Skians 2020

Programme

10am **Welcome: Chair**

10.10 **Joshua Butler**
A Digitised Middle Cornish Corpus: A Step Toward a New Grammar of Middle Cornish

10.50 **Delyth Prys**
Digital on-line dictionary and corpus for Cornish

11.30 **Dr Ken George**
'Beg' and 'Believe': two Cornish verbs

12.10 **Oliver Padel**
Newly recovered entries in the Bodmin Manumissions

13.30 **Welcome: Chair**

13.40 **Peter Jenkin**
Ple'th eth <th>? Assibilation of Middle Cornish word-medial voiceless dental fricative in Later Cornish?

14.00 **Kensa Broadhurst**
How does the decline and revival of Irish in Northern Ireland compare with the decline and revival of Cornish, and what successes from Northern Ireland can the Cornish language community adapt in its language policies?

14.40 **Viktorija Blazheska**
From a Relic of the Past to a Cornerstone of Identity: Attitudes towards Cornish

15.30 **Siarl Ferdinand**
Next Step to Accomplish the Revitalisation of Cornish: Introduction of the Language in Education

16.10 **Final remarks / discussion**

Skians 2020

_____

Abstracts in order of presentation

Joshua Butler: La Trobe University, Australia

A Digitised Middle Cornish Corpus – a Step Toward a New Grammar of Middle Cornish

The corpus of Middle Cornish is currently scattered between various libraries and collections. The physical manuscripts are locked away and difficult to reach, particularly in a post-COVID world. Both images and digital copies of the manuscripts vary in both quality and availability. This paper presents the initial attempt at the creation of an annotated corpus for the Middle Cornish texts in their manuscript spellings. The Middle Cornish manuscripts (initially comprising of the Miracle plays, Ordinalia cycle, and Passion Poem) were imported into SIL's Language Explorer 8 program and then analysed to create this corpus. Future iterations of this process look to include the remaining Middle Cornish texts.

Middle Cornish scholarship currently does not have sufficient tools specific to itself. On one hand, modern grammars need not provide resources for Middle Cornish specific grammatical constructions. On the other, the last published grammar specific to the Middle Cornish period (Llawlyfr Cernyweg Canol) predates the wealth of scholarship over the past century. It is hoped that this new digitised corpus will provide a stable footing for a new grammar specific to the Middle Cornish period.

Prof. Delyth Prys: Canolfan Bedwar, Bangor University

Digital on-line dictionary and corpus for Cornish

Use of language technologies is important for revitalizing minoritized languages today. A language will not thrive in the modern age unless it has at least some digital resources including an electronic dictionary, corpus, spell checker and part of speech tagger. However, these resources are expensive to create and require both linguistic and computational expertise to deliver.

A concerted effort at Bangor University over the last twenty years has developed many of these resources for Welsh. A chance meeting with a Cornish colleague at a Celtic Wikimedia event led to a collaboration with Cornwall Council and the Akademi Kernewek, where some of the tools and platforms used to create the Welsh resources were adapted and further developed for Cornish.

This led first to the publication of the on-line, interactive Gerlyver Kernewek (https://www.cornishdictionary.org.uk/). Here the data is held in the Maes T dictionary writing system, which has a friendly on-line interface enabling a dispersed team of editors to continue develop it. Secondly, it has led to the first on-line searchable parallel text Cornish/English corpus, compiled from Cornwall Council's in-house translation memory.

This paper will demonstrate both products and explore how they can lead to the development of further digital resources for Cornish.

Authors: Delyth Prys d.prys@bangor.ac.uk Dewi Bryn Jones d.b.jones@bangor.ac.uk

Dr Ken George: Kesva an Taves Kernewek (Cornish Language Board)

'Beg' and 'Believe': two Cornish verbs

Four different forms of the verbal nouns meaning 'to beg' and 'to believe' are found in traditional Cornish.

The reasons for this, and the accompanying verbal paradigms, are examined in detail. The significance for the revived language is considered.

Oliver Padel: Formerly Reader in Cornish and Celtic at the University of Cambridge

Newly recovered entries in the Bodmin Manumissions

Recent digital work on the manuscript of the Bodmin Manumissions in the British Library has made it possible to recover the texts (often still only partial) of about 18 further entries. I will examine the content of these texts and say something about what further information they provide about Cornish personal names and the Manumissions overall.

Peter Jenkin

Ple'th eth <th>? Assibilation of Middle Cornish word-medial voiceless dental fricative in Later Cornish?

Assibilation of Middle Cornish word-medial /θ/ <th> voiceless dental fricative in Later Cornish is found most consistently where /θ/ is in a front-vowel-fronted consonant cluster. Several cases are examined: severally and jointly, no steady rule of LC assibilation is found.

Kensa Broadhurst: Institute of Cornish Studies

How does the decline and revival of Irish in Northern Ireland compare with the decline and revival of Cornish, and what successes from Northern Ireland can the Cornish language community adapt in its language policies?

In Northern Ireland, the Irish language faced similar difficulties in terms of usage, status and acceptance within the wider society to those of the Cornish language in Cornwall. Both languages have been reduced to the point of near extinction due to the move from monolingualism, through bilingualism to an almost universal use of English within their geographical areas. Their respective language communities have, with varying degrees of success, attempted to revive their particular languages in terms of both usage and status within their respective societies. By examining the decline, revival and current position of Irish in Northern Ireland, we can apply this knowledge to factors affecting the decline of Cornish in Cornwall during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and by drawing on the experiences of the Northern Irish minority language communities, look for ways in which the continuing Cornish language revival can be most positively achieved and outline a future strategy for the Cornish language based on the factors which have achieved most success in Northern Ireland.

Viktorija Blazheska: University of Würzburg

From a Relic of the Past to a Cornerstone of Identity: Attitudes towards Cornish

The recognition of Cornish as a minority language by the UK government in 2002 (Ferdinand, 2013, p. 215) has placed the question of its nation-building power for the Cornish people back into the spotlight.

The study presented in this paper is intended as a follow-up to an attitudinal study conducted by the Cornish Language Partnership (Maga Kernow) in 2013. It attempts to tap into the way Cornish people perceive the Cornish language as a part of their identity, using a questionnaire aimed at residents of Cornwall. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media and contained general statements about Cornish, about the visibility of the language, and about efforts done to preserve the language, which were rated by the participants using Likert scales. There were 73 complete questionnaires submitted between the 12th and 31st December 2019.

This paper presents and discusses the quantitative results, with special attention to the two independent variables: the age of the participants and their fluency in Cornish. The answers to the open-ended questions form a small qualitative sub-chapter of their own and possibly provide impulse for improvement and further research. The discussion of the limitations of the study is followed by a conclusion and outlook.

Siarl Ferdinand: University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter

Next Step to Accomplish the Revitalisation of Cornish: Introduction of the Language in Education

It is undeniable that the Cornish language has become a more evident characteristic of Cornwall, especially since 2002. There is, however, much work to do. One of the most notable weaknesses of the Dasserghians is its lack of education through the medium of Cornish in schools. Education is not only essential in language maintenance, but it is also the domain where most European have learnt a second language. This preliminary paper on the subject attempts to extend the discussion over Cornish language education by putting the spotlight on the strategies that may be applied for a successful introduction of the language in this vital domain. It uses the results of a survey in which 367 participants from Cornwall and Scilly shared their views about the language and its promotion. Moreover, it also explores the adaptation and adoption of strategies already in use in Trebiñuko Enklabea, a region in Spain, where, despite the lack of institutional support by the Castilian authorities, Basque has been successfully revived after being extinguished in the early 1800s. An appropriate use of Cornish in education may result in the necessary difference between a second language mostly used by adults and the native language of many children.