



Rosweyth Hwithrans Kernewek
Cornish Language Research Network

The Cornish Perfect and Pluperfect

Nicholas WILLIAMS
University College Dublin

Abstract

In his handbook *Cornish for All Nance* teaches that Cornish has a separate pluperfect tense and further that the perfect in Cornish is expressed by prefixing the preterite with the leniting particle *re*. While neither of these assertions is untrue, they give a false impression of Middle Cornish. First, the pluperfect is confined to the earliest Middle Cornish. Second, the perfective particle *re* is obsolete by the sixteenth century. Moreover at all periods the perfect of intransitive verbs in particular is most commonly expressed not with *re* + preterite but with *bos* 'to be' followed by the verbal adjective. My talk will attempt by giving examples to elucidate these points for revivalists.