

Cornish Nation

No. 78

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Michael Bunney standing for Police Commissioner

MK says no to Westminster
power-grab

Tributes to Donald Rawe,
James Whetter & Pedyr Prior

Cornish news and views

MK says no to the Westminster “power-grab”

Mebyon Kernow members recently gathered for a policy forum and one of the issues for discussion was Brexit. Significant concern was expressed at how Theresa May’s Government is failing to address, or even acknowledge, Cornwall’s distinct needs as it develops its approach to leaving the European Union.

Obviously, the UK Government is refusing to guarantee future levels of investment into Cornwall to make up for the loss of EU structural funding, and it has done little or nothing to assess the specific economic and other impacts of Brexit on communities to the west of the Tamar.

Journalists at the *Cornish Guardian* contacted the Department for Exiting the European Union for comment and were told that Government is focussed on “securing a good deal for the whole of the UK, including Cornwall.”

The fact that they had nothing specific to say about Cornwall really does show that we are not even on their radar.

At the policy forum, consideration was also given to what many politicians from Scotland and Wales have described as the Westminster “power-grab,” with almost all powers “repatriated” from the EU likely to be centralised in London.

Unsurprisingly, MK has challenged the UK Government and all London-based political parties to link any “repatriation” of powers to a new democratic settlement for the whole of the United Kingdom, including meaningful devolution to Cornwall through the creation of a National Assembly.

The spokesman from the Department for Exiting the EU shamefully dodged this question by stating this is “not an issue” for them.

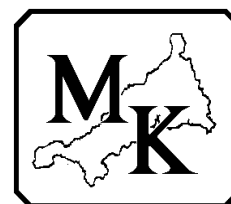
Make no mistake, the UK – even taking into account the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales – is an over-centralised state, dominated by London and the South East of England.

It is therefore great news that Mebyon Kernow has just launched an updated version of its policy document “Towards a National Assembly of Cornwall.”

The document sets out the compelling case that many more decisions about Cornwall should be taken in Cornwall, with the National Assembly able to control the majority of the public sector and a wide range of public bodies, as well as the structures of local government.

As MK has stated, time and time again, there is a desperate need for a respectful and wide-ranging debate about the future governance of the whole of the UK, with proper consideration given to our call for a National Assembly.

The new policy document can be downloaded from the MK website, or a paper copy can be supplied on request.



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Cornish Nation 78

Cornish Nation is a magazine which is distributed free to all members of Mebyon Kernow.

Membership of MK costs only £15.00 a year (£8.00 unwaged or £20.00 for a family).

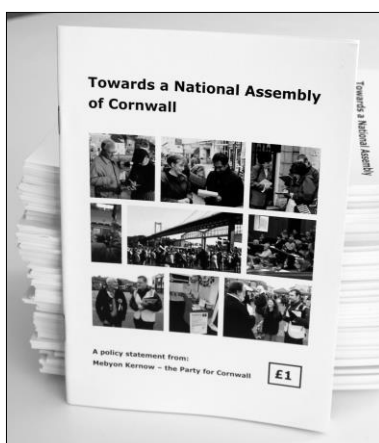
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Standing to be Commissioner

Mebyon Kernow has selected Cllr Michael Bunney as its candidate for the 2020 Police and Crime Commissioner election

The highlight of MK's policy forum on 22nd June was the well-received announcement that Cllr Michael Bunney was MK's candidate to be the next Police and Crime Commissioner.

A greatly-respected campaigner for a better deal for Cornwall, he lives in Gorran and serves on St Goran Parish Council. Michael is particularly well-known for helping out with a very large number of local groups and their associated community activities. He works as a teacher and is deputy head of an academy, working with vulnerable children.

“Cornwall’s Police need decent levels of funding, not mergers.”

In accepting the nomination, Michael has pledged to campaign energetically across the whole of Cornwall.

He said: “I will campaign passionately for a better deal for Cornish policing and Cornwall’s community services. Our police officers and PCSOs do a fantastic job, but they need better resources and more back up, at night time especially.

“We also need social care and the youth services to be well resourced, so they can function effectively alongside the police and education system. I have worked for twenty years with teenagers and I want to focus especially on supporting vulnerable families and tackling youth crime.”

He has also been at the forefront of opposition to plans to merge the existing “Devon and Cornwall” Police Force, with that of Dorset.

“Cornwall’s Police need decent levels of funding, not mergers. I oppose the proposed merger with Dorset Police Force and, on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, I will continue to support the creation of a Cornish Constabulary,” he said.

“I am also concerned that the consultation has not been genuine and the decision to merge has already been made.



“I was particularly worried by the biased nature of the online consultation. The Police and Crime Commissioner claims that she ‘is on the fence’ about the proposed merger but has been actively promoting material claiming ‘seven reasons to merge’ on social media and elsewhere. She also produced a video which really did lack balance.

“I would appeal to people in Cornwall to be very public about their opposition to the merger and to say no to this centralisation in our thousands

“History has shown us that whenever public services are centralised, Cornwall and its communities lose out – and we cannot allow that to happen to our local policing. Centralisation takes services away from our communities.”

It has been widely reported that the merger has been proposed as a cost saving measure, because of the level of cuts from central government. Michael is keen to remind everyone about the broken promises from the Conservative Party.

This includes the statement from the-then shadow Home Secretary Nick Grayling, which was featured on many thousands of election leaflets in Cornwall: “It is dishonest to claim that we will cut police officer numbers ... our plans to cut bureaucracy and red tape mean that there would be more police on the street, fighting crime and protecting local communities.”

An Kyttrin

Milyow war'n kyttrin hag ev ow kul kas nerthyk rag kist-tykk y'n Nyveryans 2021

Arghasans adhiworth Argh Gonisogethel Konsel Kernow a res dhe Gwedhen Ow chons dhe pareusi aga Kyttrin Kist-Tykk prederus, neb a gennerthas milyow a dus dhe omjunnya gans pennrewlow Kevambos Framweyth.

Lonchys orth Hwel Gever dhe dhiweth a vis Meurth, pan hwrug an Den-jyn meurghys dalleth y "Tro Dasserghyans" a-hes Kernow ha rannow erel Ruwvaneth Unys, an kyttrin eth dhe lies hwarvos ha le y'ga mysk Krestir, Dydh Trevudhek ha Fer Krowswynn.

Rann dhe les an kaskyrgh dhe fastya kist-tykk Kernewek yn Nyveryans 2021, lu a dus a dremenys dres an kyttrin hag 95 kansrann a skoodhyas aswonvos Kernewek.

Yn unn kewsyl orth an media dhe'n dalleth an tro, yn meth Will Coleman, Penrewler Gwedhen Ow: "Pyth a wra styrya Kernewekter ragos? Yn 2014, Governans an Myghternes a aswonnyas an Kernowyon avel 'minoryta kenedhlek' mes pyth yw styr poran a henna?

"Yth ni re gemmeras kyttrin dewleur, settyes gans diwotti blasa korev a-woles ha kannatti kernewek a-wartha. An Kyttrin Kist-Tykk yw le rag dadhel ygor ha diskudhans kowethek a honanieth Kernewek ..."

Neb towlen awenek gans kwys rag oll ha tremengummys a gatchas an dybyansow a vilyow a den ha danvon negys kler dhe governans kresel hag Sodhva Nyverel Kenethlek.

Ow kewsyl rag Mebyon Kernow, yn meth Dick Cole, lywyth an Parti: "Pubhuni kevrennyas gans an Kyttrin y kodh bos keslowenhes rag aga ober marthys, yn unn skoodhya oll an kaskyrghoryon usi ow herdhya rag an kist-tykk.

"An Sodhva Nyverel Kenethlek a gewsis adro 'gwellheans kuntellyans data' mes henna a godh euthek ber a'n charj res dhe'n werin Kernow gans Governans RU herwydh an Kevambos Framweyth hag an gwiryow res dhe'n minoryta kenedhlek erel kepar ha'n Albanyon ha Kembroyon."



Funding from Cornwall's Council's Cultural Fund enabled Golden Tree Productions to develop their thought-provoking Tick Box Bus, which has encouraged thousands of people to engage with the principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

Launched at Geevor Mine at the end of March, when the much-loved Man Engine began its "Resurrection Tour" across Cornwall and other parts of the United Kingdom, the bus visited many events and locations including Heartlands, Trevithick Day and the Royal Cornwall Show.

A key part of the campaign to secure a Cornish tickbox on the 2021 census, a host of people have passed through the bus and an overwhelming 95% of them backed Cornish recognition.

Speaking to the media at the start of the tour, Will Coleman, director of Golden Tree, said: "What does Cornishness mean to you? In 2014, HM Government recognised the Cornish as a 'national minority,' but what zackly does that mean?

"So we've nabbed a double decker bus, kitted her out with a beer-tasting pub downstairs and a Cornish embassy upstairs. The Tick Box Bus is a space for open discussion and friendly exploration of Cornish identity ..."

A creative project, also involving an inclusive citizenship quiz and a passport, it certainly captured the imagination of thousands of people and sent a clear message to central government and the Office for National Statistics.

Speaking on behalf of Mebyon Kernow, Party Leader Cllr Dick Cole said: "Everyone associated with the Bus should be congratulated for their fantastic work, backing up all those campaigners pushing for a tickbox.

"The Office of National Statistics has made statements about 'improving data collection,' but this still falls ridiculously short of the UK Government's commitment to Cornish people as set out in the Framework Convention, and the rights afforded to other national minorities such as the Scots and Welsh."



THE
CORNISH EMBASSY

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE OFFICE OF NATIONAL MINORITY STATISTICS

Tabern
Ticky

Tabern
Ticky

Tabern
Ticky

ST AUGUSTINE'S
KEENOW

RESURRECTION
TOUR

Cornish news and views

Progressive alliance?

At the last General Election, the Conservative Party secured all six Cornish seats but with less than half of the popular vote, and this has prompted a range of activists to promote a progressive alliance.



This included a public meeting in West Cornwall at which MK was represented by Cllr Mike Tresidder, who made the case for a distinctly Cornish approach to politics.

Stadium for Cornwall

Councillors on the unitary authority voted by 69 votes to 41 to allocate £3 million of funding towards the project to deliver a “Stadium for Cornwall,” promoted by the Cornish Pirates rugby team, Truro City football team and Truro and Penwith College. All four Mebyon Kernow councillors backed the investment.



Speaking after the debate, MK Leader Cllr Dick Cole said: “I was pleased to support the investment and, for me, the starting point for the debate was a simple one. It is shameful Cornwall does not have the same sporting facilities and venues that other parts of the United Kingdom take for granted. In addition,

the £3 million from Cornwall Council would lead to spend in the local economy of £8 million from local partners and a further £3 million from the UK Government.

“I also felt that many opponents of the proposal downplayed the importance of the role of Truro and Penwith College, which is already a significant local centre for elite sport. A stadium on their doorstep will represent a fantastic advance for educational opportunities and for local youngsters with aspirations to do well in sport.” (17th April 2018)

Action needed at Derriford

A senior Mebyon Kernow councillor has urged Cornwall Council’s head of health to intervene urgently into the Accident and Emergency crisis at Derriford Hospital, after a resident had to wait seven hours to see a doctor following a sporting injury.



Cllr Andrew Long wrote to Cllr Rob Rotchell following the incident, when a footballer suffered a triple fracture to his cheek bone but was told no ambulance was available. When transported to Derriford in a private car, he then faced a seven hour wait to see a doctor in the department.

“It is simply not acceptable that injured members of the public have to wait this long to be seen by a doctor. It is clear there is a crisis growing at Derriford and the overworked staff there, who provide an incredible level of dedication, are fighting a losing battle against restricted funding which could put people’s lives at risk. To have to wait for seven hours in severe pain before even seeing a doctor is

not something that is acceptable in the 21st century,” said Cllr Long, who represents Callington division.

“There is clearly a massive problem in both the hospital and with the South West Ambulance Trust as this is the second time in two months that an ambulance has been called and not turned up. When I asked the service why – they simply said ‘we have no ambulances that are not on emergencies.’ Even more worrying, when I asked if this was regular for a Saturday evening, the exhausted staff nurse said: ‘It is like this every night now!’ This cannot continue. It is not acceptable that the 160,000 Cornish residents are given a second class service due to government inability to fund the service properly.” (21st May 2018)

Call for planning reforms

In its response to a consultation on a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework, MK challenged the UK Government to “go back to the drawing board” and rethink its whole approach to planning. The Party for Cornwall also called for Cornish control over all aspects of planning and planning policy through a National Assembly.

The MK representation hit out at the so-called “presumption in favour of sustainable development,” which has led to much damaging development. Indeed, a MK spokesperson pointed out that the “NPPF still stated the ‘presumption’ should be ‘sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change. But surely, is not rapid change, as the term suggests, inherently unsustainable?”

MK also challenged how the UK Government has undermined the provision of genuine affordable housing, saying: “The document continues to include a definition of ‘starter home’ with a sale price of up to £250,000, promoted for families with a ‘household income’ of up to ‘£80,000 a year.’ This is frankly ridiculous, especially for an area like Cornwall where 44% of households have total annual earnings below £20,000.”

In addition, MK hit out at how the NPPF was silent on the issue of second homes, which is a key problem that excludes local people from the housing market and leaves many coastal villages as little more than havens for holiday makers. (21st May 2018)

The future of the NHS

On 5th July 2018, as the National Health Service celebrated its seventieth birthday, MK challenged all political parties “to come together to develop a truly progressive taxation system, that raises sufficient resource to provide vital public services, including the NHS, with big business and the well-off paying their fair share.”

In a statement, Party Leader Cllr Dick Cole said: “Over the last few years, the NHS has been a permanent fixture in the news. It has not all been good news, with concerns about the lack of hospital beds in numerous areas, inappropriate pressure on junior doctors, the pressing need to better link health care with social care and, not least, the ongoing NHS funding crisis.

“Political arguments abound and it has been widely welcomed that the Prime Minister has pledged to increase annual funding for the NHS to £135 billion by 2023-24, a £20 billion increase on the present year’s budget. But even the head of the Government’s own National Audit Office has stated that much more money is needed.

Cllr Cole added: “It is frankly not possible to overstate the significance of the NHS and how, over the last seventy years, universal healthcare has transformed the lives of millions and millions of people.

70
YEARS
OF THE NHS
1948 - 2018

“The fundamental principles behind the new health service were clear. It would be ‘available to all’ and ‘financed entirely from taxation,’ meaning that ‘people pay into it according to their means’ – and so must it remain. Looking forward, there is a desperate need to build a political consensus about how the National Health Service can continue to serve the people of the United Kingdom into the future – and that means progressive taxation that prioritises people, communities and public services.” (5th July 2018).

It can also be reported that MK has formed a Health Panel, which is reviewing existing policy and is aiming to come forward with new ideas to improve the Cornish NHS.

HIRETH

This November marks the centenary of the end of the First World War – a terrible conflict in which over 16 million lives were lost. An important anniversary, it is being marked in many different ways and *Cornish Nation* is pleased to report that an exciting new play will be performed at St Just Miners’ Chapel between 9th and 17th November.



Written by Ed Rowe, the play is titled *Hireth*, a Cornish word meaning a “longing for home.” It is directed by Simon Harvey and features a community chorus with music from Seth Lakeman.

This epic new production tells the untold story of “Cornwall’s forgotten war heroes” and the impact they had on the First World War. The promotional material certainly gives a tantalising glimpse of what to expect.

1914. West Cornwall. Harry Elton is starting a new life below the ground mining for tin. Across the channel, a Great War rages.

When the British Army arrive with an unexpected offer, Harry and his friends swap the dirty, dark and dangerous tunnels of Geevor for the deadly under-ground warzone beneath the Western Front.

“You battle everyday with nature. You fight to drag minerals from the ground. You’re already fighters. You’re already warriors. It’s time for you to lend those skills to the war effort.”

Mebyon Kernow at the EFA

Mael Garrec and Jonathon Kitto represented MK at the recent EFA General Assembly in Bavaria (see left), which was attended by members of progressive nationalist and regionalist political parties from across Europe.



Donald Rawe

Remembering a “courageous, relentless and life-long champion of Cornish distinctiveness”

A giant of the post-war Cornish revival, Donald Rawe passed away in June at the age of 87. There has been many tributes, which included a very telling one from the *Western Morning News*. It said: “Donald will rightly be remembered as a talented and prolific playwright, novelist, poet and publisher,” adding that “perhaps more than that, he should be remembered as a courageous, relentless and life-long champion of Cornish distinctiveness.”

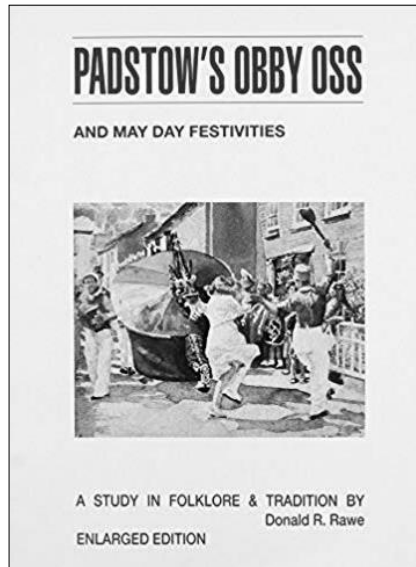
His first novel was published by Jonathan Cape in 1956. Titled *Looking for Love in a Great City*, Donald had used the pen name Daniel Trevoise, but sadly the book did not sell well after a savage review in the Times for which the newspaper later apologised.

A disappointed Donald chose to emigrate to Australia to become a teacher, but returned to Cornwall when the school in which he was working burned down. This brought him back to work in the family business, a gentleman’s out-fitters, and he threw himself into all aspects of the Cornish revival – both political and cultural.

A leading member of Mebyon Kernow in the 1960s, he was part of the MK team which started contesting local elections in his home town of Padstow at that time. He himself served as a councillor and latterly was the editor of MK’s *Cornish Nation* magazine from 1976 to 1978.

But his greatest love was literature and when he became a bard of Gorsedh Kernow in 1970, he took the name Scryfer Lanwednoc (writer of Padstow). He founded Lodenek Press through which he published a wonderful array books on Cornish topics.

As well as key texts such as E W F Tomlin’s *In Search of St Piran*, Catherine Rachel John’s *The Saints of Cornwall* and Hugh McDiarmid’s epic poem *Cornish Heroic Song to Valda Trevlyn*, Donald also published a number of his own works such as *Prospect of Cornwall*, *Padstow’s Obby Oss and May Day Festivities*, *Traditional Cornish Stories and Rhymes*, *the Mermaid of Padstow* and *Spargo’s Confession: A Novel of Cornwall 1810-1822*.



He was also the driving force behind the Cornish Literary Guild, which he chaired for many years and was still in harness at the time of his death. In 2016, it was particularly fitting that he won the Cornish Literary Guild Salver at the Holyer an Gof book awards for his novel *Geraint: Last of the Arthurians* (see below photograph).

He was involved with a wide range of organisations, which included the St Piran Trust and he was a founding and long-term member of the Cornwall Heritage Trust.

Looking back at his life, his good friend Bert Biscoe remembers: “Donald was a literary man. He read poetry carefully, fruitfully and he published judiciously. He has left us with a body of literature, a library of books, a theatre full of drama, and a conscience mapped in poems.

“He was the very best of nationalists, protesting by creating, arguing with books and indefatigable in his energy, intellectual enquiry and inner fire.

“Kernow has lost one of the founding fathers of its modern incarnation: we must treasure the canon of Lodenek Press – and mourn the loss of a steadfast and cherished friend.”

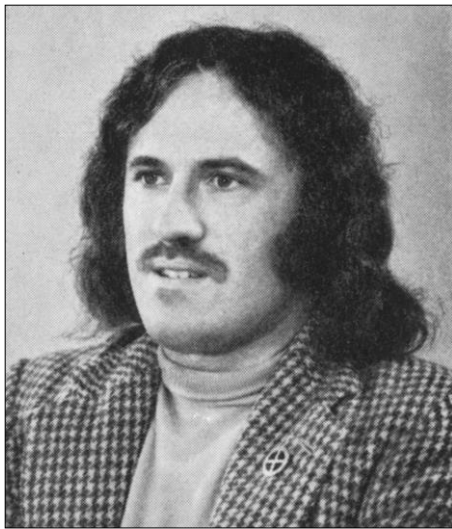
At this sad time, our thoughts are with his widow Helen, his children from a previous marriage, Clem and Melanie, as well as his four grandchildren Josh, Becky, Molly and Pippa.



James Whetter

Looking back on the life of a passionate Cornishman, who headed the Cornish Nationalist Party for four decades

Renowned Cornish nationalist and historian, Dr James Whetter, died at the end of February at the age of 82. A prominent member of Mebyon Kernow in the early 1970s, he was the Chairman of the Cornish Nationalist Party for some forty years.



Born into an old Cornish family at Gorran, James was educated at St Austell Grammar School and then Birmingham University. He went on to complete his PhD with the London School of Economics, focusing on the economic history of Cornwall in medieval times, which provided the grounding for him to become a prolific writer.

He also became a bard of Gorsedh Kernow in 1966, taking the name Dygemysker (analyst)

James joined Mebyon Kernow in the late 1960s and rose to the position of Party Vice-Chairman at the start of the following decade, editing the party magazine *Cornish Nation* from 1970 to 1975, and produced a number of other publications including *The Celtic Background of Kernow*.

He also twice fought the parliamentary seat of Truro for Mebyon Kernow in 1974, but he did not always see eye-to-eye with other prominent members of the Party. He left in 1975 following a failed and somewhat fractious attempt to be secure the leadership of the organisation and formed the Cornish Nationalist Party.



He served as the Chairman of the new Party from its inception until this present decade, and fought a number of elections between 1979 and 1985. In the 1979 General Election, he again contested the Truro parliamentary seat before fighting North Cornwall four years later. In addition to a number of council elections, he stood for the European Parliament in 1984 as a Cornish and European Federalist candidate.

Remembering his contribution to Cornish politics, fellow activist and historian Bernard Deacon has noted that even though the CNP did not make political headway “this should not obscure the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s he was an inspiration to many of the younger generation of Cornish activists.”

He said: “James combined a deep love and knowledge of his homeland with historical research. His *Cornwall in the 17th Century; an Economic History of Kernow*, published in 1974, raised eyebrows at the time among the stuffier English academic establishment, with its explicit use of the word Kernow. Mentioning Kernow at that time, like waving St Piran’s flag, was viewed in some quarters as deeply offensive and subversive. But for others of us, this forthright claim to nationhood was an intrepid example to follow.”

In more recent years, James prioritised his historic research and published more than twenty books, while producing the magazine *An Baner Kernewek*, which he launched in 1975, four times a year. His publications covered topics ranging from Cornwall in the 13th century, histories of Falmouth and Penryn’s Glasney College, to the Bodrugan family and his local Gorran area.

In 1991, he set up the Roseland Institute in Gorran as a centre for Cornish Studies, and he continued to be a prominent member of the St Goran Old Cornwall Society. He was also at the heart of the Silvanus Trevelyan Society and led the Friends of Glasney College, working for over a decade to raise funds for an excavation at this important medieval site.

Paying tribute, Michael Bunney, chairman of St Goran Parish History Society said: “James was an exemplary Cornish historian and his research on Gorran and the surrounding area was unequalled. He was a real inspiration to me as a boy in Gorran and encouraged me to become interested in Cornish politics and history. He will be very much missed in the parish.”

Our thoughts are with his two daughters, Etyld and Talwyn, and four grandchildren: Ralph, Greta, Dudley and Gabriel.

Pedyr Prior

Celebrating “a thinker and a doer,” a “force of nature,” and a “passionate powerful brilliant soul”

An extremely influential figure in Cornish politics for more than forty years, Pedyr Prior passed away in June after a short illness. He was 65. Active in Mebyon Kernow for some fifteen years, he served the Party in numerous roles including that of Chairman for one year. In more recent times, he had been a prominent activist within the Cornwall Labour Party, which he recently chaired for four years.

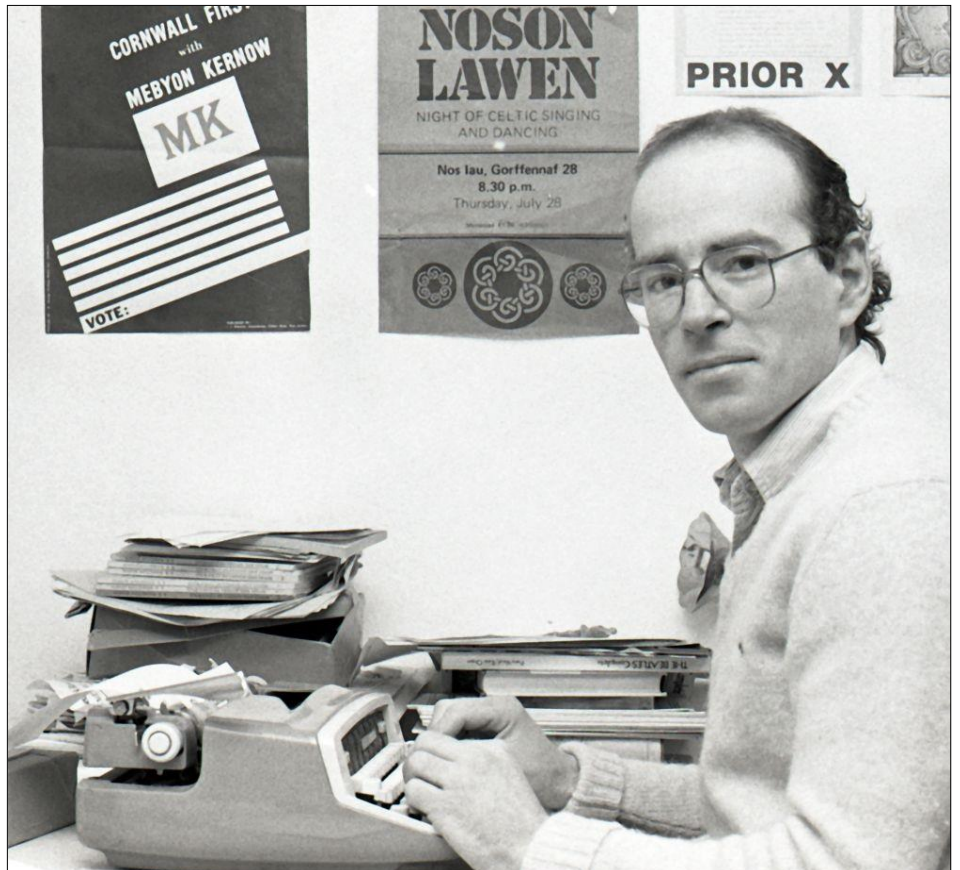
Remembering Pedyr as “both a thinker and a doer,” former Mebyon Kernow councillor Colin Lawry recalls: “His commitment as a Cornish political activist crossed several organisations, but the values remained consistent. There were so many campaign and elections, but one of my fondest memories of campaigning in the early 1980s is of Pedyr driving a yellow Triumph Herald with me attempting to sound convincing on a loudspeaker looking for votes for MK. As a Party we owe a debt of gratitude to many people, but prominent on that list is Pedyr Prior.”

Colleagues in the Labour Party have meanwhile described him as a “passionate, powerful and brilliant soul,” who was a “force of nature,” while another recalled him as “great son of Cornwall.”

Pedyr first came to prominence in the Cornish movement in February 1976 as a member of the recently-formed Cornish Nationalist Party, when he was selected as its candidate for St Ives parliamentary constituency. He made headlines one month later, publicly standing down in favour of the Mebyon Kernow candidate for the seat.

Pedyr also served MK for two spells as National Secretary and was elected Party Chairman in 1985 – when the above photograph was taken. He also co-edited *Cornish Nation* magazine in the late 1970s.

As a politician he was a dedicated left-of-centre campaigner for social justice and was one of four members who, in 1981, formed the Cowethas 1913 group within the Party. Named after the unsuccessful strike of clay workers in 1913, it was founded on the three principles of autonomy, socialism and ecology.



The values behind the group underpinned so much of Pedyr’s approach to MK politics, in which he sought to argue that the “true national liberation for Cornwall” needed a “social revolution to bring the commanding heights of the economy under the control of the people of Cornwall.”

Pedyr was one of MK’s most committed election campaigners as candidate, agent, leafletter and canvasser. In total, he stood in ten principal authority elections between 1977 and 1989, in the towns of St Ives and Porthleven. He served on Helston Town Council for a number of years and fought the St Ives parliamentary constituency in 1983.

In addition to his work for MK, he was a member of the Celtic League and edited *Carn*, the organisation’s quarterly journal. Pedyr was also prominent in the anti-poll tax movement of 1990 and it is understood that he helped organise the first protest march against the tax outside Scotland.

In more recent years, he has continued to push for a Cornish Assembly through the Cornish Constitutional Convention and was chairman of the group at the time of his death. And ever the campaigner, he was the Labour candidate in a by-election for a seat on St. Ives Town Council, which took place just weeks before his death.

Our thoughts are with his wife Mary at this sad time.

The above photograph of Pedyr Prior, as featured in cornishmemory.com, has been reproduced courtesy of Paul Yockney. We would also like to thank the following for photographs used in this magazine: Natasha Carthew, Cllr Dick Cole, Niall Curry, European Free Alliance, Gorsedh Kernow and Edward Rowe.

All Rivers Run Free

Cornish Nation welcomes the publication of the first adult novel from talented writer *Natasha Carthew*

Praise for Natasha Carthew's debut novel for adults has been extensive. *Bookbag* has described the book as a "compelling read from a considerable talent" adding that the "raw and wild powers of *All Rivers Run Free* will sweep you away," while it has also been summed up as "remarkable ... furious, fragile and courageous" (Tor Udall). Natasha herself has been commended for having a "Cormac McCarthy-esque ear for dialogue and an eye for the mystical narrative of the natural world."

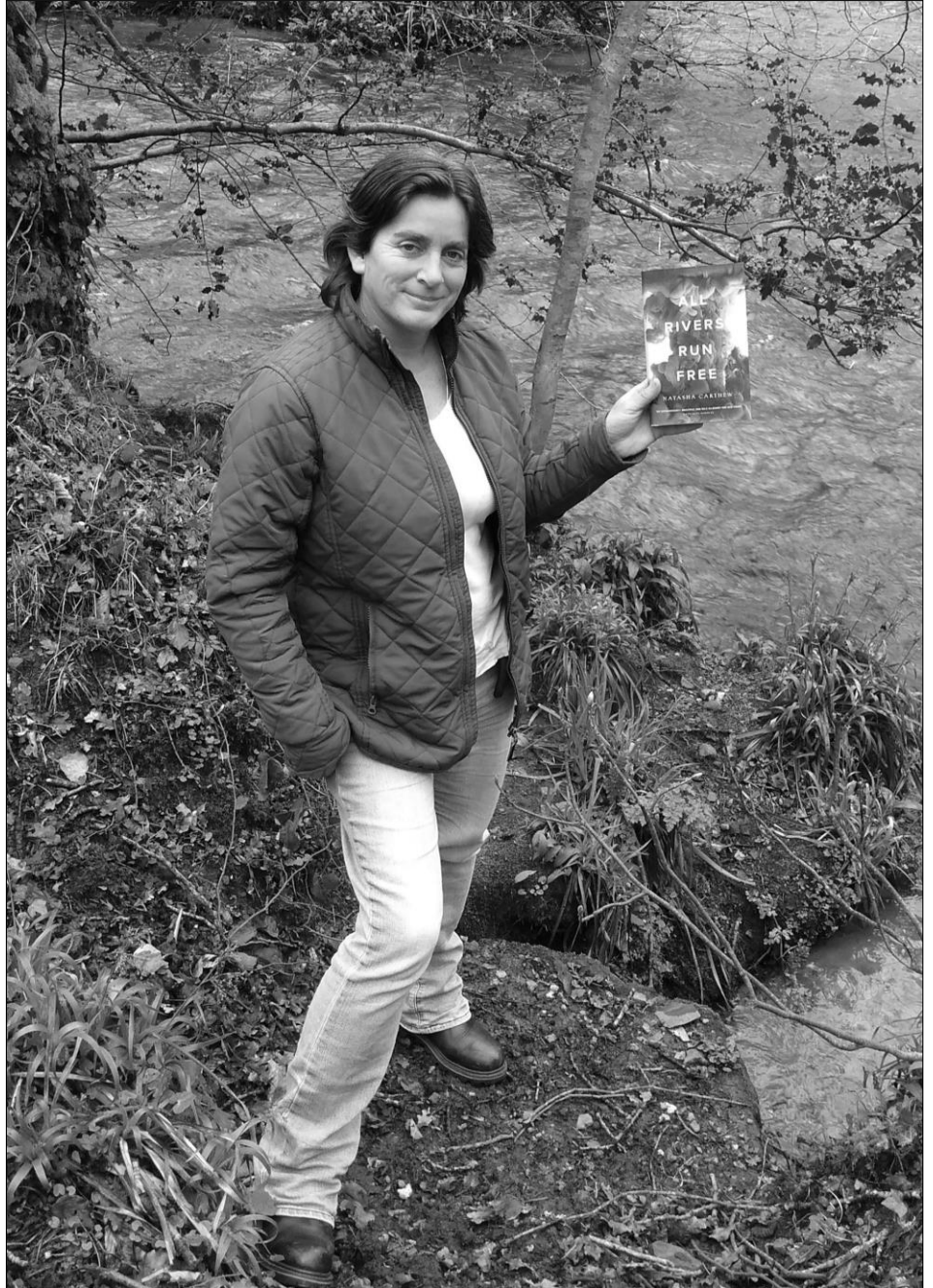
A resident of South East Cornwall, Natasha's first novel *Winter Damage* was for younger readers and was shortlisted for several awards including the Branford Boase Award in 2014. Her second book *The Light That Gets Lost*, also for children, received much critical support with Toby Clements of the *Daily Telegraph* even describing her prose as having "a startling ferocity."

All Rivers Run Free has been summarised as the tale of a young woman called Ia Pendilly in a near-future dystopian Cornwall, who finds a girl washed ashore, which interweaves issues of mental health, resilience, motherhood and marginalisation.

Interviewed for www.queerist.com, Natasha herself said that it was a "conscious decision to have marginalisation as a central topic," adding that "as a writer from a marginalised background; gay, working class and an ethnic minority (Cornish) it is important to me to write truthfully and compassionately."

"Folk who are banished from society for whatever reason is at the core of all my writing. I'm not interested in the norm, the average; writing about disadvantage, mental illness, deprivation, that's really where my writing is at. I love characters that have something to say, have complex personalities and are driven against all odds to find a way through the dark no matter what."

In her own words, the author states that the story is "about the harsh reality of rural poverty and social deprivation set against the beautiful Cornish landscape."



"It's an empathy driven story about grief, guilt and isolation, a story that says something important about the human condition. With Ia I wanted to create a character that the reader could root for from the start, a woman who despite living in a lonely, abusive relationship, finds pleasure in small things and never gives up hope despite a lifetime of adversity."

"She is a woman stuck in stasis, a woman who has lost family in the past and through her unborn babies has lost her future family; she sees no way out so she creates an alternative."

All Rivers Run Free is published by Riverrun and available in local bookshops.

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