

## **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. As the phrase goes, 'Find a hole in the ground and you'll find a Cornish man in it!'

## **Tamar Valley Tour**

### **Tamar Valley Railway Line**

One of the day trips out on Tuesday 2nd September, is to The Tamar Valley, the river that forms the far eastern Cornish border with Devon. The day starts with a coach trip to Plymouth where visitors catch the scenic Tamar Valley Line to Calstock accompanied by local historian and train 'buff' John Snell. He will tell the story of one of England's loveliest country branch lines, a fourteen mile railway that skirts the edge of the magnificent River Tamar and its estuary before crossing the splendid Calstock viaduct joining Devon and Cornwall.

The journey is full of contrasts taking in views of the Royal Naval Dockyard in Plymouth and Brunel's famous Royal Albert Bridge over the Tamar, before crossing the Tavy viaduct into the quiet countryside of the Bere Peninsula. The line continues towards Gunnislake where remnants of the area's industrial past are visible, together with glimpses of a few slopes and orchards still cultivated by market gardeners.

### **Industrial past**

The Tamar Valley is probably best known for its recent industrial heritage, dating from the great mining boom in the mid 1800s when rich copper deposits were discovered. Other minerals mined in the Valley included lead, silver, manganese, tin and arsenic. In fact at the height of this boom, the Tamar Valley and Devon Great Consols was the richest copper mine in Europe with over one hundred mines.

The area is part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape (Cornish Mining) - declared a World Heritage Site, recognised as having cultural importance on a global level. The Tamar Valley landscape has been shaped by a long history of settlement and industry, and it retains a rich and diverse rural as well as industrial heritage. There is evidence of prehistoric settlement in the Stone and Bronze Age barrows in the Kit Hill and Hingston Down area, as well as a hill fort at Dunterton Castle.

### **Drawn to the Valley**

Alighting from the train in Calstock visitors can visit one of the many art galleries, Lime Kiln Gallery part the Drawn to the Valley project which brings together artists from across the Tamar Valley area, including Plymouth. Their aims are to promote art within the area for the benefit of both the public and the artists by putting on a series of exhibitions and an Open Studios event. [www.drawntothevalley.co.uk](http://www.drawntothevalley.co.uk)

### **Calstock Village and Quay**

There will also be a chance to explore the tangle of narrow lanes and hear about the history of Calstock Quay from its hey day as a thriving port, with presentations by Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team.

### **Calstock Church & Roman Fort**

Visitors will also have a chance to see and hear about a previously unknown Roman fort that has recently been found at Calstock, one of only a handful of sites giving evidence of Roman presence in the county, and the first found close to a silver mine. Chris Smart an archaeologist from the University of Exeter says the site, next to the Church may be evidence the Romans mined tin in the county. □The hill-top site where the first-century fort is in an area known to have been involved with medieval silver mining in the 13th and 14th centuries. □It is thought that the precious metal would then have been transported back to Italy where it would have been minted into coins for use within the empire.

### **Calstock Archive**

There will also be a chance to inspect the Calstock Parish archive and the stories of the people of the valley. One compelling story is that of the Cornish men that left the Valley for a new life in the new world on the Titanic only to be cruelly lost at sea.

### **Cotehele Quay**

After a locally sourced lunch, visitors will be taken to the beautiful and tranquil Cotehele Quay, below the woods that surround the medieval manor house of Cotehele, now owned by The National Trust. Unaltered since the last century, the stone and slate buildings form a fine setting for the restored Tamar barge Shamrock. This 57ft ketch-rigged vessel of 1899 carried various cargoes on the river and worked as a diving tender and salvage barge before being acquired by The National Trust in 1974. She is now co-owned by the National Maritime Museum who supervised her full restoration to sea-going condition. Visitors will be taken on a guided tour of the quayside Discovery Centre museum.

### **Kit Hill**

Before returning to Looe visitors will be transported by coach to Kit Hill, climbing to just under 1000 feet (334m) above sea. Kit Hill is the highest point of Hingston Down Ridge, within the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Kit Hill is situated between Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor. The abundant archaeological remains are a reminder of the metal and stone extractive industries, which once took place on the hill. Formerly owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, Kit Hill was given to the people of Cornwall in 1985 to celebrate the birth of Prince William. With its 400 acres (152 hectares) for public enjoyment, Kit Hill is an ideal place for a wide range of activities including bird watching, kite flying and walking. Dramatic views stretch across the Tamar Valley toward Dartmoor in the east and Plymouth and the sea to the south. At the summit, three viewing tables help you identify features as you view the surrounding countryside.

Visitors will be accompanied by experts who will help unlock the stories and history.

Full day tour Departs Looe 10.30am Returns 5.30pm

£20 including lunch, transport and train tickets

Weekly ticket holders free of charge

The full programme is available on a comprehensive website at

**[www.dehwelanskernow.com](http://www.dehwelanskernow.com)** or contact the co-ordinator Edwina Arkell on 01503 264160 email [dehwelanslooe@btconnect.com](mailto: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](http://www.gorsethkernow.org.uk)