THE NEWLYN CORNISH LANGUAGE CLASS
Weekly lessons by Zoom

For your diary: Monday **10 May** 2021, 19:30; Monday **17 May** 2021; Monday **24 May** 2021; further lessons to be announced. For each lesson the Zoom joining details will be emailed several days beforehand.

MONDAY 10 MAY 19:30
Lesson plan 19:30 Welcome, 19:40 Plural of nouns, 20:00 Simple story, 20:30 Chat (in English, with a little Cornish thrown in) about Cornish language and culture

This week we shall be using pages 46-48 of the coursebook.

There are a few spelling corrections:
hawnsel breakfast, **astell omborth** see-saw, **boosty** restaurant, café

Note how **a wra** usually makes a future tense, but with a few verbs the sense may be present tense instead. One instance is **leverel** 'say', as in **ev a wra leverel** 'he says'. Another instance is **gwil** in weather expressions: e.g. **A wra glaw?** 'Is it raining?' (literally, 'Does it do rain?')

Here for reference are the expressions you need for telling the time to the nearest five minutes. These use the traditional numerals **ugans** for 'twenty' and **pymp warn ugans** for 'twenty-five'.

udn eur one o'clock
pymp wosa udn eur five past one
deg wosa udn eur ten past one
qwartron wosa udn eur quarter past one
ugans wosa udn eur twenty past one
pymp warn ugans wosa udn eur twenty-five past one
hanter wosa udn eur half past one
pymp warn ugans dhe dhyw eur twenty-five to two
ugans dhe dhyw eur twenty to two
qwartron dhe dhyw eur quarter to two
deg dhe dhyw eur ten to two
pymp dhe dhyw eur five to two
dyw eur two o'clock

In longer time-expressions like these you can omit **eur**, though it is rarely omitted after **dyw**, **teyr**, **peder** and almost never omitted after **udn**.

If you wish to put in the word for 'minutes', that is **mynysen**, because we use a singular noun after any traditional numeral. But note how **mysysen** gets tucked inside **pymp mynysen warn ugans** 'twenty-five minutes'.

When telling the time, there is a tendency to reduce the pronunciation of **wosa** to a rapid *wùsa* or *wùja*.

Version 23 April 2021

TIMELINE OF THE CORNISH LANGUAGE

This may be useful for orientation. Dates are only approximate. The language of our *Skeul an Tavas* course is based on Cornish from the best attested period when the historical language was still fully expressive, i.e. 1500-1650.

(1)   From 600: Southern Brythonic (already a dialect or dialect continuum of Brythonic) develops in the direction of a separate language as political and economic ties with other Brythonic speakers (in Wales and what is now North-West England / South-West Scotland) become more tenuous after Saxon victory at the Battle of Dyrham (577). Brythonic in Wales will develop eventually into Welsh. Brythonic further north will eventually become extinct.

(2)   From 650: Saxons raiding and settling in what is now Devon. Speakers of Proto-Cornish migrating to Armorica (later called after them 'Brittany' as they absorb original speakers of Continental Celtic). Proto-Cornish there will develop eventually into Breton.

(3)   From 750: Devon fully incorporated into Saxon kingdom of Wessex. Saxons raiding into what is now Cornwall.

(4)   From 900: Saxons accept east bank of Tamar as effective boundary between Wessex and Cornwall – this is agreed in treaty form by King Athelstan – but some degree of Saxon settlement in Eastern Cornwall nonetheless, while North-West Cornwall is eventually dominated by Saxon settlement.

(5)   1070-1200: Norman power established at Launceston, trusted Breton immigrants given authority by Normans in Cornwall, this is likely trigger for significant sound-change marking transition from Old Cornish to Middle Cornish – not to imitate Breton, but to distinguish Cornish more clearly from Breton – a *socio-political* linguistic reaction. This period is characterized by language change more generally, as many languages compete in everyday use. Old English is developing to Middle English under influence of Norman French.

(6)   1200-1350: This is 'early' Middle Cornish period, Cornish still spoken throughout Cornwall (and extreme west of Devon) but Middle English predominating in North-West.

(7)   1350-1500: This is the 'middle' Middle Cornish period, Cornish still spoken throughout Cornwall, but Middle English increasingly spoken in towns, and developing (under influence of Renaissance) to early Modern English. It is probably at this time that Cornish dies out completely in Devon.

(8)   1500-1550: Beginning of 'late' Middle Cornish period. Cornish now retreating westward as far as Bodmin.

(9)   1550-1600: Cornish now retreating westward as far as Truro. By order of government, Cornish ceases to be language of worship in churches.

(10)   1600-1650: Cornish now only in particular communities west of Truro. Upper / educated classes cease to use Cornish. End of Middle Cornish.

(11)   1650-1800: Late Cornish spoken only in isolated communities / individual families, eventually by just a few older people who remember it from childhood. Dolly Pentreath dies in 1777.

(12)   1800-1900: Cornish place-names endure, but their meaning is no longer widely understood. Only odd verses, sentences, phrases, individual words remain in memory, passed down the generations as items of folklore. Plus some words preserved (often much changed) in Cornish dialect(s) of English. Plus some purely scholarly interest in surviving Middle Cornish texts.

(13)   1900-1950: Cornish revival. Jenner publishes his seminal *Handbook of the Cornish Language* in 1904, Nance publishes *Cornish for All* in 1929.

(14)   1950–2000: Cornish revival continues. Widespread dissatisfaction with Unified Cornish leads to range of different 'flavours' of modern Cornish, ranging from Common Cornish with 13th century base to Revived Late Cornish with 18th century base.

(15)   2000-present: Cornish gains first (very limited) official recognition by government. Spelling standardized for use by Cornwall Council ('Standard Written Form') but does not satisfy many Cornish speakers. Development of Standard Cornish (KS) as used in coursebook *Skeul an Tavas*.