

## **Cornish a post – modern language.**

by Mike Tresidder

Although in a recently published paper Dave Sayers and Zsuzsanna Renkó-Michelsén talked of the Cornish revival in terms of a once dead language undergoing ‘...a remarkable transformation’ they, nevertheless, reiterate the question asked by Berresford- Ellis in 1974 as to whether the revival movement:

...can learn from the consistent historical disinterest in working class  
Cornish speakers ... and spread sustainably beyond middle class enthusiasts...

This paper argues that Cornish, liberated from the strictures of modernism, has the opportunity to become viable and confident enough to assert itself in public. Challenging what we have been told by ‘others’ about Cornish history, adopting an attitude that refuses to ‘decide’ or ‘resolve’ Cornish based on the demands of how a language ‘should be’ etc. frees it up to become a more attractive proposition. Recasting Cornish as a vibrant post-modern language more than dispenses with the charge that it an invented language and refocuses the mind as to where future efforts should be focussed.

Embracing the occasional unstable signifier, inventing a new vocabulary to catch up with the times, using an idiom that is not paralleled in its development to English and being a little more relaxed about grammar does not mean Cornish is like Klingon – but it might just appeal to young people!