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The Celtic Languages in North America: Notes from the Field

The Cornish Language in North America

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Cornish is a member of the Brythonic subgroup of Celtic languages, related closely to Breton and somewhat less closely to Welsh. It occupies a unique position among the modern Celtic languages, in that it is the only one of the six which has ever completely disappeared as a spoken vernacular. For over a century between c.1800 and 1904—when the publication of Henry Jenner's *Handbook of the Cornish Language* laid the foundation for its resurrection (George and Broderick 1993: 644)—Cornish was essentially a dead language. Although there are claims of Cornish speakers from the nineteenth century, and although scholars were able to collect bits of traditional[3] Cornish as late as

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[3] In this article, I have used the term "traditional" to distinguish the Cornish spoken before 1800, and survivals thereof, from the "revived" Cornish of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The use of these terms is not meant to imply that "revived" Cornish is any less authentic than "traditional" Cornish, however: the relationship between the two is comparable to that between modern Israeli Hebrew and Biblical Hebrew. Traditional Cornish can be further subdivided into Old (c.800-c.1200), Middle (c.1200-c.1625), and Late Cornish (c.1625-c.1800), on the basis

the 1920s (Ellis 1974: 125-30), most evidence suggests that the last fluent speakers of the traditional language had died by the end of the eighteenth century. Whereas in the case of Manx Gaelic, the only other Celtic language which has been (mistakenly) declared dead, the revival movement began during the lifetimes of the last traditional native speakers, Cornish suffered a one-hundred-year-long hiatus, during which only a handful of people could claim any knowledge of the language whatsoever. Also unlike the Manx situation, the last native speakers of Cornish were never interviewed by linguists or recorded on tape, and so there are doubtless certain features of traditional Cornish vocabulary, grammar, and phonology that can never be recovered.

However, despite these significant challenges, a small group of enthusiasts working in the early decades of the twentieth century set about to bring Cornish back to life. Drawing from a wide variety of sources, including the surviving literature of medieval and early modern Cornwall, elements found in place-names and personal names, words of Celtic origin preserved in the English dialects of Cornwall, and vocabulary borrowed from Breton and Welsh, these researchers and their successors have been able to reconstruct the Cornish language to an ever greater degree of accuracy. Although in recent years there have been a number of disagreements regarding various details of pronunciation and niceties of spelling—and, more fundamentally, about which period in the history of the language should be used as the basis for the revival—Cornish today is once again an indisputably living language, with an extensive literature, a burgeoning presence on the Internet, and even a few native speakers: children who have been brought up (bilingually with English) in Cornish-speaking homes. Films have been produced in

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of various changes in phonology, morphology, and syntax (see George 1993: 410, which gives slightly different dates); for a discussion of the several varieties of revived Cornish, see below. I have avoided using the word "modern" to refer to revived Cornish as a whole, since the term "Modern Cornish" is often used to refer to Late Cornish and/or the form of revived Cornish (Carnoack Nowedga) based upon it.

Cornish, rock bands perform songs in Cornish, and bilingual signs have appeared in supermarkets and along highways. In November 2002, the United Kingdom recognized Cornish under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, granting it official status for the first time in history (Wikipedia 2004: "European Recognition").

Yet despite these achievements, much progress remains to be made. The number of fluent or near-fluent Cornish speakers worldwide is likely less than 300, although perhaps ten times as many can claim a more limited command of the language. Most of these speakers and learners reside in Cornwall or elsewhere in the British Isles. Judging from examination results and correspondence course enrollment figures, there are also significant numbers of people studying Cornish in Australia and in continental Europe. In North America, however, interest in the language appears to be less strong.[4] This is particularly surprising in view of the fact that there are many people of Cornish descent living in North America—a community served by a number of regional Cornish heritage organizations in both the United States and Canada, as well as an umbrella group (the Cornish American Heritage Society) which organizes biennial Gatherings that attract members from across the continent. Nonetheless, if examination results are any guide, more native-born Czechs have attained fluency in Cornish over the past twenty years than native-born Americans and Canadians combined.[5]

This apparent lack of interest in the language among Cornish-Americans and their Canadian cousins suggests that many people

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[4] I would like to thank Jeffrey Shaw, a Cornish author who lives in Toronto, for sharing with me his experiences as a teacher—and learner—of Cornish in Canada, which were of great help to me in preparing this article.

[5] Four Czechs have passed the Cornish Language Board's fourth grade examination (the highest level offered) in the past two decades, while only one native-born North American (the author of this article) has done so. Although there are some North Americans who have attained fluency in Cornish without participating in the examination system, it is also true that many of the small number of fluent or near-fluent Cornish speakers now residing in Canada and the United States are immigrants from Great Britain who mastered Cornish before they arrived in North America.

of Cornish descent living in the United States and Canada do not regard the language as a meaningful part of their cultural heritage. Whereas many people of Irish, Scottish, and even Welsh background have a family tradition involving a grandparent or great-grandparent who spoke a Celtic language, most members of the Cornish diaspora do not. Since the Cornish language was effectively dead during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, immigrants from Cornwall who arrived in North America during that time brought with them distinctive religious beliefs (Wesleyan Methodism), skills (mining, fishing, farming), and foodways (Cornish pasties and saffron cake), but no distinctive language. It is not surprising, then, that many Cornish-Americans and Cornish-Canadians take more interest in the nonlinguistic aspects of their heritage than in a language that, as far as they are aware, no one in their family ever spoke.

In my own career as a Cornish teacher, only about one fourth of the approximately twenty students with whom I have worked have been motivated by an interest in their own Cornish ancestry. Most of the remainder have been university students who were drawn to Cornish because of a more general interest in Celtic languages or Celtic cultures. Many other American and Canadian Cornish learners feel a personal connection to Cornwall that has nothing to do with ancestry: some fall in love with the Cornish landscape; others are inspired by the works of Daphne du Maurier; yet others are attracted to Cornwall's legendary past through the tales of King Arthur or Tristan and Ysolt; and still others are intrigued by the prehistory of Cornwall—its hill-forts and megalithic sites, or its pre-Christian Celtic religion. Bringing a once-dead language back to life is an exciting undertaking, and even people with no particular interest in the Celtic world in general or Cornwall in particular are often fascinated enough by the language revival movement to want to participate in it.

Based on the number of students I myself have taught, and the number of other Cornish speakers and learners I have encountered in the United States and Canada over the past eight years, I would estimate that there are probably no more than ten reasonably fluent Cornish speakers in North America. The number who can claim some familiarity with the language is probably no higher than 200, and may be considerably lower. Most people who are currently

learning Cornish in the United States or Canada are studying the language on their own, or with the help of a correspondence course, as there are almost no qualified teachers of Cornish on North American soil, and to my knowledge no institution of higher learning currently offers any formal instruction in the revived language.[6] Any study of Cornish that does take place at the university level, in North America or overseas, is often confined to texts from the traditional period, and treats Cornish as an artifact for historical study rather than as a modern spoken language.[7] It is worth noting, however, that St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia has long offered a class in "Celtic Literature" (Celtic 120), in which students read works from all six modern Celtic languages, including Cornish, in English translation. Michael Linkletter, the instructor of this course for the 2003-4 academic year, has informed me that he intends to add some revived Cornish material to the curriculum, and that he will present the original Cornish texts alongside the English translations, as well as playing audio and video samples of revived Cornish for his students.[8]

Perhaps the closest approach to a formal university course in revived Cornish in recent years is the seminar in Common Cornish which I offered at Harvard University in 1997-8 and again in 1998-9. Although the seminar attracted a number of students (four each year) comparable to many other language courses offered by

the Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, it had no official status at the University, was not listed in the course catalog, and could not be taken for credit. Two of the students who participated in these seminars sat Cornish Language Board examinations at the end of the school year, and achieved very respectable results (2nd grade, passed with distinction; 3rd grade, passed).[9] One of the major stumbling blocks to teaching Cornish at the university level is the lack of a textbook aimed at college students. Although there are some very fine learning materials available in Cornish, they are largely marketed to adults who are studying the language on their own or as part of a class that meets only once weekly, and as such, I found they did not always meet the needs of a twice- or thrice-weekly college course in which many students had a strong background in linguistics or Celtic languages.

Since opportunities to study Cornish in a university setting are few and far between, many Cornish learners in North America turn to correspondence courses. Some of these are now available online, which makes them more easily accessible to students, and greatly decreases turnaround time between lessons. Since 1998, I have been the North American teacher and representative for the largest of these courses, Kernewek dre Lyther (KDL), and have supervised some half-dozen students, of whom only one so far has successfully completed the first grade course. This rate of attrition is likely due at least in part to the particular difficulties that face Cornish learners in North America. Whereas many KDL students in Cornwall and other parts of Great Britain are in a position to meet and converse with other Cornish speakers on at least an occasional basis (by attending language weekends or other cultural events in Cornwall or in London), no such option is open to

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[6] I would like to thank Professors Pawl Birt, David Klausner, Catherine McKenna, Joseph F. Nagy, and Eve Sweetser for the information they provided me regarding the state of Celtic language teaching at their respective universities and across North America.

[7] The most common textbook used in such courses is Henry Lewis' *Llawlyfr Cernyweg Canol* (Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1946, reprinted 1980), which presents an overview of Middle Cornish grammar (in Welsh) as well as excepts from a variety of medieval Cornish texts. Unfortunately, Lewis' book has never been translated into English, and it is now somewhat out of date.

[8] A brief course description of Celtic 120 is available on the web at http://www.stfx.ca/academic/celtic-studies/course-description.html. I became aware of the existence of this course through Kevin J. Rottet's article "Studying Breton in North America: Challenges and Opportunities", which appeared in the previous issue of this journal.

[9] The Cornish Language Board offers Cornish language examinations at four levels or "grades", and students who pass the fourth grade examination—the equivalent of two or three years of intensive college study—are deemed to be relatively fluent speakers, and are honored by being made bards of the Cornish Gorsedd "by examination in the Cornish Language". The examinations may be taken in either Common Cornish or Unified Cornish (see below); for more information, contact Maureen Fuller, Sewena, 11 Barton Close, Lannergh/Landrake, Essa/Saltash, KERNOW PL12 5BA.

correspondence students in the United States and Canada. In many cases, they find that the nearest Cornish speaker lives hundreds of miles away, and Cornish language events of any kind are rare on this side of the Atlantic.[10] The most common complaint voiced by my correspondence students has been the lack of any opportunity to practice their spoken Cornish. In addition, learners are often surprised to find how different Cornish is from other foreign languages that they have studied—even other Celtic languages like Irish and Welsh—and without the support of fellow speakers living nearby, or even an annual Cornish language gathering, it is perhaps not surprising that many do not succeed in mastering it.

Another significant problem facing would-be Cornish language learners is the bewilderingly large number of different *kinds* of revived Cornish. At present, there are no fewer than five different orthographic systems in use by a population of Cornish speakers and learners which numbers only a few thousand worldwide. Although one form, Common Cornish, has a significantly larger "market share" than any of the other systems, and is probably used by an outright majority of Cornish speakers (SGRÜD Research 2000: section 3.1), it has a number of vocal opponents, and many users of other varieties would rank it dead last in terms of preference. It should be noted that the differences between these various forms of Cornish go deeper than orthography: each one is based on a slightly different period in the history of the language, and reflects a different set of assumptions and conclusions about the phonology and grammar of traditional Cornish, as well as about what constitutes a "good" spelling system. And while many speakers of revived Cornish speak with the same "accent", regardless of which variety of Cornish they write, this is largely the result of ignoring the rules of

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[10] The only such event I can recall in recent years was part of the Cornish American Heritage Society's biennial Gathering of Cornish Cousins held in Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania, USA in July 1999, which featured an introductory class in revived Cornish (attended by some twenty people) and an abbreviated bardic ceremony in which Cornish was spoken. Similar events may have been held at subsequent Gatherings as well.

pronunciation built in to each system! The five forms of revived Cornish currently in use are as follows:[11]

- **Unified Cornish / Kernewek Unys.** This was the first widely accepted standard orthography for revived Cornish, and was developed in the 1920s and 1930s by R. Morton Nance (Mordon), in conjunction with A.S.D. Smith (Caradar) and others. Unified Cornish is often said to be based on the Middle Cornish of the *Ordinalia*, a trilogy of mystery plays written c. 1400 (see George and Broderick 1993: 646, Williams 1995: 162). The orthography is essentially a regularization of the system(s) employed in Middle Cornish manuscripts, although there are some notable exceptions and occasional oversights. Many users of Cornish now feel that Nance's work, while impressive, is not based on the most accurate possible reconstruction of Middle Cornish phonology; however, Unified Cornish still has a number of adherents, and most material originally published before 1980 uses this system. Unified Cornish textbooks and dictionaries are widely available, and are still used by speakers of all forms of Cornish.

Nance's *A New Cornish Dictionary / Gerlyver Noweth Kernewek* (Agan Tavas, 1999) is still the most complete two-way Cornish and English dictionary on the market. The most well-known textbook of Unified Cornish is Caradar's *Cornish Simplified, Part One* (2nd ed., Dyllansow Truran, 1972); *Part Two* (Dyllansow Truran, 1984) presents additional grammar notes illustrated by relevant quotations from Middle Cornish texts, and is aimed at more advanced learners. P.A.S. Pool's *Cornish for Beginners* (3rd ed., Cornish Language Board, 1970) is similar in content to *Cornish Simplified, Part One*, and also contains a number of reading passages suitable for beginning students. *Kernewek mar Plek!* by Crysten

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[11] The order in which these five orthographies are presented is roughly chronological, according to the dates at which each system was introduced to the Cornish-speaking public. It is not intended to reflect a "ranking" of the various forms.

Fudge and Graham Sandercock (Dyllansow Truran, no publication date given) is a more recent introductory textbook, and is available with accompanying audiocassettes. Fans of Heini Gruffudd's *Welsh is Fun!* will also be interested in the recently re-released *Cornish is Fun! An Informal Course in Living Cornish* (Y Lolfa, 2003). Two Unified Cornish phrasebooks are available: Christopher Bice's *Lyver Lavarow Kernewek: A Cornish Phrase Book* (Dyllansow Truran, 1994) and Clive Baker's *Lyver Lavarow Dhe Les* (Agan Tavas, 2002). Further information on Unified Cornish classes, gatherings, and learning materials is available from Agan Tavas / Spyrys a Gernow, Gordon Villa, Sunnyvale Road, Portreath, Redruth, KERNOW TR16 4NE, (+44) (0)1209 842394, spyrys@eurobell.co.uk; those interested in a correspondence course in Unified Cornish should contact Hilary Shaw, Old Kiln, Porth Navas, Falmouth, KERNOW.

- **Modern Cornish / Carnoack Nowedga.** In the early 1980s, Richard Gendall began promoting a form of revived Cornish based on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms of the language, as well as words attested in the English dialect of western Cornwall. This variety, known as Modern Cornish (Carnoack Nowedga) employs a spelling system which is more or less identical to that used by writers of Late Cornish in the 1600s and 1700s. One of the strongest appeals of Modern Cornish is the fact that of all the orthographic systems in use, it is the one that most closely resembles the forms of place-names found on modern-day maps of Cornwall. The flavor of the system is rather like Manx, in that it uses several graphemes ultimately derived from Early Modern English, albeit in ways that may surprise present-day English speakers. Because it is based on Late Cornish rather than Middle Cornish, Carnoack Nowedga is significantly different from the other four systems in terms of phonology and grammar as well as spelling, which makes it difficult for users of Modern Cornish to converse with speakers of other kinds of Cornish. A number of Modern

Cornish learning materials have been produced, but they are less widely available than those published in Unified, Common, and UCR (see below).

Richard Gendall is the author or compiler of several reference works in Modern Cornish, including *A Practical Dictionary of Modern Cornish, Part One: Cornish-English* (2nd ed., Teere ha Tavaz, 1997), *Part Two: English-Cornish* (Teere ha Tavaz, 1998), and *A Student's Grammar of Modern Cornish* (Cornish Language Council, 1991). His textbook *Tavas a Ragadazow: The Language of My Forefathers* (Teer ha Tavas, 2000) provides a complete overview of Modern Cornish grammar, and includes lessons, reading passages, and a Cornish-English glossary. A more basic textbook is Neal Kennedy's *Deskans Noze: A Cornish Course for Beginners* (An Garrack / Cussel an Tavas Kernuack, 1997), which is a translation of a Welsh course called *Dosbarth Nos*. Further information about Modern Cornish is available from **Teer ha Tavas**, Tregrill Vean, Menheniot, Liskeard, KERNOW PL14 3PL, or from **Cussel an Tavas Kernuack / The Cornish Language Council**, Tregenza Vean, Antron Hill, Mabe, Penryn, KERNOW TR10 9HH, Great Britain, (+44) (0)1326 375362. Cussel an Tavas Kernuack also publishes *An Garrack*, a Cornish-language magazine aimed at users of Modern Cornish.

- **Common Cornish / Kernewek Kemmyn.** This orthography was devised by Ken George in the early 1980s, and is based on the traditional Cornish of c.1500 (George 1986: 60). Common Cornish was conceived as a phonemic spelling system which would reflect the phonology of Middle Cornish more accurately and which would make revived Cornish easier to read, write, and speak. It was also hoped that the introduction of a new orthography which incorporated the results of a further half- century of phonological research would make revived Cornish more acceptable to the academic world in general George 1986: 41). Common Cornish was formally

introduced to the Cornish-speaking public in 1987, when the Cornish Language Board officially adopted the new system in place of Unified Cornish (Kesva an Taves Kernewek 1994: 16-7). However, from the first, there were a number of Cornish speakers and Cornish scholars who found fault with Kernewek Kemmyn, either on methodological, linguistic, or aesthetic grounds, and although it has the largest "market share" among the systems currently in use, it has not gained universal acceptance. Nonetheless, considerably more books are currently published in Common Cornish than in any other form of the language, and many works of literature originally written in Unified Cornish have been reissued in Kernewek Kemmyn editions.

Two textbooks of Common Cornish are available: Graham Sandercock's *Holyewgh an Lergh: Cornish this Way* (2nd ed., Kesva an Taves Kernewek 1993) is an outstanding introduction to the fundamentals of the language, while Wella Brown's *Skeul an Yeth* (Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 1996, 1997, 1998) is a more in-depth course which covers the entire grammar in three volumes. Both are available with accompanying audiocassettes. Ken George's *Gerlyver Kres: The New Standard Cornish Dictionary* (Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 1998, reprinted 2000) is the principal reference work for Common Cornish; his *Gerlyver Kernewek Kemmyn: An Gerlyver Meur* (Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 1993), a Cornish-English dictionary with etymological information, is scheduled to be reissued in an expanded format later this year. The children's visual dictionary *The First Thousand Words in Cornish* (2nd ed., Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 2003) is an excellent resource for adult Cornish learners as well. Wella Brown's *Grammar of Modern Cornish*, 3rd edition (Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 2001) provides a thorough treatment of revived Cornish grammar, illustrated with examples taken from the traditional texts; for those seeking a more basic overview, John Page's *Grammar for the First Grade (and Auxiliary Verbs* (5th ed., Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 1993) and *Grammar*

34

Beyond the First Grade (4th ed., Kesva an Taves Kernewek, 1993) are recommended. Ray Edwards' *Verbow Kernewek* (Kernewek dre Lyther, 1995) is a useful reference for Cornish verb conjugations, and Philip Knight's *My, Ny Vynnav Kewsel Sowsnek* (3rd ed., Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek, 1994) is a very amusing Common Cornish phrasebook.

For further information about Common Cornish, contact **Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek**, Fentenwynn, Bre Wartha, Fordh Ponsmeur, Truru, KERNOW TR2 4DR, (+44) (0)1726 882681, fentenwynn@hotmail.com. The Kowethas organizes language classes and an annual weekend for Cornish learners, and publishes a variety of Cornish-language books as well as a monthly Cornish magazine, *An Gannas*. A correspondence course in Common Cornish is available from **Kernewek dre Lyther (KDL)**; for more information, contact Symon Harner, 39 Spinnaker House, Bisscombe Gardens, Essa/Saltash, KERNOW PL12 6EG, (+44) (0)1752 844826, sym-harner@supanet.com. KDL also publishes a number of Cornish-language books, and all KDL students receive the quarterly newsletter *An Kesskrifer*. Books published by **Kesva an Taves Kernewek / The Cornish Language Board** are available from the Kesva's sales officer, Jori Ansell, 65 Churchtown, Gwynnyer, Heyl, KERNOW TR27 5JL, (+44) (0)1736 850878, jori-ansell@talk21.com.

- **Unified Cornish Revised / Kernowek Unys Amendys (UCR).** This system was proposed in the 1990s by N.J.A. Williams, largely as a response to the introduction of Common Cornish, a form of revived Cornish to which Williams has strong objections. It is based on Cornish of the Tudor period (drawn from texts dated 1504-1611), although it also takes account of material found in earlier and later texts (Williams 1995: 169). Its phonological base is significantly different from that of both Common and Unified Cornish, although its spelling system is much closer to Unified than to Common. Unlike Common

35

Cornish, which retained many of the syntactic principles of Unified Cornish, while significantly modifying the spelling and the pronunciation, UCR largely retains the spelling of Unified Cornish (itself a "regularization" of Middle Cornish orthographic practices), while altering the pronunciation, morphology, and syntax. It has won many converts, chiefly former users of Unified Cornish who consider it to be a valuable refinement of that system, and at least one prolific writer of revived Cornish, Myghal Palmer, employs a number of UCR-compatible features in his work.

The principal textbook for students of Unified Cornish Revised is Nicholas Williams' *Clappya Kernowek* (Agan Tavas, 1997), which provides an excellent overview of Cornish grammar, and uses numerous examples drawn from traditional Cornish texts. Andrew Climo-Thompson has produced an online course *Kernuak Es* (available at http://www.agantavas.org.uk/modules.php?name=Downlo ads) which combines features of Unified Cornish Revised and Modern Cornish; this course is also available in book form, and an accompanying audio CD has been produced. Williams' *English-Cornish Dictionary / Gerlyver Sawsnek-Kernowek* (Everson Gunn Teoranta/Agan Tavas, 2000) is by far the largest dictionary of its kind ever compiled, and contains several interesting and useful appendices. Also worthy of note is Williams' *Testament Noweth* (Spyrys a Gernow, 2002), which is the first complete translation of the New Testament into any form of Cornish. Further information on UCR is available from **Agan Tavas / Spyrys a Gernow**, Gordon Villa, Sunnyvale Road, Portreath, Redruth, KERNOW TR16 4NE, (+44) (0)1209 842394, spyrys@eurobell.co.uk. In addition to offering Cornish classes and an annual language weekend for learners, Agan Tavas publishes the Cornish-language magazine *An Gowsva* as well as a number of other books in Unified Cornish and UCR.

- **Kernÿweug.** This system was developed by a Cornish poet named Tim Saunders, and represents the results of

research into Cornish phonology which he conducted during the 1970s and 1980s. It has been described as an "etymological" spelling system (George, 1986: 33) and, as such, it could be said to be based on all periods of traditional Cornish, and to reflect each of these periods equally well. Saunders' Cornish makes use of a large number of Welsh and Breton loanwords, as well as new coinings that are not found in other varieties of the revived language. The orthography bears much less resemblance to traditional Cornish spelling than Common Cornish does, and makes use of graphemes found in Breton and Welsh (c'h, ph). Although there are no textbooks available in this form of Cornish, and it has never been promoted as a system for general use among Cornish speakers, it is worth mentioning here since Saunders is one of the most gifted contemporary Cornish writers, and his recently published anthology *The High Tide: Collected Poems in Cornish 1974-1999* (Francis Boutle, 1999) is among the most important works of twentieth-century Cornish literature.

Since there is no general consensus on which form of the language ought to be made "official", and no body whose authority to make such a decision is universally acknowledged, proponents of rival systems have spent a great deal of time arguing with one another—often, it should be noted, in English rather than in Cornish—and as a result, progress in introducing the language to public life and education has been slowed. Bilingual signs can only be set up if the spelling of the Cornish text can be agreed upon, and if Cornish is to be made available as a school subject, teachers need to know which textbooks and grammars to buy.

Nonetheless, there is room for optimism, as the fiercest arguments about orthography seem to have burned themselves out during the mid-1990s, while the prospect of obtaining increased recognition and financial support for the language has provided a new incentive for cooperation between groups.

When I began learning Cornish myself in the mid-1990s, there was almost no Cornish language material available on the Internet, and few Cornish speakers had access to e-mail. This situation has changed dramatically in the past five years, and Cornish speakers

today can access a number of websites featuring Cornish content. Most notable in this respect is the Cornish language website *Nowodhow Kernow*, which for the past two and a half years has presented the news of Cornwall and the Cornish language community, primarily in Common Cornish. A new website, *An Burow*, is currently under construction, and when completed it will provide similar coverage in Common Cornish, Unified Cornish/UCR, and Modern Cornish, as well as English. The list below[12] includes a number of sites which provide information in or about the Cornish language, grouped according to orthographic system:

General Information:
An Independent Academic Study on Cornish (commissioned by the Government Office for the South West; an excellent source of information on the current state of the language):
http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/cornish/GOSW/default.htm

Kevren Cornish Language Page (site based in Australia featuring general information about the Cornish language):
http://members.ozemail.com.au/~kevrenor/kevren.html

Gorseth Kernow (the official website of the Cornish Gorsedd; features Unified Cornish):
http://www.gorsethkernow.org.uk/

Wikipedia (online encyclopedia with an entry on Cornish):
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornish_language

Common Cornish:
Kernewek dre Lyther (a correspondence course in Common Cornish, now available online):
http://www.kdlcornish.freeserve.co.uk/

Kernewek dre Gesroesweyth (another series of online lessons, published in the Netherlands):
http://members.lycos.nl/siteklj/KDG/index.htm

Warlinenn (the website of the Cornish Language Fellowship / Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek, the leading organization for speakers of Common Cornish): http://www.cornish-language.org/Cornish/

Nowodhow Kernow (news of Cornwall in Common Cornish) http://www.geocities.com/cornishnews/

Kernewek 101 (a Common Cornish phrasebook): http://www.serenelife.com/kernewek101/

Western Morning News (newspaper based in Devon which features occasional content in Common Cornish—search for "kernewek" to find relevant articles): www.westernmorningnews.co.uk

Unified Cornish and UCR:
Agan Tavas (the leading organization for speakers of Unified Cornish and UCR; features an online course to download): http://www.agantavas.org.uk/index.php

Gerlyver Kernewek-Sawsnek (online Cornish-English dictionary): http://www.pauldavies.net/cornish/lexicon.cfm

Cornish Language Learning Centre (a website offering Cornish translation software and various texts to download): http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/Den/5400/index.htm

Gwyasva Golvan (N.J.A. Williams' website, with copies of articles about Cornish language issues): http://www.fortunecity.com/bally/killiney/982/

KernSpell (UCR spell-checking software for the Mac OS): http://www.evertype.com/software/mackernspell/

Modern Cornish:
Cussel an Tavaz Kernuack (the website of the Cornish Language Council, the leading organization for speakers of Modern Cornish; currently offline): http://www.geocities.com/cornishlanguagecouncil/

Tabm Kernuack (a Modern Cornish phrasebook):
http://www.ex.ac.uk/~ajbeer/aust.htm

Traditional Cornish:
Bibliography of Cornish Medieval Drama (a list of sources relating to medieval Cornish literature): http://collectorspost.com/Catalogue/medramacornwall.htm
The Ordinalia (the text of the most famous Middle Cornish text online): http://www.ordinalia.com/
Cornish Language Texts (a website featuring several Middle and Late Cornish texts, in manuscript spellings and/or Common Cornish transliteration): http://home.clara.net/carrot/kernmss/

Other Useful Sites:
An Bibel Kernewek (the Cornish Bible translation project, which produces translations in Common and Unified Cornish): http://www.bibel.kernewek.btinternet.co.uk/
An Burow (news of Cornwall in English and three varieties of Cornish): http://www.cornish-language-news.org/default.asp
Just Cornish (an online store based in Cornwall, whose website supports Common Cornish as well as several other languages): http://www.justcornish.com/new_store/catalog/catalog/default.php
A list of organizations and businesses which promote Cornish language and culture can be found at http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/cornish/GOSW/organisations.htm

In addition to the websites listed above, there are at least three online discussion groups for Cornish speakers and learners:

Cornishlanguagelearners (A group formed "for all learners of Cornish [all forms] to meet and help each other to learn Cornish") http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cornishlanguagelearners/
Kernewek: Students of the Cornish Language (A group which seeks "to unite people interested in learning the Cornish Language

or interested in the issues involving the language"): http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Kernewek/
Cornish Orthography (A group which "continues the discussion about the various ways to spell the Cornish language"): http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cornishorthography/

The Internet has been a boon to Cornish learners in North America and elsewhere in the world who do not have the opportunity to speak the language in their own hometowns, since it provides them with "online communities" in which they can congregate and communicate with one another in Cornish. Unfortunately, current technology limits most online interaction to an exchange of text messages, which has two significant disadvantages for Cornish learners: firstly, text messages do not permit students to practice actually speaking the language, and so cannot fully substitute for participation in an evening class or language gathering; and secondly, the use of a written medium serves to emphasize the distinctions between the different forms of Cornish—distinctions which are considerably less noticeable in the spoken language—thus potentially dividing Cornish users rather than uniting them. Nonetheless, each new Cornish language website and discussion group created has the potential to reach a far wider audience than any print publication could hope to do, and in this respect, the continuing growth of Cornish on the Internet can only strengthen the language.

Although I have only been studying Cornish for eight years, they have been exciting years for the revival movement, both in Cornwall and around the world. The profile of the Cornish language has never been higher, and the number of Cornish speakers and learners continues to rise. And despite the language's tenuous foothold on this side of the Atlantic, there are several North American Cornish speakers who have made considerable contributions to that success. The past decade has seen no fewer than five Cornish-language publications produced by American and Canadian writers (see below for a full list), and many students from the United States and Canada have passed Cornish Language Board examinations at all four levels. The Cornish language is achieving greater visibility with each passing year, and as the movement begun by Henry Jenner in 1904 marks its hundredth anniversary, Cornish speakers can take a justifiable pride in the

progress we have made in reviving this once-dead language. It is only to be hoped that as Cornish gains ground in its native country, it will also become more widely available to would-be learners in North America.

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Cornish Publications by North American Authors

Bruch, B., (Ed.) *An Balores.* Cambridge, Massachusetts: nos. 1-2 (Winter 1999, Spring 1999). (A short-lived periodical for Cornish speakers and learners in North America, which featured material in English and three varieties of revived Cornish)

Shaw, J. (1997) *Yn Bro Nowydh.* Kernewek dre Lyther/Kesva an Taves Kernewek, (A short novel in Common Cornish describing the experiences of a Scottish family emigrating to Canada in the nineteenth century)

Shaw, J. (1996) *Tri Hwedhel a-dhiworth Kanada.* Kernewek dre Lyther/Kesva an Taves Kernewek, (Three short stories from Canada, written in Common Cornish)

Shaw, J. (1999) *Yma an Chi ow Leski.* Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek,. (A novella in Common Cornish)

Young, B. (1999) *Lyver Lywans Bukkyas Keltek.* Spyrys a Gernow. (A coloring book featuring illustrations based on Celtic mythology, with accompanying text in Unified Cornish, Welsh, and Breton)

VOLUME 9

2004

RESEARCH ARTICLES

REVIEWS