

Eyth Bew

A Living Language

Dolly Pentreath, benen Gernooak a reeg clappia an Kernooak, a verwys en vlethan zitack cans try igans ha zitack. Meth dean drova an dewetha clappier teithyack an Kernooak a ve. Buz na reeg an tavaz merwall pereeg merwall an venen ma. Rerol a glappiaz an tavaz. William Bodinar o poscader bohodgack, a screffaz en Kernooak drell pemp dean orol et e dreav clappia an Kernooak. Leeaz dean orol a ra a cuthvas an peath a riganz clowaz carra contrevagadgow Dolly Pentreath. An benenez ma a oya gorrib Dolly tha Sows periga goofen urtans ell Dolly goath cowz an Sowsnack. Dolly a serraz ha lavaral en Kernooak nagew hye zawk ha rag sertan hye a ell clappia an Sowsnack carra pub dean orol. Hye a thowethaz e gorrib gen e breas an Sows, urt e greia cronack an hager due.

William Bodinar a verwys en vlethan zitack cans pager igans ha puzwarthack. Metessen nab teeze a glappia an Kernooak whathe bis an vlethan itack cans. Ca creeg an eyth merwall nena dean a ell clappia an Kernooak arta lebben, rag teeze an dasvewaz en cansblethan ma ha mowns urt e glappia arta en Kernow. Che a ell boaz clappier an Kernooak aweeth mar menta. Ma leeaz dean urt e thesky en Kernow hag en tellyrryow erel aweeth carra Ostralya.

Translation

Dolly Pentreath, a Cornishwoman who spoke Cornish fluently, died in 1777. It was said that she was the last traditional speaker of Cornish ever. However, the language did not die out when this woman passed away. There were others who spoke the language fluently. William Bodinar, who was a poor fisherman, wrote in Cornish that five other people in his village spoke Cornish. There were probably many more who understood Cornish when they heard it, such as the neighbours of Dolly Pentreath. These women understood Dolly's answer to an Englishman, when he asked them whether old Dolly knew any English. Dolly got angry and said in Cornish that she was not stupid and could speak English as well as anyone else. She finished her answer with her opinion of the Englishman, calling him an ugly toad.

William Bodinar died in 1794. Perhaps some people still spoke Cornish fluently up to 1800. Although the language died at that time, one can speak Cornish again now because people have revived it in this century and speak it again in Cornwall. You too can be a Cornish speaker if you wish. There are people who teach it in Cornwall, and in other places too, such as Australia.

Vocabulary

Notes about this list of vocabulary

1. as in all Celtic languages, the first letter of the word often changes, or mutates, to another letter in certain grammatical circumstances. The letters almost always mutate in regular patterns;
2. (f) means the noun is feminine. All other nouns are masculine;
3. verbs are presented here in the form of infinitives, for example, boaz, 'to be'. Exceptions are irregular verbal forms and others which need clarification;
4. the order of the vocabulary follows the order of occurrence of the words in the story.

If you have trouble printing this vocabulary listing print [this page](#).

Cornish	English	Cornish	English
benen (f)	woman	riga	he/she did
Kernooak	Cornish	goofen urt	to ask
reeg	did	urtans	(at) them
clappia	to speak fluently, to chatter	ell	can
an	the	coath	old
an Kernooak	Cornish (language)	cowz	to speak
verwys	died	an Sowsnack	English (language)
merwall	to die	serry	to get angry, to anger
en	in (the)	lavaral	to say
blethan (f)	year	nagew hye	(that) she is not
zitack	seventeen	zawk	dull, stupid
cans	hundred	rag sertan	of course, certainly
try igans	sixty	pub	every
ha	and	orol	else, other
meth	says, said	dowethe	to last
dean	man, one, person	e	her
dr(e)	that	gen	with
ova	he/she was	breas	opinion
an dewetha	the last	urt e greia	calling him
clappier	speaker	cronack due	toad
teithyack	traditional	hager	ugly
buz	but, however	pager igans	eighty
tavaz	language, tongue	puzwarthack	fourteen
pe	when	metessen	perhaps
an ... ma	this/these	nab	some
glappiaz	spoke fluently	teeze	people, men
rerol	others	whathe	still, yet
o	was/were	bis	until
poscader	fisherman	itack	eighteen
bohodgack	poor	ca	although
screffa	to write	creeg	did
drell	dre + ell	eyth	language
ell	can	nena	then, at that time

pemp	five	arta	again
et	in	lebben	now
e	his	rag	for, because
treav (f)	town, village	an	him, it
e	it, there	dasvewa	to revive
oya	knew	cansblethan	century
leeaz	many	mowns	they are
dean	man, person	urt e glappia	speaking it
orol	other	Kernow (f)	Cornwall
ra	will	che	you (one person)
guthvas	understand, knew	aweeth	too, also
an peath	what	mar menta	if you want/wish
riganz	they did	ma	there is/are
clowaz	to hear	leeaz	many
carra	like, such as	urt e thesky	teaching it
contrevagadgow	women neighbours	hag	and (before consonant)
benenez	women	tellyrryow	places
gorrub	answer	erel	other (plural)
than	to the	Ostralya (f)	Australia
Sows	Englishman		

[Return to Story List](#)

For questions concerning Cornish, contact: cornish@bbmedia.com.au

Introduction	Stories	Site Coordinator	History	English Home
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in Kernowek	en francais	auf Deutsch	in italiano	Home
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