courtesy of LW

A tale of two authors

Based on **'THE MISCHIEF MAKERS'** by Elizabeth Gifford, Corvus 2024 and **'AGATHA CHRISTIE'** by Lucy Worsley, Hodder 2022.



Images courtesy of Waterstones

When reading these books recently I was struck by the many parallels between the two internationally famous authors. Gifford's book, endorsed by the du Maurier family, is a well-written fictionalised account of Daphne's life. Worsley's in-depth biography of Agatha gives us clues about the thoughts of another great writer, though both were fiercely protective of their privacy.

Daphne and Agatha were brought up in Edwardian households, yet both of them overcame the limitations which that era imposed on women to develop their talents, rising to the peak of their chosen profession. However, Daphne rebelled against her sheltered background more than Agatha, as Gifford describes: *'Why is it that every time I sit down to write someone drags me away? Lately she had begun to wake in the night, gasping for breath, with no escape from girdles and garters, tight hats and tight shoes.'*

Daphne's career began when she sent a short story to a literary agent. *'She sat by the open window, gulping in the night air, with its tang of London soot. She wanted to be out there, living on her own terms, with her own income.'* After her first book **'The Loving Spirit'** was accepted for publication in 1931 she knew she could succeed.

Both young women had little formal education. Taught mostly at home, they loved books and read widely. Like many in the 1890s, Agatha's mother believed that overeducating girls would damage their reproductive powers. Worsley says that Agatha *'became a bookworm, devouring everything she could lay her hands on, educating herself where the adults had not.'*

Whilst Agatha was to focus mainly on writing crime novels, Daphne's genres included historical family sages, short stories, adventure, romance, and biographies of her father Gerald in 1934 and

Branwell Bronte in 1960. Both women wrote plays which were staged in London, though Daphne's never achieved the longevity of Agatha's famous drama **'The Mousetrap'**, which premiered in 1952. Agatha's output of 22 plays has been eclipsed by her novels, which remain popular thanks to film and TV adaptations.



Daphne as a young woman

Photo courtesy of google images

Cornwall inspired Daphne to write. Her career began when she lived at **Ferryside**, opposite Fowey and continued at **Menabilly**, with her last novel, **'Rule Britannia'** being written at nearby **Kilmarth**. Agatha also loved the West Country, growing up at Ashfield in Torquay, Devon. Torquay town hall became a 50-bed auxiliary hospital in WW2, and she worked long hours there as a VAD nurse and later in its pharmacy. After the war she loved spending holidays at **Greenway** on the River Dart.

By contrast, both authors stayed in, and wrote about, hot countries. When Daphne's husband Tommy was posted to Alexandria in 1936, she accompanied him but hated the relentless heat and the lifestyle of an army wife. However, the enforced loneliness gave her the idea of the novel **'Rebecca'**. *'Her world of Manderley became a drug, an escape, as she followed cool pathways through ancient trees, or wandered the passageways of a mysterious house lost in time.'* The success of that and **'Jamaica Inn'** meant Daphne became the main breadwinner. *'Tommy's army pay wasn't nearly enough to cover their bills. Unlike most men of his rank, he didn't have a private income and he had expensive tastes cigars, fine wines and bespoke tailoring.'*

Daphne had married Major (Boy) Browning, DSO of the Grenadier Guards in 1932. He was a veteran of WW1. Agatha's first husband, Archibald, was also in the Forces; he became a pilot in 1912 and served in the Royal Flying Corps in the war. However, both women faced personal crises, partly due to their wartime experiences. Daphne found frequent partings hard. When Tommy returned after 6 years he was mentally and physically exhausted, and their life together changed irrevocably. Like Agatha, she found solace for her problems in imaginary worlds.

Agatha also spent long periods of WW2 separated from her second husband, the archaeologist Max Mallowan, whom she married in 1930 after divorcing Archie. She coped by working as a pharmacist again, in University College Hospital in London. She also did war work in her books, such as **'N or M?'** which featured spying and mocked the Nazis. Daphne and Agatha had become best-selling authors in the US as well as at home, but during wartime they had to pay enormous amounts of tax. *'Daphne earned £25K in 1942, but paid 90% of it as tax, enough to buy a Lancaster bomber!'*



Agatha Christie photographed in the 1920's

Photo courtesy of google images

Agatha loved houses, owing a large number over the decades, many of which she rented out. Daphne's main love was Menabilly, near Par, which she leased for 20 years. By 1942 the empty house had become ruinous, but despite materials and builders being in short supply, Daphne fought a huge battle on the Home Front to make parts of it habitable. Her sister Angela, also an author, disagreed with the plans. *'This is Rebecca's revenge. You finished her off at Menabilly, or Manderley, and now she's coming back to finish you off with this mad project'*.

Both Daphne and Agatha had many successful media adaptations of their work, especially Hitchcock's 1940 film **'Rebecca'** and David Suchet's portrayal of Poirot in 66 TV films. As the *'Queen of Crime'*, Agatha was pleased and surprised when she was asked to help Queen Elizabeth II write her speech for the Christmas Day broadcast in 1957.

Although Agatha became famous for her detective fiction, she also wrote several novels using the pen name Mary Westmacott. She and Daphne both used their alter egos in their work, and Worsley comments that *'psychology came to intrigue Agatha more than plot'*. Of **'Unfinished Portrait'**, Max said *'In Celia we have more nearly than anywhere else a portrait of Agatha.'*

Agatha loved travelling and often went with Max to Iraq, using her experiences as copy for several books. She also supported his work financially, and following her death in 1976 aged 86, she was mourned in the world of archaeology as well as literature. I was amused by the description of her portable toilet in Baghdad, which was a tea chest with a brass-hinged mahogany seat attached. When she and Archie had visited Honolulu, she'd loved surfing and later described how writing could sometimes feel. *'I'm enjoying working, a wonderful moment which doesn't usually last long, but which carries one on with terrific verve as a large wave carries you to shore'*.

Daphne died at Kilmarth in 1989, aged 82. Of all her novels my favourite is **'The House on the Strand'**, set in the area around Par. On a recent visit to the reference library at Kresen Kernow in Redruth I was delighted to see a book of six short stories by Agatha, which were set in Cornwall. Unfortunately, they'd been translated into Cornish, which I can't read! The only words I recognised were the names of three of her detectives, Poirot, Miss Marple and Mr Parker Pyne.

Afterthought: I confess that the title of Gifford's book remains a mystery to me. Who or what are the mischief makers? If anyone can enlighten me, I'd be grateful.

Sue Amer

Trelowarren



Trelowarren House

Image courtesy of Wikipedia

The land around the **Trelowarren** estate, just south of the Helford River, has seen human habitation since the Iron Age, as evidenced by the existence of **Halliggye Fogou**, one of many such remains in Cornwall. This fogou is one of the largest and best preserved, consisting of a long tunnel leading to three sectioned chambers. Finds inside have included Iron Age pottery, animal bones, Roman Samian ware from Southern Gaul and a Celtic cup and vase containing ashes, indicating use of the fogou over many years. During World War II it was used as an ammunition store by the Manaccan Auxiliary Unit.



The main chamber of Halliggye Fogou

Image courtesy of Wikipedia

The estate has been owned by the **Vyvan** family since 1427. Whilst part of the current house date from the mid-15th century, bits were added in 1662, 1698, 1750 and in the 19th century. The family itself has had a rather chequered history, at one stage being excommunicated in 1328 to St

Michael's Mount for '*causing great bloodshed and violence*' after attacking the priest at St Buryan who had been put in place by the Bishop of Exeter rather than the king.

The Vyvyans were traditionally Royalists, siding with the king during the Civil War when **Richard Vyvyan** was Gentleman of the Privy Chamber and Master of the Hunt at Truro and Exeter. After presenting a masque at Oxford for the king in 1536, Richard received a knighthood.

A later Richard is said to have fallen in love with one of the royal nieces, 17-year-old Princess Elise, (he was 47 at the time) and in order to impress **Queen Victoria** had the **Tremayne Quay** built on the upper tidal reaches of the Helford where it could only be accessed on foot or by boat. Sadly, it was all in vain as bad weather prevented the royal yacht from entering the Helford.

Finally in 1921, royalty arrived when **Prince Edward, Duke of Windsor**, visited Trelowarren to have tea with Sir Courtenay and Lady Vyvyan, landing at Tremayne Quay as part of his tour of Cornwall. The prince however didn't stay long as Wallis Simpson was waiting for him on a yacht moored offshore.

On 1978 the Vyvyan family donated the woods, boathouse and quay to the **National Trust**.



View of the house from the footpath

The '5 banana' walking group recently enjoyed exploring the area which provides a lovely peaceful wander from the house through the woods down to the quay. We also managed a peep into the walled garden at the house which is normally behind closed doors, however on this occasion two of the estate's gardeners were harvesting the Victoria plums which were ripening on a south facing wall.



View of the extensive walled garden

After years of walking the byways, coastal paths and country estates of our beautiful county it is wonderful to discover new places and the history behind them. Many thanks to Jon Skelton for taking us somewhere some of us had not been before. If you'd like to join this very friendly group, contact Rosalind Smith whose details are on the website.



Some of the walkers on Tremayne Quay

Sue Hutt

Ref. cornishbirdblog.com
trelowarren.com
wikipedia.org

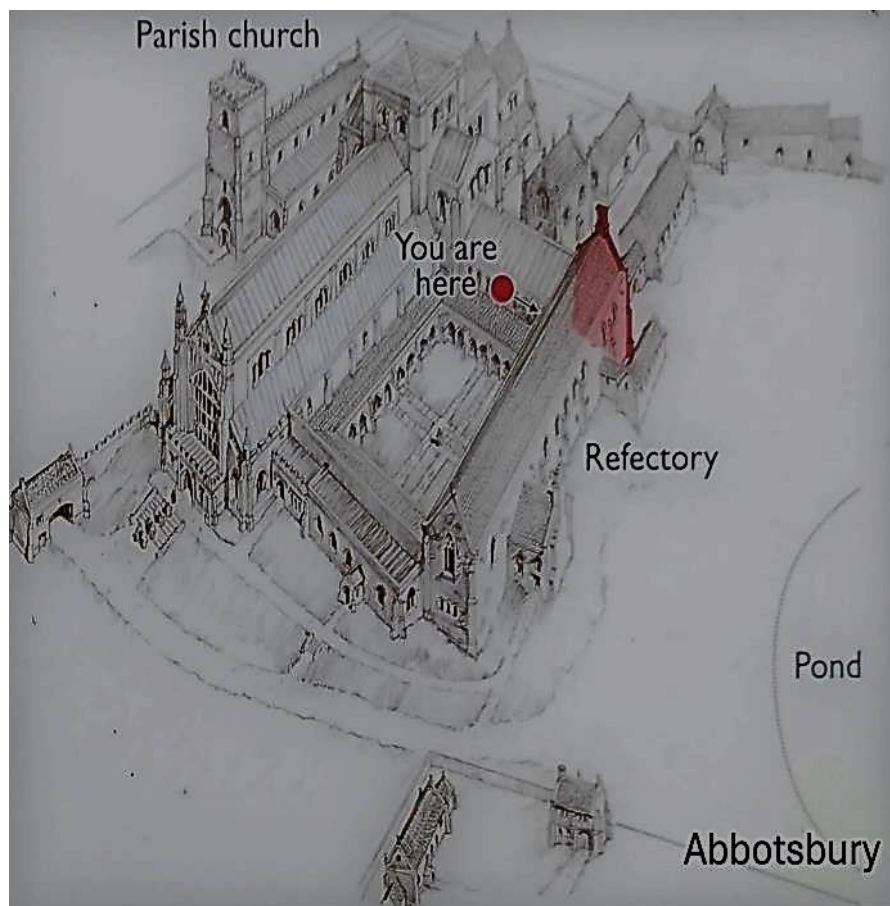
Photos from the walk courtesy of Sue Hutt

Abbotsbury Abbey

Many of you will have heard of and may probably have visited the famous swannery at Abbotsbury in Dorset.



Until a recent visit I hadn't realised that the swannery was originally founded to feed the monks of the nearby Benedictine Abbey. The Abbey was founded in 1044 by **Orc** the house steward of **King Cnut** (better known to us as *King Canute*). Little remains of the Great Abbey that gave

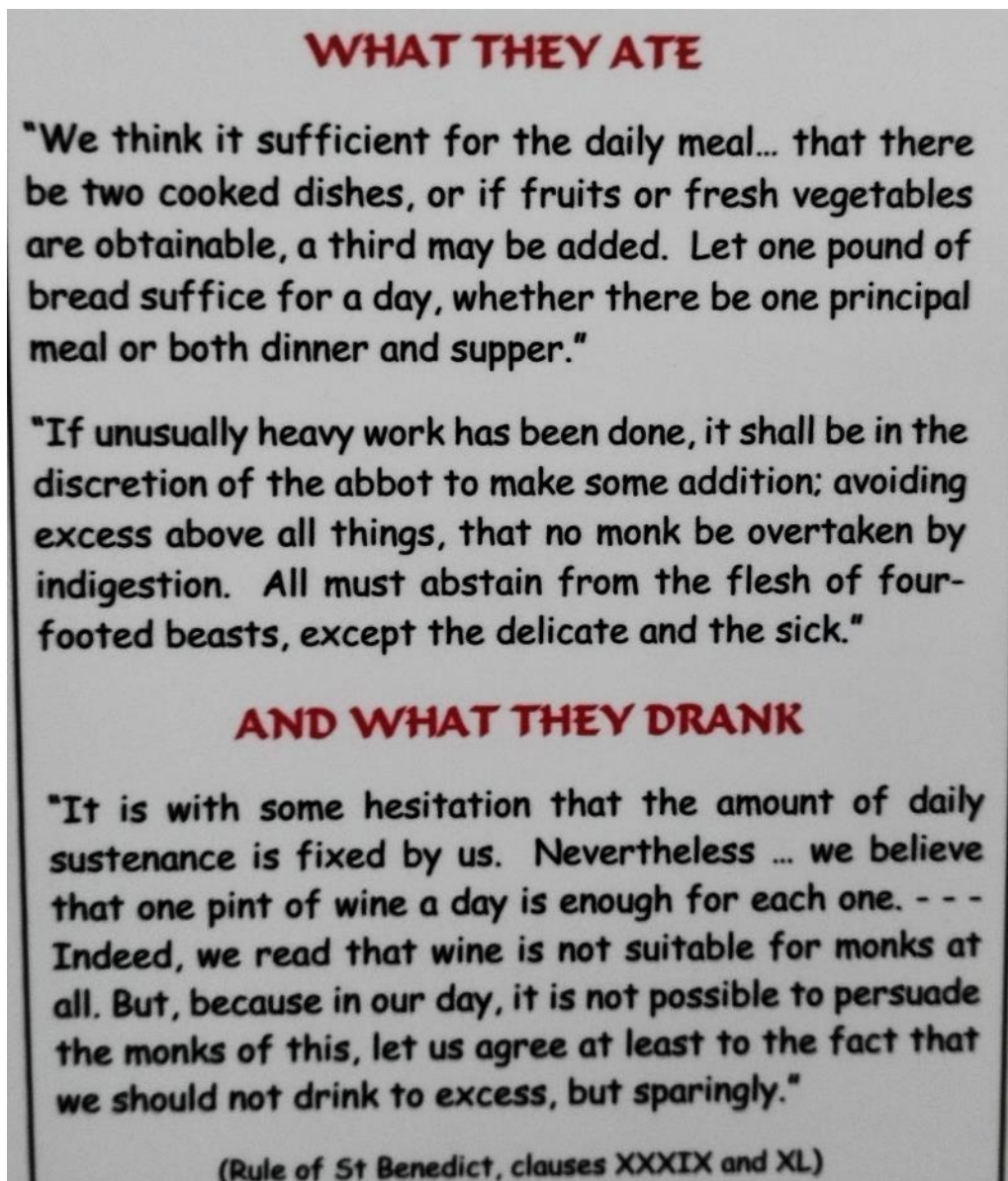


Abbotsbury its name. Its layout probably followed the normal Benedictine pattern of that time with cloisters, dormitory, refectory, infirmary and abbot's lodging.

The parish church still stands in the position shown on the plan and fragments of the Abbey Church can be traced in the adjoining graveyard. However the extensive fish ponds and the massive tithe barn remain.

Within the walled precinct of the Abbey, up to 30 black robed monks would have followed the orderly routine of work, study and prayer laid down for them in St Benedict's rules.

The Benedictine Order had strict rules about their food and drink.



Despite their vows of poverty, some monks lived very well, as typified by Chaucer's monk in the Canterbury Tales:

*"He was not pale as a tormented ghost
A fat Swan loved he the best of any roast"*

In view of the ban on eating the flesh of four-footed animals naturally the monks would secure their food sources (especially in winter months) by creating swanneries and fish ponds.



The Abbey's great tithe barn, dating from the 14th century, stands by the fish ponds. It is nearly 80 metres long and was once one of the largest in England. The capacity of the tithe barn is a convincing witness to the Abbey's wealth. Sadly, only half of the barn is still roofed.



The Abbey was dissolved by **Henry VIII** in 1539. Some abbeys and monasteries were no doubt in disrepute but it is suspected the reports justifying dissolution were probably very suspect. However, Abbotsbury Abbey did have a past:

ANOTHER ABBOT IN TROUBLE - 1436

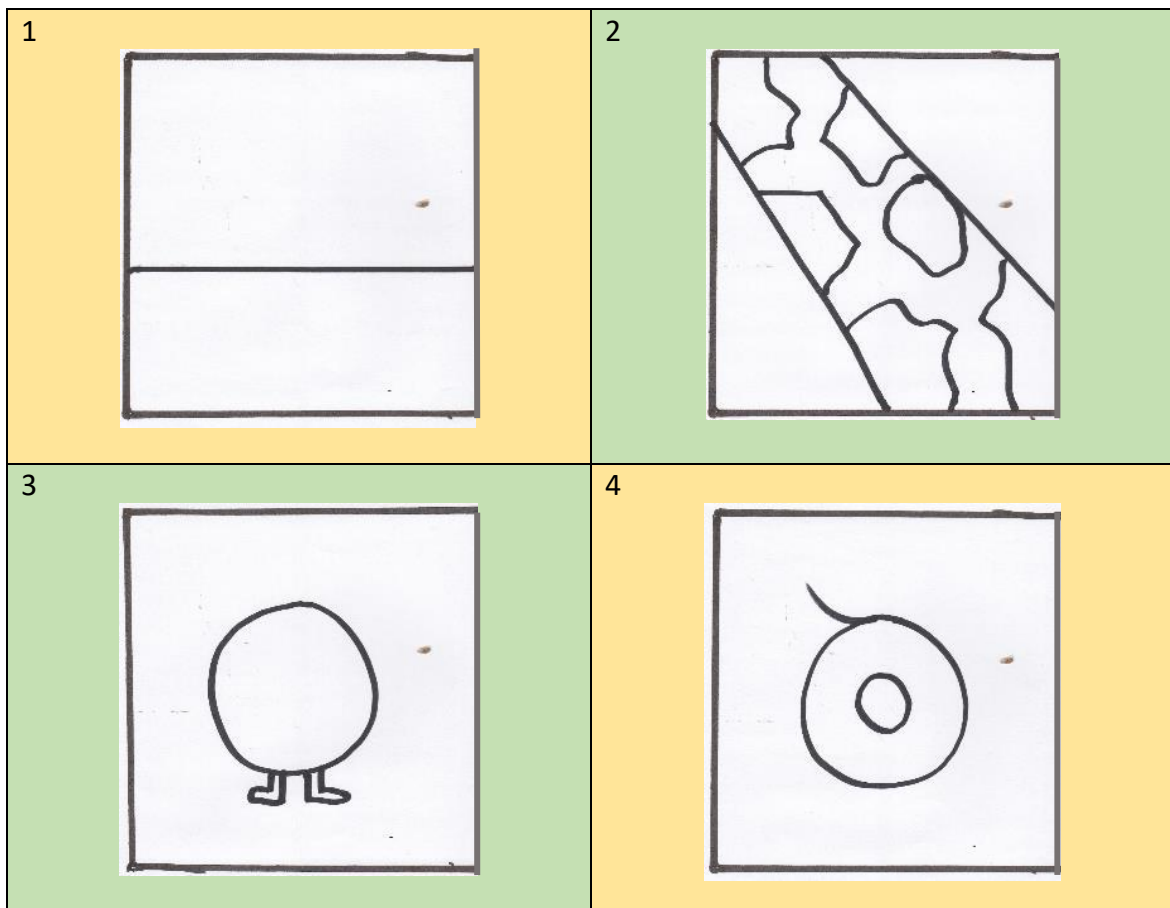
Almost a hundred years after the last case, another Abbot was in dispute with another Bishop. Apart from slack management of Abbey business, Abbot de Percy was ordered not to buy any more wine than necessary for his guests, to ban women from the Abbey, and to forbid the monks from *"resorting to a certain chamber for the purpose of confabulation."*

The Abbey ruins are well worth the visit and there is a good cafe next to the tithe barn!

I acknowledge indebtedness to English Heritage for most of the information and some of the photos in this article.

Jon Skelton

David's Doodles



[Answers on page 34](#)

Cotehele at Christmas

There has been a house at Cotehele since medieval times. The huge estate came into the hands of the Edgcumbe family following the marriage of William Edgcumbe and Hilaria de Cotehele in 1353. Succeeding generations extended and altered the original buildings, particularly during the Tudor period following the battle of Bosworth Field when Richard Edgcumbe was knighted by Henry VII and given more land and honours.

In the 18th century the main home of the family was at Mount Edgcumbe, which was closer to Plymouth, but they retained Cotehele as a second home, entertaining guests there including King George III and Queen Charlotte in 1789.

Mount Edgcumbe was destroyed by bombing in 1941 and the family returned to Cotehele. The house and estate were given to the National Trust in 1947. A favourite time to visit Cotehele is at Christmas, where since 1956 the gardeners on the estate have provided the flowers to create 60ft garlands to hang in the Great Hall. Seeds are sown from January in the cut flower garden, with the flowers being picked and dried by volunteers and staff from April onwards. The making of the garland takes place over two weeks in November.

Sue Hutt

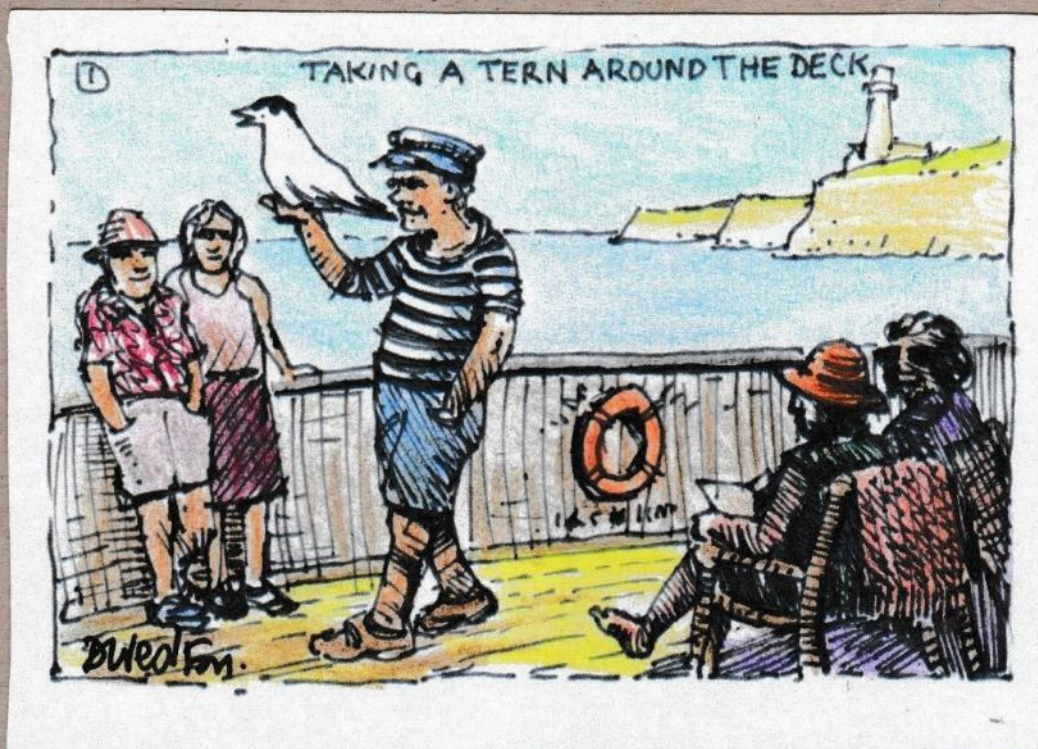


Photos courtesy of Adrian Rowlands

Humour: The Natural World publications

This month's recommended reading has been selected by Terry Firmer

1. When spring is here by Teresa Green
2. All about Flowers by Chris Anthymum
3. Wind in the bushes by Russell Hedges
4. Big Waves by Sue Nami
5. Colourful and Scented Planting by Rose Garden
6. A Walrus by any other name by C. Lyons
7. Alternatives to Greenhouses by Polly Tunnel
8. The secret of a perfect Lawn by Moe DeGrasse
9. Big Lizards by Anna Condor
10. The Redbreasts' brood by Nesta Robins
11. My favourite Llama by Al Parker
12. Windy Weather by Gail Force
13. Crossing a Man with a Duck by Willie Waddle
14. Our Feathered Friends by Jack Dawe *Illustrated by Mag Pye*
15. Walking Tall by G. Raffe



Creative writing: Quantum Entanglement

'Did you see the thing about tardigrades in space? I thought of you ...' he laughed, *'I'm sorry, I didn't mean ...'*

She did her best to sound offended. *'... that I am a barrel shaped creature who trundles along like a bear?'* Not a pause; he was quick.

'And is absolutely adorable. No, I mean yes but ... you know what I mean'.

Of course she did. She had sent him information about tardigrades years ago when she came upon these 'moss piglets' or 'water bears', the half-millimetre long creatures which can live at the top of mountains and in deep ocean troughs, endure extremes of heat and cold, radiation and starvation, she knew it was the sort of thing he would relish.

She'd been emailing him snippets for a long time. He sent the occasional postcard; he travelled extensively for his work and now he was phoning her. He had always had her number, but this was a first.

'Where are you?'

'Well, that is why I am phoning; back in the Wild West.' Delight flooded her. *'And I thought we should meet.'*

'Oh yes, when?' She hoped they would recognise each other it was at least fifteen years since they had actually met. And she hoped he would not suggest dinner, somewhere overpriced. That always made her uncomfortable.

'Well, now, I know it's short notice, but are you busy tonight?' She laughed. He hadn't changed. *'It is just that there should be a spectacular meteor shower ... For old time's sake?'* Old time's sake; that last accidental encounter. It had become a bit of a habit over time - they had bumped into each other at the Pitt Rivers in Oxford, at the Cheltenham Gold Cup, on a long rainswept beach in Northumberland and then on Ithaca, Odysseus's island, both travelling solo. After a giggly supper they swam in phosphorescence, then lay back on the warm sand and watched shooting stars. *'Do you still swim? Even Cornish water will be warm tonight!'*

She had a brief nap in the afternoon; she wasn't used to late nights now. But she was soon wide awake, excited. She found his email about the tardigrades. It was an article from a scientific journal; apparently, NASA is experimenting on sending living creatures into space, and 'water bears' are 'the first multicellular organism to be quantum entangled with a superconducting qubit'. Well. If they ever had a quiet few hours, she would demand clarification on that one.

They hugged briefly when he picked her up outside the house that had been her home when they were schoolfriends. They chattered, catching up, discussing the Perseids. He had done the homework, worked out which little beach on the Helford had the best viewing direction. They didn't need their torches; the path was milky in the moonlight. Small groups watched the sky, some splashing in the water.

The heavens were perfect, an indigo bowl of starry sprinkles. As each meteor whizzed across the darkness, there were murmurs and 'aahs' of appreciation. Then they were bursts of light, at shorter and shorter intervals. Where had they come from? Fragments of something that

happened unimaginably long ago. He would tell her the details if she asked, later. But now they were bewitched. During a brilliant almost continuous fusillade he reached for her hand, and they lay, propped on inflatable pillows, simply feeling happy.

Then came cheers from the sea; swimmers were kicking and splashing and pouring handfuls of liquid light over each other, so they stripped down to swimsuits and walked slowly into photoluminescence. It was cold, but completely magical; around their feet swirled stars, diamonds tumbled from their fingers.

When the chill struck, they dried off and climbed back to the carpark. They drove back, almost silent.

'Thank you for your company; that was something that needed sharing!'

She smiled; she felt unbelievably tired.

'Let's meet again soon. The Orionids come in October?'

He embraced her warmly.

'Oh, much sooner than that!', he laughed, and they parted, full of joy.

Janet Zoro

Creative writing: The Crash

An old man on a red bike tries to rent her a room, but happily walks with her to the harbour. No boats to Patmos, but the trip boat to Nissyros leaves in half an hour. She looks it up; sounds good, with few visitors but lots of day trippers for its volcano. She buys a ticket. She is exhausted - it had been a night flight, arriving in Kos at 4am - and lulled by the sun and the rocking of the boat, she sleeps. At Mandraki she is the only passenger not boarding the tour bus and she walks through the little town. She falls for it. Tatty and tumbledown, a few bars and tavernas on the cement-mixer strewn promenade, houses all painted different colours. Eventually she finds a room at the far end of town, right on the sea. Perfect.

A leisurely walk reveals that the little shops, everything from butcher and baker to hairdresser and pharmacy, are all squashed into front rooms, with very little signage. She later finds that a stroll during siesta, when the shutters are closed, gives the impression of no shops at all. There is a pleasing tangle of lanes behind the seafront, little bars and coffee shops and she sits outside one to draw. An old lady comes over to display her embroidery and encourages her to draw her old man and his pal, sitting outside the cafe. The men are delighted and each claim the portrayal of the other is perfect. Lots of handshaking, but now she really needs a swim. The little beach past her lodgings is uncomfortable - slippery black stones and fiercely jagged volcanic rocks - but the water is delicious. After a siesta, and a very early supper she sits outside her room, watching the lights along the harbour twinkling beneath a low, golden moon. In vain she tries to spot a faller from the wreath of stars. The sea is almost soundless, like crushed tissue paper. Sleep falls around her.

The bus, apparently, leaves when the boat comes in; in fact, not until a third boat arrives and the people on the first bus are emptied off to be redistributed among a fleet of three smaller buses do they depart for the volcano. But nobody moans and the journey is beautiful. Two craters lie surrounded by golden and russet hills; the larger, where Poseidon crushed the Titan Polyvotis

under a huge rock, is accessible down a path over hollowly echoing, springy, white pumice dust. The crater is huge, flat, punctured by small blowholes, puffing steam intermittently, each surrounded by crystallised sulphur and insect skeletons held forever in yellow fingers. Towards the centre, the ground becomes spongier and hotter underfoot and there is a rolling, rumbling sound, like a big pot of soup. That is the Titan, snoring, of course. Every now and then he wakes up and roars. All around, huge heaps of yellow pebbles, white pumice debris. She is overwhelmed by the elemental-ish-ness. Even the tour groups are awestruck. She knows she will have to come back. Next day, she does and this time manages some painting, but there is not enough time. She is going to have to hire a scooter!

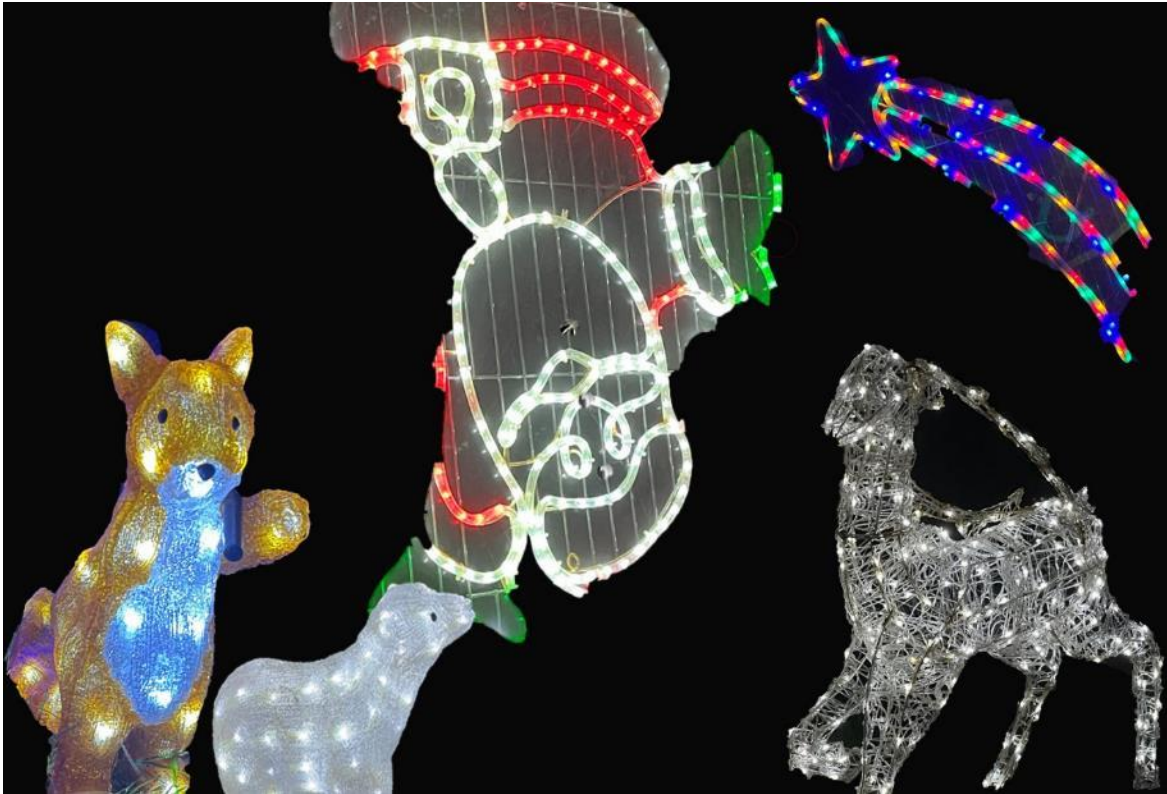
She has never ridden one and is nervous. One of the bike hire places have some very small, old, cheap ones. She amuses the helpful and sympathetic girl in charge by hitching up her skirt, failing to start and then wobbling wildly. But she finds she can ride at bicycle speed, and, apart from the noise, it is fine. She waves at the German girl she met the other night, who is chatting to a very nice looking man, then has a late breakfast, buys some emergency provisions and sets off. She feels elated. There is hardly any traffic and she can enjoy the views - brown terraces down to the sea, a horizon dissolving into the sky, islands floating blue shadows. She reaches a peak, turns a corner, and there is the crater far below. She stops in Nikia, an astonishingly pretty village perched on the edge of the hills. A cheerful cafe with tables under tamarisks and a dazzling white church, the space in front patterned with white stones and dark pebbles. Sadly, the best view of the crater is from the village dump. She takes the downhill stretch very carefully and slowly, stopping to paint from time to time. The tarmac runs out and, an inexperienced rider on the loose pebbles and sand, with her feet on the rests, she goes into a slide and falls off.

Shaken, she sits in the grit. Then the sound of an approaching bike; it is that beautiful man she saw earlier. He is on his way back from the crater. He stops, extricates her from the bike, makes sympathetic noises as she wipes blood and gravel off her cuts and grazes, straightens the handlebars and encourages her. He suggests letting her feet hang close above the track in case of accident, explains that he has to return to town before everything shuts for siesta, but rides slowly behind her for a bit, till they are both happy she can cope. He promises that if he does not see her around, he will mount a search party. She is actually quite happy to be alone and the volcano does not disappoint; there are no buses today, the kiosk is closed, there are a handful of people. The only sound is the subdued hiss and grumble; she stands, steam swirling round her legs, breathing the sulphur. What a very lovely man!

She takes a detour through Emborios, an almost deserted village which must have been a splendid place once. Tall eyeless ruins still patched with heavenly blue, a square around a sighing plane tree. She spots feral cats and chickens, a man with a shot-gun and a mumbling, half-crazed woman hanging out washing. The surrounding terraces are uncultivated, the old olives wild. Back in Mandraki after a slow and careful ride, the afternoon sleeps. It is too windy to swim, now, so she washes off the dried blood and dirt in the shower and dozes. As dusk falls, she heads for her favourite indoor eating place and she is making her choice from the dishes cooking in the kitchen when her gallant rescuer, Gunther, comes in. He looks pleased to see her.

'May I join you?' he asks.

Adrian's pick of the month: Light or decoration





Images from Christmas 2024

Courtesy of u3a Carrick Photography group



Quiz

Operas- who wrote the following?

1. La Traviata
2. Carmen
3. The Marriage of Figaro
4. Tosca
5. The Barber of Seville
6. Porgy and Bess
7. Giulio Cesare
8. Der Rosenkavalier
9. L'incoronazione di Poppea
10. Don Pasquale

For which sport are these people famous?

1. Simone Biles
2. Michael Jordan
3. Tom Daley
4. Ronnie O'Sullivan
5. Amir Khan
6. Rebecca Adlington
7. Jessica Ennis Hill
8. Ding Ning
9. Coco Gauff
10. Jonah Lomu
11. Sachin Tendulkar
12. Jill Scott

Architects- who designed the following?

1. The Shard
2. St Paul's Cathedral
3. The Eiffel Tower
4. The Statue of Liberty
5. The Albert Hall
6. The Royal Crescent in Bath
7. The Houses of Parliament
8. The Titanic
9. Buckingham Palace
10. The Hall for Cornwall

[Answers on page 33](#)

Picture Quiz: Festive Fare

 <p>1</p>	 <p>2</p>	 <p>3</p>	 <p>4</p>
 <p>5</p>	 <p>6</p>	 <p>7</p>	 <p>8</p>
 <p>9</p>	 <p>10</p>	 <p>11</p>	 <p>12</p>
 <p>13</p>	 <p>14</p>	 <p>15</p>	 <p>16</p>

[Answers on page 34](#)

This month's Riddle



What has a neck and no head,
Two arms but no hands?

David Westby

[Answer on page 33](#)

Ballwall Barrow

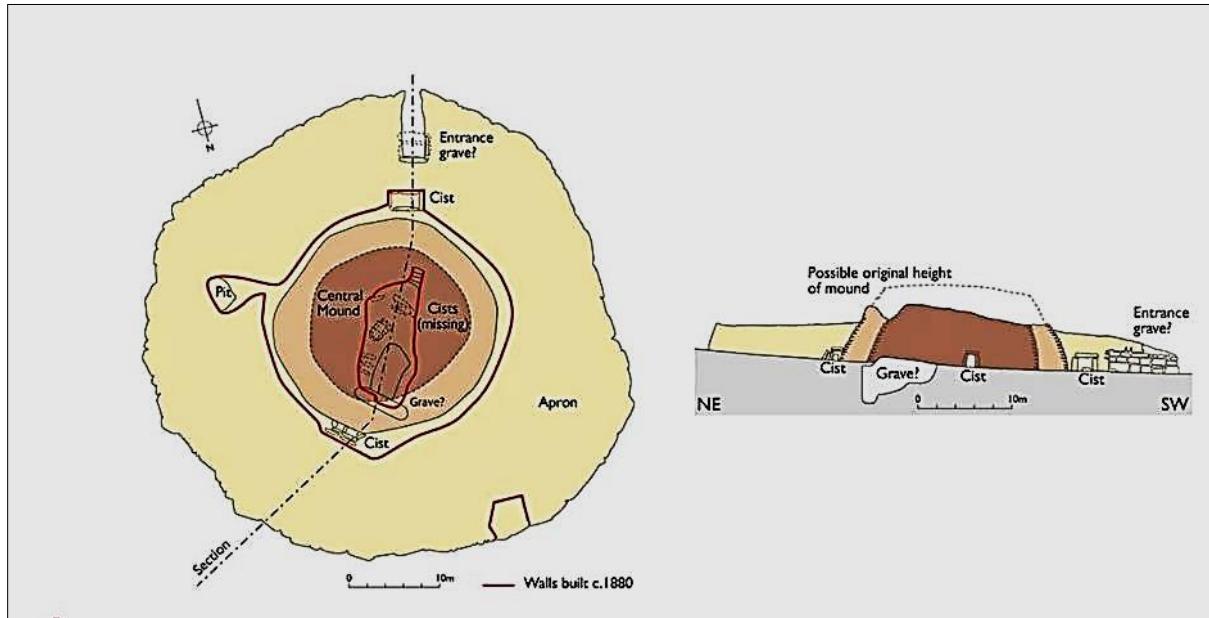
These Bronze Age remains occupy a dramatic situation on the edge of a cliff close to St Just in Penwith. Although little is known of its history, it has been suggested that it was perhaps a tomb, an “**Ancient Portal to the Afterlife**” or because of its layout aligning to the stars, maybe a sacred site of celestial worship.



It was almost destroyed by debris from the tin mining that was widespread in the area in the 18th & early 19th centuries, but in 1878 **William Copeland Borlase**, the famous Cornish antiquarian, excavated the site, discovering a complex system which is unique in Britain. It consists of a mound surrounded by two concentric walls, with five small stone lined chambers inside. Dating was possible with the finding of some Bronze Age pottery and cremated bones. The two pits in a T shape may have been graves with an entrance grave on the surrounding apron.



Sadly, following the excavation, Borlase constructed stone walls between the mound and the apron, removing the central cists or chambers and dramatically changing the appearance of the site. However, it is still possible with the end of mining to stand on the edge of the windswept cliffs and imagine our ancient ancestors meeting here to worship or to bury their dead.



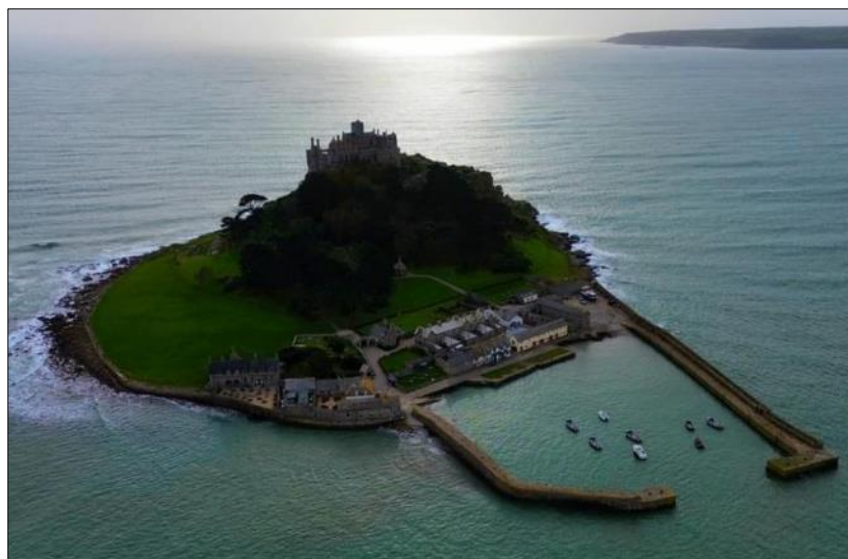
Plan of Ballowall Barrow

All images courtesy of English Heritage

Entry to the site is free and parking is available close by. It can be found by the side of Carn Glouce Road, TR19 7NP, less than a mile from St Just.

Sue Hutt

Ref. english-heritage.org.uk
Ancient Britain



Aerial view of St Michael's Mount

Courtesy of Smugglers of Mousehole & Facebook

Quiz answers

Operas - who wrote the following?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. La Traviata | Giuseppe Verdi |
| 2. Carmen | Georges Bizet |
| 3. The Marriage of Figaro | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart |
| 4. Tosca | Giacomo Puccini |
| 5. The Barber of Seville | Gioachino Rossini |
| 6. Porgy and Bess | George Gershwin |
| 7. Giulio Cesare | George Frideric Handel |
| 8. Der Rosenkavalier | Richard Strauss |
| 9. L'incoronazione di Poppea | Claudio Monteverdi |
| 10. Don Pasquale | Gaetano Donizetti |

For which sport are these people famous?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. Simone Biles | Gymnastics |
| 2. Michael Jordan | Basketball |
| 3. Tom Daley | Diving |
| 4. Ronnie O'Sullivan | Snooker |
| 5. Amir Khan | Boxing |
| 6. Rebecca Adlington | Swimming |
| 7. Jessica Ennis Hill | Heptathlon |
| 8. Ding Ning | Table tennis |
| 9. Coco Gauff | Tennis |
| 10. Jonah Lomu | Rugby Union |
| 11. Sachin Tendulkar | Cricket |
| 12. Jill Scott | Football |

Architects- who designed the following?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. The Shard | Renzo Piano |
| 2. St Paul's Cathedral | Christopher Wren |
| 3. The Eiffel Tower | Gustave Eiffel |
| 4. The Statue of Liberty | Auguste Bartholdi |
| 5. The Albert Hall | Fowke and Scott |
| 6. The Royal Crescent in Bath | John Wood |
| 7. The Houses of Parliament | Barry and Pugin |
| 8. The Titanic | Alexander Carlisle |
| 9. Buckingham Palace | John Nash |
| 10. The Hall for Cornwall | Christopher Eales |

Riddle answer

Any of the following: A shirt, A jumper, A jacket, A sweater, etc

Picture Quiz answers

			
Sprouts	Pigs in Blankets	Chestnut Stuffing	Roast Parsnips
			
Cranberry Sauce	Nut Roast	Stollen Cake	Yule Log
			
Brandy Butter	Mince Pies	Christmas Pudding	Sherry Trifle
			
Christmas Cake	Roast Potatoes	Honey Glazed Carrots	Mulled Wine

David's Doodles answers

1. Man pulling goat by rope past a window.
2. Giraffe passing a window.
3. Bubble gum blowing world champion.
4. Toilet roll.

Thought for the Day



People demand freedom of
speech as a compensation
for the freedom of thought
which they seldom use.

Søren Kierkegaard

Courtesy of Facebook

Carrick Argus: Contact details

We look forward to receiving your letters and any other contributions you may like to offer such as quizzes, articles, and short stories by email to carrickargus2017@gmail.com

Deadline for next issue – Sunday 21st December 2025

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- 2) The topics of your contributions should be restricted to those likely to be of interest to members of u3as. But see 6 below.
- 3) Apart from obvious typing errors, your contribution will never be altered or cut without first being returned to you for your agreement. That includes punctuation.
- 4) Contributions must show name of contributor; contact details their choice. A contributor may instead select a pen name, but if so, their own name will be supplied to any reader who asks for it.
- 5) A contribution that is critical of an identifiable individual will not be published. But see 6 below.
- 6) If contributing, you should regard yourself as responsible for factual accuracy. Opinions are your own.

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