



Rosweyth Hwithrans Kernewek
Cornish Language Research Network

The 1877 Pentreath Commemorations and the Proto-Kernewek Revival

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Abstract

The revival of the Cornish language in the early twentieth century tends to be associated with such key events as the creation of Kowethas Kelto-Kernuack in 1901 and Henry Jenner's Handbook of the Cornish Language in 1904. But as with many historical processes there is a need to adopt a longer time frame and consider the foundations of the so-called Revival (or Reawakening as Jenner referred to). This preliminary paper on the subject attempts to extend the discussion over Cornish language history by putting the spotlight on the commemoration of the centenary of Dolly Pentreath's death in 1877. It uses newspaper accounts of the time to highlight the significance of this event in relation to perspectives on the Cornish language at the time and the attempt by early pioneers like the Rev. W.S. Lach-Szyrma to ensure that Cornish survived and remained a 'living language' in the subsequent century.