

East Pool Mine

NEWS FROM
THE JOHN
HARRIS
SOCIETY

CELEBRATING
THE CORNISH
MINER, POET
& PREACHER

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Bardh

AUTUMN 2025

No. 77

CHAIRMAN'S *Ramblings*



ADRIAN MITCHELL

Welcome to our latest edition of the BARDH. It was great to see so many of you at our AGM back in March earlier this year.

It went very well and our President Pol Hodge's literary presentation 'Pagan Dumnonia to Christian Kernow' after the business section of the meeting was superb and enjoyable.

The Society has been out and about promoting the works of John Harris at the Threemilestone Trefoil Guild, Constantine History Group and also on a stall at the Celebration of Cornwall at Trevenon Church. On Saturday 21 September 2025 we are booked at Redruth Library for a display during the International Mining and Pasty Festival.

May I recommend you visit our superb website: www.johnharrissociety.org.uk for a John Harris biography, his poetry, historical information, photographs and a news-letter archive.

Do not miss out on our October Birthday events: Thursday 9th we are at the National Trust's East Pool and Agar mine workings, and also with a possible

visit to Robinsons Shaft at Heartlands on the cards. Sunday 12th the annual church service focusing on John Harris to take place at Troon Methodist Church at 10.30am where I shall lead a special John Harris-themed chapel worship. This is to be followed by a dinner at The Penventon Park Hotel, Redruth, at 1pm.

I leave you, until we meet again, to take a walk with these words from John Harris' poem, '*The Village Lane*'.

*O'er-shadowed, still retreat,
track trod by tuneful feet,
haunt of the swallow, robin's rich domain
the freehold of the wren,
the fairies chamber when the moon is fullest! Welcome, village lane.
Beneath some ancient trees,
shook by the sighing breeze,
a few roods past the last house and the mill, bubbles the village well where lads and lasses tell the hamlet's wonders when the day is still.*

Adrian

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Taylor's Shaft and pump house at East Pool Mine. Photo: Murgatroyd49. Licence: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0

John Harris birthday events 2025

Thursday 9 October 2.15 for 2.30pm:

A guided tour of the National Trust's East Pool and Agar Mine. Exclusively for JHS members. Entry free to those JHS members who are also members of the National Trust. Those who are not Trust members will be required to pay the standard entry fee. Meet at East Pool (Satnav TR15 3NH). Park on Morrisons' car park, far end.

Sunday 12 October

10.30am: Troon Methodist Church. A service celebrating the life of John Harris. Led by Adrian Mitchell – Chair of the JHS. No need to book. Early arrival is recommended to get a parking

space fairly close.

Sunday 12 October

12.30 pm arrival for 1pm: Penventon Park Hotel, Redruth. A two-course lunch in the Venetian Room. The cost of the meal is £28 per head. Payment (to the JHS) is required in advance, please. (Drinks can be ordered and paid for at the bar on the day).

There are two documents concerning the Birthday celebrations – a registration/booking form and a lunch menu on which you can select your choice of food and highlight any dietary requirements. Those of you online will receive both documents by email. If

you are not online, please find the documents inserted in this issue of Bardh.

You can make your payment direct to the John Harris Society bank account (details on the registration/booking form) or by cheque (payable to 'The John Harris Society'). If paying directly into the bank account, the preferable option, please use the reference: Birthday Lunch.

Completed forms and menu choices to be returned to JHS Secretary, Tony Langford by Saturday, 4 October.

Either by email to: tony46langford@gmail.com or by post to Tony Langford, St Hilary, South Downs, Redruth TR15 2NW.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription fee -
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NEWSLETTER

All articles for inclusion to:
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The passing of Derek Reynolds

Derek, a widower whose health had been failing for some time, sadly passed away in April and his funeral service took place at Kea Church on May 8, when Paul represented our Society.

At the service, Derek was said to have been an early member, and held

the offices of chairman, joint secretary and acting editor of the newsletter.

He produced a timeline of Harris' life and was active in getting the plaque at 84 Killigrew St, Falmouth, replaced with accurate information.

We offer our sympathy to his family. **PL**

An update from the treasurer

The AGM debated the issue of how to raise additional funds to cover increased costs, particularly in printing, postage, bank charges and the maintenance of the website. It was decided that the necessary funds were best raised by an across-the-board increase so that each member bears an even part of the load. Therefore, **from 1 January 2026**, the subscription will increase to **£15 PER MEMBER PER ANNUM**.

It would be greatly appreciated if payments can be made **during the first three months** of the new year since that is the period that is most demanding of our finances.

If you usually pay by Standing Order, please

amend your instruction to your bank. To save bank charges, payments can also be made direct to The John Harris Society, **Sort code 30-97-00, Account no. 00480676**. Please include your name as a reference. If that method proves inconvenient, cheques can be made payable to The John Harris Society and sent to Paul Langford, Durlston, Penance Lane, Lanner, Redruth TR16 5TL. If paying by PayPal using the following email address: pandglangford@gmail.com, please add 6% to your payment to cover the charge made by PayPal.

Many thanks for your ongoing support for the Society.

Paul



At the end of May the John Harris Society had a stall at a 'Celebration of Cornwall' event at Trevenson Church, Pool.

Organised by Trevenson Church, it celebrated and promoted Cornish culture and history and took place in the church, the church community hall and gardens.

A wide range of Cornish organisations had stalls, displays and gave talks. Throughout the day there was a feast of music with Illogan Sparnon Silver Band, the Red River Singers and Illogan Luggers. And there was an abundant range of Cornish refreshments, including pasties, jam, cream and splits, and saffron cake.

It was well attended

despite being an overcast, drizzly day with occasional bursts of sunshine.

The JHS stall, manned by committee members Pol, Adrian, Paul and Tony, had few sales. However, the team fielded many questions about John Harris and his work and complementary copies of *Bardh* were much in demand.

Trevenson Church organises various events but this was the first devoted to Cornish culture. The organisers were encouraged and hope to make the *Celebration of Cornwall* an annual event. The John Harris Society will certainly be keen to be involved again.

Tony Langford



Photos by
Adrian Mitchell.

Pagan Dumnonia to Christian Kernow

Troon Methodist Church hosted a short talk by Pol Hodge, President of The John Harris Society at the AGM on Saturday, 15 March, 2025. The title was *Pagan Dumnonia to Chris-*

tian Kernow and, as is often the case, the starting point is the brilliant poetry of John Harris:

St Nectan's Kieve from Luda - Lay of the Druids, 1868.

*A little river strange and clear
Beside the chapel flows:
Then suddenly adown the rocks
A waterfall it goes.
And much the music which it makes
From morn till pensive eve,
As it drops o'er mid fern and flower
Into the rocky Kieve.*

*Cornwallia boasts no fairer spot
In all her wide domain:
The very rocks are legend-mark'd
And rife with legend stain
The grasses bending o'er its brim,
The mosses shining round;
The winds with hymns of olden times
Make it enchanted ground.*

*And here the good St Nectan dwelt
In his religious cell;
Within his tower upon the rocks
He placed a silver bell.
Its solemn notes the sailor heard
Clear sounding down the glade,
And flowing o'er the salt sea wave;
Then cross'd himself, and pray'd.*

*The evening sun was sinking down
The crimson western sky,
When by the Kieve St Nectan lay
Upon his bed to die.*

*They brought his silver bell to him;
He rang it thrice, and sigh'd,
Then dropp'd in the crystal Kieve,
And closed his eyes and died.*

*Two ladies from a distant land,
In foreign garments dress'd,
The dead saint and his sacred store
Placed in an oaken chest
His solitary grave was dug
Within the river-bed,
And evermore the waters clear
Are murmuring o'er his head.*

*Within the chapel of the saint
These lonely sisters hide:
No fellowship had they without,
And here at last they died.
Of lofty parentage they seem'd,
And no one knew their name,
Or cross'd the threshold of their cell
To glean from whence they came.*

*A mystery hides their sleeping-place
In fair Glen Neot dell,
A-near the mossy waterfall
Where lies the silver bell.
Still mystic murmurs fill the glen,
And tremble on the air,
As from the holy hermitage
The nuns come forth to prayer.*

Hodge 2025 – Black =
a definite Children of
Brychan parish, shaded
= possible Children of
Brychan parish.



This poem raised a number of questions; What is a kieve? Who was St Nectan? Why did John Harris use “Cornwallia” for Cornwall? These were answered by the meeting!

Returning to the poem, a number of lines were investigated; “Two ladies from a distant land”, “These lonely sisters” and “Of lofty parentage”? All of these can be explained by reference to An Fleghe Breghan or in English The Children of Brychan.

Why was our hero, John

Harris, miner at Dorkoth/ Dolcoath and Sunday School teacher at Trewoon/Troon Methodist Chapel inspired to write of a far-off, isolated spot in Triggshire and about a saint of the Celtic Church?

The Brychanian Mission occurred c.480-520 CE and involved 24 saints, (12 male and 12 female), bringing the Christian faith to Cornwall.

We now know they gave us in Kernow/Cornwall:

- The Black and Gold,
- The Tamar as our border

with pagan Saxon areas,
• And the most precious legacy of all, of Christianity – the good news of Jesus Christ.

This is possibly the most significant event in Cornish history. The question left before the meeting was this – did John Harris – hard rock miner, Methodist preacher and Cornwall’s greatest English language poet – know more than we in today’s Cornwall about the Children of Brychan?

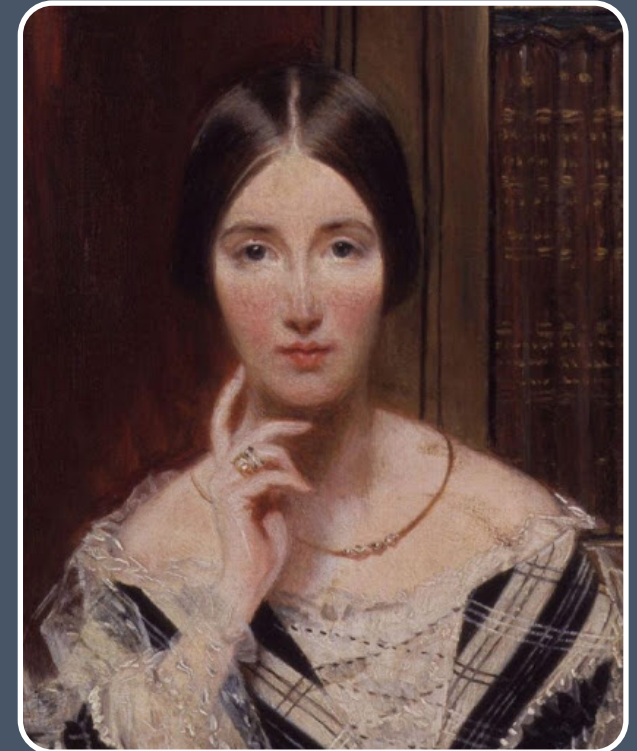
Pol Hodge

Do all the good you can...

Lesley Chandler

I love connections. Today we live in a world full of 'connectivity' which is fast becoming more disconnected and polarized and that troubles me.

Last year amongst other bits of research I was trying to connect some of John Harris's published poetry to the newspaper reports of Nigel Farage MP who had recently had his *Coutts* bank account closed because the bank felt that his beliefs and values did not align with theirs. *Coutts* for those readers who do not bank there and I am one, is one of the oldest private banks in the world. Its exclusive clients have been drawn from nobility, landed gentry, the royal family and the extremely wealthy. The connection to me was obvious in the person of Angela Burdett Coutts (1814-1906) later Baroness Angela Burdett Coutts. She inherited £1.8 million in 1837 (equivalent to £210,000,000 in 2023) making her one of the



wealthiest women in England. ABC as I refer to her, was to become perhaps the most generous of that rare but necessary breed of 19th century philanthropists and benefactors. Having inherited vast banking wealth and wanting to do some good with it, she donated and gifted sums of money to churches, education, charities and institutions with many

benefiting from that wealth, albeit often in small ways. Paul Newman refers to her cropping up as one of Harris's sponsors and indeed he dedicates *The Cruise of the Cutter* to her in the same way that Charles Dickens dedicated his *Martin Chuzzlewit* to her. She was a friend of Dickens and with him co-founded *Urania*, a home for young 'fallen' women. Previous



HOUSE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—MAGDALENS IN THE LAUNDRY

provision came in the form of Magdalen institutions such as the infamous laundries in Ireland. Until ABC and Dickens there was the Magdalen Hospital for the Reception of Penitent Prostitutes in Whitechapel. ABC with Dickens established a less harsh alternative which focused on rehabilitation and re-entry into society.

However, I wanted to look more closely at his Peace poems which are prolific. What were his reasons for writing them and what influences did he pick up in those years after the end of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars? These were epic world wars of their time with parallels to be made with today's superpowers. Wars require financing and loans can take decades, sometimes a century to be repaid. The British national debt peaked at £1 billion in 1815, more than 200% of GDP! That's just the money, then there's the men.

No part of the country was without its fallen women and fallen men throughout John's lifetime. The 1800s are synonymous with the growth of empire and industry in which the labouring

classes and the starving poor of Cornwall played their part. Poverty, homelessness and prostitution share an intrinsic connection. Legislation passed in the form of the Vagrancy Act in 1824 or to give its full title '*An Act for the Punishment of Idle and Disorderly Persons, and Rogues and Vagabonds, in that Part of Great Britain called England*' is self-explanatory. Still an active piece of legislation today, it reflects a punitive attitude towards street homelessness and begging. The 'fallen' of any sex could be incarcerated for up to a month and given hard labour. The 1800s are also synonymous with a string of wars and John will have witnessed limbless ex-soldiers plus widows and orphans having to beg. It wasn't only soldiers but his neighbours and friends who will have experienced hunger and high prices during the Cornish potato blight of the 1840s and the widespread food riots of 1847. Throughout his lifetime Britain was at war in Afghanistan, India, The Crimea and Africa. Each war would bring back evidence of its violence in the form of the physically and mentally

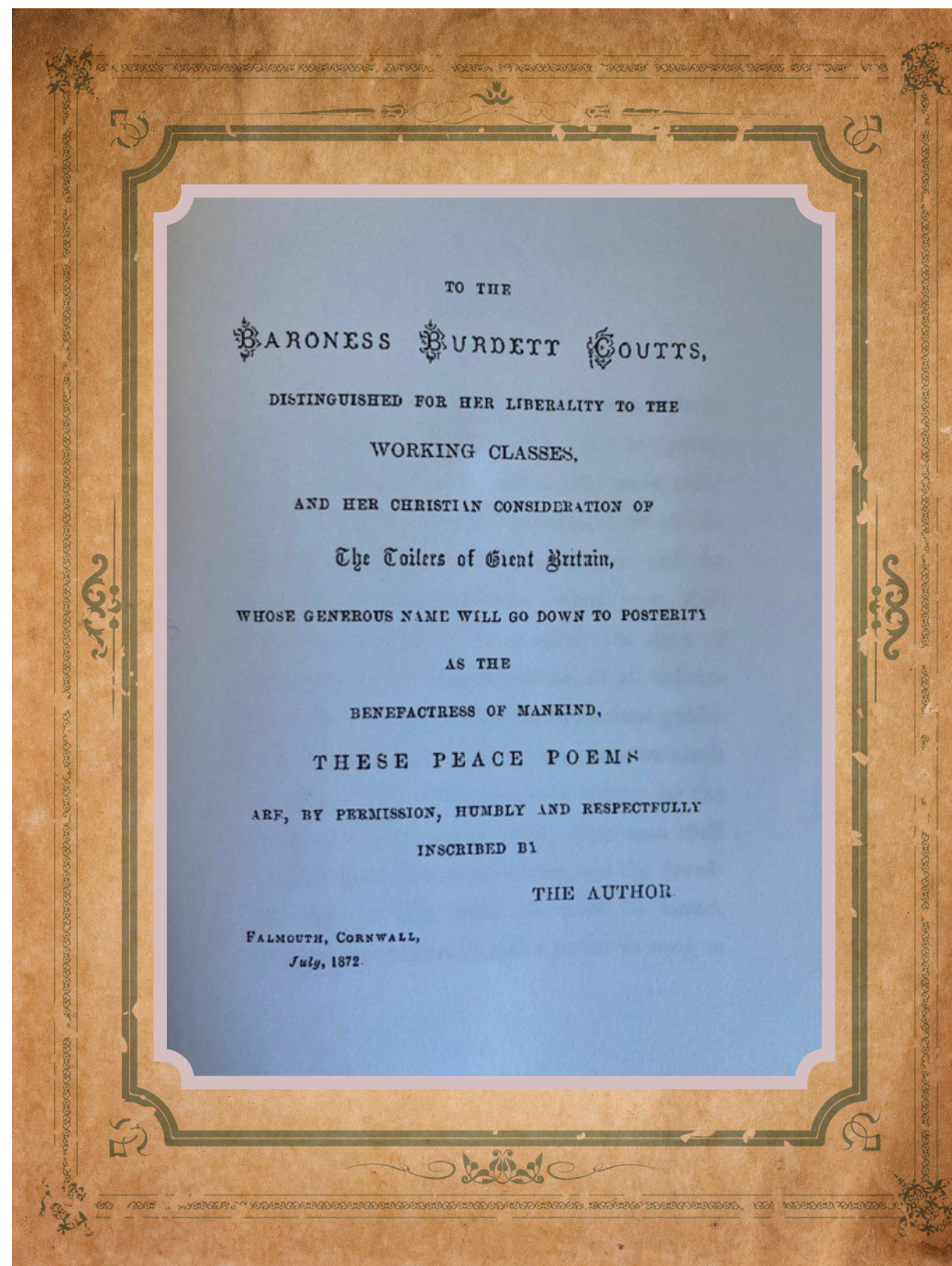
traumatized with little hope of a decent pension and secured healthcare let alone employment and a home. Even without war, in mining areas, life expectancy for several reasons had fallen dramatically. In St Just it had fallen to 26 in the 1840s and often up to half of all funerals were for the under-fives.

The negative effects on family life were reflected in his poems. In *Joan Jakes* we hear of the deaths of her husband and son reducing her to widowhood and childlessness...

*The war trumpet sounded
and at the shrill call,
My son rushed to battle, my
eldest, my all!
My husband has long been
engaged in the fray
And Fred and his father
both fell in one day*

In *The Orphans...*
*The moon went down in
silence and yet no father
came,
And day by day they waited
and still it was the same,
Alas! their soldier-parent
will never see them more
Down-trodden in the battle
with garments rolled in
gore.*

Please turn to p12



Continued from p10

In *The Lame School-master* who practised peace in the schoolroom without resorting to the cane, we see the legacy of non-violence being shared and copied...

*'Tis said by those who knew him that stripes were his disdain,
He never beat a pupil, he never used a cane.
Yet rich became his scholars from Wisdom's golden hoard
Why cannot wrongs be settled without the flashing sword?*

In *Willie and Meg* as Willie returns home to marry Meg he confides in being truly sickened by the killing of his fellow men in battle...
*"Oh Meg I've seen enough," said he, "in camp and tented field,
Where many a warrior slept in death, upon his broken shield.
'Tis wrong, 'tis wrong: I'll fight no more, nor follow in the van,
Nor lift my arm in battle-work against my fellow man."*

On the idea that enlisting can solve hunger and provide solutions we read in *Alf Andrews* of Alf's father definitely not wishing to wear a soldier's uniform...

*"I'd rather live where Peace flowers grow, apart from human strife
And feebly aid my fellow-men along the road of life,
Than wear a soldier's crimson badge, to gain the hero's name,
In polished brass and printed books: away with such a fame!"*

Peace pioneers throughout history have seldom been popular. Peace can be seen as a form of reality avoidance at times when national security is required. But how we process the trauma of conflict and war as well as everyday village conflicts, was well scrutinised by John Harris. His record of that trauma is documented in his poetry which although simple with its rhymes offers some basic moral advice about using violence to solve a conflict. On not reacting, not retaliating in

Ben Forest and Jack...

*And think we of One, without blemish or stain,
Who when they reviled Him, reviled not again.
They were friends ever after, Ben Forest and Jack,
And it all hinged on this - HE NEVER STRUCK BACK*

Some time after the move to Falmouth to become a scripture reader and visitor to the sick in their homes, *The Cruise of the Cutter and Other Peace Poems* was published in 1872. These poems containing such characters as Agnes Arrow, Dolly Duff, Will Ward and Ned Norris, he dedicated to ABC. They're undoubtedly the people he knew. In 1873 the Falmouth Drill Hall (now the Phoenix Cinema) a stone's throw from John's home, was built as a training centre for the 3rd Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Rifle Volunteers. He will have seen many a young man pass through those doors and I suspect he will have sighed sadly at such a bold military presence on the streets close to his home.

Two artists from St Ives



John Tremberth

Julius Olsson (1864-1942), the son of an English mother and Swedish father, was a leading figure in the St Ives School of Artists who,

from about 1890 to 1912, despite being essentially self-taught, was an influential teacher of young artists from Britain and overseas.

He was mainly a maritime artist in the late impressionist style. He

was also a keen yachtsman in the summer and was actively engaged in civic life as a St Ives town councillor and Justice of the Peace. His house, known as St Eia, overlooked St Ives Harbour and Carbis





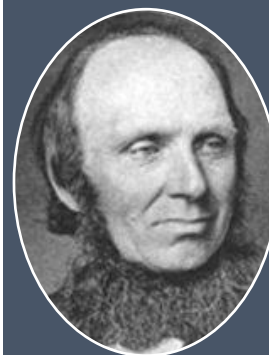
Bay. Above is a photo of one of his seascapes entitled *'The Squall'*, formerly belonging to my late brother Michael. His paintings of the sea illuminated by moonlight are particularly acclaimed.

During summer holidays in the early 1960s my brother used to visit the studio of another St Ives artist, namely Bryan Pearce (1929-2007). It so happens that our mother attended Penzance County School for Girls at the same time as Bryan's

mother, Mary (May) Warmington, herself an amateur painter. She devoted her life to the promotion of the work of her son, who suffered from a rare inherited condition, phenylketonuria, that seriously retarded his ability to learn and communicate.

After attending schools for pupils with special needs, he began drawing and painting in 1953 and was a student at the St Ives School of Painting under Leonard Fuller from 1954 to 1957. However, Fuller soon realised that

Bryan could not derive any benefit from formal academic training, as he possessed a unique natural talent of his own – he is considered to be one of the UK's leading naïve artists of the 20th century. Most of his paintings are set in St Ives, where he lived and worked all his life, and the surrounding Penwith area. With their bright colours, bold outlines and precision they possess an unique innocence and serenity. The above print featuring St Ives also belonged to my brother.



JOHN HARRIS
1820-1884

the miner the poet the preacher

John Harris was born in 1820 at Six Chimneys on Bolenowe Carn, near Camborne, the eldest of 11 children. Largely self-educated - he started school when he was six or seven years old, before finishing at the age of nine - John had an insatiable appetite for reading from his early years.

On his ninth birthday he started work, briefly as a ploughboy, then for a tin-streamer operating in Forest Moor.

When he was 13, John went to work underground at Dolcoath. He was to ply this arduous occupation for 24 years, seeing the famous mine pass from copper to tin.

Poetry, or verse-making as he called it, had been part of John's life since his first attempts at rhyme at school when he was just eight years old.

Whatever he was doing, verses were forming in his mind and he scribbled these down whenever and wherever and on whatever he could. He used the clean side of cast off labelled tea wrappers, and when no paper was available, would scratch his poems on slate, using a sharp pointed nail.

In his mining days his miner's 'hard' hat was sometimes used for this purpose. When no ink was available, he used blackberry juice.

He fitted his writing into a busy life that, apart from his work and his family responsibilities, included being a Methodist lay preacher and a Sunday School teacher.

John Harris left Dolcoath in 1857 to take up an appointment as a Scripture Reader at Falmouth, a post which he threw himself into with enthusiasm.

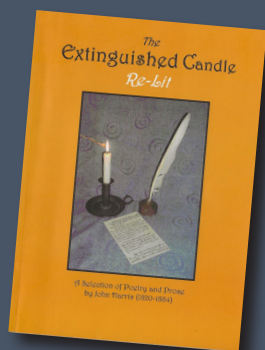
He continued writing poetry, and began writing peace tracts and became a Quaker.

John Harris died in 1884 and lies buried in Treslothan Churchyard.

Tony Langford

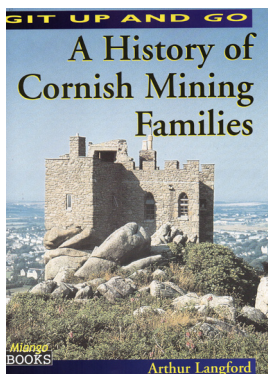
The John Harris Society aims to publish this newsletter twice a year, free to members. We welcome articles from you - anything connected with Cornwall, John Harris, poetry, including other poets and Cornish life.

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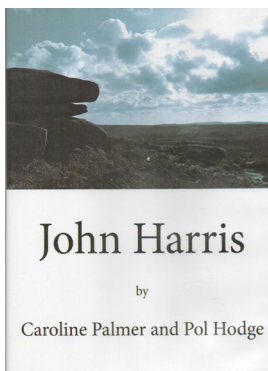


The Extinguished Candle Re-Lit is a large selection of poetry and prose by Harris, published in 2009 by The John Harris Society.

PRICE: £5



Published in 2002, this book by Arthur Langford, a great nephew of the poet, catalogues the lives of Harris' forebears from 1743 and his siblings. **PRICE: £7**



Created in 2004 by Caroline Palmer & Pol Hodge, this DVD was filmed by Leo Phillips, of Cornwall Media Resource, on Carn Brea and at Cornish Engines in Pool. Copper and Tin, adapted from a Harris poem by Sue Farmer, was sung by Kontekh Karrek Community.

PRICE: £5

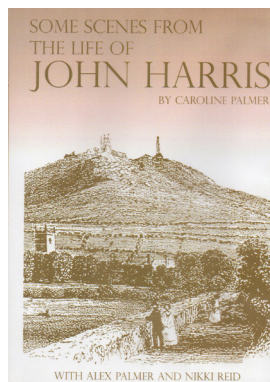
**MAWLA, NANCEKUE
AND MORE ABOUT
PORTHTOWAN AND TOWAN CROSS**



CAROLINE PALMER

Caroline Palmer's book, published by Pen and Ink, covers topics from farming to family life, from mining to Methodism and much else.

PRICE: £9.99



The creation of Caroline Palmer, this DVD was filmed locally and takes in various aspects of the poet's life. The film won Best Documentary at Buxton Film Festival in 2011 and was shown at the Cornwall Film Festival in the same year.

PRICE: £5