

# Cornwall

Cornwall, the most southwestern county of the United Kingdom, is known by many names including Kernow, the land of King Arthur, the Cornish Riviera, and the Duchy of Cornwall.

One might say that Cornwall is almost a 'nation' with a climate, history, culture, economy and, until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a language distinct from the other counties of the UK.

Warmed by the Gulf Stream, parts of Cornwall enjoy a sub-tropical climate; palm trees grow in several areas of the county. An important industry is the growing of flowers which, when picked and shipped in February, provide solace to those in other parts of the UK still under winter's grip. This climate and the county's magnificent scenery are the foundation of Cornwall's important modern tourist industry.

Although Britain was occupied by the Romans from 43AD-410AD, there is little evidence that Roman rule was effective west of Exeter and few Roman remains have been found. Rural society in Cornwall was largely unchanged by the Roman influence and the remoteness of the county helped them to retain their unique identity. The Cornish language, of Celtic origin, similar to Welsh and the Breton language of Brittany in France, had died out by the end of the eighteenth century. Today the Cornish speak English but with their own distinct accent. In the last fifty years there has been a successful revival of the Cornish language, Cornish is taught in

some schools and now there are several hundred people who can speak the language.

The county has inspired many renowned poets, authors and other artists including Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, Daphne Du Maurier and Barbara Hepworth.

The patron saint of Cornwall, St. Piran, an Irish monk, born about 480 AD, is believed to have been converted to Christianity by St. Patrick. St. Piran is credited with establishing the new faith in Cornwall and we fly his flag on 5 March, St. Piran's Day.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, John Wesley visited the county many times. His message and preaching skills, together with the established Anglican Church's neglect of the spiritual needs of those living in the new mining areas, persuaded many Cornish to convert to Methodism. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of Methodists in Cornwall far exceeded those of the Anglican faith.

Tin has been mined in Cornwall since the Bronze Age. The Cornish are believed to have traded the metal with the Phoenicians at the time of the building of the Temple in King Solomon's reign.

During the hundred years beginning around 1750, Cornwall was in the forefront of the industrial revolution. The county experienced a huge expansion of tin and copper mining and

these mines soon employed tens of thousands of men and women. The Cornish became the most skilled hard-rock miners in the world. These industries were among the first to utilize steam power. Richard Trevithick, the inventor of the world's first steam locomotive, was a Cornishman, as was Sir Humphry Davy, the inventor of the miner's safety lamp.

In the 1860's the prices for both tin and copper slumped when new mines outside the United Kingdom opened up. This hit the industry hard as Cornish mining had become high cost due to the more accessible deposits having been extracted first. Thousands of jobless miners left for Canada, United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Latin America, anywhere where hard rock mining skills were in demand.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was estimated that between one third and one half of those born in Cornwall lived outside the county. This 'Great Emigration' or Cornish diaspora included not just miners but also slate quarrymen who went in large numbers to Pennsylvania and farmers who came to Ontario and Wisconsin.

The area around Cobourg, Bowmanville, Oshawa, Port Hope and north to Peterborough attracted a large number of Cornish immigrants. Many were Bible Christians from the farms of North Cornwall. These Bible Christians were a separate Methodist denomination not only from North Cornwall but also North Devon.



### How do I join the TCA?

Complete the application form below.  
Send it, together with the annual membership fee  
of \$25.00 CDN  
(payable to the Toronto Cornish Association)  
to:

The Membership Secretary  
Toronto Cornish Association  
25 Queensgrove Rd  
Scarborough  
Ontario M1N 3A9

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....  
Home Phone.....  
Other.....  
E-mail.....

Research names and towns

For further information  
Visit our website at  
[WWW.TorontoCornishAssociation.org](http://WWW.TorontoCornishAssociation.org)  
Or contact the membership secretary  
[bjgardner@sympatico.ca](mailto:bjgardner@sympatico.ca)

Southwestern Ontario also attracted Cornish farmers. Copper miners found jobs at Bruce Mines, near Sault Ste. Marie.

Interest in family history is growing. Many descendants of those who left Cornwall are investigating their Cornish roots and the culture of their ancestors. In the last twenty years, many Cornish societies have been established world-wide. There have been earlier Cornish Associations in Toronto, one dating back to 1874 but the present association was inaugurated in March 1994. The current TCA has a membership of about ninety.

The objectives of the TCA are to preserve our Cornish heritage, to stimulate interest in our Cornish traditions, local history, genealogy, and culture. The Association provides information to members in newsletters and minutes of monthly meetings and also a link with other Cornish Associations and with Cornwall.

Our newsletters and our website, [www.torontocornishassociation.org](http://www.torontocornishassociation.org), contain items of Cornish interest: newspaper items, research by members, lists of books or other Cornish reference material found in Toronto libraries or member's collections, a photo gallery and much more. The monthly mailing provides a link to out-of-town members and those unable to attend meetings. The modest annual fee is set to cover the cost of printing and postage and is the same for Toronto and members living further afield.

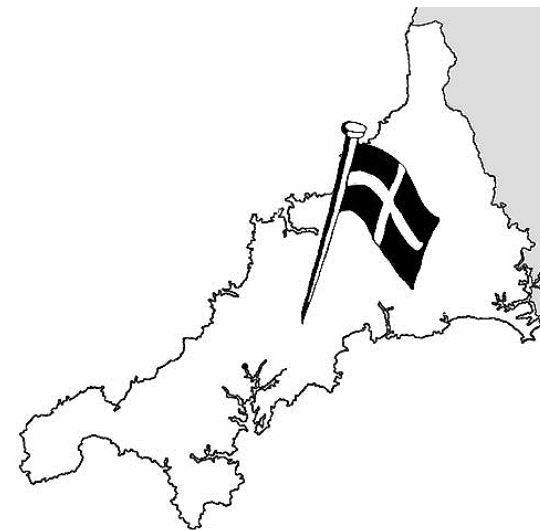


## Toronto Cornish Association

Founded in 1994

Providing a forum for those interested  
in the County of Cornwall, UK.

E-Mail: [torontocornish@gmail.com](mailto:torontocornish@gmail.com)



[www.TorontoCornishAssociation.org](http://www.TorontoCornishAssociation.org)