



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

I am sure that many of you would have driven past the familiar Hendra Farm on the way to Bodmin. Like a lot of buildings, they are so familiar you don't give them much thought. I found an article in the Cornish & Devon post from late January 1904, 120 years ago, reporting on "A Social Evening at Hendra Farm" where Mr and Mrs Stephens entertained the contractors, their workmen and apprentices who have taken part in erecting "the very excellent new farmhouse at Hendra". They were all treated to a "very high-class supper", and the youngest apprentice was accorded an "equal invitation" with the contractors, Mr. Hooper, Carpenter, and Mr. Worth, Mason. A few friends were also invited, making altogether a large number. After supper, there were singers and various amusements, a very enjoyable time was spent which would be long remembered by all.

The "entertainments" talked about consisted of storytelling, duets and tableaux which seemed to be very extravagant affairs. These events were very popular in St. Tudy during the late 1890's and the early 1900's and were held to encourage people to raise money for various funds in the village like the extension to the school and missions, or just as patriotic events such as one held in 1894 in the schoolroom. Apparently the "Patriotic Concert" was crowded by an enthusiastic audience, who expressed great pleasure at the excellent entertainment provided. The Perriott Minstrels, forty in number, occupied the stage during the first part of the programme. As they usually only toured seaside resorts, the Minstrels would have been a real attraction to those attending in St. Tudy. Then solos were sung, and the programme concluded with a grand spectacle entitled "Britannia", in which quite an imposing "army of little men and women" represented Great Britain's possessions and allies. After this, all joined in heartily singing Rule Britannia, and then a tiny girl entered dressed as Her Majesty the Queen – Queen Victoria – who was received by the singing of the National Anthem.

All the village got involved in presenting these "entertainments". There seems to have been a lot of talented musicians and singers around, but of course, people took the time to learn musical instruments and popular songs of the day, as this was the only entertainment a hundred years or so ago in a place like St. Tudy.

I wonder if we could bring back "entertainments" in these days of TV, computers, mobile phones and social media? PAM FREE