

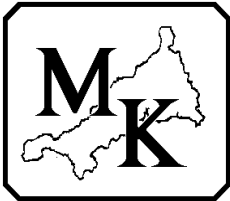
# Cornish Nation

No. 94 July 2024

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**A tribute to  
Ann Trevenen Jenkin**



## Looking ahead to 1st May 2025

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall took the bold decision to not put forward candidates for the 2024 General Election.

Party members had discussed participation in Westminster elections on a number of occasions during the last couple of years, though activists repeatedly made it clear that MK’s electoral priorities had to be the upcoming elections to Cornwall Council, and the associated town and parish council polls, due to take place on 1st May 2025.

Activists who had campaigned in recent General Elections also knew from experience how difficult it remains for non-Westminster and non-statewide political parties, such as Mebyon Kernow, to secure access to fair levels of television and other coverage during the campaign.

In addition, many members make it clear to the leadership of MK that they wanted to “lend” their votes to other political parties to ensure that sitting Conservative MPs could be defeated.

We acknowledge that there are many people who were disappointed that they were unable to vote MK on 4th July, but we have concluded that this was the best approach to help us make progress with our campaigns for Cornwall.

MK members continue to work hard building the pressure for meaningful devolution for Cornwall and fair funding for our public services, and are already lobbying Cornwall’s new MPs on these matters.

The conscious decision to focus MK’s resources on the 2025 local elections was undoubtedly the right one. But to make our abstention from the General Election really meaningful, we have to “step up” and make these coming elections our most effective to date.

We need to campaign solidly over the next nine months and get more MK councillors elected – both at Cornwall and town and parish level – in order to put more pressure on the new Government to deliver for Cornwall.

Please consider how you can be a part of this.

Could you be a candidate for the unitary authority or your local town or parish council? Are you willing to help with campaigning?

To find out more about how you can help, contact:

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| West Cornwall / Cllr Loveday Jenkin | 07718 763566 |
| Mid Cornwall / Cllr Dick Cole       | 07791 876607 |
| East Cornwall / Cllr Andrew Long    | 07812 597257 |

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### Cornish Nation 94

*Cornish Nation* is a magazine which is distributed free to all members of Mebyon Kernow.

Membership of MK costs only £15.00 a year (£8.00 unwaged) or £20.00 for a family. Life memberships are £300 (aged 64 and below), £150 (aged 65-74) or £100 (aged over 75).

For further information, contact:

Mebyon Kernow,  
Lanhainsworth,  
Fraddon Hill,  
Fraddon,  
St Columb, TR9 6PQ

07791 876607 (General inquiries)  
[www.mebyonkernow.org](http://www.mebyonkernow.org)

# A Labour landslide?

*Cornish Nation reviews the outcome of the General Election and what happened in the Celtic parts of the United Kingdom*

As expected, Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party suffered a catastrophic defeat on 4th July and Keir Starmer became Prime Minister after a landslide victory. The number of Labour parliamentarians jumped to 412, turning the Tories' 2019 majority of 80 into a Labour one of 174. The number of Conservative MPs meanwhile fell from 365 to 121.

The distortions of the first-past-the-post voting system meant that Labour secured 63.4% of the UK's seats with only 33.7% of vote. Turnout was significantly down and their share of the vote increased by less than 2% while Labour harvested fewer actual votes than in both the 2017 and 2019 defeats under Jeremy Corbyn.

The biggest reality of this "uneven" election result is that the Conservative vote collapsed. In percentage terms, their vote share was down from 43.6% to 23.7% while their total vote more than halved – down from 13,966,454 in 2019 to 6,827,311 in 2024. Linked to this was the surge of the Reform Party. It achieved 14.3% of the vote, which equated to more than four million votes – the majority of which are assumed to be former Conservative supporters.

This overall situation was replicated in Cornwall. In the 2019 General Election, the Conservatives had secured more than 50% of the vote and won all six constituencies convincingly. This time around, the most popular party was Labour. It won four seats – two-thirds of those available – on 26.2% of the vote. The remaining two seats were won by the Liberal Democrats, achieved on a quarter of the vote. Their two successful candidates achieving the highest personal votes in the election, as Labour did not poll well in those seats.

The Conservatives had a truly disastrous night. They achieved less than half of their 2019 vote, though their percentage share was only a fraction behind Labour on 26.1%. It is hard to make direct comparisons because of boundary changes but, as an example, in the constituency of St Austell and Newquay, the defeated MP managed 13,488, down from 31,273. As elsewhere, one factor which did

significant additional damage to the chances of Cornwall's Conservative MPs getting re-elected was Reform. To the west of the Tamar, they managed 16.5% of the vote.

In terms of Mebyon Kernow's sister parties, the Scottish National Party had a very bruising election. It has been a difficult period for the party following the resignation of Nicola Sturgeon as First Minister, a police investigation into party finances, constant barracking from opponents and the media, the ending of the Bute House agreement with the Scottish Green Party and the subsequent stepping down of Humza Yousaf as leader of his country.

In 2019, they had polled 45% of the vote but, because of the vagaries of first-past-the-post, won 81.4% of the seats (48 out of 59). In 2024, the same voting system worked against them. Their vote was down to 30.0% and they ended up with only nine MPs (15.8% of the seats).

Eight constituencies were successfully defended – Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen

North), Dave Doogan (Angus), Stephen Flynn (Aberdeen South), Stephen Gethins (Aberdeenshire North and Broughty Ferry), Chris Law (Dundee West), Graham Leadbetter (Moray West, Nairn and Strathspey), Brendan O'Hara (Argyll and Bute) and Pete Wishart (Perth and North Perthshire) – while Seamus Logan gained Aberdeenshire North and Moray East. In contrast, Labour won 37 constituencies (63.4% of the total) on a vote of 35.3%.

But Plaid Cymru had their best-ever Westminster election under the leadership of Rhun ap Iorwerth. The recent boundary review had reduced the number of Welsh seats from 40 to 32, but Plaid managed to elect four MPs – a notional gain of two.

Liz Saville Roberts and Ben Lake both secured strong majorities in their enlarged constituencies of Dwyfor Meirionnydd and Ceredigion Preseli, while Ann Davies and Llinos Medi won stunning victories in Caerfyrddin and Ynys Mon. Plaid's overall share of the Welsh vote was 14.8%, a creditable increase of 4.9% since 2019.



# Ann Trevenen Jenkin

*Cornish Nation pays tribute to Mebyon Kernow's last founder-member, its Honorary President and Cornwall's first female Grand Bard*

On 8th April 2024, Ann Trevenen Jenkin passed away at her home in Leedstown at the age of 93. She will be remembered as an exceptional woman, who was at the heart of the Cornish movement for the whole of her adult life.

Dorothy Ann Trevenen was born on 14th April 1930 in Barnet, Hertfordshire, to John Arnold Trevenen, a Cornish solicitor, and Dorothy Goldsmith from Somerset. The family moved to Redruth in 1932 and Ann was educated in the town though, when the family home was requisitioned for the use of American soldiers during the Second World War, she spent a period as a boarder at Truro High School. In 1948, she left Cornwall to study for a degree in English at Exeter University and after a year's teacher training in London she got a job teaching English at Evesham in Worcester-shire.

Ann had a second cousin, Helena Charles, who was one of the pioneers in the Cornish movement at that time. It was through her that she started to learn Cornish, act in plays and do Celtic dancing. Ann studied with Robert Morton Nance, Gorsedh Kernow's second Grand Bard, which led to her becoming a bard for proficiency in the language in 1957. Her bardic name was Bryallen (Primrose).

She also attended the 1950 Celtic Congress held in Truro, where she was involved with the performance of the Cornish language play Bewnans Meriasek. The event brought together a range of people interested in Cornwall's culture and identity, which led to a series of meetings in the following months that were the catalyst for the formation of Mebyon Kernow.

Ann was one of 13 people who came together for MK's inaugural meeting at the Oates Temperance Hotel in Reduth on 6th January 1951. The first chairman of the organisation was Helena Charles and also present was another from her new circle of friends, Richard Garfield Jenkin, her future husband. This meeting was also the start of an active and unbroken association with MK for more than 70 years.



Richard and Ann married at St Euny Church in Redruth in 1956 and initially lived at Totnes but, in 1959, Richard secured employment in West Cornwall and the family moved to Leedstown. By then, they had taken responsibility for the magazine *New Cornwall*, which they produced until 1973.

In 1965, they wrote an important booklet, "Cornwall the Hidden Land," described by Professor Philip Payton as "a manifesto for modern Cornwall ... rooted in the revivalist tradition of 'Celtic Cornwall,' but which attempted to reconcile Cornwall's ancient Celticity with the culture of industrial Cornwall," adding it had a "strong political edge," making the case for self-government.

Richard increasingly became a figurehead for MK, serving as Chairman between 1973 and 1983, fighting its first parliamentary contest in Falmouth and Camborne in 1970 and standing for election to the European Parliament in 1979. But Ann was always there, supporting him in all his activities, whether producing posters, sending out election material or leafletting. On occasions, she even had to "spring" some members of the family out of police custody when they had been caught fly-posting election posters.

Ann was extremely proud that her daughter Loveday served as Party Chairman between 1990 and 1997, fought parliamentary elections and became a respected councillor on Kerrier District Council and then Cornwall Council, and that her son Conan also contested a number of parliamentary and local elections.

Ann's children remember that her politics were about gentle persuasion and discussion and she always sought to encourage people to understand the importance of Cornwall as a nation and in a wider cultural context. And following her husband's death in 2002, Ann herself became Honorary President of Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall.

A committed educationalist, she inspired hundreds and hundreds of pupils. Having taken time out from work to raise her family, she returned to teaching in the 1970s at the Girls Grammar School in Camborne, which later became Camborne School. She introduced Cornish classes and became the librarian, rising to the position of the chairperson of the Schools' Library Association. She retired in 1987, leaving her much more time to devote to Cornish activities and in particular Gorsedh Kernow.

Ann became the first female Deputy Grand Bard in 1994 and then the first female Grand Bard in 1997. This was a great honour for someone who had devoted her life to numerous Cornish Associations.

Ann was an exceptional organiser and a catalyst for so many projects. She was Chair of the Publications and Archives Committee of Gorsedh Kernow from 1994 to 2012, which facilitated the publication of a number of biographical books. This led to the creation of a special collection of published material, produced by or about Cornish bards, which is held on the university campus at Penryn, while other material has been archived at Kresen Kernow. Another of her initiatives was to establish a Publisher's Award Scheme, named *Holyer an Gof*, meaning follower of the Smith, after the bardic name of the late Len Truran, a renowned publisher and former Chairman of Mebyon Kernow.

She travelled widely as Grand Bard, going as far as Australia and the United States of America. She was twice given the "Ambassadors' Award" by Gorsedh Kernow for her services to the Cornish overseas and, in 2002, was instrumental in the organisation of the first *Dehwelans*, a homecoming for people of Cornish descent from across the diaspora, which was held in Pendennis Castle. She also assisted with follow-up events in Newquay in 2004 and Looe in 2008.

Ann was heavily involved with the millennium project to produce a history book about Cornwall – titled "*Cornwall For Ever! Kernow Bys Vykken*" – which was distributed to all children in Cornish Schools during her time as Grand Bard.

One of her greatest achievements was to help organise the *Keskerdh Kernow* events in 1997, which remembered the Cornish rebellion against the English crown, led by Michael Joseph An Gof and Thomas Flamank, 500 years before. The pinnacle of the commemoration was the re-enactment of the march from St Keverne to Blackheath, where the Cornish host was defeated. She was one of the two principal members of the sub-committee tasked with planning out the route and organising nightly accommodation for the walkers, as well as a range of associated activities. She also served on the committee, which produced educational materials about the rebellion.



At the age of 67, Ann was one of 26 individuals, who walked the entire 365 miles to London. She was determined that it should represent a "huge boost for Cornish consciousness, pride and identity." Her fellow long-distance walkers affectionately nicknamed her "*Bardicea*," and she was there at the front of the new Cornish host as it arrived in Blackheath after 29 days of walking.

Along the route, she was accompanied by her beloved dog, Brengy, and afterwards wrote a children's book, "*The Dog Who Walked To London*." It received a *Holyer an Gof* commendation and a Cornish language version of the book was also produced.

Ann was indeed in her element when writing. She published books of her own poetry and wrote numerous articles on Cornish subjects, while contributing to a number of publications.

She also had an amazing amount of energy and it is simply not possible to cover everything that she was involved with. But it is important to note that she was Life President of the Celtic Congress and, as well as attending many Congresses in other Celtic countries, she organised multiple successful ones in Cornwall. She was a trustee of the Cornish Heritage Trust, a member of Helston Old Cornwall Society, a volunteer at Helston Museum, a Guide Leader and District Commissioner, an active member in Leedstown Women's Institute and the Leedstown Village Hall Committee, and a school governor.

Ann's life was certainly well-lived, it was a life committed to the service of Cornwall and its people, and dedicated to the promotion of all aspects of Cornish culture, identity and heritage.

At this time, our thoughts are with her four children, Morwenna, Loveday, Gawen and Conan; and her ten grandchildren, Trystan, Riwana, Taran, Talwyn, Trifina, Elowenn, Kelyn, Davy, Meryn and Kit.



# One decade on

*National minority status for the Cornish must mean parity with “the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish.”*

The tenth anniversary of the UK Government’s recognition of the Cornish through the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was met with a palpable silence from the Westminster establishment and London-centred political parties. But members of Mebyon Kernow came together at the council offices in Truro on Saturday 20th April, to publicly challenge central government to meet its obligations towards the Cornish and Cornwall.

At the gathering, party members issued a statement for campaigners to use to put pressure on central government, members of parliament and public bodies. It challenges one and all to commit to full compliance with all aspects of the Framework Convention. The full text of the bilingual statement is as follows:

2024 marks the tenth anniversary of the UK Government recognising the Cornish as a national minority through the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

This was a landmark moment for our nation as the Framework Convention is a significant international treaty, which sets out numerous obligations. These include support for language and culture, education and the media, the greater visibility of national minorities in public life, the protection of historic territories, more opportunities on the international stage, and so much more.

The official government press release (24th April 2014) stated that “the decision to recognise the unique identity of the Cornish, now affords them the same status ... as the UK’s other Celtic people, the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish.”

Sadly, this promise has proved to be illusory, and ten years on, we demand and insist that central government fully meets its obligations in the Framework Convention by treating Cornwall equally with the other national parts of the United Kingdom.

We require the following:

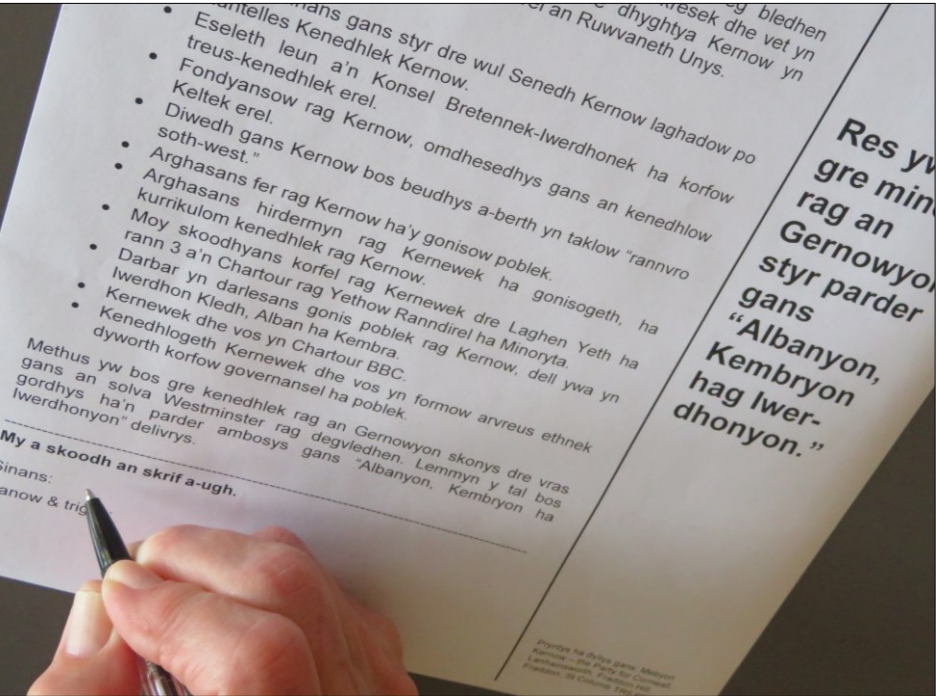
- Meaningful devolution through the creation of a legislative Cornish Parliament or a National Assembly of Cornwall.
- Full membership of the British-Irish Council and other trans-national bodies.
- Institutions for Cornwall, which match those of the other Celtic nations.
- An end to Cornwall being submerged into “south west region” entities.
- Fair funding for Cornwall and its public services.
- Long-term funding for Cornish language and culture, and a national curriculum for Cornwall.
- Greater institutional support for Cornish through a Language Act and part 3 of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.
- Public service broadcasting provision for Cornwall, as exists in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- Inclusion of the Cornish language in the BBC Charter.
- Inclusion of Cornish nationality on ethnic monitoring forms from governmental and public bodies.

It is shameful that national minority status for the Cornish has been largely ignored by the Westminster establishment for a decade. It must now be respected and the promised parity with “the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish” must be delivered.

2024 a verk an degves penn-bloodh a’n Governans RU owth aswon Kernowyon avel minoryta kenedhlek dres Akord Framweyth Konsel Europa rag Gwitha Minorytys Kenedhlek.

Hemm o pols bras rag agan kenedhel awos bos an Akord Framweyth kevambos keswlasek meur y vri, a wra ragworra lies ambos. Y’ga mysk yw skoodhyans rag yeth ha gonisogeth, adhyskans ha’n media, gweladewder brassa minorytys kenedhlek yn bewnans poblek, gwithans a diredhow istorek, moy chonsyow war’n wariva geswlasek, ha lies moy.

Yn-medh dyllans gwask an governans sodhek (24a Ebrel 2014) “an ervirans dhe aswon honanieth unnik a’n Gernowyon a re dhedha keth gre ... avel poblow Keltek erel yn RU, Albanyon, Kembryon ha Iwerdhonyon.”

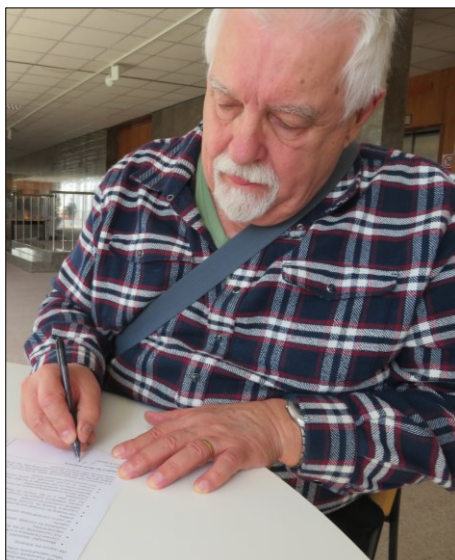


Yn trist, an ambos ma re brofyas bos husek, ha deg bledhen diwettha, y hwovynyn ni hag inya war wovernans kreskek dhe vet yn tien y ambosow yn Akord Framweyth dre dhyghtya Kernow yn kompes gans an rannow kenedhlek erel an Ruwvaneth Unys.

Res yw dhyn ni dell sew:

- Digresennans gans styr dre wul Senedh Kernow laghadow po Kuntelles Kenedhlek Kernow.
- Eseleth leun a'n Konsel Bretennek-Iwerdhonek ha korfow treus-kenedhlek erel.
- Fondyansow rag Kernow, omdhesedhys gans an kenedhlow Keltek erel.
- Diwedh gans Kernow bos beudhys a-berth yn taklow "rannvro soth-west region."
- Arghasans fer rag Kernow ha'y gonisow poblek.
- Arghasans hirdermyn rag Kernewek ha gonisogeth, ha kurrikulom kenedhlek rag Kernow.
- Moy skoodhyans korfel rag Kernewek dre Laghen Yeth ha Rann 3 a'n Chartour rag Yethow Ranndirel ha Minoritya.
- Darbar yn darlesans kylghran Boblek rag Kernow, dell ywa yn Iwerdhon Kledh, Alban ha Kembra.
- Kernewek dhe vos yn Chartour BBC.
- Kenedhlogeth Kernewek dhe vos yn formow arvreus ethnek dyworth korfow governansel ha poblek.

Methus yw bos gre kenedhlek rag an Gernowyon skonys dre vras gans an solva Westminster rag degvledhen. Lemmyn y tal bos gordhys ha'n parder ambosys gans "Albanyon, Kembryon ha Iwerdhonyon" delivrys.



*Pictured at the campaign event in Truro (top from left to right): Julie Tamblin, Adam Wiktoerek, Cllr Donte Ragan, Duncan Paul, Edward Curry, Cllr Zoe Fox and Cllr Chris Lawrence.*

# General Assembly

*Cllr Mike Tresidder represented Mebyon Kernow at the latest annual gathering of the EFA in Brussels and reports back on the experience*

Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall remains an active participant in European politics through membership of the European Free Alliance (EFA). Its charter states:

**“The European Free Alliance promotes the right to democratic self-determination and supports the peoples’ aspirations to choose their own political future, including independence, greater autonomy or linguistic and cultural recognition for minorities. EFA aims for European unity in diversity based on the principle of subsidiarity and social justice.”**

There are currently eight EFA Members of the European Parliament who, along with the Greens, form the sixth largest block in the legislature.

The latest General Assembly was held on 7th and 8th March, with representatives from political parties who share the same desire for greater autonomy. MK joined 22 other delegates with full voting rights.

As well as receiving reports from the political parties that make up the European Free Alliance, various groups within the organisation addressed the Assembly. These included the Islands Forum, EFA Youth (EFAY), the EFA Group within the European Parliament, and the policy research organisation the Coppieters Foundation. A representative talked about the expulsion of Armenians from Nagorno Karabak and there were calls for a ceasefire in Gaza.



Formal motions were passed covering a range of topics, from those that affected the EU generally to issues of particular concern to specific regions represented by the EFA. However, they all had one thing in common, namely a challenge to over-centralised government.

A motion, of particular interest to Cornwall, called upon the European Commission and Council to respond to the need for an “Islands” agenda and strategy. This, and a report, came about as a direct result of the Islands Forum meetings which, again, has MK as a member. The report highlighted how the loss of traditional industries, an exodus of young people, an over-dependence on tourism, poor public transport and second homes, etc, destroyed communities.

Damage was halted, even reversed, in communities with the most say in their own affairs. The more freedom to make and enact policies, raise taxes, the better an island fared. If ever there was a strong case for devolution in Cornwall it was to be found in the findings of this forum.

The second day of the General Assembly was a public event and featured a session on gender equality led by Carmen Smith, who recently secured a seat in the House of Lords for Plaid Cymru, and a presentation of the 2024 European elections manifesto.

In the evening, the delegates took part in an International Women’s Day march through the city (see left).

All in all, this was a professional and well run General Assembly and a great tonic for those of us who mourn the effect that Brexit has had on our politics and contacts with continental Europe. By working together, sharing common issues and experiences the General Assembly led the way in opposing over-centralised political bodies.

I would urge all Mebyon Kernow members to become curious about its work and young people, in particular, to consider creating a European Free Alliance Youth (EFAY) branch here in Cornwall.



# Cornish news and views

## MK's newest councillor

In March, Mebyon Kernow activist Mael Garrec was co-opted onto Penryn Town Council. Originally from Brittany, he has been resident in the town for nearly a decade and shares his home with his partner Aurelie and their child.



Mael is a senior transport planner, who has specialised in the decarbonisation of the sector. His focus on the town council will be to promote a sustainable and future-proof Penryn, which will include support for the high street and climate resilience for the wider area.

## Early Day Motion

The Plaid Cymru MP for Ceredigion Ben Lake kindly tabled an Early Day Motion (EDM) in the House of Commons to mark the 10th anniversary of the Cornish securing national minority status.

The text was very similar to the statement issued by Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall on the weekend prior to the actual anniversary. The EDM included a call for “meaningful devolution through the creation of a legislative Cornish Parliament or a National Assembly of Cornwall,” fair funding, a Cornish Language Act and much more.

We would like to thank the 21 MPs who signed the EDM. These were all three of the Plaid Cymru MPs (Ben plus Liz Saville Roberts and Hywel Williams), 13 members of the Scottish National Party (Steven Bonnar, Deidre Brock, Martyn Day, Dave Doogan, Allan Dorans, Chris Law, Anne McLaughlin, John McNally, Gavin Newlands, Chris Stephens, Alison Thewlis, Richard Thomson and Philippa Whitford), two Labour representatives (Mary Kelly Foy and Lloyd

Russell-Moyle), two independents (Jonathan Edwards and Angus MacNeil), and Jim Shannon (Democratic Unionist Party). (24th April 2024).

## Media Bill

The decision of the Prime Minister to call a July General Election meant that a number of pieces of legislation could not go forward. One bill that did make it through onto the statute book was the Media Bill. This includes an obligation for public broadcasters to broadcast audio-visual material in “regional and minority languages” and, for the first time ever, the list of relevant languages includes Cornish. It is to be welcomed that Cornish has finally been referenced in this way, though MK members were lobbying members of the House of Lords to get the relevant section of the legislation strengthened, but that opportunity was lost because of the announcement of the election. (24th May 2024)

## UDB visit

Gael Briand from the Union Démocratique Bretonne in Brittany visited Cornwall in June to build ever closer links between the two parties. He met with councillors Mael Garrec, Loveday Jenkin and Mike Tresidder, and held discussions about issues of mutual concern including housing, traditional industries such as fishing and mining, culture and identity, plus prospects for young people across the two nations. Gael also visited Kresen Kernow with Cllr Jenkin. (6th June 2024)



## Labour in power

Immediately after the result of the General Election was confirmed, the new Prime Minister Keir Starmer held a press conference. He spoke about the “four nations” of the UK, and how he would govern for all four corners of the United Kingdom – meaning England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Over the next 48-hour period, he toured the “four nations” and met with the First Ministers in each of the devolved administrations, before returning to London. On the following day, the PM hosted a meeting of “metro mayors” from across England. The prospect of further devolution was discussed at this gathering and he reaffirmed his commitment to a “Council of the Nations and Regions.”

The Deputy Prime Minister, Angela Rayner, has meanwhile stated that “work will now continue at pace to deliver on manifesto commitments to transfer power out of Whitehall ... with upcoming devolution legislation to take back control.”

It was therefore extremely symbolic that all six of Cornwall’s MPs – Anna Gelderd (South East Cornwall), Andrew George (St Ives), Jayne Kirkham (Truro and Falmouth), Noah Law (St Austell and Newquay), Ben Maguire (North Cornwall) and Perran Moon (Camborne, Redruth and Hayle) – took their parliamentary oaths in the Cornish language.

MK leader Cllr Dick Cole said: “It was fantastic to see all six Cornish MPs asserting Cornish nationhood by taking their oaths in Cornish. This was a powerful cultural and political statement and emphasised Cornwall is just as much a key constituent part of the United Kingdom as Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; and its democratic, economic and cultural needs also need to be prioritised by the UK Government.

“It must be our hope that Keir Starmer and others will come to understand Cornwall’s position as one of the nations of the UK. And that the Government will, as a consequence, seek to meet all their ‘national minority’ obligations and ensure that Cornwall, in the first instance, is represented on the ‘Council for Nations and Region’ as a step towards achieving greater parity with Wales and Scotland through meaningful devolution.” (11th July 2024)

# Remembering friends

*Cornish Nation pays tribute to a number of members of Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall who have died in recent months*

**Roy Schama** moved to Cornwall from his native London in the late 1980s, along with his wife Patricia (see obituary in *Cornish Nation* no 80). They settled in Philleigh on the Roseland Peninsula, from where he ran an accountancy practice. Patricia, who had been the Deputy Director of Social Services in a London Borough prior to retirement, meanwhile became the chairman of St Petros – a charity supporting homeless people in Cornwall.



Roy was a life-long activist for social justice. In 1965, he was one of four people, described as members of a pacifist community, who founded the Homer Lane Trust. The aim of the Trust was to continue the work of the quaker David Wills, who was a pioneer psychotherapist and educator. This work focussed on providing support to children and young people, who had suffered emotional or social distress. Roy was the organisation's first treasurer.

The Schamas loved Cornwall and became active members of Mebyon Kernow – the Party for Cornwall in the 1990s. For the best part of a decade, Roy and Patricia were ever-present at the heart of MK and did so much to

help the Party make progress. Roy became Party Treasurer in 2000. He was active with the Truro and St Austell Constituency Party, which Patricia served as Chair, and MK's National Executive. They were also founding members of the Cornish Constitutional Convention in 2000.

In 2007, they made the difficult decision to move away from Cornwall to be closer to other members of Patricia's family. Patricia passed away in 2019, and now Roy has joined his beloved wife.

Party Leader Cllr Dick Cole remembers Roy with great fondness. "It was a privilege to have known and worked with Roy and Patricia. It was also a joy to have spent so much time in their engaging company, which included meals at their home. I will forever be grateful for their sound advice and guidance on policy matters, as well as Roy's care and attention in dealing with Mebyon Kernow's finances."

**Paul Metcalfe** was a dedicated campaigner, who supported his wife Audrey's election campaigns with great enthusiasm.



Their first campaign was in 2001, when Audrey stood for election to Cornwall County Council and, in the following year, he helped her win a by-election for a place on Carn Brea

Parish Council. The big success came in 2003, when Audrey was elected onto Kerrier District Council for the Illogan South ward. She served for four years, where she was one-quarter of Mebyon Kernow's four-strong female group on the authority, which also included Cllrs Jane Acton, Helene Cullimore and Loveday Jenkin.

Away from politics, Paul was employed by Plumbase (formerly Thompsons) in Redruth. He worked in the showroom and assisted hundreds of people with the measuring up for their new kitchens.

Paul played pool and took part in local leagues. He also loved rugby and could often be found at the Recreation Ground in Redruth, cheering on the Reds.

**Peter Harvey** made outstanding contributions to the study of geology as the Professor in Geomathematics in the School of Geology, Geography and the Environment at Leicester University. During his academic career, he published over 170 scientific papers on geology, volcanology and petrophysics in international journals and shared his vast knowledge with a very large number of students.



He retired in 2004 and moved back to his native Cornwall with his wife Rael. He became a strong supporter of the Cornish language and was admitted as a bard to Gorsedh Kernow. He took the bardic name of Godhonyth an Nor (Earth Scientist).

Peter made significant contributions to the promotion of the use of the Standard Written Form of Cornish. Together with Rael, he taught up to fourth grade and they also worked with Steve and Dee Harris to publish “A Learners’ Cornish Dictionary in the Standard Written Form.” Peter was elected to Gorsedh Kernow’s Council in 2012 and the Harveys also co-ordinated the Holyer an Gof book awards for several years.

As life members of Mebyon Kernow, Peter and Rael sometimes helped out with MK campaigns and stalls. In particular, during a number of Loveday Jenkin’s parliamentary and local election campaigns, they took responsibility for much of the paperwork linked to the electoral process and co-ordinated the distribution of letters to postal voters.

Long-standing Mebyon Kernow member **Shelagh Gerrard** (nee Hocking) was brought up in Africa and she was educated at Kenya High School.



Like her sister Vanessa Beeman (see obituary in *Cornish Nation* no 82), she retained strong links with the Cornish roots of her family and often stayed with her grandfather Sidney Hocking. Their father Kaspar also became an enthusiast for Cornish culture and language, producing translations and serving as Chairman of the Agan Tavas organisation in the late 1990s.

Shelagh’s first degree was in zoology, followed by a masters in chemical education at Imperial College, London. She then worked as an entomologist – just like her father – and also taught biology and chemistry, both in Central Africa and the UK. She latterly moved to Cornwall to be near family and look after her elderly parents.

A woman of many interests, she was an observer for the Institute of Advanced Motorcyclists and founded the Cornwall Advanced Motorcyclists in 2006. She served as Chair of the Windsor and Maidenhead Embroiderers Guild and was a trustee of the Cornwall Wildlife Trust

A keen supporter of Cornish, she was an active committee member of Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek and was barded in 2010 through examination in the Cornish Language. Her bardic name was Cares Jyndywros (Lover of Motorcycles) and she taught classes through An Kylgh Kernewek.

She also regularly helped out with Mebyon Kernow campaigns, especially leafletting during elections in her home area of Constantine.

**Anthony Hitchens Unwin** was a life member of MK and a frequent attendee at branch meetings in the Truro area. He gave regular donations to support the work of the Party.

Born in Kent of Cornish descent, after studying Modern Languages at Kings College, London, he moved to Norfolk, where he cycled around the county collecting old photos of windmills that today form the Unwin Collection at the Norfolk Central Library. In 1971, he became involved with the restoration of a derelict windmill at Garboldisham and, in 1974, he moved to Cornwall.

He had an encyclopaedic knowledge on the subject of mills and gave advice to a wide range of individuals and organisations. This included the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, with whom he co-authored reports about Carminow Mill near Loe Bar (with Charles Johns) and the Town Mills in St Columb (with Eric Berry and Nigel Thomas). He also wrote numerous articles. Some appeared in the

Trevithick Journal, covering subjects such as gearing systems in Cornish grist mills, techniques in early water mills and mills in the Lower Gweek area.

He will be remembered by many for his work on the restoration of Poltesco Mill near Ruan Minor. A small two-storeyed water powered corn mill, it had fallen into disuse but the mill machinery had remained virtually complete.



Anthony took out a tenancy from the National Trust and, through the 1970s and 1980s, restored the mill to working order. He continued to maintain the property, the most southerly working mill in the whole of the United Kingdom, until his death.

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# **Kenedhel Gernewek**

