

In this Centenary year for St Ives Old Cornwall, we celebrated the commencement of the Cornwall Old Cornwall Societies which began, here in St Ives, 100 years ago from the original suggestion of a group of like-minded people including Robert Morton Nance and Henry Jenner who were concerned that, with the passing of time, the customs, traditions, language and way of life of the people of Cornwall would be 'lost'. It is to them we owe thanks for their idea and the Federation motto of "gather ye the fragments which are left that nothing be lost".



Trevor Smitheram receiving the manuscript from Brian Stevens. Photo: Paul Phillips

Dave Brotherton, Dee Brotherton, Marion Smith and Ivor Fankell. Photo: Paul Phillips.



In recognition of the 100 years since its inception, a celebratory meeting was arranged in St Ives Infant's School, on 27th January 2020 which Old Cornwall Societies throughout Cornwall were invited to attend; we were delighted that so many in the Federation took the time to attend on a rather wet and cold evening. Margaret and Brian Stevens had prepared a varied evening of activities interspersed with readings by members from the original Minute Books and records kept by St Ives Old Cornwall. A Cornish 'droll' - Duffy, originally written by R. M. Nance in 1920 was narrated by Marion Smith and re-enacted by Ivor Frankell and Dee and Dave Brotherton. Stuart Guppy read extracts from an original St Ives Guide Book. Dave & Dee sang two songs,- one in Cornish called 'Kan Kernow Dyvres', 'The Song of a Cornish Exile', with a tune written by them but using the words of R. M. Nance and 'Hevva' composed by them. Margaret Stevens introduced her childhood doll and an image of her Mother's 'Joannie' doll which was carved from a broken oar. Knitting Fish, family treasures, were also demonstrated. Paul Turner spoke about an original painting of the back yard of 4 Fore Street, where he lived as a child. Mary Quick, dialect recorder for St Ives, read a story and a poem of her own composition. Linda Peters gave a detailed history of her cottage and how it has been in her family home for over 100 years. Brian Stevens introduced two founder members - Richard J Noall and Robert Morton Nance. Brian returned a manuscript book which R. J. Noall had borrowed from Hayle in 1930 to Trevor Smitheram of Hayle Old Cornwall. He brought to the attention of the audience



Mary Quick



Stuart Guppy

Williams' Cornish Dictionary which Morton Nance had used and annotated. Efforts are being made by the Royal Institution of Cornwall - Courtney Library & Archive to conserve this and contributions would be appreciated. Sylvia Rule and Doreen Barber spoke, with illustrations, about their childhoods in St. Erth & Halsetown respectively. David Thomas showed a very old 'scantle' which is a tool used to measure the slates when constructing a scantle slate roof. To conclude the evening Karin Easton, President of the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies thanked St Ives for providing such varied programme, which was very much in keeping with the original meetings of the Society, and for the traditional Cornish refreshments which were provided to conclude the evening.

St Ives banner. Made by Win Cothey

