

The Cornish are Coming!

Cousin Jacks' and Jennies' from around the World will be descending on the historic fishing port of Looe and South East Cornwall during the first week of September 2008 for the third Dehwelans or Homecoming in Cornish. It is estimated that there may be over six million people worldwide that are of Cornish descent.

Festival co-ordinator Edwina Arkell said, "With the decline of the Cornish mining economy after its peak in the 1870, migration was an attractive proposition for young men seeking the best wages and conditions."

History shows that 'Cousin Jacks' were not slow to seek their fortunes wherever skilled miners were needed and as the mining fields of the New World began to give up their riches and the old mines of Cornwall stopped paying dividends, so young men and their families - miners, foundry workers, carpenters and farm boys alike - took ship to the Americas, Australasia, Asia and Africa.

"The Dehwelans Festival is an opportunity to encourage the descendents of these miners, as well as the considerable UK Cornish community to retrace their family roots and sample a piece of Cornish culture and hospitality."

The Festival is organised by the Keskerdth Kernow group, with local board member Ron Overd overseeing. The group wants to provide a platform for developing future links with visitors from these overseas communities that will not only spread the richness and diversity of Cornish culture but also bring lasting economic benefits to South East Cornwall.

The Dehwelans website has been revamped and will not only provide information on the range of walks, talks, lectures, film shows, dances, musical entertainment, trips and tours, performances and workshops during the week long gathering, but be an opportunity for Cornish businesses to promote their products, produce and services. www.dehwelanskernow.com

Festival programme

A large performance marquee and market place is planned on the grassed area by the Millpool car park right next to the river and at other locations around the town, all promoting Cornish culture, crafts and history.

There will be weekly and daily Festival tickets on sale in the Looe Tourist Information Centre. Telephone 01503 262072

Below is just a flavour of what is planned;

Cornish Troyl & Noze Looan, theatre performances, choir concerts, children's entertainment, local produce market, early bird catches the fish, market tour, Sheila's School of Dancing The Smugglers Tale dance show, TASTE SE Cornwall group 'Grazing on the Riverside', photographic exhibition, guided heritage trails, Methodism lecture, World Heritage Site lecture, family history studies and links to the Cornwall Records office at the Looe Enterprise Centre. An RNLI concert and a Looe Valley walk to name but a few. Sir John Trelawny has also agreed to read excerpts from his book the Islanders and a trip has been arranged to tour Trelawne Manor near Looe topped with a Cornish cream tea.

A full programme of film screenings is planned with feature films, sponsored by Barclay House Restaurant, Rooms and Cottages and including 'Cornish Shorts', Dressing Granite, The Midnight Drive and The Wrecking Season as well as local archive film material. It is hoped that young people will be able to make their own film around their insights into their Cornish identity, that will be edited and shown at a later date.

It is also hoped that Cornish musician Phil Innes of KYNAZ (Cornwall Youth Music Action Zone) and Cornish speaker Pol Hodge will work with Looe Community School to assist young people to write a unique musical piece especially for Dehwelans that they will perform at the festival. Young people from Sheila's School of Dancing are writing a unique dance piece around the story of Zephaniah Job, The Smugglers Banker to be performed in the picturesque riverside location. The Cornwall Songwriters will be performing their latest offering called Cornish Lads.

Trips Out

The organisers wish to spread the benefits of the festival by organising a number of trips out around South East Cornwall including;

The Mineral Trail to Minions & Liskeard, Pelynt & Bishop Trelawney tour & workshop, Smugglers Yarn trip to Polperro, Looe Island. The Monkey Sanctuary and Tamar Valley Tour to Calstock, Gunnislake and Kit Hill.

The week will culminate in a Gala Show Case on the Friday with dancing on the seafront with Carolaire & colourful processional on the Sunday.

Gorsedd

To top it all, the annual Cornish Gorsedd is being held in Looe on the Saturday, when 350 plus Cornish Bards and their families from around the World will descend on Looe for their annual Bardic ceremony.

The Gorsedd of Cornwall is an organisation dedicated to the preservation of Cornwall's unique Celtic spirit, through literature, language, music, the arts and is the recognition of all forms of important service to Cornwall and its people. The annual Gorsedd ceremony takes place on the first Saturday in September at a different outdoor site each year. It is open to the public, attendance is free and visitors are most welcome. The colourful ceremony, which takes about 1½ hours is conducted mainly in Cornish but an explanatory bi-lingual booklet is available. This ceremony will take place on the playing fields at the Barbican and in Looe Community School. There will be a procession of Bards through the town in the morning.

For more information on the Cornish Gorsedd go to www.gorsethkernow.org.uk To book contact Looe Tourist Information Centre Telephone 44 (0)1503 262072

Email looetic@btconnect.com or go to www.dehwelanskernow.com to download a booking form.

For more information on Dehwelans Looe 2008 contact Edwina Arkell co-ordinator on 44 (0)1503 264160 Mobile 07717203725

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