



## News from the St. Tudy History Group Research Team .....

I decided to look into what was happening in St. Tudy 100 years ago regarding Christmas entertainments, to see if anything was going on at all in what I assumed would be a quiet sleepy Cornish village.

It seems that far from being so, St. Tudy was a lively and thriving place to live. The "Hut" which was originally built as part of the WW1 War Memorial, was the hub of all entertainments including whist drives, dances and concerts on Saturday nights – this was our Village Hall then, and the whole village threw themselves into all events. In December 1922 there was a "Big Drapery Sale", the WI also carried out a social evening of carols, songs and a one-act play, followed by a picnic tea – everything seemed to include a "tea" of some sorts. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day there were services in both Churches. On Boxing Day there was yet again another social evening, organised by Reverend Eardley in the now named "Recreation Hut", when there was a short entertainment followed by games and more refreshments of course.

I had previously also started researching the connection between Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol" and Cornwall. Apparently Dickens had befriended Dr. Marley whilst Marley worked as a physician in London, and they had joked during dinner about Marley's unusual name. Dickens told him that he would be a "household name". Dr. Marley later retired to Cornwall to be closer to his son who was a doctor in Padstow, Marley died in 1854. Recent research done by a local historian has led to the discovery of his grave at St. Endellion. In December 1922 there was an article in the Western Morning News on the subject of Dickens, referring to the influence Cornwall had on him when he visited in 1842. It stated that two very popular Cornish Christmas Carol books of the time had also greatly influenced Dickens in his writing of the famous story.

Another Dickensian connection is when, in December 1920, the inhabitants of St. Tudy were entertained by "Mrs Jarley's World Famed Wax Works" in the Hut. The Waxworks were created by Charles Dickens as a small part of The Old Curiosity Shop, where Mrs Jarley displayed waxworks on a platform behind a velvet rope, and the characters were described one by one as they are pointed out by little Nell. Amateur theatre performers then toured the country recreating this tableau, playing various waxwork figures. So, you can see that 100 years ago St. Tudy residents were very well entertained, fed and watered, and it was very much a social community, as it is today.

I did have one concern about the "Bric-a-Brac Concert Party" who gave an "entertainment" which was much enjoyed in the Hut in December 1922. They performed various humorous interludes, song and dance, and farcical sketches. One of their usual closing songs was "Glorious Devon" which was a very famous and popular song of the time. The chorus was a rollicking affair that would have encouraged those listening to join in singing the praises of Devon in the chorus.

I don't think they would have sung THAT song in St. Tudy – do you?

PAM FREE