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Text type: Glossary

Date of composition: 1865

Editions:1865

Source text:

Garland, Thomas. 1865. "A List of Words in Common Use in West Cornwall." *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 3 April: 45-54.

e - text

Access and transcription: March 2021

Number of words: 2,084

Dialect represented: Cornwall

Produced by María F. García - Bermejo Giner

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VNiVERSiTAS
STVDII
JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL INSTITUTION OF CORNWALL
SALAMANTIINI

VOL. 3:1865

"A LIST OF WORDS IN COMMON USE IN WEST CORNWALL"

BY

THOMAS GARLAND.

VII.—*A List of Words in common use in West Cornwall.* By THOMAS GARLAND.

I HAVE compiled this list as supplementary to the catalogue prepared by Mr. Couch, and inserted in this *Journal* for March, 1864. The readers of the *Journal* are under great obligations to that gentleman for the copious vocabulary with which he has furnished them. As the first in the field he has reaped the harvest, and I come after him merely as a gleaner. Mr. Couch's list contains 404 words. Of these I have marked 135 which belong to East Cornwall only, and 31 which form part of the English language, though many of them are probably more in use in that locality than elsewhere. After these deductions there remain 238 words, which seem to be equally familiar to East and West Cornwall. To these I have added 248, in common use in the West. There must be taken from these a few which appear in Mr. Couch's list as well, but with such variation in the orthography that they would not readily be recognised in the West, such as *eglet*, for *aglet*; *errish*, for *arrish*; *ozel*, for *uzzle*; and some others.

This second list, however, does not complete the Cornish vocabulary. In the district between Hayle and the Land's-End there is a great number of words used which are not familiar to people between Hayle and Truro. It is hoped that some contribution may come from that quarter to supply this deficiency; and although many provincial terms may still have escaped the diligence of the collectors, there will then be a tolerably complete compilation.

A.

AGLET. The berry of the hawthorn.

ALLISH. Weak, emaciated.

A-NEAR. "What's a-near,"—equivalent to "what is the use?" in the way of remonstrance.

ARAA. An exclamation of surprise. Pronounced aréah, in Penwith.

ARRISH. Stubble-field.

ATHIRT. Corruption of "athwart;" commonly said of a cross-grained man—"He's always going athirt."

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B.

BAL. A mine. Formerly used as a prefix—Ballanoon, Ballaswidden, &c.

BALARAG. Low, scurrilous abuse.

BALCH. Sash-line.

BEDOLING. Sorrowful, distressing.

BEE-BUTT. Bee-hive.

BELK. Belch.

BENDER. Anything unusually good of its kind.

BLOWTH. Blossom.

I venture to insert this beautiful word in a Cornish vocabulary, not because it is of Cornu-British origin, but because it has found refuge in Cornwall after being expatriated from the country at large. Modern lexicographers omit it, or insert it only as obsolete. It does no credit to the national taste that a word so full of liquid melody should have dropped out of general use.

BOILING. A word often used differently from its ordinary sense, applied to a numerous family, or a crowd of people—"the whole boiling of them."

BOLK. Firm.

BUCCA. A scare-crow.

BUCKING. Breaking-up ore, in the mines, with hammers.

"'Twas candle-teening when young Mall Treloar

"Trudged home from Bal, from *bucking* copper-ore."

BULGRANACK. A small fish. Stickleback.

BULK. To butt with the horns.

BULLEY. A pebble.

BURN. A "burn" of fish; corruption of "burden."

BUSSA. An earthenware vessel.

C.

CAUNCE. Pavement.

CHACKING. Thirsty.

CHET. A kitten.

CHILL. Oil-lamp.

CHIRKS. Cinders.

CHUCK. Throat.

CHUR. Any odd job of work. *Qy.* Corruption of *char*.

CLACK. Gabble, nonsense.

CLISTY. Soft, sticky.

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CLOMEN. Made of earthenware.

A mine captain at St. Just, who was often very rich in his figures, spoke of a hypocritical man as an old clomen cat, hollow to the toes."

CLUBBISH. Churlish, cruel.

CLUSH. To hide, stoop down.

COB. A "cob" wall is a wall built of earth. A bunch of hair on the forehead.

COBBET. A blow.

COLLOP. To strike.

COOSING. Loitering.

COOT. A threshing.

CORE. Hours of labour in mines.

COSTEENING. A mining term, for examining the back of a lode, by sinking pits upon it.

COXY. Foppish.

CREASE. Ridge-tile.

CREEVED. Bread scarcely browned in baking.

CROW. Pig's-house.

CROOM. Little, a crumb.

CROWST. Refreshment in a harvest-field.

CRUMMAT. A small bit.

CUD. Quid (of tobacco).

CUNY. Decayed, moss-grown.

D.

DAG. An axe.

DAGGING. Longing for, earnestly wishing.

DIG. A rap. "I'll fetch thee a dig."

DOB. To throw stones, or other missiles.

DOLE. Parcel of copper-ore. Share in a mine.

DOTE-FIG. Turkey fig.

DOWN-SOUSE. Frank, out-spoken.

DOWSING. Searching for mineral veins by the divining-rod.

DOWST. To yield, give up. "Come, dowst out."

DOWSTER. A fall, thump.

DREXLE. Threshold, door-step.

DRIBS. Small quantities, little debts.

DRILGY. Noise.

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DROKE. A narrow passage.

DROLL. Long-winded, tiresome.

DROOGE. An inferior labourer, lout, drudge.

DROUTH. Dry, parched.

DUMBLE-DORY. Cockchafer.

It may amuse the juvenile readers of this Journal to be told of a little boy who one day found something in a garden which he ate rather hastily, but not finding the taste to his expectation ran to ask his mother whether plums had legs, and being told they had not, exclaimed "Then I've been and eat a dumble-dory."

E.

ENT. To empty.

EVIL. A large three-pronged pike.

F.

FADDING. Toiling, moving heavily.

FADGY. "How d'ye fadgy"—equivalent to "how d'ye do?"

FENEAGE. To cheat.

FIG. To dress gaudily—"a fine fig."

FITCHERED. To be balked, stopped short. The word is mostly used in mining, where some difficulty occurs in the boring of a hole, for blasting.

FLASKET. Linen-basket.

FLINK. To jerk, fling about.

FLOOR. A term often applied to a rich grass-meadow. "A good floor of grass."

FLOP. Thump, rap.

A man who fancied himself haunted by his deceased wife's ghost, who would come to his bed-side by night, and slap him in the face, said he was sure it was she, because the flops were exactly the same as she used to give him when alive.

FLOSH. To spill, shake over.

FLUSHET. A dam in a stream.

FOOCH. Slovenly plight. Used as a verb, it implies that the subject of it is in rather in different circumstances. "Fooching along."

FRINGLE. Kitchen-grate.

G.

GADDLE. To fill up, brim over.

GAGGLED. Dirty, lagged with mire.

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GALE. A childless man.

GAMBORNE. A cross-stick, for hanging pigs on, when killed.

GAYS. Bits of broken earthenware.

GEEK. To pry about.

GIRTS. Oatmeal.

GLOW. To look sullen. What art thee glowing about?"

GLUMP. Sulkiness, ill-temper.

GOARD. Goad.

GOMMOCH. A fool.

GRAMFER. Grandfather.

GRAMMAR. Grandmother.

GRAMMAR-SOW. Wood-louse.

GRASS. The surface (in mining).

GRIGLAN. Stem of heather.

GROWAN. Loose friable granite.

GROWDER. Soft, powdery granite, often used instead of soap.

GRUSHANS. Sediment (in a glass, or tea-cup).

GRUTE. Dry earth.

GURGEY. A low hedge.

GURRY. Hand-barrow.

H.

HAPS. Clasp, fastening.

HAVAGE. Habit.

HEAP. Thigh.—It is also applied to any one knocked up and down by a sudden blow,—
"scat all of a heap."

HETCH. A low door, hatch.

HIDE. To beat, punish.

HOGAN. A piece of pastry, often with some meat or fruit in the middle. Also, *hòban*.

HOP. Narrow entry to a street, passage. Ope.

HOSE. Hoarseness.

J.

JAN-JEAK. Snail.

JIGGING. A process in the dressing of copper-ore.

JOUSTER. A travelling dealer in fish.

K.

KEILS. Ninepins.

KIDDLING. Tricky, cozening

[50]

KIDGED. Joining of a broken bone.

KILTER. Sorry plight.

KINK. Knot in a rope.

KITTEREEN. A public conveyance, van.

KITTING. Stealing ore in a mine.

L.

LACE. A term of measurement for land. As a verb, it is synonymous with to beat or to punish,—” I'll lace thee.”

LAP. To beat.

LATTICE. Tinned ware.

LING. To thump, chastise.

LOFFING. Laughing.

LOGGERS. Ears. “I'll pull thy loggers for thee.”

It creates some suspicion as to the moral qualities of our ancestors that their provincial vocabulary is so copious in words expressive of personal violence. Here, under the letter L, out of six words we have three of this class,—to *lace*, to *lap*, to *ling*. Their muscular powers appear to have been a long way in advance of their reflective, and we fancy their differences of opinion were oftener settled by a blow than an argument.

M.

MABYER. A young fowl.

MANSHUN. Small loaf of bread.

MIDGET. Very small, a mite.

MINCHING. Playing truant.

MORT. Unmelted lard.

MUNDIC. Iron pyrites.

MUNGE. To chew. Munch.

MUTTING. Cross, sullen.

N.

NACKIN. Handkerchief.

NALE. Awl.

NASH. Pale, debilitated.

NICKERS. A class of mining gnomes or fairies, heard working in advance of miners.

Sometimes called *Nuggies*.

NIFF. Disagreement, quarrel.

NOGGY. A blockhead.

NUDDICK. The nape of the neck.

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O.

OLLICK. A kind of leek.

OVER-FANGED. Strained, over-stretched.

P.

PAN-CROCK. Earthen pan.

PATTICK. Silly fellow, fool.

PISKEY. Probably a corruption of Piixie.

The veritable Cornish Piskey has some qualities which are peculiarly its own. The Piskey delights in playing tricks upon benighted travellers, leading them over trackless commons, or to the edge of quagmires or precipices; generally leaving them in a position of extreme peril, from which it is dangerous to move till daylight. The only mode by which a victim to the caprices of a Piskey can release himself is by turning his coat inside out. *Why* such an effect should follow so unlikely a cause is a question we would rather

refer to so learned a body as the Royal Society, it being beyond the powers of a provincial institute to grapple with such a mystery.

PITCH. The limits for working on a lode by a party of miners.

PLOSH. Puddle, quagmire.

PLUMMING. Raising dough with yeast.

A farmer near the Lizard who was confined to his bed by illness, and complained of a distension of his stomach, heard to his great horror that a pitcher of yeast had been accidentally upset into the well from which he was supplied with water. "Then," he cried out, "that explains my complaint,—I'm *plumming*."

PLUMP. Draw-well.

POCK. To push, to shove aside.

PODDLING. Meddling.

POP-DOCK. Fox-glove. (*digitalis*).

POR. Bustle, confusion.

POSS. Gate-post.

PRILL. To *prill* a sample is to mix rich ore with poor, to cheat the buyer.

PURE. This word is often used in a peculiar sense, implying something very good of its kind. "A pure boy enough, that."

Q.

QUAB. Sickly, infirm.

QUARRY. Pane of glass.

QWILKIN. A young toad, or frog.

QWILTING. A beating.

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R.

RIGGLE. To clear the cinders from between fire-bars.

ROW-CAST. A compost of lime and pebbles.

RUDDLING. Talking incoherently.

RULL. To wheel.

RUNNER. Jack-towel.

RUSSLING. Unquiet, moving.

S.

SAPE. Soft, idiotic.

SCAT. To strike.

SCIBUT. Small safe within a box.

SCOW-TREE. Elder-tree.

SCUD. To spill, run over.

SCRAFF. Odds and ends, refuse.

SCREED. Small portion.

SCROOTCH. Crutch.

SCROW. To scratch.

SCROWLED. Fish salted and dried.

SEAM. A quantity of clay (about a cart load.)

SEINE. Pilchard-net.

SHAPE. A word often used differently from its ordinary sense, for a mess, or confusion.

SHARPS. Shafts of a waggon.

SHIG. To cheat.

SHOAT. Falling stream of water.

SHODING. Sinking pits on the back of a lode.

SHRIMMED. Trembling with cold.

SIGURE. To leak.

SISSLING. Moving uneasily in sleep.

SKEET. To skit.

SKRINKLED. Shrivelled, puckered.

SLACK. Loose talk.

SLAGGY. Sticky, miry.

SLAMMIKIN. Careless, untidy.

SLEWED. Topsy.

SLINGERS. Uninvited guests.

SOG. Half-sleep, a dwawm.

SOUR-SOPS. Wood-sorrel.

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SOWDLING. Burly, ungainly.

SPALE. A fine.

SPALL. To break stones.

SPARS. Willow-rods for thatching.

SQUAB-PIE. A pie made of mutton, onions, apples, and currants; and which the reader had better try before he condemn it.

SQUITCH. A sudden pull.

STANK. Mess, bad plight.—As a verb, to tread, step upon,

STEM. A day's work in a mine, or any short time of labour.

STENT. The limits of a bargain on tutwork.

STIR-A-COOSE. Lively, active.

STROTH. Fuss, hurry.

STURT. More than ordinary gain—(chiefly used by miners.)

T.

TABN. Food.

TACLE. Windlass.

TACK. To clap the hands.

TARVING. Raging, convulsed.

THIRL. Lank, lean.

TOB. Small turf, or piece of earth.

TOIT. Short, snappish,—”mighty toit.”

TOM-HOLLA. An empty, loud-talking person.

TOM-TODDY. Tadpole.

TOM-TROT. Toffee.

TONGUE-TABBAS. A windy, frothy talker.

TOPPING. Great, superior.

TOTALISH. Foolish.

TOTE. To sing, or play on an instrument.

TOWSE. Noise, clamour.

TREESING. Idling.

TRIDDLING. Trifling, talking nonsense.

TROACHING. Carting fish or vegetables for sale.

TULGY. A dirty, slovenly body.

TUMMALS. A large yield. A heavy crop is said to be "good tummals."

TUT. Hassock.

TWINGLE. To writhe.

[54]

UP-RAISING. Churching of women.

UZZLE. Throat.

VEAR. Young pig.

VOOR. A furrow.

VUG. A cavity in a mineral vein.

W.

WALLOP. To beat.

WERRET. A slap, or lash.

WHILK. Pimple on the eye-lid.

WIDOW-MAN. Widower.

WINZE. Communication between two levels in a mine.

WITHY. Willow.

WIZEN. Thin, shrunk.

WONDERS. Tingling of the hands with severe cold.

WOP. A blow.

Y.

YAFFLE. A bundle, arm-full.

Z.

ZEW. To work alongside of a lode, before breaking it down.

