

Notennow a Istor an Yeth

Peswora Gradh

Cornish Literature (* in English)

c1100 Old Cornish Vocabulary
1265 In Polsethow ywhylyr anethow
c1340 Charter endorsement (Golsough ty cowez)
c1380 Ordinalia (Origo Mundi, Passio Christi, Resurrexio Domini)
1450 Pascon agan Arluth
1504 Beunans Meriasek, Beunans Ke
1560 John Tregear translation of Bonner's Homilies
1602 Carew's Survey of Cornwall*
1611 Gwreans an Bys
1665 Nicholas Boson - John of Chyanhor
1675 Nicholas Boson - Nebez Gerriau
1680 William Scawen - Reasons for Decline in Cornish*
1693 John Tonkin - If Cornish People would but listen
1703 Edward Llyud - On the Death of King William III
1707 Edward Llyud - Archaeologica Britannica*
1710 John Boson - Pilchard Curing Rhyme
1776 William Bodinar's letter
1904 Jenner - Handbook of the Cornish Language
1929 Nance - Cornish for All
1938 Nance - Cornish-English Dictionary
1939 Smith - Cornish Simplified

Number of Cornish Language Speakers

Year	Speakers	Total Pop	Area %
1200	30000	35000	93
1300			73
1500	35000	69000	54
1600	22000		
1650	14000		
1700	5000		

Fowey/Camel line

Topics of Cornish History

1497 Rebellion. Henry VII confiscated Stannary charters. But mainly new taxes to finance war in Scotland. St Keverne leader Michael Joseph the blacksmith. Bodmin lawyer Thomas Flamank intellectual leader. Marched to Salisbury, Winchester, then 25000 English beat 1000 Cornish at Blackheath. Flamank and Angove hung, drawn and quartered. Later that year Perkin Warbeck landed at Lands End and proclaimed King at Bodmin but this rebellion failed at Taunton. Later Stannary powers restored and enhanced in Charter of Pardons.

1549 Prayer Book Rebellion. St. Keverne and Constantine men prominent in earlier fights in 1548 when churches were being sacked. No special case for Cornwall in Act of Uniformity 1549. English imposed. Stopped Creed, Commandments, Lord's Prayer etc. in Cornish. Battles of Fenny Bridges and Clyst St. Mary. Several thousand Cornish killed. Then clergy executed. Sir Anthony Kingston in charge of brutal pacification of Cornwall - the Cornish Holocaust.

Civil War. The more Anglicised Gentry were for Puritans and Parliament. The more Cornish Gentry, yeoman farmers (who had rebelled in 1497 and 1549) and popular opinion resisted the Puritans and so fought for the King. (Devon mostly Puritan). Early Stuarts had re-invigorated Duchy after Tudor clamp down. Following their victory, Parliamentarians vilified the Cornish and abolished the Duchy and Stannary Parliament (restored in 1660)

Trelawny. Bishop Jonathan Trelawney, Royalist and Anglican from a family of landowners in SE Cornwall. Refused to read James II Declaration of Indulgence, which gave tolerance to Catholics and Dissenters. Imprisoned 1697, tried and acquitted for libel. Celebrated in RS Hawker's song.

Emigration. Factors - no state religion, taxes for "useless institutions", agricultural depressions of 1840's and 1870's, collapse copper and decline in tin 1860/70s especially in W.

To S Australia (Burra, Moonta, Wallaroo)

US (Wisconsin, California, Colorado etc.), Canada, Mexico

S Africa (Namaqualand, Transvaal, Witwatersrand). Also NZ, Chile etc.

Cornish identity retained - very marketable. ?Dependency culture at home.

Mining. 1860 Copper decline. 1870 Tin decline.

Fishing. Pilchards, for export to catholic Europe mostly. Big in c17th to 19th. In 1830's disappeared for years. Some turned to mackerel, but competition from E Coast.

Celtic Revival.

Use of St Piran's banner, described first in 1826

Writers promote Cornish otherness (RL Stevenson, DH Lawrence, T Hardy, D du Maurier), implying romance, pre-Christian remains in culture / people

Painters - Newlyn (Stanhope Forbes etc.), Lamorna (John Birch), St Ives - visitors included Whistler and Sickert.

Theatre - Minack (Rowena Cade)

GWR Cornish Riviera - romantic, exotic

This was an essentially colonial interpretation but with local collusion:

Rev RS Hawker (Morwenstow), Matthew Arnold (Study of Celtic Literature),

Sir Arthur Quiller Couch. Aim - recognition of Cornwall as a Celtic nation.

Henry Jenner (1846 - 1934 Gwas Myghal). Born St Columb Major, parents English and Scottish. He considered language as the foremost badge of nationality. Founds old Cornwall societies, gets Cornwall accepted as Celtic nation, writes Handbook of Cornish language which many followers use to learn language. Retired from British Museum 1909 and moved to Hayle.

Rev. WS Lach-Szyrma (d 1915). Vicar of Carnmenellys, near Newlyn. Gathered Cornish survival words, wrote language lessons, worked with Jenner.

Robert Morton Nance (1873 - 1959 Mordon) born Cardiff, moved to Cornwall 1906 and met Jenner 1909. Developed Unified system, based on mediaeval and all Cornish. Life work was dictionary. Second Grand Bard after Jenner.

Richard Gendall (1924-2017 Gelvinak), leader of the movement for Kernewek Diwedhes in the 1980's. Founded Teere ha Tavaz. Wrote songs and sang with Brenda Wooton.

Wella Brown (d 2020) wrote 'A Grammar of Modern Cornish' in 1984. It is now the full, authoritative KK grammar. He also wrote the 'Skeul an Yeth' series.

Ken George (Profus an Mortyd) originated Kernewek Kemmyn and wrote the Gerlyver Meur in 1993.

Nicholas Williams (Golvan) developed Unified Cornish Revived in 1997, wrote an English-Cornish Dictionary in 2000 and the first New Testament in Cornish in 2002.

Standard Written Form - SWF (FSS - Furv Skrifys Savonek) is the standard orthography for public bodies and the educational system. Agreed in 2008 after negotiations with all the main Cornish language groups and with expert input. The agreement meant that Cornish became officially accepted and funded, with support from the UK government and the European Union. It was reviewed in 2013 and a few small changes made.