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Kernewek yn adhyskans formel/ Cornish in Formal Education

Abstract

The Cornish language is currently successfully taught through adult education and a correspondence course but has a limited position within formal and compulsory educational settings. The principal studies into the use of Cornish within education are MacKinnon (2000) and Sayers et al (2018), however, these studies do not consider the most recent developments within the teaching of Cornish and are written from an outsider's perspective. What needs to occur for the language to gain a greater presence in schools, further and higher education? This paper, written from the perspective of an insider from the language community, discusses the current position of the language, and issues for the language community to consider in both the immediate and longer-term future.

Kernewek¹:

Amkan an paper ma yw dhe vires orth presens a-lemmyn Kernewek yn sedhesow adhyskansek formel. Wortiwedh ev a dheskrif maters dhe brederi y'n termyn a dheu, ha desempis, ha war an diwedh, yn y mysk dhe byth eus res rag ynkressya y lo kyn yn skolyow hag adhyskans pella hag ughella. Studhyansow kyns istori an yeth yn adhyskans, a gomprenhend yn arbennek henna dhe MacKinnon,² rag an Sodhva Wovernans an Soth West, ha Sayers hag erel rag Kresen Hwithrans Europek war Liesyethieth hag Adhyskans Yethow.³ Ferdinand re eksamnyas breusow poblek war studh an yeth yn adhyskans y'n kynsa kansvledhen warn ugens, ha Konsel Kernow a askorr ha tolow stratejek pypmp-bledhen hag oberansek bledhynnyek an dhew.⁴ An paper ma a breder istori, le a-lemmyn hag amkanow rag an yeth Kernewek yn termyn a dheu yn adhyskans formel, yn y mysk provians kors Pennskol nowydh.

Dyskans Kernewek dhe fleghes kyns-skol a dhallethas pan vagas teyluyow certain omvyskys gans movyans an yeth aga fleghes dhe gewsel Kernewek hepken y'n chi. Byttegyns, nyns esa momentom a-ji dhe fondyans adhyskansek rag skoodhya an tybyansow

¹ Rag dadhel voy avonsyans an ragdresow nowydh yn adhyskans skolyow kynsa mires orth: Kensa Broadhurst, 'Cronnack an hager dhu' Sign of a flourishing language? Efforts to Advance Cornish by the Cornish Language Community in the COVID-19 Pandemic.' *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 40: 2021, (March 2023).

Kensa Broadhurst, Forthcoming, "Cornish: Can an Indigenous Language become a Fixture in the Local Primary Curriculum?" in *'Other' Voices in Education – (Re)stor(y)ing Stories: Stories as an Analytical Tool*, ed. C. Blyth, (Singapore: Springer Nature).

² Ken MacKinnon, *Cornish Language Study*, (Government Office for the South-West, 2000).

³ Dave Sayers, Merryn Davies-Deacon, and Sarah Croome, *The Cornish Language in Education in the UK*. (Mercator: European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning, 2018).

⁴ Siarl Ferdinand, *Introducing Cornish in Education*,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344464261_Introducing_Cornish_in_education/ (Skians Conference, online, 2020) [accessed 30th August 2021].

ma. Y'n vledhen mil naw kans nownsek ha tri ugens, an kowethas Dalleth a veu fondys rag skoodhya tybyansow a'n par na keffrys ha'n teylu neb a veu godhvedhys dhe devi aga fleghes yn fordh dhiwyethek yn pols na. Y'n vledhen mil naw kans ha peswar ugens lyver termyn fleghes, Len ha Lyw, a veu dyllys.⁵ Wortiwedh, Movyans Skolyow Meythrin a fondyas an Skol dy-Sadorn Kernewek orth Kollji Kernow yn Poll y'n vledhen diw vil deg. Homm a brovi esedhogow dy'Sadorn, myttinweyth, rag fleghes ynter dew ha pymp bloodh ha dyskansow Kernewek rag an gerens, selys war'n fleghes. Y'n vledhen diw vil ha seytek an Skol Veythrin Kerenza a dheuth ha bos gwithva dre vayn Kernewek leun-govskrifys gans Ofsted rag fleghes bys dhe eth bloodh, hag yth esa sedhes nowydh dhe ygeri orth Pask diw vil hag ugens.⁶ Y'n gwetha prys, ny hwarva hemma drefen an pandemek Kovid-19, ha chanj an kasys yn kever drehevyans ragweles rag an gresen. Yn pols ma drehevyans nowydh dhe vos aswiwyas rag ostya an gresen hag y fydh skol veythrin diwyethek. Yn kettermyn assays a veu synsys y'n brys provia hwarvosow diwyethek rag teyluyow avel kerdhow ha glanyans treth.⁷

Yn kettermyn bagas Skol Veythrin Tregenna, neb a berghenn dew sedhes bledhynnyow a-varr orth Porthia ha Lannudhno, re gomendyas Kernewek dh'ga bewnans pubdydhyek.⁸ Ha'n berghenoges Gernewegores, hi a erviras komendya an yeth drefen bri dhedhi treusi an yeth dhe'n dinythyans nessa. Kernewek a veu ynplansys y'n dygthyans pubdedhyek gans us dynarghow, mar pleg ha meur ras orth li, ha komprehendyans hwedhlow gans lavarennow posek yn Kernewek pub jydh. Yma dyskansow rag bagasow byghanna dres an term. Orth pub dhyskans an fleghes a wra neppeth dhe dhri tre, avel lymnansow gans an geryow yn Kernewek hag yma lytherow nowodhow rag an gerens gans gerva Gernewek. Yma testskrifow rag an fleghes orth penn an vledhen rag solempnya aga dyski neb a veu res dhe'n fleghes orth solempnita arbennek attendyas gans kyns Bardh Meur Gorsedh Kernow. Ha ni yn-dann naw alwedh fylmow a'n hwedhlow a veu gwrys rag an gerens dhe usya gans aga fleghes. Dasliv dhyworth an gerens yw posedhek. Drefen nag yw brassa rann an vayni kernewegoryon, displetyansow y'n skol veythrin a gomprehend lytherenans fonetek an gerva Kernewek. Y'n termyn usi passys [hav 2021] pymthek flogh warn ugens a gemeras an dyskansow ma.⁹

Kyns an bledhynnyow mil naw kans ha peswar ugens, derivys veu bos Kernewek dyskys yn dornas a skolyow. An derivas war studh an yeth y'n vledhen mil naw kans peswar ha peswar ugens a gavas y vos dyskys yn seyth skol gynsa ha diw skol nessa.¹⁰ Gans dalleth an kors-dyski kenedhlek, provians a Gernewek o synsys y'n presyow li po klubys wosa skol, ha res o dhedha fydhya war dharbar bodhek po dyskador hwansek neb a wodhya kewsel Kernewek po usya an asnodhow kavadow. Dres hy bosva, an keskowethyans kyns, Keskowethyans an Yeth Kernewek, Maga, a dhanvonas tri fardel dyski yeth dhe bub skol gynsa a-dreus Kernow, hag y'n vledhen diw vil ha dewdhek, aga dew sodhek adhyskans rann-dermyn a oberas gans a-dro dhe ugens skol a-dreus Kernow.¹¹ Yn-wedh, Maga a dhelivras trenyans yn Kernewek rag dyskatoryon, ow provia asnodhow adhyskansek ha nebes esedhogow rag assaya an yeth, herwydh usadow yn shoppys ober. A-dhia diw vil ha

⁵ MacKinnon, f.21.

⁶ Esther Johns, Trustee Movyans Skolyow Methrin, email to author, July 2020.

⁷ Esther Johns, Trustee Movyans Skolyow Methrin, email to author, August 2021.

⁸ Matthew Clarke, *An Mis 48, Pellwolok an Gernewegva*, online video recording, You Tube, 25 August 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bE_Q7gYLzD8, [accessed 30th August 2021].

⁹ Sue Davies, owner, Tregenna Nursery Group, zoom conversation with author, September 2021.

¹⁰ MacKinnon, f.44.

¹¹ Sayers et al, f.11.

hwetek, an negys Gwedhen Owr re waynyas an ambos dhe dhisplegya ha skoodhya an adhyskans ha'n devnydh a Gernewek. Aga devar o dhe ynplansa Kernewek avel yeth dres bagas kolonnen a skolyow kynsa, ow kressya an niver dhyworth pypm dhe hanter-kans a-ji dhe bymp bledhen.¹² Yn diw vil ha nownsek an dowlen ma a veu eksekutyas yn pymthek skol yn Pensans ha Lyskerrys.¹³ Byttegyns, rag Kernewek dhe seweni orth nivel skol gynsa, yma edhom a skoodhyans dhyworth penndyskatoryon keffrys ha dyskador neb a wodhya po kewsel Kernewek po eksekutya an esedhogow hag y'n vledhen diw vil hag ugens Gwedhen Owr re erviras chanjya aga fog dhe skoodhya Kernewek yn skolyow neb a'n brof hwath. Bys y'n dydhyow ma, ny'n jeves Kernewek skons krev lowr y'n skolyow kynsa kernewek, po yn termyn kors-dyski, po avel klub, awos bos provians anlowr a dus. Byttegyns, pan dheffo ha bos meni skol moy bodhek hag abel dhe dhyski an yeth, ha le trestek war brovioryon erel henn a wrussa pesya tevi. Prov posek rag musura sewena an yeth yn skolyow kynsa a vydh degemeryans a Gernewek avel yeth herwydh an kors-dyski kenedhlek drefen bos possybyl 'dyski neb yeth arnowydh po hen.'¹⁴

Ha ni yn-dann naw alwedh rag an kynsa termyn mis-Meurth diw vil hag ugens, Gwedhen Owr a erviras chanyja ha dasdisplegya aga fog yn kever skoodhyans Kernewek yn skolyow kynsa. A-der synsi y'n brys bagasow aghel dhe skolyow kynsa, i a dhisplegyas framweyth 'rag solempnya an yeth yn fordhow didhanus hag ollgompasus,' ha dhe weres skolyow ynplansa an yeth dres an skol dhien, a-dhia testenow kors-dyski dhe geskomunyans pubdydhyek.¹⁵ An framweyth a vydh profys orth tri nivel: brons, arghans hag owr, dres pyneyl skolyow a allsa oberi an eyl wosa y gila, po dewis dhe driga orth nivel kynsa, brons. Yma edhom dhe nivelyow diffrans a omrians rag ynplansya Kernewek y'n kors-dyski ha desinys yns i rag livreson yn kynsa le gans dyskatoryon po darbaroryon dhyskansek heb aswon vyth an yeth. Yma skoodhyans hag asnodhow heb kost provys war gwiasva eseli diogel. Mis Gwynngala diw vil onan warn ugens yth esa naw skol warn ugens ow sina dhe'n ragdres, hwath moy ages niver a skolyow y'n ragdres bagasow.¹⁶

Unn termen posek Gwedhen Owr a breder hag i ow telivra an ragdres ma dres an etek mis a dheu yw diskwedhes y sostenadewder. Y'ga mysk trenyans Kernewek synsys rag dyskatoryon ha skolyow ow medra gorfenna nivelyow arghans hag owr hag ynplansa moy a'n yeth dres aga frovians. Yma amkan ynwedh dhedha komprehendya an skolyow neb a sinyas dhe'n dowlen yn dasliv war an pyth usi, po nag usi owth oberi y'n kors-dyski. Dres usyans arhwithransow a sew, manylyon dhyworth an skolyow a vydh esya dhe guntel ha gorwolya. Yma govenek dhe Wedhen Owr yn kehevelyans gans an patron bagas eus passys, an dowlen ma dhe vos delivrys heb ynworran didro dhyworth arvethesigyon Wedhen Owr.¹⁷

Yn skolyow nessa possybyl o dhe studhya Kernewek bys nivel GCSE bys dhe'n vledhen mil naw kans hwetek ha peswar ugens, mayth esa dew ombrofyer ha dew ugens rag an apposyans. Byttegyns, nyns o an apposyans hewul yn maner kenwerthel na hwath ha

¹² Sayers et al, f.19.

¹³ Mark Trevethan, Cornish Language Officer, Cornwall Council, personal communication with author, September 2020.

¹⁴ Department for Education, *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 2. National Curriculum in England*. (London: DFE-00174-2013, 2013), f.2.

¹⁵ 'Go Cornish for Primary Schools,' Go Cornish, <https://gocornish.org/primary-schools/> [accessed 20th September, 2021].

¹⁶ Will Coleman, Artistic Director and Vicki Kent, Company Manager of Golden Tree, zoom communication with author, September 2021.

¹⁷ Will Coleman, Artistic Director and Vicki Kent, Company Manager of Golden Tree, zoom communication with author, September 2021.

tewlys dhe-ves o.¹⁸ Y'n vledhen diw vil Kernewek a veu dyskys yn peder skol nessa avel klub, mes avel y'n kors-dyski rag skolyow kynsa, kavos spas lowr rag dyski Kernewek y'n kors-dyski skolyow nessa yw ogas hag onpossybyl.¹⁹ Dyski yeth arnowydh yw konstrinus bys peswardhek bloodh, gans an rewl hemm a brovi an grond rag studhyansow pella.²⁰ Ytho, fatel wren ni styrya Kernewek a-ji dhe'n oryon ma? Rag provia Kernewek orth nivel skolyow nessa y fydh edhom a gressyans bras y'n myns a asnowdhow, ha trenyans dyskatoryon, mayth yw lemmyn trest bras a'n dhew ma war an ranngylgh bodhek a-ji dhe adhyskans Kernewek rag tevesigyon.²¹ Rag Kernewek dhe sewena a-ji an kevreyth adhyskansel kenedhlek, yma edhom a neb gre hwath dhodho, spas lowr a-ji dhe'n jydh-skol, dyskatoryon arbennik gans gobrow hag asnodhow lowr, po asnodhow ha dastrenyans rag dyskatoryon a-lemmyn a-ji dhe skolyow. Rag Kernewek dhe vos ha dos tennvosek gans studhyoryon ha dyskatoryon an dhew orth nivel skolyow nessa, res yw dhedhi kavos porpos dres stevellow an klass, ow kwruthyl chonsyow rag po sewena apposyans po dres dos ha bos gorholeth rag devnydh dres adhyskans nivel skolyow nessa-a-ji dhe adhyskans ughella po an oberva.

Y'n vledhen diw vil hag etek, an gesva apposyans Kembrek, WJEC, a gomendyas apposyansow nivel dallethoryon ha kynsa gradh yn Kernewek. An kwalifiansow rag-GCSE ma yw profyes yn yethow erel yn-wedh. An apposyansow ma a veu gwrys y'n vledhen diw vil ha nownsek gans bagas arbrovel a studhyoryon neb e dhe glassow adhyskans tevesik, hwegh warn ugens dhe nivel dallethoryon, ha peswar dhe gynsa gradh.²² An apposyansow a veu delatyas y'n vledhen diw vil hag ugens, mes yma govenek y hwra studhyoryon aga gul hag y fydh displegyans an apposyans nessa gradh Kernewek. Kynth yw an ober ma kesordenys gans Sodhva an Yeth Kernewek dhyworth Konsel Kernow, er Maga, displegyans daffar adhyskans hag apposyansow, ha'n dyskas klassow adhyskans tevesik, yw gwrys gans bodhogyon oll. Brassa rann a dhyskatoryon yw Berdh an yeth Gorsedh Kernow, ytho i a sewenas yn gradh ughella an apposyansow Kesva an Taves Kernewek, ha lies anedha yw dyskatoryon a-lemmyn po kyns, mes nys esens dyskatoryon yethow porres.

A-dhia an kynnyav ma, Pennskol Garesk re gomendyas kors isradhesik yn 'Kernewek rag dallethoryon.' Ha'n kors ma gorfennys studhyoryon a allo oberi war-tu gradya gans 'studh y'n yeth Gernewek.' Formys yw an kors gans amkan dyski an yeth avel yeth vyw, gwiw rag porpos pubdydhyek, kynth yma elvennow avel fenten henwyn tyller, istori an yeth ha gonisogeth yn kettesten ledanna ynwedh.²³ An bennskol re gomendyas klass gorthugherweyth warlinen medras orth an poblans ledanna arvethegyon ha studhyoryon. Mar erys-da o hemma; yth esa edhom kavos dew glass rag ri le a bub a vynn omrolya.²⁴ Yma'n niver owth ynkrassyas dhe studhyoryon hwithrans y'n Fondyans Studhyansow

¹⁸ MacKinnon, f.46.

¹⁹ MacKinnon, f.4.

²⁰ Department for Education, *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 3. National Curriculum in England*. (London: DFE-00195-2013, 2013), f.1.

²¹ Mark Trevethan, *Strateji an yeth Kernewek Towl Oberansek 2017/18 – Derivas Penn an vledhen/ Cornish Language Strategy Operational Plan 2017/18 – End of Year Plan*. (Truro: Cornwall County Council, 2018), f.4.

²² Mark Trevethan, *Strateji an yeth Kernewek Towl Oberansek 2019/20 – Derivas Penn an vledhen/ Cornish Language Strategy Operational Plan 2019/20 – End of Year Plan*, (Truro: Cornwall County Council, 2020), f.8.

²³ 'Cornish for Beginners,' University of Exeter,

<http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/flc/modules/PLC1130/>. [accessed 20th September, 2021].

²⁴ 'Learn Cornish in your own home as part of a exciting new online course,' University of Exeter, https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/staff/title_870214_en.html. [accessed 20th September, 2021].

Kernewek ow synsi y'n brys hwithrans an yeth, nyns o henna an kas pub prys, hag yma edhom gans hemma y fydh efanyans brassa a'n yeth avel testen akademek. Yma studhyoryon toktourieth yn leow erel, yn fenowgh yn asrannow Studhyansow Keltek, neb a hwrith tremenow an yeth.

Onan a'n kudynnnow brassa rag an re neb a vynsa dasserghi yeth yw fowt asnodhow adhyskansel gwiw ha dyskatoryon alwesik. Rag hemma dhe hwarvos, bysi yw a eghen efan a dhaffar yeth, an gwrians a eryow nowydh ha towlennow trenyans rag dyskatoryon. Dyski yeth dre vayn yethadoryow po gerlyvrow hepken ny re marnas blas kreftus a'n efander a dhevnydh yn neb yeth, ytho res yw dhyn provia adhyskans, ha daffar adhyskansel magata, mar efan dell yllyn rag gwitha an yeth avel neppyth byw, gwiw rag porpos y'gan bewnansow pubdydhyek ha dastewynnya gwell hy forposys gwreydhek. Ynkressyans trenyans dyskatoryon, askorrans asnodhow nowydh gwiw ha'n devnydh kressys a deknologieth a gevarwodh bos an yeth desedhys yn ta dhe wul an gwayans dhe dhosedhansow adhyskansel formel mar kyll bos gwrys an demond rag y wul kynnik hewul rag ha studhyoryon ha fondyansow an dhew.

Pyth yw an termyn an dheu rag Kernewek yn adhyskans formel? A-barth an assays a hwer yn pols ma dhe gavadowder an yeth orth an nivel meythrinvha ha nebes kavadowder orth nivel skolyow kynsa. Res yw dhe'n movyans an yeth prederi py lesow ev a allo profya dhe adhyskans skolyow nessa, koljiow ha pennskolyow. Mar pessyo niver ombrofyoryon an apposyansow WJEC, y fe possybyl kavos GCSE nowydh, ha provians A Level a alsa holya a-wosa. Y fia martesen profyans tennvosek rag studhyoryon devesik maga ta skolyow. Byttegyns, kavadowder dyskatoryon neb a yll dyski orth an nivelyow ma, hag asnodhow adhyskanskek gnas yw mater hwath. Nagonan an materyow ma a vydh erviras dres nos. Tevesigyon a dhysk testennow nowydh avel hobbi, mes rag studhyoryon yn tyleryow adhyskanskek formel, nyns eus termyn lowr dhe dhyski testen rag didhan hepken, res yw dh'ga kwalifiansow ri sewyans posedhek rag aga thowlow adhyskanskek po soodh. An le may fo possybyl komendya Kernewek avel testen gwiw rag studhyans akademek yw yn pennskolyow, yn py le yma hengov akademek hir dhe yethow ha studhyansow Keltek. Komendyans sewen testen orth nivel pennskol a wra an desten tennvosek orth nivel skolyow nessa. Omma, hwath, mater fatel wra kavos tus a yll dyski an yeth ha hedhas dhe asnodhow gwiw yw posek, kesunys a'n edhom dhe neb provians bos hewel hag erbysek rag an fondyans. Martesen unn fordh may hwreller komendya Kernewek yn pennskolyow a vydh hwithra an possybylta kavos keskoweythyansow treusfondyansow gans an amkan provia diskas Kernewek orth studhyoryon yn nebes pennskolyow. An fordh ma a allsa ri bagas bras lowr dhe studhyoryon rag gul kors hewul hag erbysek, mes kesoberyans an par na a allsa tenna arhasans ynwedh.

English translation: Cornish in Formal Education²⁵

²⁵ For a further discussion of the progress of the new initiatives in early years education see: Kensa Broadhurst, "Cronnack an hager dhu' Sign of a flourishing language? Efforts to Advance Cornish by the Cornish Language Community in the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 40: 2021, (March 2023). Kensa Broadhurst, Forthcoming, "Cornish: Can an Indigenous Language become a Fixture in the Local Primary Curriculum?" in *'Other' Voices in Education – (Re)stor(y)ing Stories: Stories as an Analytical Tool*, ed. C. Blyth, (Singapore: Springer Nature).

This paper considers the most up-to-date position of formal teaching of Cornish, including the provision of a new undergraduate course. This paper aims to examine the current position of Cornish in formal educational settings. Finally, it outlines issues to consider in both the immediate and longer-term future, including what needs to occur for the language to gain a greater presence in schools, further and higher education. Previous studies of the history of the Cornish language in education notably include MacKinnon,²⁶ for the Government Office of the South-West, and Sayers et al, for the European Research Centre on Multilingualism and Language Learning.²⁷ Ferdinand examined public views on the status of the language in education in the twenty-first century, and Cornwall Council produces both five-year strategic and annual operational plans.²⁸

The teaching of Cornish to pre-school children began when particular families involved in the language revival movement brought up their children speaking Cornish at home. However, momentum within the educational establishment to support these initiatives was limited. In 1979 the organisation *Dalleth* 'Beginning' was founded to support both these efforts, and also those families known to be bringing up their children as bilingual. In 1980 *Dalleth* introduced a children's magazine, *Len ha Lyw* 'Read and Colour.'²⁹ The *Movyans Skolyow Methrin* 'Nursery Schools Movement,' established the Skol dy-Sadorn Kernewek 'Cornish Saturday School' at Cornwall College in Pool in 2010, providing a Saturday morning session for children aged two to five, and child-based Cornish lessons for parents. In 2017 the Skol Veythrin Kerenza 'Love Nursery School' became an Ofsted-registered fully Cornish-medium day care centre for children aged up to eight, and a new setting was due to open at Easter 2020.³⁰ Unfortunately, this did not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a change in the circumstances surrounding the anticipated premises for the day care centre. Currently new premises are being adapted to host the centre, which will instead provide a bilingual nursery. In the meantime, efforts have been concentrating on providing bilingual events for families such as walks and a beach clean.³¹

Meanwhile, the Tregenna Nursery Group, which owns two early years settings in St Ives and St Erth, has introduced Cornish into its daily routines.³² A Cornish learner herself, the owner decided to introduce the language due to the importance of passing the language on to the next generation. Cornish has been embedded into the daily routine with the use of greetings, *mar pleg* 'please' and *meur ras* 'thank you' at the lunchtime meals, and the inclusion of stories with key phrases in Cornish each day. These include both pre-existing stories and new ones adapted by the owner. In addition to this, sessions are held for smaller groups across the term. At each session the children produce something Cornish to take home, such as paintings with the words in Cornish, and newsletters for parents include Cornish vocabulary. In recognition of their learning, children are awarded certificates in Cornish at the end of the school year at a special ceremony attended by a former Grand Bard

²⁶ Ken MacKinnon, *Cornish Language Study*.

²⁷ Dave Sayers, Merryn Davies-Deacon, and Sarah Croome, *The Cornish Language in Education in the UK*.

²⁸ Siarl Ferdinand, *Introducing Cornish in Education*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344464261_Introducing_Cornish_in_education/ (Skians Conference, online, 2020) [accessed 30th August 2021].

²⁹ MacKinnon, p.21.

³⁰ Esther Johns, Trustee Movyans Skolyow Methrin, email to author, July 2020

³¹ Esther Johns, Trustee Movyans Skolyow Methrin, email to author, August 2021.

³² Matthew Clarke, *An Mis 48, Pellwolok an Gernewegva*, online video recording, You Tube, 25 August 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bE_Q7gYLzD8, [accessed 30th August 2021].

of *Gorsedh Kernow*. During the national coronavirus lockdowns in 2020, videos of the stories were produced for parents to use with their children at home. The feedback from parents is positive overall. As most staff are not Cornish speakers, displays within the nursery also include phonetic spelling of the Cornish vocabulary. In the last term [summer 2021], thirty-five children were receiving these Cornish sessions.³³

Before the 1980s, Cornish was reportedly taught in a handful of schools. A 1984 report on the state of the language found it was being taught in seven primary and two secondary schools.³⁴ However, the introduction of the national curriculum confined any Cornish language provision to lunchtime and after school clubs. This relied on either volunteer provision or a keen teacher who was able either to speak Cornish or use the resources available. During its existence, the former Cornish Language Partnership, Maga, run by Cornwall Council, sent three language-learning packs to all primary schools across Cornwall. In 2012 their two part-time education officers worked with around twenty schools.³⁵ Maga also delivered training to teachers, providing teaching materials and some taster sessions, usually in the form of workshops. Since 2016, the company Golden Tree has been contracted by Cornwall Council to develop and support the teaching, learning and use of Cornish. Their task has been to embed Cornish into the general curriculum across a core group of primary schools, rising from five to fifty within a five-year period.³⁶ In 2019 this programme ran at eighteen schools in Penzance and Liskeard.³⁷ For Cornish to succeed at primary level, it needs both the support of headteachers and a teacher who is able either to speak Cornish or to run the sessions. As yet, Cornish does not have enough of a stronghold within the primary system in Cornwall either within curriculum time, or as part of a club, due to inadequate manpower provision. However, if school staff become more willing and confident to deliver the language, and less reliant on outside providers, uptake should continue to grow. A key marker of the success of Cornish in primary schools will be the acceptance of Cornish as a language in terms of adherence to the national curriculum stipulation that 'teaching may be of any modern or ancient foreign language.'³⁸

With the advent of the first national lockdown in March 2020, Golden Tree decided to switch and redevelop their focus with regards to supporting the use of Cornish in primary schools. Rather than concentrating on geographical clusters of primary schools, they have developed a framework 'to celebrate the language in fun and immersive ways,' and help schools to embed use of the language across the entire school, from curriculum topics to daily communication.³⁹ This framework will be offered at three levels: bronze, silver and gold, through which schools can either work progressively or choose to stay at the initial bronze level. These require differing levels of commitment to embedding Cornish within the curriculum and are designed for initial delivery by teachers or teaching assistants with no prior knowledge of the language. Support and resources are all provided for free via a secure

³³ Sue Davies, owner, Tregenna Nursery Group, zoom conversation with author, September 2021.

³⁴ MacKinnon, p.44.

³⁵ Sayers et al, p.11.

³⁶ Sayers et al, p.19.

³⁷ Mark Trevethan, Cornish Language Officer, Cornwall Council, personal communication with author, September 2020.

³⁸ Department for Education, *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 2*, p.2.

³⁹ 'Go Cornish for Primary Schools,' Go Cornish, <https://gocornish.org/primary-schools/> [accessed 20th September, 2021].

members website. As of September 2021, 29 schools have signed up to the project, which is already more than the number of schools reached by the cluster initiative.⁴⁰

One of the key aspects Golden Tree are considering in the delivery of this project over the next eighteen months is demonstrating its sustainability. This includes dedicated Cornish language training for teachers and schools aiming to complete the silver and gold levels and embed more of the language throughout their provision. Golden Tree also aim to ask the schools signed up to the programme for feedback on what is, or is not, working within the curriculum. Through the use of tracking surveys, it will be far easier to collect and monitor data from the schools.⁴¹ Golden Tree hope that in comparison with the previous cluster model, this programme can be delivered in schools without direct input from Golden Tree staff members.

At secondary level, it was possible to study Cornish GCSE until 1996, when 42 candidates took the examination. However, it became no longer commercially viable and was scrapped.⁴² In 2000 Cornish was being taught at four secondary schools as part of a club, but as with the primary curriculum, finding space for Cornish within the secondary curriculum is all but impossible.⁴³ Within the national curriculum, the teaching of a modern foreign language is compulsory to the age of fourteen, with the proviso that this provides the basis for further study.⁴⁴ How, therefore, do we define Cornish within these parameters? The provision of Cornish at secondary level would require a vast increase in resources and teacher training, both of which currently rely heavily on the voluntary sector within Cornish adult education.⁴⁵ For Cornish to succeed within the state education system, it requires status, a place within the school day, properly resourced and paid peripatetic teachers, or resources and retraining for existing teachers within schools. For Cornish to be attractive to both students and teachers at a secondary level it needs to have a purpose beyond the classroom. This could include creating opportunities either for examination success or for further use beyond secondary education—within higher education or the workplace.

In 2018 the Welsh examination board, WJEC, introduced Entry Level and Level 1 examinations in Cornish. These are pre-GCSE level qualifications also offered in other languages. These examinations were taken in 2019 by a pilot group of students attending Cornish adult education classes: twenty-six at Entry Level, and four at Level 1.⁴⁶ Examinations were put on hold in 2020, but the hope is that further students will sit these and that a Level 2 Cornish qualification will be developed. Although this work is coordinated by the Cornish Language Office of Cornwall Council, the development of teaching and exam materials, and the teaching of adult education classes, is all carried out by volunteers. Most teachers are language bards of *Gorsedh Kernow*, who have passed the highest level of the Cornish Language Board examinations, and many are current or former teachers, although not necessarily in languages.

⁴⁰ Will Coleman, Artistic Director and Vicki Kent, Company Manager of Golden Tree, zoom communication with author, September 2021.

⁴¹ Will Coleman, Artistic Director and Vicki Kent, Company Manager of Golden Tree, zoom communication with author, September 2021.

⁴² MacKinnon, p.46.

⁴³ MacKinnon, p.4.

⁴⁴ Department for Education, *Languages Programme of Study: Key Stage 3*, p.1.

⁴⁵ Mark Trevethan, *Cornish Language Strategy Operational Plan 2017/18 – End of Year Plan*, p.4.

⁴⁶ Mark Trevethan, *Cornish Language Strategy Operational Plan 2019/20 – End of Year Plan*, p.8.

From this autumn, Exeter University has introduced an undergraduate module in ‘Beginners’ Cornish.’ Completion of this module will allow students to work towards graduating with ‘proficiency in the Cornish language.’ The course is very much shaped towards teaching the language as a living language, fit for everyday purpose, although it also includes elements such as place name derivations, the history of the language and culture in a wider context.⁴⁷ The university has also introduced an online Cornish evening class aimed at the wider staff and student population. This has proved so popular that it has been necessary to run two classes to accommodate all those who have enrolled.⁴⁸ An increasing number of research students within the Institute of Cornish Studies at Exeter are now concentrating on language-based research which has not always been the case. It is hoped that this will generate even greater expansion of the language as an academic subject. There are also PhD students elsewhere, who are researching aspects of the language, often coming under the umbrellas of Celtic Studies departments.

One of the biggest problems facing those seeking to revive a language is a lack of appropriate teaching materials and qualified teachers. This necessitates the provision of a wide variety of language materials, the coinage of new vocabulary and training programmes for teachers. Learning a language solely through the medium of grammar books and dictionaries only gives an artificial flavour of the range of use in a particular language, therefore we should seek to provide as diverse a range of education, and educational materials, as possible to preserve the language as a living being, fit for purpose in our everyday lives and to better reflect the purposes for which it was originally used. Increased teacher training, the production of new appropriate resources and the increased use of technology indicate the language is well-placed to make the shift to formal educational settings if the demand can be created to make it a viable proposition for both students and institutions.

What then, for the future of Cornish in formal education? Apart from the efforts currently underway to increase the availability of the language at the pre-school level and to provide some availability at primary level, the language movement now needs to consider what benefits it can offer to secondary, further, and higher education. If the number of candidates taking the WJEC examinations continues to rise, a new GCSE might be possible, which in turn could lead to A Level provision. This could be an attractive proposition to adult learners as well as schools. However, the availability of teachers capable of teaching at these levels, and quality educational resources remains one of the biggest problems. None of these issues will be resolved overnight. Whereas adults do learn new subjects as a hobby, students in formal educational settings do not necessarily have the leisure time to study a subject just for the fun of it; their qualifications need to provide a positive outcome for their future educational or employment plans. Where Cornish could be introduced as a subject worthy of academic study is at tertiary level, where Celtic studies and languages have a long academic tradition. Successful introduction of a subject at university level makes it attractive at secondary level. Here, once more, the issue of sourcing people able to teach the language and access to appropriate resources is key, combined with the necessity for any such provision to be economically viable for the institution. Perhaps one way for Cornish to be introduced more widely within higher education is to examine the possibility of cross-institution

⁴⁷ ‘Cornish for Beginners,’ University of Exeter, <http://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/flc/modules/PLC1130/>. [accessed 20th September, 2021].

⁴⁸ ‘Learn Cornish in your own home as part of an exciting new online course,’ University of Exeter, https://www.exeter.ac.uk/news/staff/title_870214_en.html. [accessed 20th September, 2021]

partnerships with the aim of providing teaching in Cornish to Celtic studies students at several institutions. This approach could not only provide a large enough cohort of students to make such a course economically viable, but such collaborations might also be able to attract funding from outside the institutions themselves.

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