

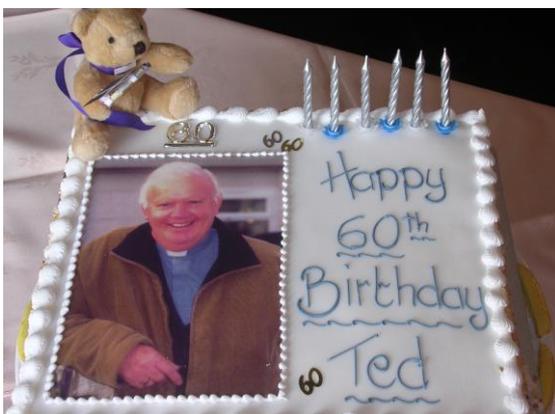
Curnow's Cornish Calendar No 31
The Very Big 60
 7 June 2004

Beryl had been asking for weeks what I would like for my birthday. Well I just didn't have a clue ---a lovely work of art, a book on Cornish antiquity, an ornament in local tin. I thought my reluctance and indecision would help guarantee a quiet 'coming of age.'" I clearly underestimated the resolve of my wife and daughter.



It seems that Beryl had alerted the world and with email and Lorinda's private mobile number secretly co-ordinated the responses. I was alarmed to discover my birthday splashed across the front of the Church News sheet. The 'chockie cake' and Happy Birthday that followed the service was nice. but it was also a diversion tactic to distract from the surprise afternoon tea at the "Mad

hatter Tea Rooms" I was lured into a Sunday afternoon stroll, only to find an extended Cornish Family of about 30 'Cousins Jack's and Jenny's eager to celebrate and to take advantage of my accumulated years. Even Rev Dr Chris Blake, Chairman of the District and his wife Joy had been drawn into the plot. With Joseph, Eva and Ross from Launceston. Neil and Beatrice from Stithians Hedley and Freda from Falmouth, Bill and Alma from Penzance, William and Joyce from Mount Hawke, Rev Derek and Hilary Balsdon & Boys, Rennee and Alan from St Ives, Mary and Ruth from Carbis Bay, Pete and Liz, Betty and Alan, John and Lorna from Hayle.



Marcus sent a family milestone greeting. Nathan invited me to "float, walk and glow". Unbeknown to me Lorinda's polished speech recalling my

'sordid' past was still being typed minutes before our blissful afternoon stroll. She excelled and made me proud.



Emails from Australia and Leigh Duffett's photos of yesteryear were passed around. Lorraine Merton sent a photo of their sheep instead of the family!! Three grand - children from Portland sent drawings of "Papa's Party" and I received a Cornish card handmade in New Zealand.

In all I enjoyed three birthday cakes, the last being decorated with Cornish features, a chough, bluebells and lily of the valley, Engine house, Lighthouse etc all in icing. An interesting feature of this birthday has been its connection to the 60th UK commemoration of D Day. The human story unfolding here at the time of my birth on the other side of the world has come alive with a good amount of detail. Thousands of young servicemen were billeted in homes of people here in preparation for the Normandy landings. Almost half never returned!! This over-arching anniversary of and event that opened the way for an allied victory, also accentuated the blessing afforded the post-war generation and the privileged period of history in which I have lived my 60 years.

For the sustaining grace of God conveyed often through parents, family and wonderful friends I offer continual praise

