

2017 Mid-summer Bonfires

Liskeard OCS

On Mid Summer's Eve, 23rd June, courtesy of Mr James Moon, of Bolitho Farm, Maudlin, the Liskeard Old Cornwall Society held their Annual Mid Summer's Eve Bonfire with Her Worship the Mayor of Liskeard, Cllr Christina Whittie, as their principal guest with her consort and a number of her Councillors. Also attending was Cornwall Councillor, Mrs Jane Pascoe , Mr Ken Terry, President of the Looe OCS with a number of their Membership plus two guests, college friends on holiday in the area, one from Northumberland, the other Warwickshire.

The Rev. Becca Bell, (St Cleer) officiated with prayers and a homily, whilst Mrs Kathy Lang (Looe) read a passage from the Gospel according to St Matthew. Miss Ruth Breen (Liskeard OCS) and Mrs Norma Dobinson (Looe OCS) were 'Maids of Flowers', to throw wreaths of herbs onto the pyre in the hope of prolonging the summer for a bountiful harvest.

The ceremony concluded with the singing of 'Trelawny' and saffron buns with tea for all thirty guests around the fire.









REDRUTH OLD CORNWALL SOCIETY

TANSYS GOLOWAN

MIDSUMMER BONFIRE

Midsummers Eve proved to be rather dull with an extremely brisk breeze which kept our St. Piran flags flying high and proud at the entrance to the fields of Pencoose Farm, Stithians. Once again our hosts Paul Gluyas and family did us proud and built an enormous bonfire (had to be the largest in Cornwall, it was still smouldering two days after!) Despite the threatening weather around 80 or so folk turned up to enjoy the ceremony and to partake of a pasty and cup of tay whilst listening to or joining in with the "Singing Seagulls" with a

medley of Cornish and traditional songs . Although we weren't blessed with a glorious setting of the sun the atmosphere was warm and friendly whilst we all anticipated the glorious blaze the fire was going to provide. At approximately 8-45 the ceremony began with the blessing, first in Kernewek then in English by Pat Parry and R.O.C.S. chairman Vanessa Moyle, the "sacrificial" bouquet of good and bad herbs was carried and placed on the pyre by Tracy Moyle prior to it being ceremoniously lit by Ron Moyle, followed by Paul Gluyas and helpers to ensure an even blaze all round. We had as usual our stalwart supporters , several bards of Cornish Gorsedh, we were delighted to welcome some new faces and two of our Breton cousins and Redruth twinneders who have gone home with a camera full of photos to share at a meeting and as they told us a memory of " un feu de joie magnifique " . Pencoose Farm itself is 13th. century and has been farmed by the successive Gluyas family since the 1850s so it could only have enhanced the atmosphere and made us think of the continuous celtic link to our forefathers of yore who would have performed this ceremony with the very same expectations of blessing their precious crops etc. with the cleansing and ritual sacrifice of the Midsummer Bonfire, (albeit in a little more refined and sober a manner ! and I doubt very much whether even the most energetic young man would attempt to "jump the embers" in order to be cleansed and fortified) R.O.C.S. are very pleased to be aided and enabled to continue this ancient tradition and thank all concerned in this respect

This very enjoyable occasion was made possible by the hard work of members of the committee, these included:- Rosy Hawking who made the bouquet, headdress, and medallion for the Lady of the Flowers, and ordered and served pasties with David Carbis who kept us all smiling with his ready wit of the very unique Cornish kind, Linda Beskeen who kept everyone happy with the cup that cheers, and Joan Andrew who also helped in the refreshments tent and carried our banner with pride. Also all those who performed on the field.

We will be visiting Pencoose Farm again on 19th. August this year as Paul will be hosting us for our "Crying of the Neck "ceremony. Details of this as usual from our secretary or chairman. A warm welcome is guaranteed, see you there.











St Columb Old Cornwall Society

St Columb Old Cornwall Society has continued the tradition of celebrating St John's Eve, (Golowan in Cornish), on June 23rd, by lighting a bonfire on top of Castle an Dinas, courtesy of Cornwall Heritage. The history of the midsummer bonfire seems to date back to Pagan Times when bonfires were lit to protect against evil spirits. At this time the Church could either suppress these Pagan rituals or embrace them. It chose the latter and the fires were allowed to continue but to occur on the Eve of the Feast Day of John the Baptist.

There were more than 100 spectators at the bonfire and among them were members of other Old Cornwall Societies, several Bards of the Cornish Gorsedd and trustees of Cornwall Heritage Trust.

Much of the organisation was down to the committee with a tremendous input from Phil and Pippa Ellery. At the start there were plenty of hot pasties and cups of tea served by Joy Payne and Lyn May. Following a welcome from our President, Mrs Bill Glanville, the ceremony continued in Cornish and English with Barbara Wyper reading the Prayer in Cornish followed by Reverend Helen Barber reading the prayer in English. The fire was lit by Peter Wyper. The Lady of the Flowers, Barbara Wyper, cast the enormous garland of wild flowers onto the fire. The flowers and herbs chosen for the garland are presumed to have 'good' and 'bad' properties.

Within minutes the fire was ablaze. Then came the singing led by John Bennallick with Mark Hawken playing the accordion. There were lots of smiling faces.

A collection raised over £90 for the Air Ambulance. The St Columb Old Cornwall Society are grateful to all those taking part and especially to our Events Secretary, Phil Ellery, for all his hard work.

