



## GLOSSARY OF ASSOCIATED CORNISH WORDS

Some Cornish language and dialect words relating to the countryside and hedges, their function & wildlife. Written Cornish is derived from many old documents with a variety of spellings, not all being shown. Dialect words derived from English are shown *Eng.*

Main source:

*Gerlyver Noweth  
Kernewek-Sawsnek Ha  
Sawsnek-Kernewek (A New  
Cornish Dictionary)* by R.  
Morton Nance pub.  
Dyllansow Truran 1990.

### A

agroas = rose-hips  
aiglet = haw-berry  
anaf = slow worm  
aras = to plough (*aras en  
kensa an todn* = to plough  
first the ley)  
ascallan = thistle  
azan = barrel-stave, rib  
adgy = a gap, esp. a gap in a  
hedge  
atal = mine rubbish, refuse  
or waste.

avallom = apple tree  
awhesyth = skylark

### B

bagas eithin = furze  
bush  
barr = bolt, bar  
bagaroot = turnip *Eng.*  
bah = gate hinge  
bal = a mine  
banal = broom plants  
baren = small branch  
barges = buzzard  
barles, barlez = barley  
bedewen = birch tree  
bethan = meadow  
beorth = cattle enclosure  
bownans = lifetime (yn  
ow bewanas = as long as  
I live)  
bigal = cowman  
bilders = water  
dropwort, hemlock  
bledgan = a flower  
blowth = blossom  
bod an ethen = sparrow  
hawk  
bool = an axe, hatchet  
bowlan = cattle pound  
bolt = a stone-built drain  
*Eng.*  
bothen = corn marigold  
*Eng.*  
bottoms = a narrow  
uncultivated valley floor  
(Cornish *straze*) *Eng.*  
bounder = lane leading  
from the homestead to  
pasture *Eng.*  
bran = a crow  
breach = heathy ground  
on which the turf has  
been cut and burnt *Eng.*  
breath = herd grazing  
common land  
breilu = primrose(s)

brogh = a badger  
brows, bruss = broken wood  
fuel, small fragments  
britton = thrift, sea pink  
budnan = meadow  
beuh = cow  
bulas = hemlock  
bullum = fruit of the bullace  
tree *Eng.*  
burn = a load, as much turf,  
furze, straw, hay &c as one  
can carry *Eng.*  
buorth = land manured by  
enclosing animals on it at  
night

### C

kalx = lime  
cammik = rest-harrow  
carneth = heap of rocks  
casting up = replacing soil  
run or fallen off a hedge  
*Eng.*  
cadgwith = thicket  
chawk = jackdaw  
chikkiar eithen = furze chat,  
stonechat  
clos, cluit = hurdle, gap in  
hedge  
clugyar = partridge  
cluit = a wattled gate, gap  
in hedge  
cockedge = a trimmed thorn  
hedge (also used for drying  
clothes) *Eng.*  
coffen, coffin, cofan = tin  
quarry, open to grass.  
cogegoes = green  
woodpecker  
colmy = to bind  
cumpas = level, straight  
conen = rabbits  
core, coor = eight hours  
work.  
corlan = sheep pen  
cos, coose = a wood

cothan = bedrock  
country = the ground itself,  
especially used of that about  
or near an excavation *Eng.*  
cank = dog rose  
clicket = gate fastener  
clidga = muddy area around  
gateway &c.  
colan = pigeon or dove  
collan = hazel tree  
cran = bracken, scrub (cf.  
reden)  
creeb, criban = roof ridge,  
top of hedge  
creen = readily split stone,  
brittle  
crellas = ancient ruined hut,  
excavation in a hedge  
roofed over for shelter  
cricken (cricks, crinnicks) =  
dry sticks for kindling  
croft = uncultivated  
enclosed land esp. for  
growing furze  
crokkan = a snare for rabbit  
and hare  
crobman = reaphook, sickle  
cronag du = toad  
cronag mellin = frog  
crow = hut, hovel, or sty  
cue = ox shoe  
cuntl, terry = to pick or  
pluck  
cunys, kinnis = fuel,  
firewood  
cutting and casting up =  
repairing turf hedge *Eng.*

## D

da = fallow deer  
dar = oak tree (also glastan)  
dash (tash, tosh) = unbound  
faggot of furze  
dashed, dysel = sow thistle  
davas = sheep  
denewes = young ox or

heifer  
devith = uncultivated  
waste land  
dowrak = soggy  
deyl = leaves  
doer = earth, soil,  
ground  
doerhok = nightjar  
dowran = watering place  
durgy = otter  
dralyer = trailing stem  
of plant eg bramble  
(extended to follower,  
sweetheart)  
dreth = sand, gravel  
dreas = arable crop  
dreave = barren, empty  
(as a nut without a  
kernel)  
drez an vledhan = all the  
year round  
dreyn, drannack, yrynen  
= blackthorn bushes (cf.  
spern = hawthorn)  
dreynek = thorn thicket  
dreys = brambles  
drim = ridge  
drok-dewedha = to come  
to a bad end  
durn = side post of a  
door or gate.  
dygea = to unenclose,  
unfence

## E

edil = plough handle  
egr diu = daisy  
ehal = draught animal  
eithen = furze, gorse  
elaw = elm trees  
enlidan, ledanen =  
plantain  
ent = to empty out, rain  
heavily. "Es enten  
down" *Eng.*  
ervinan = turnip

ethen = birds  
ewder = straightness

## F

falh = scythe  
falky = ready for mowing  
fave = bean  
fow, vow = badger or fox  
hole  
felga = ready to split  
fellon = hawkweed  
fenton = natural spring  
ferdhyn-tyr = land-farthing  
(quarter of Cornish acre)  
fern = bracken especially  
after cutting and stacking  
*Eng.*  
foar = drill, furrow  
vor = road  
fôs = a wall (cf. kee = a  
hedge)  
fradge = to mend a gap in a  
hedge  
freath = gap in, or a,  
wattled hedge.  
frith = quickthorn hedge

## G

gadga = daisy  
gadja-vrawz = oxeye daisy  
gahen = henbane  
gar = a stem  
garth = small enclosure  
gaver = goat  
geler = coffin  
gew, kew = best field on the  
farm (prob. nearest and  
oldest field)  
giririk = partridge  
gladdy = yellow hammer  
glastanen = holm oak (*Ilex*)  
gleth = chickweed  
glastan = oak tree (see also  
dar)  
glaswedhen = sapling  
glaw = rain

glawgy = shelter  
glaws (gloas, gloz) = dry  
cow dung used as fuel  
glit = hoar frost  
glosen = dried cow-dung  
fuel  
glowwyth = trees for  
charcoal  
gluth = dew  
godegh = lurking-place,  
cover for wildlife  
godror = small homestead  
gulran-gea = hedge-sparrow  
goon = undivided moorland  
part of a farm or parish.  
goon = flatish downland,  
unenclosed pasture, usually  
shared between farms  
gord (goad) = 9ft rod for  
cattle, used for measuring a  
"lace", 39 sq yards. ?perch  
of land *Eng.*  
gorra, foen = hay  
gothal = watery scrub,  
willow carr  
gothfys = honeysuckle,  
woodbine  
gouwan = moth  
goyf = the winter  
gre = a herd  
greet = dry earth.  
grelin = horse/cattle pond  
grend (grin, gren) = rabbit  
snare, a loop in a chain (?  
crokkan ?)  
gribble = a rooted cutting of  
a plant  
gridge = a small fragment of  
a stone *Eng.*  
griggan = grasshopper  
griglan = heathland, bushy  
heather.  
grip = ditch along the foot  
of a hedge *Eng.*  
growan = decomposed  
granite, often used as core

for hedges.  
grig = heather  
groundya = to lay  
foundations, grounders  
guarrak = cattle  
gucu = bluebell  
(Camborne/Redruth)  
*Eng.*  
gueal = enclosed field  
(usually arable),  
sometimes in multiple  
occupation by villagers.  
guennol = swallow  
guhien = wasp  
guradnan = wren  
gurgy (gurgo, gorge,  
gurgow, gurgoe &c) =  
ancient low hedge,  
usually pre-Mediaeval &  
broken-down; also  
ancient low hedges  
(usually both sides of an  
old lane)  
guern = swamp with  
alders  
guersyn = spindle  
guhyen = apple bee,  
wasp  
gurthyd = ox-goad  
guersyn = wind  
gwage = uninhabited,  
empty  
gwandra = to ramble,  
stroll, wander  
gwnath = wheat  
gweal = arable land  
guedhan = a tree  
guedhan-knufan =  
hazel-bush  
gwetnak = tree-grown  
place, full of trees  
gweel kea = to build a  
hedge  
gwelz = the grass  
gwenan = bee  
gweras = ground, soil,

earth, mould  
gwarnik = marshy, swampy  
gwernam = alder-trees  
gwythrose = honeysuckle  
gwradnan = wren  
gwrythya = to take root  
gwiban = fly  
gwybesen = gnat, midge,  
mosquito  
guilkin = frog  
gweeth = wood, grove  
gwescas = covering,  
coating, layer

## H

have = summer  
hager gowas = cloudburst  
hagglan, haggles = haws  
hained up = to shut off a  
field for hay, also ground  
preserved by tin bounds  
*Eng.*  
hale = moor (as in mire)  
hare = honeysuckle  
haze = seed  
haza = to set seed  
havrak = land tilled for  
fallow  
heap = turnip  
heblyth = pliant, flexible  
helagon = willow, sallow  
hendra = original or winter  
homestead  
henvor = abandoned road  
heskan = sedge bog  
heth = stag  
hewas = summer dairy farm  
holm-scritch = missel thrush  
*Eng.*  
hogan = haw  
hoh = sow (pig)  
  
hoppes = hops  
  
**I**  
igotty = keeper for gate

fastener  
ivre, eaver = darnel

## K

kea = hedge bank (*in neb toll kea* = in some hole of a hedge)  
keas = to hedge, fence, enclose  
keggas = Alexanders, hemlock, or similar  
keleren = pig-nut, earth-nut  
kelleel = plough stick, coulter  
kelly, killy = small wood  
kelinan = holly tree  
kenidgak = place for getting fuel  
kennegan = marsh or bog  
kentra = to spike, fix with one nail  
kerdhynen = mountain ash, rowan  
kerh = oats  
kerth = property (as of right)  
kees = hedged, closed  
kekezna = Cornish heath  
kezan = turf or peat cut for fuel  
kevelak = woodcock  
keverang = hundred of county  
kew = enclosure, close, field  
kewny = moss, lichen &c.  
kevar = land ploughed jointly  
kib a gap = to mend a hedge with thorns, and put tabs or turves to keep them down.  
kibbed = fenced off with bushes, furze, &c.  
kilvin = plough tail  
killas = clayey slate  
kinnis = fuel for fire esp. turf, furze & scrub. Not wood or coal

kyfor = hollow way

## L

lace, les = landyard of 18 feet square ?perch  
lastethes = filth, vermin, weeds &c.  
launder, londer = gutter  
leasing = picking stones  
lehan = flag-stone  
lem = to strip *Eng.*  
leaz = breadth  
lesdushak = betony  
leskes = burnt  
laister = yellow flag  
lidn = pond  
logas = mice  
lobm = bare, naked  
ludnu = cattle  
lokles = mugwort  
lowarth = garden  
lowarn = fox  
loog = undergrowth of weed, clover, &c. among corn  
lidziw = ashes  
linas = nettles  
lene = stitch, strip of land, often part of field in multiple occupation  
lis- = former admin. centre, manorial court  
lubbas, lobmas = unproductive ground  
luzu = vegetation, weeds  
luzumoh = hogweed

## M

madere = groundsel  
maglen = a trap, gin  
maggy-uler = the goat moth  
maruran = raven  
margh = a horse  
maun, maud, gurry = large wicker basket *Eng.*

meader = field or harvest mouse

meat-earth = soil suitable for arable cropping *Eng.*  
meaz = large open field  
melwhen = snail, slug  
melenek = goldfinch  
meilhionan = clover  
melyn = a mill  
mean-lear = foundation stone, grounder  
merrian = ants  
mill = poppy  
minfel = yarrow  
mola = thrush  
molgh dhu = blackbird  
moorstone = granite rocks or boulders, "scattered over our hills". Now used of granite from any source *Eng.*  
mot = tree-root *Eng.*  
mow = what is mown, small rick  
mungern = horse-collar

## N

noswyth = in the night  
nyth = bird's nest

## O

odgon, ohan = oxen  
onnen = ash tree  
orgal = woundwort  
out-of-core = out of regular working hours *Eng.*  
owna = to make right, to mend  
oye = egg

## P

pagespaw = lizard  
pal, ref = shovel  
parah, tonak = herd or flock  
park = enclosed field, sometimes pasture

pedripromter = knapweed  
(lit. priest's heads)  
pednan = small pieces of  
turf.  
pedrevan = newt  
pednan = tadpole  
peeth = dug well (cf. fenton)  
penedna = broken tops of  
furze  
pezzack = a rotten pichard,  
broken fish not for salting  
plansa = to plant  
plaow = pests  
pleau = parish  
podar = rotten, decayed  
popdock, bochgoch =  
foxglove  
porfel = pasture, grazing  
place  
poth = burnt, scorched  
pow = countryside  
pras, praze = meadow,  
pasture, small grazing  
prill = small solid egg sheep-  
dropping, stone chip.  
prill = small solid egg sheep-  
dropping, stone chip.  
predn = timber tree  
pry = clay-earth, cob  
preve = 'creepy-crawlie'  
pillas = naked oats (*Avena  
nuda*)  
pigol = hoe, mattock, pick  
axe

## Q

quithias = herdsman

## R

radgel = ground covered  
with loose rocks, fox's earth  
ramsan, ransy = wild garlic  
recam = grassy side of a  
hedge  
redan = bracken  
reeze = for grain to shed out

of ear  
ros = heathland hill  
slope or spur (cf. goon)  
ruddock = robin  
ryp = beside

## S

saw = backload,  
horseload  
sawan davas = sheep  
creep-hole in hedge  
saime = pilchard oil,  
train oil  
scavaligian = wild arum  
scanarnak = hare  
scaw-dower = figwort,  
kennel wort  
scaw, scawan = elder  
tree  
scaw-dhu = hemp  
agrimony  
scollok = refuse of a  
slate quarry  
scoran = bough  
screech = a short sudden  
blaze.  
sentry = glebe land  
set = a lease  
sharaliggo = lizard  
shiver = a bar of a gate  
*Eng.*  
sichor = a dryness,  
drought  
seavy = strawberry  
skeddrak = broken or  
dilapidated  
skedge, sherrish = privet  
skeet = squall  
skew, skiff = driving  
mist or drizzle  
soch = ploughshare  
sorn = nook, cranny  
sour-sops = common  
sorrel *Eng.*  
sowle = arish, stubble  
spern = hawthorn

spernek = thorn copse  
spethas = brambles  
splat = a piece of ground  
stent = rubble left by tin  
streamers in their workings.  
stroil = couch-grass  
strother = pack-saddle  
shewollok = fieldfare (the  
sly one)  
sprowse = light hay crop  
from pasture  
summering = farmstock sent  
on to moors for whole  
summer *Eng.*  
sumper = downpour

## T

taler = headland of  
ploughed field, or end of  
tillage  
tam = short furze  
tash = a pile of furze, briars  
&c. at one cutting &  
removal  
taval = dock  
teel = to cultivate and sow  
ground *Eng.*  
teke = shrew  
tevy = to grow  
tiching = setting up turves to  
dry, to prepare for fuel *Eng.*  
tigry = kestrel  
tink = chaffinch  
tinner, dishwasher = pied  
wagtail *Eng.*  
tommy-tailor = the crane-fly  
*Eng.*  
toll-ke = ditch beside a  
hedge  
todn = arable grass  
ploughed in rotation (aras an  
kensa an todn = plow first  
the ley)  
towargh, toor = light turfy  
soil for burning  
towan = sand dune, or land

derived therefrom  
trap = stile  
tre, tref = farming hamlet,  
mostly post-Roman & pre-  
Norman  
treveglos = village (lit.  
churchtown)  
trimtram = sheep trap or  
cattle grid  
trone = a furrow, lynchet  
trodgan = starling  
trulerch = footpath  
tubban, tab, tob = a turf  
tyak = farmer, manager,  
householder  
tikki-dui = butterfly

**U**  
ula = owl  
urts = *Eng.* wortleberry

**V**  
vady = damp  
visgay, visgie = a kind of  
mattock/hammer for  
hedging  
vorver = way cleared  
around crops to ease access,  
bridle-path  
voulz = hedging bill

**W**  
wastrel = uncultivated land,  
unused *Eng.*  
want = mole *Eng.*  
weeth = a field  
weggas = bindweed  
wheal = mine-work  
whil = beetle  
winnard = redwing ("As  
whisht as a winnard ") *Eng.*

**Y**  
yar = hen  
yeat = a gate  
yorth = roe deer

**Z**  
zart = hedgehog  
zewl = skimming plough  
for removing turf.

### Some old Cornish sayings

Nyn ges gûn heb legas,  
na kei heb scovern  
There is no down  
without an eye, nor  
hedge without ears.

Cows nebas, cows da  
Speak little, speak well.

Guel yw guetha vel  
goosen  
It is better to keep than  
to beg

Neb na gare y gwyant  
coll restouas  
He that heeds not gain,  
must expect loss.

Nrb ns gare y gy, an  
gwra deveeder  
He that regards not his  
dog, will make him a  
sheep-killer

Gura da, rag ta honan te  
yn gura  
Do good; for thyself  
thou doest it.

Me an' pref guyr a  
gousaf,

Kyns ys dybarth.  
I will prove it true what I  
say,  
Before we separate.

En hav perkou gwâv  
In summer remember  
winter.

An laver kôth yn laver gûr.  
What's said of old is said in  
truth.

Elo why clavier Kernuack  
Can you speak Cornish?