

**An Intellectual Adventurer
in Archaeology:
Reflections on the work of
Charles Thomas**

edited by

Andy M. Jones and Henrietta Quinnell

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Christmas card December 2004

North Cliffs (F68-071, © Historic Environment, Cornwall Council)

Frontispiece: Charles Thomas, self portrait as a young man

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We much appreciate the support of Jessica Thomas and her permission to include a selection of Charles' Christmas cards, which add greatly to the character of the volume.

Lastly, we thank all the authors for their contributions and for supplying images to accompany their chapters.

All the images which appear in the volume chapters have been obtained from the contributing authors, and responsibility for the correct attribution of their source/copyright permission lies with the submitting author.

Foreword

It is a privilege and a personal pleasure to have the opportunity to contribute the foreword to this tribute volume to Professor Charles Thomas.

My contribution to the memory of Charles relates to his qualities as a mentor and a friend, who has given me advice, support and encouragement throughout my career.

I first came to know Charles when I had just graduated from university and came home to Cornwall in 1970 to gain work experience in my local museum, the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. The curatorial staff in those days consisted of the curator, Leslie Douch, who at the time was engaged in digging at Carvossa; his deputy, Roger Penhallurick, whose interests ranged widely from numismatics through archaeology to Cornish seabirds, and Angela Broome, in charge of the Courtney Library, then the *de facto* Cornish Record Office before the County Archive Service was established. Charles' day job at the time was as Professor of Archaeology at Leicester University, but he found time to appear regularly at the Museum in his roles as board member of the Royal Institution of Cornwall (the parent body of the Royal Cornwall Museum), the Honorary Courtney Librarian and, from 1970–1971, the President of the RIC. Although I was just a student volunteer, he took an interest in my plans for the future and advised me on my next steps.

At the end of that year I moved on to the Archaeology Department at Durham University to study under Professor Rosemary Cramp, where Charles was the external examiner. Charles and Professor Cramp shared a common interest and expertise in early Christian archaeology; Professor Cramp headed the Department of Medieval Archaeology and was responsible for the excavations at Monkwearmouth and Jarrow, while in 1971 Charles published *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*.

Fortunately Charles approved my dissertation on the metalwork from Monkwearmouth, which enabled me to move on to the Department of Museum Studies at Leicester University. At that point Charles and Jessica were still living in the city before moving back to Cornwall where Charles set up the Institute of Cornish Studies in 1972. Money was tight, and they helped enormously by allowing me and another student to live in a flat adjoining their house in Oadby.

At the end of the course at Leicester I finally got a proper job in a museum, and did not return to Cornwall for many years, but Charles continued to take an interest in my career. When Leslie Douch retired after many years as curator of the Royal Cornwall Museum, Charles supported my application for the post, and, in his role as an active Trustee of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, continued to be a source of advice, support and inspiration throughout the sixteen years that I served as Director of the RCM. I finally left Cornwall for five years to head up the Hampshire County Museums and Archives service, and was delighted and reassured to find Charles still the same and still a presence in the county when we returned to retire here.

Charles was a person of enormous generosity of spirit, independence, energy, pragmatism and above all enthusiasm – everything that one could wish for in a mentor and a boss! To follow in his footsteps as a President of the Cornwall Archaeological Society is an unimagined honour. His was a unique personality, and, as the papers in this book make clear, he will be forever missed by those who knew him and worked with him.

Caroline Dudley BA, FMA, OBE
President, Cornwall Archaeological Society
2018

Chapter 1

A miscellany of papers

Andy M. Jones and Henrietta Quinnell

This collection of papers has been assembled in celebration and memory of Antony Charles Thomas (1928-2016), far and away the most important figure in twentieth century Cornish archaeology, a campaigner of national standing on heritage matters and a major, internationally recognized, academic (Johnson 2015). Charles' work in championing all aspects of Cornwall's past is difficult to overestimate and his influence is now much missed in the challenging times of the early twenty first century. A number of substantial obituary notices have already appeared (for example, Driscoll 2107; Johnson 2015) and we are grateful to Professor Nancy Edwards for details of her forthcoming British Academy Memoir.

In the early 1960s Charles was the prime mover in the transformation of the West Cornwall Field Club into the countywide Cornwall Archaeological Society, its first, and long serving, Editor of its journal *Cornish Archaeology*, and President from 1984 to 1987 (Johnson 2015). The origins of this volume lie in the determination of the Society's present Trustees, and that of other archaeological colleagues, to swiftly and appropriately commemorate Charles' contribution to archaeology, especially that in Cornwall. It was decided that the Cornwall Archaeological Society AGM in April 2017 would be timed to mark the first anniversary of his death in April 2016. An afternoon of presentations was planned on aspects of Cornish, Scillonian and Lundy archaeology strongly associated with Charles' research and interests. The speakers were invited to prepare their lectures for a volume aimed to appear in print around the time of the second anniversary in 2018. We, the joint editors, had long acquaintance with Charles, and are still working on aspects of his North Cliffs Mesolithic material (Chapter 3).

Very generously, all invitations, both to speak and to publish, were accepted and the seven papers given at the AGM form the core of this volume (Chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11), but further articles were needed to produce a book which adequately reflected Charles' personality and the range of his work. His huge range of interests and his contribution to so many aspects of archaeological and historical study precluded coverage of everything (Johnson 2015; Chapter 2, this volume). The publication of the volume planned to broadly mark the second anniversary of his death allowed only a year for the preparation of papers. This restricted timetable debarred the preparation of lengthy papers, but a series of quickly produced brief hagiographies did not appear appropriate. Something other than a standard festschrift was required, with contributions reflecting both Charles as man and scholar and also the great width of his academic interests and achievements.

Inspiration for the format and content of the volume came from Charles himself. Around the time of the 2017 AGM and perhaps not by chance, the editors both happened to reread the collection of his writings *Gathering the fragments* (Thomas 2014). This book was Charles' own selection from his writings and covers a variety of subjects in pieces of varying length and tone, some previously unpublished. *Fragments* in turn reminded us of the diverse but pithy and well-illustrated collection of papers in the festschrift to Stuart Piggott *To Illustrate the Monuments*, for which Charles had written a very entertaining paper entitled 'the archaeologist as fiction' (Thomas 1976). The editors had also recently read Philip Marsden's (2014, 86) *Rising Ground* with its description of finds processing at Charles' home at Lambessow near Truro. Inspired by these works, we discussed how to capture a mix of themes and styles in a single publication. Potential contributors, people who had worked with or knew Charles, were then contacted and invited to contribute pieces either on academic subjects which had interested him, more anecdotal personal recollections, or a mix of both. We were delighted that most of those who were contacted said yes, and that some who heard of the proposed volume then offered to write chapters. The outcome is this volume which Archaeopress has presented so well for us and for which we thank them.



Figure 1.1: Charles at his eightieth birthday celebrations at Crane Godrevy 2008. (Photograph: © Cornwall Archaeological Unit, Cornwall Council.)

The resulting miscellany of papers covers a range of subjects which, we hope, would have interested Charles, either because they develop subjects on which he had worked, or because they contain recollections which would have amused and entertained him. The papers are of varying lengths and styles, the longer on matters of substance, the shorter pieces personal recollections. None of these were written as hagiographies, nonetheless the warmth and respect of friends and colleagues, sometimes tempered with wry amusement, is evident throughout the volume. We are particularly pleased that the contributions come from across the generations, from a recent graduate to those who were students with Charles in the 1950s. Their authors have a wide range of backgrounds, ranging from the holders of prestigious Chairs in Archaeology to amateurs who, inspired by Charles in their youth, are still contributing to archaeology in retirement.

Most of the chapters focus on the region which Charles cared most deeply about, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, but there are also pieces on Lundy, Scotland and Le Causse Méjean in France, and more broadly based contributions on coastal and upland archaeology. Chronologically the

majority of chapters cluster in the post-Roman to medieval periods, which appropriately reflect his major academic interests (Lawson-Jones 2015; Johnson 2015; Chapter 2). But there are also contributions on place-names and prehistory, and on field walking which was one of his earliest and last interests in archaeology. Some papers relate current work on sites with which Charles was closely associated – Gwithian, Tintagel and the North Cliffs, near Hayle in Cornwall, while others relay memories of past excavations or reflect his intellectual interests.

Charles has also directly contributed to the volume in several ways. Some of his personal illustrated Christmas cards with accompanying text are scattered among the papers in the volume, by kind permission of his widow Jessica. These were an annual treat for those fortunate enough to be on his mailing list, and are sadly missed by their recipients. Nicholas Thomas reproduces here a previously unpublished poem written by Charles in the 1950s, a reminder of his aptitude for comic verse. Lastly, but no means least, Charles Johns publishes the draft report on Charles' 1956 excavation on Teän, Isles of Scilly. Charles's draft was assembled in 1960 but not finalized. The edited draft which appears here helps fill an important gap in Scillonian archaeology and also gives us Charles's distinctive voice expressed in archaeological terms current in the 1950s.

We thank all the contributing authors for completing their papers so quickly. Especial thanks go to Nick Johnson for his chapter, which provides the wider context for many of the subsequent chapters, for scanning the Christmas cards, and for systematically compiling the list of more than 800 'ACT' publications which ends this volume. Nicholas Thomas, Charles' friend since his student days at the Institute of Archaeology, has provided an active channel to friends from earlier days and a source of images and details. Finally, we are very grateful to Philip Marsden for writing such an appropriate 'end note', which closes the volume and shows how apt is the title – *An Intellectual Adventurer in Archaeology*.

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Water colour of Cross at La Roquaire, Languedoc by Charles Thomas,
Christmas card December 1996

Chapter 2

Charles Thomas 1928–2016: The sixty-year archaeological adventure of a Cornish polymath

Nicholas Johnson

Charles' academic life can perhaps, with a degree of imagination, be compared to the Stars Wars phenomenon. Thus many of us know, more or less, the main story behind the franchise; but most of us are baffled by the prequels and side stories and the films being issued in the wrong chronological order; but we all know who the principal characters are, since there are literally hundreds of publications and toys (artefacts) available, and it is reassuring to know that the geography of the epic stays constant throughout if one bothers to learn it. As with the Star Wars film series, so with Charles' prodigious academic life and career. One has to study the whole oeuvre in order to sort his output into chronological order; to understand the full width and depth of his work, with its own sidelines and little known fascinations; also to get a sense of the temporal rhythms and geographic spread of his research and fieldwork, and of which research was the result of academic awards and appointments, and which research resulted in such awards and appointments.



Figure 2.1: Charles on Scilly in 1985. (Photograph: Thomas family.)

Over a long and distinguished career as an archaeologist and historian, an academic, a fieldworker, and as a bibliophile and collector, Charles wrote or contributed to over 800 publications including 16 books (of which 4 were unpublished), 15 booklets, 3 short stories, over 100 reviews of books and hundreds of articles, pamphlets and notes for academic journals, newsletters and conference proceedings and festschrifts. In order to make all of this available, his full bibliography, ordered by subject and area, is published at the end of this volume. The Cornwall Archaeological Society conference in April 2017, and many of this collection of papers and recollections that result from that conference, have focused on his archaeological work in Cornwall, on the Isles of Scilly and Lundy Island. This paper aims to set out the broad chronology of his long academic career so that it is possible to understand better where these West Country studies fit in to the wider picture of his academic life.

His academic career, his research themes and those sites he excavated or researched are summarized in Figure 2.2, and can best be outlined as phases or periods.

1950s – Student period

1948-51 Oxford University (law degree)

During vacations he pursued his growing interest in archaeology, which had been encouraged by his father and galvanized by his army service in Egypt. Excavating a Bronze Age barrow at Godrevy and sorting through Colonel Hurst's prehistoric artefacts at the Wayside Museum in Zennor was the start of his abiding interest in prehistoric Cornwall. The excavation at Godrevy was the start of fieldwork at Gwithian.

1951-3 Institute of Archaeology, London (Diploma in Archaeology)

In 1951 he excavated the prehistoric settlement at Carwynnen (Thomas 1954a), whilst continuing the work at Gwithian with members of the West Cornwall Field Club, family and friends.

1953-8 Workers Educational Association (part-time tutor in Archaeology and Folk Lore in Cornwall)

His research and fieldwork was essentially Cornish in location and largely prehistoric in date. He excavated a Bronze Age Cist on Emblance Downs, Bodmin Moor, in 1953 (Thomas 1975), and the following year he and Bernard Wailes investigated the ruined Sperris Quoit Chambered Tomb (Thomas & Wailes 1967) and Mulfra Vean Courtyard House settlement (Thomas 1963b). Work at Gwithian continued, becoming an established feature in the summer archaeological calendar, gradually attracting funds and support from the West Cornwall Field Club, the Royal Institution of Cornwall and various Universities which acknowledged that work here was acceptable as the compulsory fieldwork element of their archaeology degrees.

His two decades of fieldwork and excavation on the Thomas family owned land at Gwithian (Fowler 1962; Fowler & Thomas 1962; Nowakowski 2007; Nowakowski *et al* 2007; Megaw *et al* 1961; Thomas 1958) and his research into the early Christian origins of his home parish of Camborne (Thomas 1967b) provided the foundations for his fascination in the kingdoms of the post-Roman world in North and West Britain, and the origins and character of the early Christian church in the north and west.

1960s – University career outside Cornwall

The 1960s were spent first in Edinburgh (1958-67), then at Leicester (1967-71), His interest in early Christian archaeology and inscriptions was sparked initially by the re-interpretation of the inscription on the 5th century *Cunaide* Stone at Carnsew, Hayle (Thomas 1953). This interest blossomed in the 1960s with research and fieldwork on early medieval sites in Scotland (Iona and Ardwall) and in Cornwall (Tëan on Scilly, St Ia and Merther Uny near Camborne). Work at these sites provided the intellectual foundations for his work thereafter:

1. An abiding interest and great expertise in imported Mediterranean post-Roman pottery, first encountered at Gwithian in the early 1950s (Thomas 1954b) and encountered again on Tëan (Chapter 8) which led eventually to his work at Tintagel.
2. A fascination with the church and its organization in the early medieval period, particularly on the role that islands played in the early church.
3. The study and translation of, and enquiry into, the meanings of early medieval inscriptions and inscribed stones which he pursued across Scotland, Ireland, Wales and South West Britain.

His good friend, and fellow student at the Institute of Archaeology, Professor Rosemary Cramp describes it as *...a lifelong fascination with this extraordinary period, particularly in the west and north, when the structure of the Roman Empire in Britain disintegrated and transitioned, via the Irish and Ionan traditions of the Celtic Church, to the Roman church we are familiar with today. Whilst many others used excavation and fieldwork to explore this period, Charles used his deep knowledge of arcane languages, scripts and pictograms, as powerful tools to cast fresh light on the spread of Christianity in a pagan world, and the geographical and chronological variations and connections that provided the cultural foundations of Britain and Ireland today* (Johnson 2015).

1970s and 1980s – University career in Cornwall

These two decades were spent in Cornwall at the Institute of Cornish Studies (1971-91) and these were the years of his work in Scilly and of the re-imagining of the post-Roman royal ‘citadel’ at Tintagel and its contemporary burial ground at Tintagel church. This was also the twenty-year period when Charles was in the front row of the push to create a national professional archaeology service. Unusually for a University Professor he was actively involved in not just the debate but also in the implementation of developments at national, regional and local levels.

YEAR	PREHISTORIC/EARLY MEDIEVAL SITES	UNIVERSITY	PRINCIPAL RESEARCH THEMES	CAREER PHASES
1949	Gwithian Pond Flints	Oxford University	Gwithian	1950s Living in Oxford, London and Cornwall. Teaching and research in Cornwall
1950	Godrevy Barrow	Oxford University	Gwithian	
1951	Carwynnen	Inst of Archaeology	Gwithian	
1952		Inst of Archaeology	Gwithian	
1953	Emblance Down; Snail Down; Cunaide Stone	Inst of Archaeology; WEA Tutor	Gwithian	
1954	Sperris Quoif; Mulfra Vean	WEA Tutor	Gwithian	
1955	Snail Down	WEA Tutor	Gwithian	
1956		WEA Tutor	Gwithian	
1957	Iona, Tean	WEA Tutor	Gwithian; Scotland	
1958	Iona Cemetery	WEA Tutor; Edinburgh Univ	Gwithian; Scotland	
1959	Iona Cemetery	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1960	Gatehouse of Fleet; Iona; Tean	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1961	Iona	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1962	Iona; Castilly Henge; St Dennis Hillfort	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1963	Iona	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1964	Ardwall	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1965	Ardwall; Fenton Ia	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1966	Fenton Ia	Edinburgh University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1967	Merther Uny	Edinburgh Univ; Leicester Univ	Gwithian; Scotland	
1968	Merther Uny	Leicester University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1969	Lundy	Leicester University	Gwithian; Scotland	
1970	Lundy	Leicester University	Scotland	
1971		Leicester University	Scotland	
1972		Exeter University (ICS)	Scotland	
1973		Exeter University (ICS)	Scotland	
1974		Exeter University (ICS)		
1975		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1976		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1977		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1978		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1979		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1980		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly	
1981		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1982		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1983		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel; Scotland	
1984	Bosillack	Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel; Scotland	
1985		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1986		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1987		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1988		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1989		Exeter University (ICS)	Scilly; Tintagel	
1990		Exeter University (ICS)	Tintagel	
1991		Exeter University (ICS)	Tintagel	
1992		Hon Fellowship, Lampeter Univ	Tintagel; Scotland; Wales	
1993			Scotland; Wales	
1994	Govan		Scotland; Wales; Ireland	
1995	Llanddewi-brefi 'Idnert' Stone		Scotland; Wales; Ireland	
1996		Hon Doctorate, Galway Univ	Scotland; Wales; Ireland	
1997			Scotland; Wales; Ireland	
1998	St Andrews		Wales; Ireland	
1999	Llanlleonfel ; Penzance Market Cross		Wales	
2000			Wales	
2001	Brycheiniog		Wales	
2002	Anglesey		Wales	
2003				
2004			Gwithian	
2005			Gwithian	
2006			Gwithian	
2007			Gwithian	
2008				
2009-16				

Figure 2.2: Table showing the prehistoric and early medieval sites Charles examined and / or excavated; his University appointments (ICS is Institute of Cornish Studies); his main research themes; and the principal phases of his career.

1990s – Retirement in Cornwall part 1

After thirty four years of university work, Charles retired in 1991, and almost immediately turned the focus of his research once again towards early Christianity in the early medieval period in Scotland, Ireland and Wales. His honorary research positions at Lampeter and Donegal and his research at Govan, Llanddewi-Brefi, St Andrews, Llanlleonfel, Brycheiniog and Anglesey all reflect this.

2000s – Retirement in Cornwall part 2

Over thirty years after he moved on from the Gwithian campaign, he returned once again to put his archaeological house in order. Even if we still await a final published report, he at least ensured that the large excavation archive was ordered, conserved, assessed, and summarized.

Thus his long career in archaeology can be seen as a series of research foci governed to a large extent by where he was living and teaching, with a constant interest in and flow of research into, such a wide variety

of aspects of the land of his birth flowing along underneath. Not many archaeologists are recognized at both a national and local level. His national appointments and awards are matched by his reputation (on the death of A.L. Rowse) as Cornwall's 'greatest living Cornishman'.

The practical methods he used to carry out his research and write his many books and articles are less well-known. He was a very systematic and well-organized scholar, and had the great advantage of being able to write quickly, concisely and in a most attractive and clear style. His very large library at Lambessow, his house outside Truro, and his large and comprehensive self-created card indexes and catalogues and slide collections allowed him to carry out his writing and research largely from home; he also visited many other libraries (in particular the University Library of Edinburgh, the Society of Antiquaries, and the Courtney library of the Royal Institution of Cornwall), and visited hundreds of sites and inscriptions throughout the UK and Ireland.

Figure 2.3 attempts to summarize his published output. Charles published nine archaeological books (and one about early Cornish photographers), and completed, but did not publish the manuscripts of three further archaeological books. He also published five booklets that concentrated on the description, interpretation and date of particular Inscribed stones. As one would expect, these publishing events follow the path of his research themes and follow a similar chronology, although of course they inevitably lag a few years behind due to the exigencies of the publication process. What is unusual, however, about Charles' publications is that a significant number of the books were constructed out of the texts of memorial lectures and lecture series that he gave at various universities. Figure 2.3 shows this very clearly. Those of us lucky enough to have attended his lectures remember well that all his talks were read from typescripts and these typescripts invariably formed the core of an article, booklet or book. Charles was of sufficient eminence to be presented with many such prestigious opportunities in which to crystalize his thoughts over and above those contained within his everyday undergraduate lecture scripts. Thus, the five O'Donnell lectures at the University of Wales in 1978 allowed him to turn his full attention onto the Isles of Scilly and these lectures provided the structure for his memorable book *Exploration of a Drowned Landscape* (1985d) (Figure 2.6). All his lecture series resulted in books or chapters in books. Once written, he never wasted a lecture script.

Throughout his whole career, rumbling away in the background, were his other constant research companions: military history and the classification and meaning of militaria; Cornish local history, language, dialect and folklore; the history of Methodism; and Cornish politics. We need not pursue these here. Having set out the broad sweep and rhythms of Charles' career, we shall put much of his research to one side and concentrate here on only that which relates to Cornwall and Scilly. This will be covered by examining his work at Gwithian, the Isles of Scilly and Tintagel. Also considered will be his contribution to the world of the amateur archaeologist through his involvement with the West Cornwall Field Club and the Cornwall Archaeological Society, and the world of the professional archaeologist through his involvement with the Cornwall Committee for Rescue Archaeology/Cornwall Archaeological Unit/Historic Environment Service, the Institute of Cornish Studies and the Royal Institution of Cornwall.

Gwithian

The archaeological work that the Gwithian team undertook in the sand dunes above the Red River, at Crane Godrevy above this, and on the coast at Godrevy and the North Cliffs, provided a huge range of archaeological opportunities from the Mesolithic to the medieval (Figure 2.4). Looking back, it seems obvious that the Gwithian campaign was a pioneering attempt at total archaeology where the historical narrative is clearly greater than the sum of its physical parts. This was not, however, a coordinated campaign of landscape archaeology from its inception. Charles himself makes clear (Nowakowski *et al* 2007) that the excavations and the fieldwork developed gradually in sophistication and breadth and varied in intensity as the funding waxed and waned. Nicholas Thomas, in his reflective article (*ibid* 2007) in the same volume, explains how wartime and National Service had equipped a generation of young archaeologists with the basic survival skills of camp life and the organization of people. The Institute of Archaeology had also taught Charles the rudiments of

LECTURES	YEAR	BOOKS and Booklets
	1965	
	1966	
Hunter-Marshall lectures (6), Univ Glasgow	1967	BOOK-Christian Antiquities of Camborne
	1968	
	1969	
	1970	
	1971	BOOK- Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times AD 400-800; BOOK- The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain
	1972	
Jarrow lecture -1300 th anniversary -birth of Bede	1973	
	1974	
	1975	
	1976	
Truro Cathedral Lent Lectures (5) The Age of the Saints: Henry Lewis lecture, Univ Coll Swansea	1977	
O'Donnell lectures (5), Univ Wales	1978	
Marett Lecture, Univ Oxford	1979	
	1980	
	1981	
	1982	
	1983	
	1984	
Buchan Lecture, Soc of Antiquaries of Scotland	1985	BOOK- Exploration of a Drowned Landscape
	1986	BOOK- Celtic Britain;
	1987	
	1988	
	1989	
	1990	
Dallymple lectures (4), Univ Glasgow	1991	
1 st Whithorn Lecture, Friends of Whithorn Trust	1992	BOOK- Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500
	1993	
	1994	
	1995	
	1996	BOOK- And Shall These Mute Stones Speak?
1 st John Jamieson Lecture, Scottish Church History Society	1997	Booklet- Mental Images from Latin Inscriptions in Post Roman Western Britain
	1998	BOOK- Christian Celts: Messages & Images
Alexander Rhind lectures (6), Soc of Antiquaries of Scotland	1999	Booklet- Silent In The Shroud Booklet- Penzance Market Cross : a Cornish Wonder re-wondered
	2000	BOOK (MS)- Flight from Egypt – Breconshire and Cornwall BOOK (MS)- Deserts in the Ocean – origins of insular monasticism
	2002	Booklet- Whispering Reeds, or, the Anglesey Catamanus Inscription Stript Bare - A Detective Story,
	2003	Booklet- Vita Sancti Patemi: The Life of Saint Padarn and the Original Mthiu
	2012	BOOK – Gathering The Fragments
	2016	BOOK (MS)- With one Bound – The boundaries of Gwithian, Gwinear, Hayle parishes)

Figure 2.3: Table showing the relationship between Charles' memorial lectures and his output of books and booklets. The books in italics are unpublished MS. Two were completed in 2000, but With One Bound was not completed by 2016.

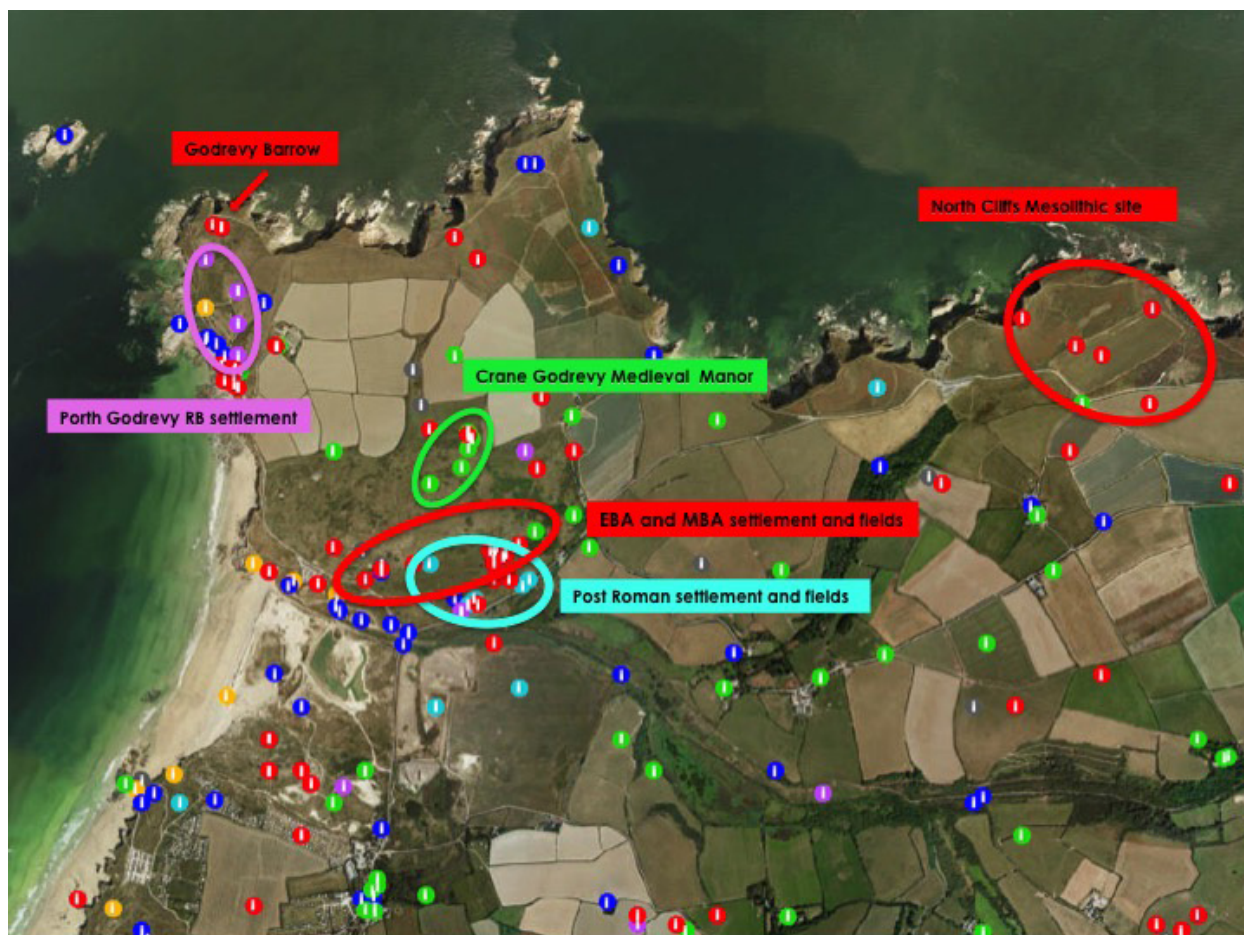


Figure 2.4: Gwithian and the Godrevy area. Superimposed on the air photograph are the various archaeological sites recorded in the Cornwall Historic Environment Record, shown as points in their standard chronological period colours. The main areas of investigation are enclosed and their period indicated. There are over 70 sites within a geographical area of 15 sq km.

current excavation techniques, how to carry out measured survey, take photographs and record finds. What was different at Gwithian was that, because the whole area was so familiar and available to Charles through deep family connections, it soon became clear that it was possible to record a whole landscape. He had very rapidly gone beyond the site specific and period specific and was using field walking, excavation, scientific techniques, documentary research and the study of place names across a broad geographical area. Sadly this is not made clear in the 1958 interim publication *Gwithian: Ten Years Work (1949-1958)*. Although some of the sites were published, for example Porth Godrevy (Fowler 1962) and the Bronze Age plough and spade marks (Megaw *et al* 1961; Thomas 1970), the extraordinary preservation under the sand of the Bronze Age, post-Roman and medieval (Fowler & Thomas 1962) settlements and fields was only hinted at in interim reports and lectures.

The campaign sank beneath the onward march of his University career and surfaced again briefly in 1989 twenty years after fieldwork stopped. The excavation by Cornwall Archaeological Unit (CAU) of a Bronze Age settlement at Trethellan in 1987 (Nowakowski 1991) prompted a desire to revisit the Gwithian archive for comparative material. In 1988-89 Charles was acting Chairman of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments and in 1989 CAU received funding from English Heritage, and advice on micro-copying from RCHME staff to assess the Bronze Age Excavations of 1954-61 (Nowakowski 1989). This was intended to be the forerunner of an assessment of the entire Gwithian archive and its eventual publication. This proposal only surfaced again after a further 15 years in 2004 through a fortunate coming together of English Heritage's post-excavation and publishing initiative for unpublished nationally important excavations, and the availability of Aggregates Levy money for work in the Gwithian sand quarry area. Gwithian was very personal to Charles and with the resources to look at the archive again, he felt confidence and trust in Jacky Nowakowski and her cluster of specialists in the Historic Environment Service, Cornwall Council, and beyond to bring their skills

and experience to do justice to his baby. Volume 46 (2007) of *Cornish Archaeology* (Figure 2.5) is devoted entirely to a review of the Gwithian work and gives for the first time a balanced overview of the whole campaign. Backing this up are the various technical assessment reports that were carried out with Charles close at hand. The archive was appraised, audited, ordered, indexed, boxed and filed to modern archive standards (Nowakowski 2004), with descriptive summaries made of the key Bronze Age and post-Roman excavations (Nowakowski 2007; Nowakowski *et al* 2007). Although everything is now accessible for future research, the archive still deserves and awaits full analysis and publication.

Isles of Scilly

Whilst Charles' family had a long connection with the Isles of Scilly, his interest in the area came from different directions to his work at Gwithian. His work on Iona in Scotland, on the 8th century chapel and burials on Tëan, Scilly (in 1957 and 1960), and his researches across the north of Britain in the 1960s led to an understanding of the significance of islands, in particular, in the early church. Charles published, as West Cornwall Field Club editor, many of the reports by Paul Ashbee on the prehistoric Neolithic Tombs and later prehistoric cist cemeteries and settlements on Scilly. He was also aware of the observations of William Borlase (1753) and O.G.S. Crawford (1927) concerning the intertidal field walls on Sampson Flats. This started a long interest in how sea level change had created an archipelago of islands where once there had been the much larger island of Ennor. Subsequent studies prompted by his work have pushed back the 'drowning' by several millennia, but his model of landscape change and historical development of the Islands remains a powerful narrative today.

His general interest in Cornish language place names was put to good use on Scilly, where he attempted to demonstrate that the distinctive geographical location of Cornish and English topographic names was evidence of submergence within the historic period. He was interested to record all known place names on Scilly, including particularly the names of all the islands, islets, ledges, reefs and caves as well as the various names given to successive coastal batteries on the Garrison (Thomas 1989). His extensive index card of Scillonian place names has now been rescued from his garage at Lambessow and sits in the Courtney Library in the Royal Cornwall Museum awaiting publication.

His research and views on the early church, the submergence and the place names of Scilly benefitted enormously through his hands-on involvement with the organization of public archaeology at a national level and his direct involvement in the Cornwall Archaeological Unit and the Isles of Scilly Environmental Trust. In 1978 the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey undertook a five-month revision of the archaeological records of the islands. Charles was on the Duchy of Cornwall Archaeological Advisory Group (1983-93) and was Chairman at the time. One of its first initiatives was to agree the setting up of a Manpower Services Commission scheme at the Institute of Cornish Studies (ICS) under Charles' direction to compile a full SMR for Scilly. This

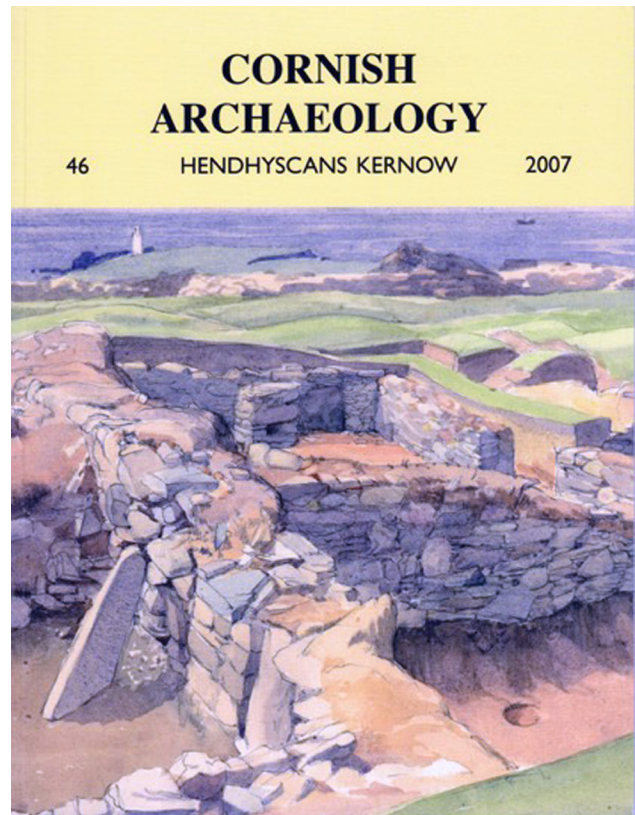


Figure 2.5: The 2007 volume of *Cornish Archaeology* devoted entirely to a review of the 20 years of fieldwork and research at Gwithian. This was the result of a series of assessments of the Gwithian archive undertaken by Cornwall Archaeological Unit/Historic Environment Service in 1989 and 2004/5. The Gwithian archive is now catalogued and re-packed and lies safe in the Royal Cornwall Museum store. Hopefully in the future, resources will be found to publish the results in full – 2019 will be the 50th anniversary of the end of work at Gwithian and 2024 will be the 75th anniversary of its start.

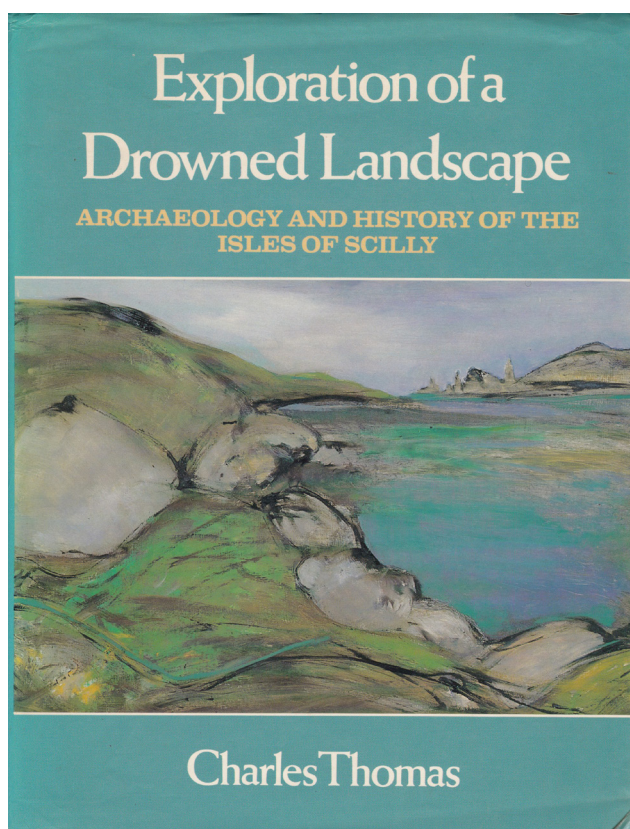


Figure 2.6: In 1978 the O'Donnell lectures at the University of Wales allowed Charles to turn his full attention on Scilly; these lectures provided the structure for this memorable book. It is a compelling interdisciplinary narrative that ranges over archaeology, sea-level rise, palaeo-botany, linguistics and place-names, historic documents and modern Scilly. It gives a tantalizing glimpse of a large island named Ennor with St Agnes offshore being gradually overwhelmed by the sea within the early historic period. This model of sea level change was tested through field observation of the well-known 'submerged' prehistoric field walls on the intertidal flats between the islands, through the number and disposition of the extraordinary number of prehistoric burial chambers and through close examination of the location of earlier Cornish Place names around the edges relative to the newer English ones on the inland bays. This was an attractive model told in a scholarly but very readable style. Subsequent studies prompted by his work have pushed back the 'drowning' by several millennia, but his model of landscape change and historical development of the Islands remains a powerful narrative today.

map the Historic Landscape Character of Scilly and to map its coastal and intertidal archaeological resources can all be traced back to those O'Donnell lectures in 1978 when Charles first outlined his new history of Scilly and the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division created the first modern archaeological record of the islands.

Tintagel

Charles had been intrigued with post-Roman imported Mediterranean pottery since he encountered it on his first dig at Gwithian in 1953. Subsequent to this he went on to publish *A Provisional List of Imported Pottery in Post-Roman Western Britain & Ireland* (Thomas 1981). This was the result of many years research and was to prove the launch pad for his most hotly debated research topic – the post-Roman settlement at Tintagel Castle (Figure 2.7). Charles had been fascinated by the reason why Tintagel has more such

was carried out in 1984-85. In a serendipitous moment in January 1985 it became known that trenches were to be dug across all the inhabited 'off' islands as part of the electrification of Scilly. An ICS/CAU watching brief was immediately organized and this provided new evidence for post-Roman imported pottery and the location of possible early medieval settlement (Thomas 1985a; 1985b; 1985c; Farnsworth *et al* 1986).

In 1987 the paper SMR records were entered into the computer based Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) at CAU. At the same time Charles was closely involved with the establishment of the Isles of Scilly Environmental Trust. In recognition of his long association with Scilly, he was elected Honorary Vice-President of the Trust in 1985 and made Honorary President in 1992. In this position and with his close association with the Duchy of Cornwall, he was able to advise the Countryside Commission, English Heritage and the Nature Conservancy Council that an assessment of the significance of the archaeological resource was necessary in order to help towards creating a Management Plan for the Trust. Survey work and assessment of the new SMR records were carried out in 1988 and published in 1989 (Ratcliffe 1989). This report formed the basis for subsequent archaeological work on the islands.

Since 1989, CAU and its successor the Historic Environment Service (CAU again since 2015) have been engaged in many watching briefs, excavations, conservation works to monuments and historic buildings as well as interpretation and publication of guides. Palaeoenvironmental work has been summarized, wrecks been recorded and most recently the *Lyonesse* Project has taken another look at the sea level curve for Scilly. Most of these reports and publications are available to view in the **Events** section of the **Historical** layer of the Cornwall Council Mapping Site This and projects to



Figure 2.7: Tintagel Castle (upper top) and Tintagel Church (bottom) showing the close geographic proximity one with another. The post-Roman citadel on what was then a promontory (later an island) juts out into and ‘controls’ the coast-hugging western seaway from Lands End to the Bristol Channel and to the Irish Sea via St George’s Channel.

pottery than the rest of the country put together. He knew and admired the work of its excavator, Raleigh Radford, since he had been Vice President of the West Cornwall Field Club (1952-55), then its President (1956-61) and the first President of Cornwall Archaeological Society (1961-64). Charles was editor of both Societies at these times and came to know him very well. With this close relationship with Radford, it is unsurprising that Charles should be drawn to the imported Mediterranean pottery at Tintagel and its identification as an early Christian monastery. It was ironic indeed that it was Charles who helped overturn the monastery interpretation of his mentor and friend (Figure 2.8).

A disastrous, but fortuitous fire in 1983 cleared a large part of the island of its vegetation and turf, and revealed many foundations of rectangular buildings. A complete survey of the island was carried out a few months later by the RCHME (Fowler & Thomas 1985). Such a quick response was relatively straightforward for Peter Fowler (old Gwithian supervisor and the Secretary of the RCHME) and Charles (a RCHME Commissioner) to organize! This revealed an extraordinary number of buildings and building

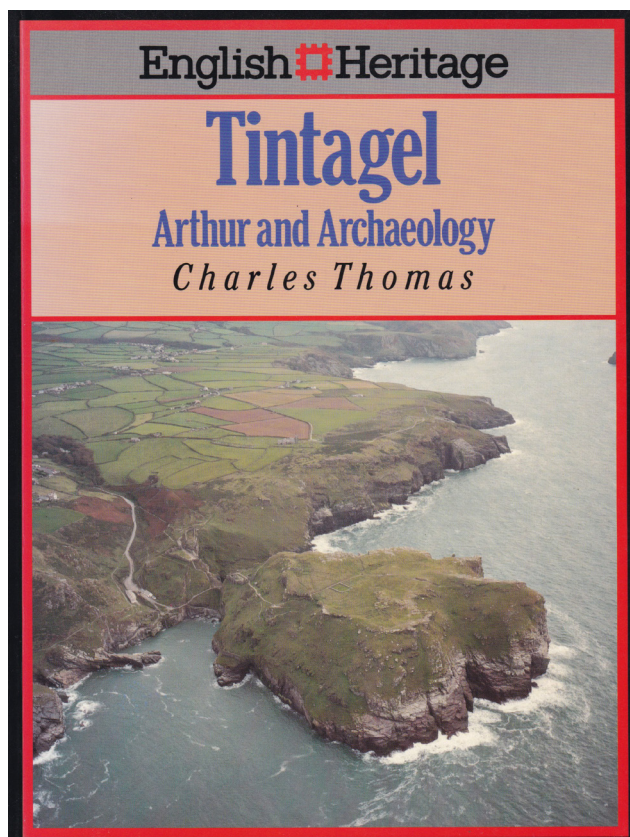


Figure 2.8: English Heritage commissioned Charles to write a book on Tintagel in their Batsford series (1993). He sought to bring the story of Tintagel up to date and somewhat provocatively subtitled the book *Arthur and Archaeology*. He tackled the Arthur legend in the same robust style as he had the monastery explanation. Here was a vexing subject that he loved to argue about, and yet the more he argued, the more the public associated the Castle with King Arthur and his story! Excavation work by Glasgow University between 1990-99 (Barrowman *et al* 2007) confirmed much of Thomas's conclusions, and in 2015/16 English Heritage completely revamped the introductory exhibition at the site and are sponsoring a three year excavation to examine hitherto untouched structures on the Island cliff terraces to confirm their character, date, function and state of preservation. Results to date confirm (winter 2017) what he and others had begun to think over thirty years before. Seldom has such a nationally important state owned site had its history so radically re-written.

to test this theory came rather quicker than anyone had thought. In 1989 Mobil Oil named their new North Sea gas field Camelot and were looking around for an 'Arthurian' project to sponsor. On being contacted, Charles leapt at the opportunity and suggested they sponsor an excavation at Tintagel Church. He was at the dig every day and was delighted when graves were found in the churchyard associated with 5th and 6th century imported pottery. This place was clearly '*a Christian place, the churchyard was directly linked to the secular occupation of Tintagel Island (itself, some form of occasionally occupied royal citadel), and both churchyard and Island must be dated to not long after AD 500.*' (Nowakowski & Thomas 1990; 1992). In addition, the remains of the dismantled pre Norman 'church' were also found. Whilst no direct link was found between the graves and the earlier 'church', it is likely that there would have been some sort of church structure in AD 500 within such an important cemetery. Finding evidence of 1500 years of Christian activity at Tintagel church since the 5th century is quite an achievement!

platforms spread across the plateau and clinging to precarious cliff terraces. Gradually the view that this was a citadel emerged and in 1986 English Heritage asked him to write a new guide book which would replace the monastic model with a story that was much more dramatic. The story of the reinterpretation continues until the present day (Chapter 7). As the Chairman of the Duchy of Cornwall Archaeological Advisory Group, he showed the present Duke of Cornwall around Tintagel Castle, still owned by the Duchy of Cornwall even if managed by English Heritage. He took particular delight in pointing out that this was the first such visit since that of Earl Richard in the 13th century.

Scarcely a year has gone by since 1985 without an archaeological buildings survey, a watching brief, excavation taking place in advance of improvement works, or a reinterpretation or conservation plan or management plan being produced in response to the growing popularity of this most iconic and contested site. Excavation work by Glasgow University between 1990 and 1999 (Barrowman *et al* 2007) sought to examine the remains of the post-Roman settlement and this provided the material for new guidebooks and a new exhibition.

In addition to amassing an eclectic and very large collection of historic picture postcards of Tintagel (now in the Royal Cornwall Museum), his last substantive work here came about entirely by chance. In 1988, photographs had been found in C K Croft Andrew's archive of his archaeological work in Cornwall. They showed a 'dig' undertaken in 1942 by the vicar and some off-duty airmen on mounds in Tintagel Churchyard. Charles had suggested that these might be post-Roman graves. The opportunity

The amateur and the professional archaeologist in Cornwall

Charles' work in Cornwall has been summarized by the author in *Cornish Archaeology* (Johnson 2015) and parts of this have been used again to describe the important role that he played in the archaeological life of these institutions.

Charles was one of the active members of the West Cornwall Field Club that determined to re-launch the Club's Proceedings after a break of nearly 20 years. In his first editorial in July 1953 Charles wrote:

'This will not be a chronicle of past glories. Cornish archaeology at the half-century is in a sorry state.....many of the new techniques which have been so successfully employed in other parts of Britain have yet to reach Cornwall. We have in fact progressed little since the publications of the erratically brilliant Borlase family. Excavation since Hencken's time has consisted of steady progress of a band of devoted amateurs, to a lesser degree of the work of outside archaeologists on holiday in Cornwall, to an uncertain degree of unofficial and generally unpublished scratchings by various persons...Many archaeological finds from Cornwall have been, and still are, exported to collectors' cabinets or the vaults of various museums. Those that remain in the few Cornish museums are, with a few exceptions, inadequately displayed and inaccurately labeled...An immediate change for the better is unlikely. Cornwall has very few archaeologists trained in modern techniques; no Society, except the West Cornwall Field Club, wholly devoted to archaeology; and no journal dealing adequately with the material to be published. It will be a few years yet before Cornwall has its own professional archaeologist, but in the meantime publication must recommence'.

His readers can have had little idea just how much would change over the coming decades. However, Charles could clearly see what was wrong with archaeology in Cornwall and we now have the evidence that, either consciously or subconsciously, he set about the radical overhaul of archaeological practice and the organization of archaeology in Cornwall and, with others, brought structure and purpose to public archaeology across the country as a whole. In his editorial he highlights a number of significant deficiencies in Cornwall:

1. Modern archaeological techniques lacking.
2. Modern excavations lacking.
3. Lack of archaeological societies.
4. Lack of a substantive archaeological Journal.
5. Inadequate deposition and display of archaeological finds.
6. No professional archaeologists.

This list could be the sub text for his career! Whilst of course he pursued his own academic interests with vigour (prehistory, submergence, post-Roman pottery, the early Christian church and its inscriptions and so on), what was evidently threaded through his work was a constant desire to improve archaeological study and fieldwork. He was also an 'early adopter' of the need to establish a national public archaeological service capable of ensuring the survival of the archaeological resource (the historic environment) and to make it more accessible to the public. It is possible to track how he was responsible, to a large degree, for the improvement in and in some cases the complete transformation of those deficiencies he has identified in Cornwall in 1953. This will be done by examining his record within the world of amateur archaeology through the lenses of the West Cornwall Field Club and the Cornwall Archaeological Society; and his contribution to the professional archaeological world through the lenses of the Institute of Cornish Studies, The Royal Institution of Cornwall and the Cornwall Committee for Rescue Archaeology/ Cornwall Archaeological Unit.

The amateur archaeologist in Cornwall

Charles was a prime mover in the transformation of the West Cornwall Field Club (WCFC) into the countywide Cornwall Archaeological Society (CAS). Most of his innovations with the WCFC were carried into and expanded within the CAS. Whilst a lecturer in Edinburgh and then Professor at Leicester he edited the *Proceedings of the West Cornwall Field Club* and then *Cornish Archaeology* from 1952 to 1975, and

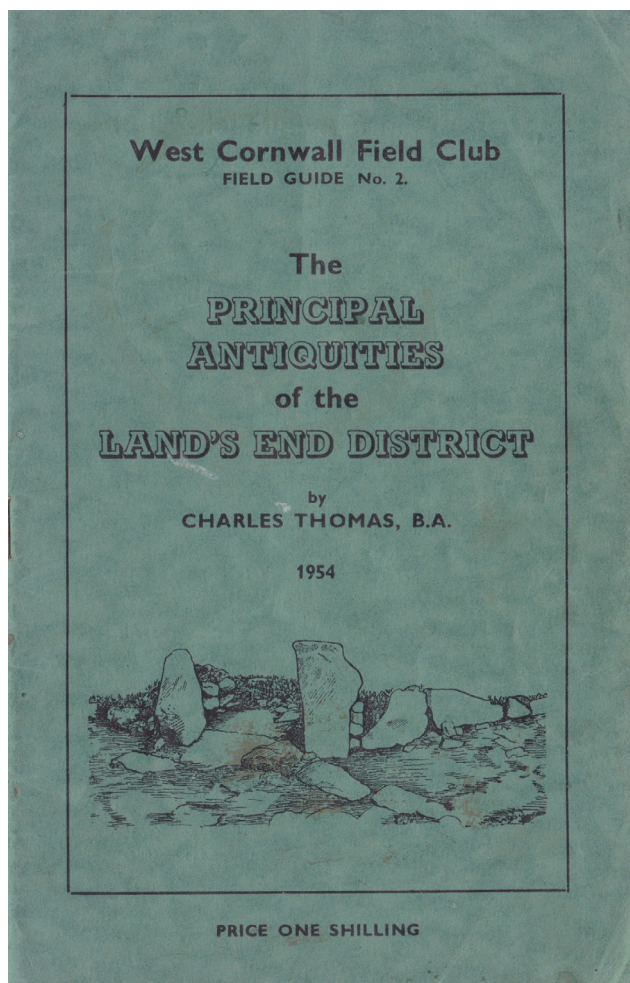


Figure 2.9: The first of 18 editions of the Field Guide to the archaeological sites and monuments of West Penwith. The Field Guides, of which Charles edited all but the 1st and wrote 6 out of the 12 himself (Nos 2, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 11) are: No 1 Maen Castle. 1949; No 2 Principle Antiquities of the Lands End District; No 3 Bodrifty. 1954; No 4 Late Bronze Age Site at Gwithian - Cornwall. 1957; No 5 Goldherring 1959 (3 editions); No 6 People and Pottery in Dark Age Cornwall. 1960; No 7 Principle Antiquities in the Newquay and Padstow Area. 1962; No 8 Castilly, Lanivet. 1962; No 9 The Cliff Castle at the Rumps, St Minver. 1963; No 10 Medieval Settlement at Lanyon in Madron. 1964; No 11 Merther Uny, Wendron. 1968; No 12 Carn Brea, Illogan. 2 editions.

access he had to libraries in Edinburgh, Leicester, at the Royal Institution of Cornwall and of course at his various homes. It is easy to forget that in a pre-computer age these bibliographic reference lists were an essential part of research – a sort of pre-computer search engine.

In addition, when he took on the editorship of *Cornish Archaeology* he began to compile an annual *Digest of Cornish Periodicals* from 1960 to 1974. These 12 lists comprised a summary of each periodical for that year and the range usually covered more than a dozen periodicals and reflected his eclectic yet broad interest in Cornish history, culture and natural history.

Whilst he was a WEA tutor he used his class and WCFC members to excavate a Bronze Age Cist on Emblance Downs, Bodmin Moor (Thomas 1975), and he and Bernard Wailes investigated the ruined Sperris Quoit Chambered Tomb (Thomas & Wailes 1967) and Mulfra Vein Courtyard House settlement (Thomas 1963b) (Figure 2.12). After this flurry of activity in Cornwall he went to teach at Edinburgh. However,

Cornish Studies from 1973-91 a staggering 40 years. During that time he not only wrote the editorials, contributed articles, short notes, excavation news, and book reviews but also many of the Society's field and site guides (Figure 2.9). In addition he was responsible for several initiatives that indicate his ability to gather together and organize huge amounts of data. The Club set out on a programme of annual excavations. Excavation techniques tried and tested at Gwithian were adopted by the Society and the dissemination of information was transformed under his editorship.

In 1958 he encouraged the West Cornwall Field Club and later the Cornwall Archaeological Society to be the first in the country to publish parish checklists of archaeological sites and monuments (Figure 2.10) and he himself went on to compile the checklists for Gwithian, Gwinear and Camborne. Parish Checklists were an important influence in the later development of Sites and Monuments Records (now Historic Environment Records) that underpin archaeology today.

He was well aware of the difficulties that members of the WCFC and scholars elsewhere might have in tracking down published material concerning the archaeology of the county when the Morrab Library in Penzance and the Royal Institution of Cornwall library in Truro were the only antiquarian libraries within reach. To ease this problem he initiated the *Cumulative Index of Cornish Archaeology* annual Index in 1952 (Figure 2.11) with a retrospective list of all archaeological publications since 1932. This continued for 20 years amounting to an astonishing 1118 archaeological references. His lists of published material from 1932-72 give us a real insight into the width and depth of his interests and the

CUMULATIVE INDEX OF CORNISH ARCHAEOLOGY	
LIST No. 2 (1953-1954, with addenda to LIST No. 1)	
<p>This adheres to the lines laid down for the previous list (see Proc. W.C.F.C. (NS)I. 1 (1953), p.7) and the numbering is consecutive. The entry, e.g. "Ref. (40)" implies a cross-reference to a previous or subsequent item in the Index as a whole, for instance where a note is expanded into a report. The Addenda, which are not separated, embrace a few items omitted or overlooked in the previous list. The period headings remain the same, except that "POST-ROMAN" of List No. 1 is now sub-divided into "MEDIAEVAL AND LATER" (from 1066 to 1800 A.D.) and "DARK AGES" (roughly 400 to 1066).</p>	
General	
99. HELBAEK, HANS	Early Crops in Southern England. P.P.S. 18 (pt. 2) (1952) p.194. (Grain impressions from pots at : BALLOWAL, BOSCAWEN-UN, CHYCARNE, KNACKYBOY, ST. JUST-IN-ROSELAND, PEDNGWINION, TREBARVETH, TRESAWSEN, and TREWORRICK.)
100. RADFORD, C. A. R.	Prehistoric Settlements on Dartmoor and the Cornish Moors. P.P.S. 18 (pt. 1) (1952) p.55.
Mediaeval and Later	
101. ANDREW, C. K. C.	Spear-head from Probus (17th century). D. & C.N. & Q. 23 (April 1948) p.181 illus.
Dark Ages	
102. ANDREW, C. K. C.	The Doniert Stone. Ref. (13) (105) D. & C.N. & Q. 26 (Jan. 1954) p.27.
103. BECKERLEGGGE, J. J.	Ancient Memorial Inscription on Stone at Hayle. Ref. (107) "Old Cornwall," V.4 (1953) p.173.
104. CROFTS, C. B.	King Athelstan and St. Buryan. (The "Pipers"). D. & C.N. & Q. 23 (July 1949) p.337.
105. ELLIS, G. E.	Cornish Crosses : St. Cleer (Doniert stone). Ref. (102) D. & C.N. & Q. 25 (July 1953) p.177.
106. FINBERG, H. P. R.	Early Charters of Devon and Cornwall. Univ. Coll. Leics. Dept. Eng. Local History, Occ. Paper No. 2 (1953).
107. THOMAS, A. C.	The Carnsew Inscription. "Old Cornwall," V.3 (1953) p.125.
Roman	
108. RUSSELL, V.	Earthwork at Boskennal, St. Buryan. Proc. W.C.F.C. (NS)I. 1 (1953) p.26.
Iron Age	
109. CORCORAN, J. X. W. P.	Tankards and Tankard-Handles of the British Early Iron Age. P.P.S. 18 (pt. 1) (1952) p.85. (p.97 Pentewan tankard, illus.)
110. CROFTS, C. B.	Maen Castle, Sennen, Excavation (note). Ref. (40) D. & C.N. & Q. 23 (April 1949) p.311.
111. CROFTS, C. B.	Bodrifty, Mulfra, Interim Report 1952. Ref. (41) Proc. W.C.F.C. (NS)I. 1 (1953) p.15 illus.
112. DUNNING, G. C.	The Swan's-Neck and Ring-Headed Pins of the Early Iron Age in Britain. Arch. J. 91 (1935) p.269. (Harlyn Bay pin, p.275, illus., p.289 ref.)
113. FOX, Lady A.	Hill-Slope Forts and related earthworks in S.W. England and S. Wales. Arch. J. 109 (1952) p.1. (TREGEAR, CASTLE DORE, and see note pp.21, 22).
Bronze Age	
114. ATKINSON, R. J. C.	Pond Barrow at Winterbourne Steepleton, Dorset. Arch. J. 108 (1951) p.1. (See notes p.19 on burial at Cataclews, p.22 Carn Kief urn — Ref. (63).)
115. BECK, H. C. and STONE, J. F. S.	Faience Beads of the British Bronze Age. Arch. 85 (1936) p.203. (See pp.234, 249.)

Figure 2.11: An example of the Cumulative Index of Cornish Archaeology initiated and compiled by Charles Thomas.

Leicester he used students as well as CAS members to investigate the medieval chapel built inside an Iron Age Round at Merther Uny, Wendron in 1968 (1968a; 1968b). He never quite lost his interest in megalithic tombs and was very pleased to be able excavate the Early Bronze Age entrance grave at Bosiliack, Madron when in 1984 a moorland fire burnt off all the vegetation and from the nearby Middle Bronze Age settlement and field system. Bosiliack was the first entrance grave to have its chamber excavated under modern conditions (Jones & Thomas 2010), and the excavation coincided with his Presidency of CAS and he used this to launch the Society's Megalithic Project. Little did he know at the time that the Megalithic Monument closest to his home and heart, Carwynnen Quoit, was to be re-erected within his own lifetime with substantial input by CAS.

Continuing the theme of making archaeology accessible to a wider audience, he helped initiate the Society's annual Corfield (later Corfield Nankivell) memorial lecture in 1975. Knowing how many memorial lecture series and lectures he had given already elsewhere, it is not surprising that the creation of a prestigious annual lecture should be encouraged. He was able to provide the names of eminent candidates who were his friends and colleagues.

He was on the WCFC Committee as editor from 1953-1961, on the CAS Committee as editor 1962-76, as Hon. Vice President 1975-2016 and as President between 1984 and 1987. This is a formidable period of service to the Society, and by the end of his Presidency it is fair to say that the first four of the six problems that had afflicted Cornish archaeology in 1953 had been addressed. He had been an important influence in setting the tone and ambition of CAS, particularly in its first decade.

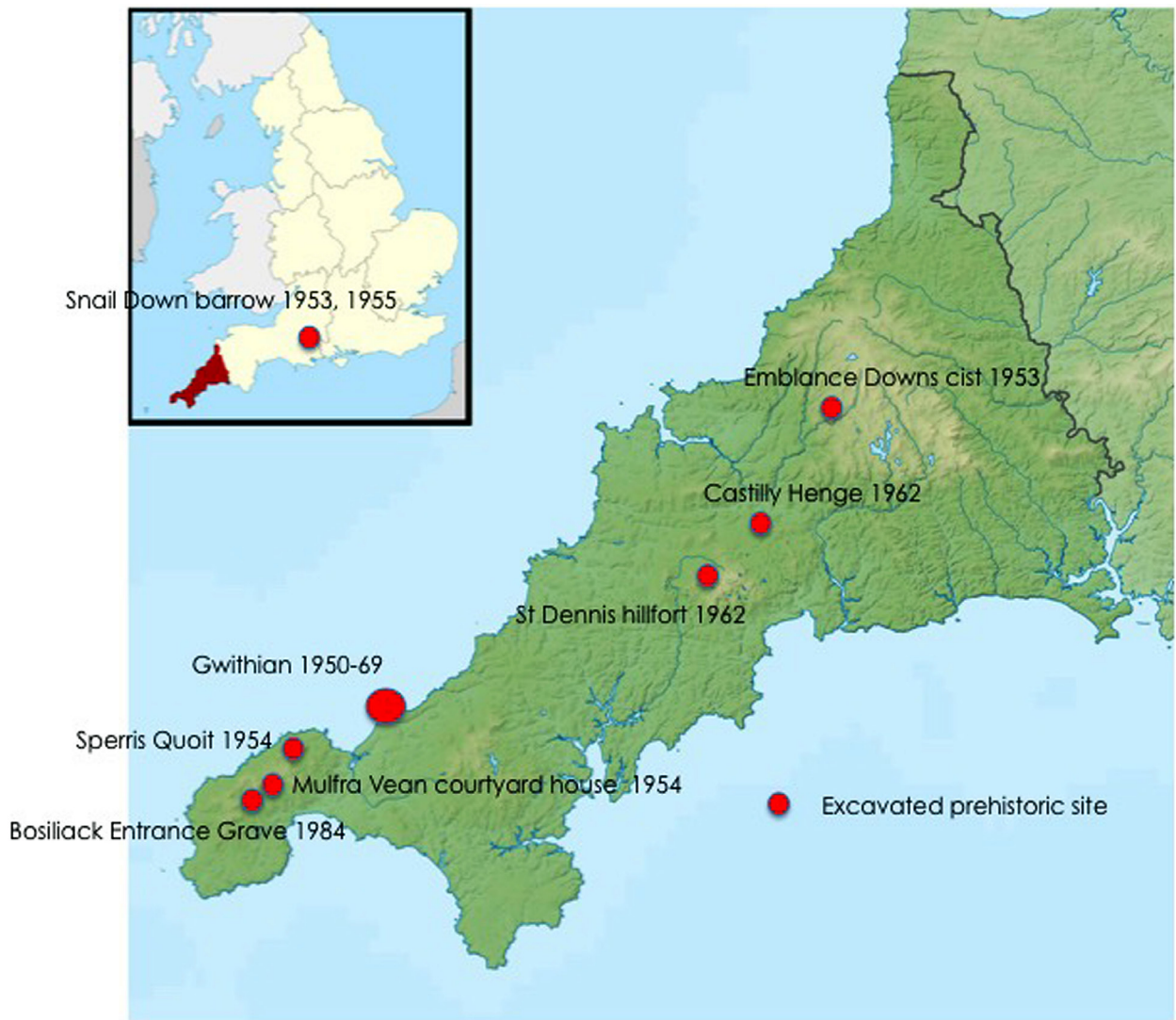


Figure 2.12: Prehistoric Sites excavated by Charles Thomas in Cornwall. For more detail of his Gwithian work see Figure 2.4. Charles was also a supervisor at Snail Down in Wiltshire.

The professional archaeologist in Cornwall

While establishing the new Department at Leicester he found time to become increasingly involved in the beginnings of a new professional structure for archaeology. Over the next decade the foundations would be laid for the development of a professional public archaeological service delivered at local authority level. He was elected President of the Council for British Archaeology (1970-73), with Peter Fowler (a veteran of the Gwithian, Iona, Tëan and Lundy excavations) elected Honorary Secretary. With his experience at Gwithian and the work involved in compiling the parish surveys in Cornwall, Charles encouraged the CBA to push field archaeology hard as a desirable function of local societies and groups.

A committee/Archaeology Panel of Honorary Archaeological Advisers was established in 1974 by the National Trust, with Professor Grimes as chairman. This was a step forward.

Charles was a significant mover in the formation and subsequent actions of RESCUE: A Trust for British Archaeology, being both a founder Trustee and Vice Chairman. In hindsight 1971 proved to be a seminal moment, a 'line in the sand' for archaeology; the concept of 'Rescue Archaeology' was born, represented on the iconic RESCUE logo by a bulldozer with Stonehenge in its bucket. There was widespread alarm as

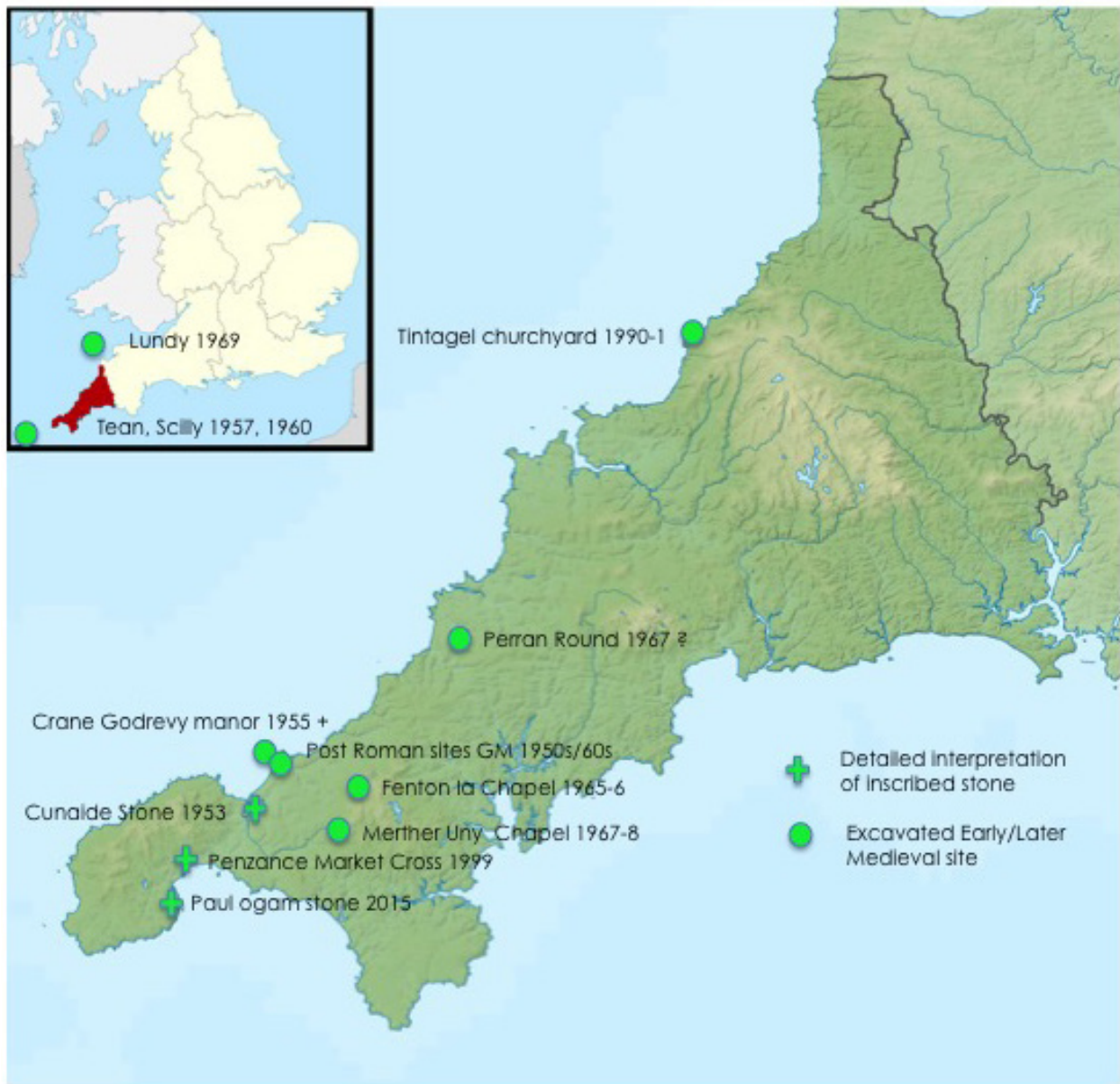


Figure 2.13: Post-Roman and early and later medieval sites excavated by Charles Thomas and inscribed stones he studied in detail.

development destroyed ever more unrecorded archaeology. He was one of the few senior academics who publicly committed to this movement and riding the tectonic plates, which were now moving within the archaeological establishment at national level, he was appointed Chairman (1974-79) of the Area Archaeological Advisory Committee, Area 13 (SW Britain) based on the CBA regional structure. The formation of County or multi-County professional Archaeological Units followed quickly thereafter. In 1975 he worked to set up, and was then appointed chairman of, the newly created Cornwall Committee for Rescue Archaeology (CCRA); the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate and Cornwall Archaeological Society being the sponsors.

He became a Commissioner of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England (1983-97), teaming up again with his old friend from Gwithian, CBA and RESCUE days, Peter Fowler who was Secretary of the Commission. He played a crucial role in holding the Commission together as Acting Chairman (1988-89) during an unfortunate gap between Chairmen, and his role in initiating the work at Tintagel has been outlined above.

He was a very successful and hands-on leader of CCRA, the new archaeological Unit in Cornwall. His experience at the CBA, RESCUE and the RCHME meant that he was a strong advocate of field survey. As Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies, he had organized the archaeological assessment of the Rame Peninsula in southeast Cornwall in advance of the proposed CEGB power station at Innswork, so the practice of 'rescue recording' was in place when CCRA was established. In the first year of its existence two reports were produced; a Rural Survey Report (Johnson 1977) looking at the threats to archaeology in the rural areas; the first comprehensive rapid assessment (Figure 2.14) of the development threats to the 29 medieval boroughs of Cornwall (Sheppard 1980). The first individual town survey was carried out in Penryn in 1978 (Wingfield 1979) in advance of a Carrick District Housing scheme to improve historic housing within this most historic town. Charles had obtained a grant from the Robert Kiln Trust. Kiln, an amateur archaeologist and Lloyds Underwriter, was a founder member of RESCUE along with Charles.



Data and its cataloguing was important to him. It is not surprising therefore that he played a significant but perhaps undervalued role in the formation and development of the Cornwall and Scilly Sites and Monuments Record (later the Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record). The SMR was constructed out of four important datasets:

1. Parish Checklists of the WCFC and CAS which he helped pioneer and edit.
2. While he was a Commissioner at the RCHME he helped absorb the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey which had been responsible for the index of all archaeological sites that appeared on their published maps, and which had been responsible for the first modern survey of Scilly. These index cards provided the first countywide record of the archaeology of Cornwall.
3. Using a Manpower Services Commission (MSC) employment scheme he set up the joint ICS/CAU project that constructed a comprehensive set of archaeological records for Scilly.
4. In another joint ICS/CAU MSC project in 1981, all historic industrial sites shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps were identified. This was the first time that a whole county had been documented thus, and it formed the fundamental building block upon which the bid for the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site was built some 20 years later.

As elsewhere in the country, excavations were carried out in advance of development, but under his guidance it was in landscape survey that CAU forged a reputation for innovation and ambition. He was an influential promoter and facilitator of the Bodmin Moor Survey (1978-85). This joint project with the RCHME used air photo transcription and was the first time that a major moorland area had been systematically surveyed accurately at the same scale. He also played a vital role in the ongoing and difficult negotiations with the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate (later English Heritage) over the funding

Figure 2.14: The Historic Towns of Cornwall survey was the first attempt to assess the threat of development in those Cornish towns that had achieved Borough status by the end of the middle ages. This survey was prompted by the publication by the CBA of *The Erosion of History – Archaeology and Planning in Towns* (1972). This work was undertaken whilst Charles was President of the CBA.

of the West Penwith Survey from 1980. The struggles to find adequate national funding for the surveys in West Penwith and investigations and reinterpretation at Tintagel were an important part of his work throughout the 1980s and early 1990s.

CCRA seamlessly morphed into the Cornwall Archaeological Unit as the team became more established and carried out contract work as well as its curatorial and advisory roles. He provided the leadership and had the local reputation to ensure that Cornwall County Council would eventually in 1988 take the CAU into the Planning Department. He was finally able to stand down as Chairman with the fifth of the six problems that he had identified in 1953 overcome. Charles was central to the setting up the public archaeological service in Cornwall.

Charles had been on the Council of the Royal Institution of Cornwall since 1967, President 1970-73, and Honorary Librarian since 1972. Under his guidance not only were the displays of archaeology improved but the financial support of Cornwall County Council was obtained. It became a principle that the RIC would accept the storage of the archaeological archives and artefacts produced by CAU through 'rescue' recording in advance of development, after 1990 through developer led funding for archaeology. Whilst he was editor of *Cornish Archaeology* he sought to increase the profile of museums in Cornwall. He published a list of Cornish Museums in the first volume in 1962 and published two consecutive papers on *Unpublished Material from Cornish Museums* (Camborne Public Library (1962) and Helston Museum (1963c)). His efforts to improve the profile of archaeology in museums and to ensure that artefacts and archives could be deposited has gone a long way to improve considerably the state of his 6th and final issue that he highlighted in 1953.

In conclusion, Charles was able to achieve what he achieved through a combination of factors:

- Encouraged by his training at the Institute of Archaeology, having been taught by the best, he had a rare talent for multi-disciplinary research and fieldwork.
- He was a natural and talented academic and linguist who specialized in the rarer fields of archaeology.
- He had already practiced 'total' archaeology at Gwithian before landscape archaeology became the zeitgeist of the 1980s.
- He was himself passionate about gazetteers and cataloguing at a time when the idea of creating county Sites and Monuments Registers was being discussed.
- His friends at the Institute and members of his Gwithian team went on to build illustrious archaeological careers for themselves, and by the 1970s and 1980s Charles and they were in national positions of influence at a critical time in the development of public archaeology.
- He came from a well-known local family and this opened doors for him in Cornwall.
- He was lucky to have been able to carry out his formative fieldwork on his own family's land.

The archaeology of Cornwall and its archaeological institutions have benefited immeasurably through the confluence of these factors in this remarkable man.

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