

The Cornish are Coming!

The first week in September sees two major events in Looe, Dehwelans, which means the homecoming in Cornish and the Gorseth.

Dehwelans is a weeklong celebration from 1st – 7th September of all things Cornish, with performances, walks, talks, lectures, trips out, dancing, music, local history and heritage. There will be events all around the town from a packed programme including; award winning Cornish films in the Masonic Hall sponsored by Barclay House Hotel to local produce tasting and musical drama performances in a large marquee on the Millpool. The town will welcome visitors from the worldwide Cornish diaspora keen to immerse themselves in Cornish culture and heritage and a chance to retrace their family ancestry. Many of the visitors from the USA, Australia and Canada are descendent of the Cornish miners who left their homeland at the end of the 1800's following the collapse of tin prices. These miners' skills were highly sought after around the World. The phrase goes, 'Find a hole in the ground and you'll find a Cornish man in it!'

Liskeard & Caradon Hill Tour

Looe valley Line

One of the day trips out is to Liskeard and Caradon Hill on Thursday 4th September, starting with a journey up the Looe Valley on the scenic Looe Valley Line railway accompanied by Blue Badge Guide Mark Camp. He will tell the story of the valley from the earlier canel transporting gravel and lime from the kilns at Sandplace to the later railway that not only brought tourists to Looe, but transported copper ore, iron ore, tin and granite from the mines on Caradon Hill to be exported to the world from the port of Looe.

Stuart House

Visitors will be greeted in Liskeard by the Worshipful Mayor of Liskeard, Councillor Anne Purdon, her councillors and the town crier Frank Beer and escorted to the historic Stuart House, a 16th century town house in the centre of town, which has been restored by Stuart House Trust as an arts and heritage centre. The house is used for exhibitions and sales of arts and crafts, for charity sales, meetings/seminars and other, heritage, community and cultural events. In August 1644, when the Civil War was raging, King Charles stayed in Stuart House before going back to Devon.

Town Museum

A short walk away is the town museum when visitors will have a chance to see artifacts and records from the ancient stannary town of Liskeard, first mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086. There will also be time for a walk around the town guided by local history experts and of course to explore the shops of the market town for souvenirs. Over a Cornish buffet lunch in the Public Hall, courtesy of Liskeard Town Council, guests will have a chance to view exhibitions about local engineers Joseph Thomas and Thomas Land and listen to the musical talents of Jonathan Delbridge who will play on the towns impressive grand piano.

Dissenters Chapel St Cleer

From Liskeard visitors will be taken to St. Cleer on the edge of Bodmin Moor to visit the Dissenters Chapel. The Chapel was built in 1864 for the use of Dissenters who were denied burial by the established church after a lifetime of nonconformity. The Parish Projects Group sought to restore the building and record as much of the burial records as possible on a recently launched website database.

www.thedissentersgeneralchapel.co.uk

St Cleer

St Cleer is a rural area with a history of settlement going back to the Bronze Age some 5000 years ago. In the early 19th Century the population was approximately 3000, but declined rapidly with the collapse of the mining industry. The main village area and the surrounding hamlets are in an Area of Great Landscape Value with the moorland areas being designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The area is also part of the World Heritage Site for Mining.

Minions & The Hurlers

From St Cleer the tour continues to Minions in the heart of the Caradon Hill World Heritage Site. Mining records show that over 650,000 tons of copper ore was mined within the district in little less than three decades. With so little pressure for redevelopment or re-use, sites within the Caradon Hill mining district have by and large, escaped clearance and demolition. Visitors can also stroll to the ancient Bronze Age stone temple known as The Hurlers, a group of standing stones. According to another legend, it is difficult to count the number of the Hurlers at Minions, but should you do so correctly, a misfortune will befall you! Experts will be accompanying the group to help unlock the stories and history.

Full day tour Departs Looe 9.17am Returns 4.30pm
£20 including lunch and train tickets
Weekly ticket holders free of charge

The full programme is available on a comprehensive website at www.dehwelanskernow.com or contact the co-ordinator Edwina Arkell on 01503 264160 email dehwelanslooe@btconnect.com

Gorseth Kernow

The open Gorseth is an annual event when the Cornish Bards gather to invite new Bards to join and to celebrate Cornish culture and identity. Particular regard is given to excellence in artistic endeavour, promotion of the Cornish language and people who have generally worked hard on behalf of Cornwall.

This year the gathering will be on Saturday 6th September, weather permitting, in the open, on Barbican Sports Field, East Looe at 12 noon or if the weather is inclement in Looe Community School.

Bards, following robing, will process to the Gorseth site and form a large circle, at the North-eastern point of which is a platform (The Rock) on which stand the Grand Bard, the Deputy Grand Bard, the Gorseth Secretary and delegates from the Welsh and Breton Gorseths.

The ceremony includes a symbolic call to the four corners of the Nation, made by the Horner and the ceremony of peace.

A dance by local children from Sheila's School of Dancing precedes the "Lady of Cornwall", Christie Phillips, who is escorted by the Sword Bearer across the circle, presenting a sheaf of flowers and corn to the Grand Bard, symbolising God's gifts to Mankind.

After the ceremony of the Sword the Grand Bard asks all to swear their loyalty to Cornwall. All the Bards then sing "Land of Our Fathers". The Cry of Peace, which preceded the opening of the Gorseth, is repeated before the Gorseth is declared closed.

For more information on Gorseth Kernow go to www.gorsethkernow.org.uk

