

## John Knill - ? First? owner of 'Grayhound'

Born 1.1. 1773 Callington

Served clerkship (lawyer) in Penzance

1762 – 1782 Collector of Customs St Ives

11.1767 elected Mayor of St Ives (aged 34)

1773 to Jamaica to inspect ports

1774 returns to St Ives customs duties

1777 becomes Private Secretary to Duke of Buckinghamshire

1779 Speculates in search for treasure of Capt John Avery

### St Ives. The Customs Men of Cornwall 1705 & 1779

<b>Collector *</b>	<b>John Knile</b>	<b>£30</b>
<b>Deputy Customer</b>	<b>Thomas Wallis</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Deputy Comptroller</b>	<b>Thomas Hickens</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Land waiter *</b>	<b>Hugh Mulfra</b>	<b>£10</b>
<b>Coast waiter and deputy Searcher *</b>	<b>Nathaniel Hickes</b> <b>More to keep a horse and guard the coast and tide to Penzance, to assist in the discharge of ships there</b>	<b>£25</b>  <b>£10</b>
<b>Tidemen *</b>	<b>Thomas Rogers</b> <b>Samuel Green</b>	<b>£25 each</b>

\* = as in 1705

[http://smugglers.oldcornwall.org/customs\\_men\\_in\\_cornwall\\_1705\\_\\_1.htm](http://smugglers.oldcornwall.org/customs_men_in_cornwall_1705__1.htm)

1784 Purchased chambers in London

1779 painted by Opie



Mr. John (Johannes) Knill from a portrait by John Opie  
Courtesy of St. Just Museum

## JOHN OPIE AND HIS CIRCLE

By ADA EARLAND

Among the early patrons of Opie were the families of St. Aubyn, Penwarne, Prideaux, Daniell, Vivian, Grylls, Rashleigh, Giddy, and Scobell : of this last-named family, about 1779, he painted no less than seven separate portraits. Dolly Pentreath the old, old woman who told fortunes, and was said to be the last to speak the Cornish language, and whom Daines Barrington interviewed in 1768, when he visited Cornwall to study and preserve records of the dying language was painted by Opie shortly before her death in 1777 at the reputed age of one hundred and two. In relation to another portrait, that of John Knill, painted during the same year, Mr. Joep Rogers quoted an interesting memorandum made by Mr. Knill :

" Paid Mr. Acres for painting the hands and blue coat to a portrait of me by Opie, painted at Penzance in 1777, who only finished the head, for which I paid Opie one guinea, and now Mr. Acres one pound one shilling. Dec. 30, 1808. J.K."

From this it appears that not only were sitters found able, and willing, to pay the increased charge of half a guinea, but that Opie could sometimes get a higher price still, even before his removal to Exeter in 1780, when his recognized charge was a guinea. It appears strange that the portrait should have remained in an unfinished state for so long. Possibly Mr. Knill imagined that Opie would eventually finish it, and took no steps towards employing another artist until this hope was crushed by Opie's death. There are a good many unfinished portraits by Opie : some, as in the case of the portrait of Dr. Johnson, owned by Lady 1 " Opie and his Works," J. Joep Rogers, M.A.

[http://www.archive.org/stream/johnopiehiscirc100earliala/johnopiehiscirc100earliala\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/johnopiehiscirc100earliala/johnopiehiscirc100earliala_djvu.txt)

1782 erected mausoleum at Worrall Hill



1801 First ceremony at the Knill Monument (?)

### Advertisements & Notices .

*Liverpool Mercury etc* (Liverpool, England), Monday, July 31, 1871; Issue 7338.

**SINGULAR CUSTOM AT ST. IVES.**—The *Western Morning News* says that July 25 was the day appointed for carrying out the directions contained in the will of the late Mr. John Knill, of St. Ives. This gentleman, who was formerly collector of the port, prior to his death, in 1788, made a most eccentric will. In the first place he directed that an obelisk should be erected to his memory. Around this monument, known as Knill's steeple, ten virgins resident in the town, two old women, and a fiddler, dance once every five years. The virgins (who, according to the wishes of the testator, must not exceed ten years of age) each receive 10s. 6d., the old women 10s. 6d. each, and the fiddler one guinea. In addition to these bequests, the oldest man (or his widow) in the parish who has brought up the largest family by his own industry, and without the aid of parochial or other relief, receives £5. The recipient this year was Job Stevens, fisherman. The last-married couple before the quinquennial distribution receive £1 1s. After the ceremonies are over, the trustees, the mayor, collector, and clergyman, with their friends, proceed to dinner, on which a certain sum of money, agreeably to the will, is spent. The day was kept as a general holiday. The couples started, amidst great cheering and laughter, at eleven, and returned at one p.m. to receive the bequests.

### THE KNILL FESTIVAL AT ST. IVES .

*The Royal Cornwall Gazette, Falmouth Packet, and General Advertiser* (Truro,

**THE KNILL FESTIVAL AT ST. IVES.**  
(By our Special Correspondent).

Keskey's bus from Hayle to St. Ives carried a full cargo from the half-past ten train on Tuesday morning. With most of them business was no doubt combined with pleasure; but certainly ten out of the twelve gentlemen a-top intended to see that comical celebration called "the Knill Festival." Thitherward at all events their conversation tended; and this would probably have been more of a main topic of discussion had it not been for the presence of our "spiritualistic" friend Noyes, who, true to his name when taken phonetically, made so much noise that few else could be heard. However, he contrived somehow to very much interest the company with his "inspired" utterances—somebody called them the utterances of an "inspired" maniac—and time passed pleasantly until we reached the road leading up to the Knill monument—in distance, about a mile from the town. Here we found a crowd already wending their way to the place of rendezvous, and getting down we entered the Inn hard by to quench the thirst engendered by a hot summer's sun and a dusty road. The old lady in waiting seemed affected with the excitement which appeared general and a press of custom made her testy, for she was sure she should miss "the virgins," and perhaps she should never see them again. Under this terrible thought, however, she became quite brisk, and seemed greatly relieved when she had satisfied our requirements, and the procession had not yet arrived. They soon, however, were in sight. And what a sight they made! Preceded, followed, and enclosed by a crowd, principally of girls, of various ages and still more varied attire, the little body presented one of the most ludicrous sights we have seen for a long time. The dancing party at the Flora are lively and gay; the procession of a half-a-dozen black policemen and two town sergeants solemnly perambulating the streets of Bodmin to meet the judge is funereal-like and sombre; but this came somewhere between the two. It was neither gay nor solemn. It rejoiced in the possession of one fiddler; who was preceded by the two town sergeants. Then came two old ladies, of 64 or upwards, who were followed by ten little maidens under ten and dressed in white, and the rear was brought up by the Mayor (Mr. Chas. N. Tremearne), the Vicar (the Rev. J. Balmer Jones), and the Collector and Deputy Collector of Customs. On they go, up the rugged path leading to the eminence upon which stands Knill's monument or mausoleum. A great crowd here already awaits their arrival, and the policeman leads the way through the people to the further side of the monument. Here there is a gate by which the procession enters, and the gate is again shut, only one personage being added to their number, and that personage our redoubtable "spiritualistic" friend, who commences inspecting the maces, and amusing the sergeants, one of whom he congratulates on the possession of a fine aquiline nose, betokening that "blue" blood runs in his veins! Meanwhile preparations were made for the completion of the programme. The fiddler strikes up and round go the two old maidens and the ten little maidens dancing to the merry jig, one of the old ladies doing the thing with commendable spirit and causing roars of laughter as she appeared on either side of the monument. By the way, I have forgotten to say, for the benefit of those who don't know St. Ives, that this monument or mausoleum, as it was really intended to be, is a triangular pyramid of granite, 50 ft. high, enclosed by an iron railing, and surrounded by a plantation of furze and firs. It is situated on the summit of one of the highest eminences of the neighbourhood known as Worvas Hill, and is useful as a landmark for seamen. It is, as I have indicated, a pyramid with three sides. On one is the word "Resurgam," carved in bold letters, and the arms of the Knill family, with their motto "Nil desperandum;" on another the text "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" and on a third "Johannes Knill, 1782." The date 1782 is the date of the erection of the mausoleum, in the base of which there is a cavity sufficient for a single interment. Knill evidently intended to be buried here; but from some circumstances which intervened he could not carry out this intention, and his will gave directions for his burial at St. Andrew's, Holborn. But before we investigate the biography of the man, let us see the finish of this singular celebration which by his will he originated. We left the old ladies and the ten little maidens dancing around the monument. While we have digressed they have still been on the

move; but now, having completed the fourth or fifth round, the directors of the ceremony remember that a burning sun is pouring down upon them with an effect the reverse of pleasant; and as a photographer is present, and has asked permission to take the group, now undoubtedly is the time for the operation. The ten little virgins are consequently arranged in front of the principal side of the monument, with one of the old ladies at each end, and the fiddler in the centre. The crowd underneath all seem comparatively indifferent to this part of the ceremony except a Methody parson—one of four out on the spree—who seems most anxious that the picture should be made complete by including his fine figure, or at least his dark and handsome physog. Whether he succeeded or not I cannot say; but he came back to his companions apparently satisfied with his achievement, and they together tried to make a joke out of "Hymns Ancient and Modern," from which the Vicar now gave out the Hundredth Psalm. This having been feebly sung by the little maidens, accompanied by the fiddler, the procession re-formed and marched down town to the Western Hotel; I and my colleague adjourned to our inn for dinner; and our "spiritualistic" friend went, as he told us, divining-rod in hand, searching for gold mines in the Lelant district! Every man in his humour.

When the cravings of appetite were appeased, we again sallied forth in quest of information concerning the curious proceeding we had just witnessed, and the history of its founder. This we were fortunate in obtaining in the shape of a "Notice of John Knill," by "J. J. K." Penrose, and from this we find that Mr. Knill was a half-brother to the Rev. John Jope, of St. Clero. Mr. Knill, who was a barrister of Gray's Inn, was born at Callington, in 1737, and died at his chambers in Gray's Inn, in 1811. For upwards of twenty years he held the post of Collector of Customs for the port of St. Ives, and he also served the office of Mayor for the borough. Resigning the former post he went out to Jamaica to hold an appointment in connection with the Customs, but was not long there, and again returned to St. Ives, where he resumed his duties as collector. Later on in life he was appointed private secretary to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, lord-lieutenant of Ireland. The will and trust deed which have given rise to so much attention, on account of their peculiar provisions, direct, amongst other things, that at the festival above referred to, which occurs every five years, 10s. each shall be given to ten maidens not exceeding ten years of age, the stipulation in connection with the gift being that the children shall proceed from the town to the monument, locally known as "Knill's Steeple," and dance and sing around it. Two widows of the age of 64 or upwards who accompany the children, and also a fiddler, in order that music shall not be wanting, receive £1 each for their services. A further sum of £5 is given to the oldest person, a native of St. Ives, who has brought up the largest family solely by labour, care, and industry; and £10 to a woman, a native of the borough, and between the ages of 20 and 36, who has been married to a seaman, fisherman, tinner, or labourer, between the 31st December, 1875, and the 20th July, 1876. A further sum of £25 was, this year, at the disposal of the trustees, and was distributed by them among the existing friendly societies of the town. These are some of them singular provisions; but it does not appear that we should be justified in running away with the idea that Mr. Knill was a very peculiar character. "J. J. K." is loud in his praise. "He mixed much in good society, where his ready wit and the genial humour of his well-stored mind, made him a welcome guest. He cultivated the friendship of men of letters and wits of the day, whom he often entertained at Gray's Inn." He appears to have entertained, as he says in his will of 1809, "a real affection for St. Ives and its inhabitants, in whose memory," he proceeds, "I have an ardent desire to continue a little longer than the usual time those do of whom there is no ostensible memorial. To that end my vanity prompted me to erect a mausoleum and to institute certain periodical returns of a ceremony which will be found in a deed," etc. His greatest peculiarity—barring the establishment of this singular ceremony,—appears to have been that he was a bachelor till the time of his death in 1811.

That the end of his instituting this ceremony and erecting the mausoleum has been attained was fully apparent on Tuesday. All St. Ives was alive for the occasion; and we append a list of the recipients of the charity:—

Names of virgins under 10 years of age, to each of whom the sum of 10s. was paid:—Mary Hocking, Selina Peak, Emma Chard, Joanna Williams Quick, Elizabeth Ellen Laity, Mary Ann Jones, Maria Nankervis, Philippa Daniel Murt, and Annie Jane Stevens.

The two aged widows, each of whom received £1 were Mrs. Elizabeth Trevorrow and Mrs. Nancy Williams.

The fiddler to whom £1 was paid:—John Major.

The oldest father of the largest adult family who received £5:—Job Stevens.

The married woman to whom £10 were given:—Margaret Ann, wife of John Richards. There being another claimant of equal merit, Jane, the wife of Rd. Coush, it was agreed by the candidates before the Trustees that the successful competitors should give half the sum to her rival.

The sum of £35 to be distributed in equal shares between the Friendly Societies of the town was given to the Foresters, the Philanthropic, and the Rechabites.

The three trustees, who each invited two friends, sat down to dinner at the Western Hotel, at seven p.m., and this finished a faithful carrying out of the trust deed of John Knill at the quinquennial festival of 1876.

RAMME HISTORY GROUP 2011

29<sup>th</sup> March 1811 died, aged 77 buried St Andrews Holborn London

So far no ship registration documents have been found to positively tie John Knill with 'Grayhound' as its owner.

## Modern events involving John Knill

# Nick Darke.

The King of Prussia



Written in 1996

Originally staged by Plymouth Theatre Royal/Kneehigh Theatre

This major play was based on the lives of the 'free trading' Carter family who lived in West Cornwall at the end of the 18th century.

### Reviews

'A meaty play...seethes with life, wit and ideas. Darke gives shape to a Cornish identity that feels vital and real and has nothing to do with clay pipes and clotted cream. Like Cornwall's coves, it has many unexpected depths. The piece acts as a critique of capitalism. It also raises questions about the points where justice, conscience and the law part company.' - *Financial Times*

### Original Cast

John Carter: Tristan Sturrock

Harry Carter/John Stackhouse: Giles King

Bessie Bussoe: Bec Applebee

Suzanne Stackhouse: Mary Woodvine

John Knill/Charlie Carter: Charles BarnecutXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Edward Carter: Carl Grose

Music by Jim Carey

"About John Knill Born 1733, died 29th March 1811. Appointed Collector of Customs for St Ives, Cornwall in 1762, a post he held for over 20 years. He was a man with a keen legal brain and well respected by anyone that met him. So much so he was elected Mayor of the town in 1767.

"In 1782, he constructed what is now known as the Knill Steeple, high on a hill a mile from the town- intended to be his mausoleum but never used. The steeple is in fact a

a three sided obelisk of local granite some 50 foot high. Wrote an indenture in 1797 requesting this delightful ceremony to be held every five years on 25th July, Feast of St James the Apostle.

### "The Participants

10 girls- the daughters of fishermen, tanners, or seaman, or belonging to such families.

2 Widows.

Fiddler.

The three trustees- The mayor, Customs Officer, and Vicar.

Accompanied by the Mace bearer, and Master of Ceremonies.

### "Opening the chest

Opening the chest outside the Guildhall.

Process to the Steeple Sing the Old 100th Psalm to the Tune of 200 years ago ... 'All people that on earth do dwell ...' Dance around it three times, to the satisfaction of the trustees. Vicar says the blessing and the ceremony over for another 5 years. Leaving refreshments to be partaken by all the participants back in St Ives town.

"Reminnescent of Simpler times. John Knill Day St Ives a quaint Cornish Custom."

#### Source

[Rick Parsons' West Penwith resources](#)   [John Knill Monument with pictures](#)

#### More

<http://www.wilsonsalmanac.com/book/jul25.html>

John Knill was born in Cornwall, in Callington on 1st January 1733. His job as an articled clerk to a solicitor in Penzance meant he was well able to deal with all the problems surrounding harbour dues and customs monies. Life was very harsh in 18th century Cornwall and smuggling was rife and the ships that were wrecked on the rocks on this notorious coastline plundered. John Knill knew about many of his neighbours activities. He became a Collector of Customs at St. Ives from 1762-1782 and also Mayor of the town in 1767 at 34 years of age. He was a well respected citizen and travelled a lot in a time of roads little more that cart tracks and where all communication was poor. In his position as Customs Officer both in St. Ives and London his advice was eagerly sought and he inspected Custom Houses as far away as Jamaica. He also became a magistrate, was called to The Bar and was Treasurer to the Bench of the Inn. He appeared to enjoy life to the full and socially he met many eminent people, including John Wesley and the engineer John Smeaton. There is a story that John had his mausoleum built high on a hill as a landmark to those at sea smuggling in goods to St. Ives and that he himself was a smuggler. However, there is no evidence that this is so and could be gossip spread around by his enemies.

<http://www.btinternet.com/~ptaffs/knillmon/knill.html>

## A ghost from John Knill's life??

### Well Dressed Lady

**Location:** St Ives - John Knill's House, Fore Street

**Type:** Haunting Manifestation

**Date / Time:** Nineteenth century

**Further Comments:** A room in this building was sealed off to prevent the inhabitants disturbing the ghost of a wealthy lady that lurked within.

[http://www.paranormaldatabase.com/cornwall/pages/corndata.php?pageNum\\_paradata=7&totalRows\\_paradata=188](http://www.paranormaldatabase.com/cornwall/pages/corndata.php?pageNum_paradata=7&totalRows_paradata=188)

Note: JK was a batchelor

## MA Fine Art Falmouth

### Nil Desperandum – Opening Friday 11th December

Posted in [MFA104 - Exhibition opportunities](#), [MFA104 - Graduate news](#) by andyw on 06/12/2009

Opening on Friday 11th December, **Nil Desperandum: Contemporary artists respond to the legacy of John Knill** which has projects by MAFA student Anne Haycock, and MAFA graduates Lois Wild, Doug Jones, and Sally Noal (curator).

12th – 24th December

Knill House, 50 Fore Street, St. Ives

An invitation to the opening night  
**Friday December 11th, 7-9pm**  
 Knill House, 50 Fore St, St Ives

Oliver Brada, **BridA** (Sendi Mango, Tom Kersevan, Jurij Pavlica), Anne Haycock, Rita Heck, Anna Howarth, Doug Jones, Hayley Lock, Ally Mellor, Randy Richmond, Therese Sunngren, Lois Wild, Charlotte Young

**NIL DESPERANDUM**  
 12 - 24th December, Knill House, St Ives

An exhibition of contemporary artworks by local, national and international artists exploring notions of story telling, cultural identity, time and tradition in response to the family motto and legacy of historically celebrated St. Ives mayor, John Knill.

Curated by Sally Noall and Phil Rushworth. Sponsored by Scott Loveluck  
**Mon - Fri 11- 4pm, Sat 11-6pm, Sun - Closed**  
[www.sallynoall.co.uk/nildesperandum.html](http://www.sallynoall.co.uk/nildesperandum.html)

On the 12th of December an exciting exhibition of contemporary art will open at Knill House, St Ives. ***Nil Desperandum*** brings together a group of local and international artists to pay tribute to John Knill, the late Mayor of St. Ives and the building's former resident.

The artists included in the show were asked to provide work in response to the legacy of John Knill, whose family motto ***Nil Desperandum*** inspired the title of the exhibition. Some of the pieces take a direct influence from the history of Knill, who left a sum of money in his will for the residents of the town to conduct a celebratory parade in his honour every five years. Other artists produced work which explored more universal concepts of ritual, tradition and storytelling.

The exhibition includes St. Ives local participatory artist **Lois Wild**, who has produced an interactive, sound accompanied walk around St. Ives. Visitors to the exhibition can download the sound file from the gallery during the show, and listen to stories and memories of the John Knill celebration as they explore the town. ***Nil Desperandum*** also includes Cornwall based artists **Ann Haycock** and **Ally Mellor** who are joined by a range of national and international artists including Slovenian artist collective **BridA**, (Sendi Mango, Jurij Pavlica, Tom Kersevan) and Finnish artist **Therese Sunngren**. In the words of co-curator Sally Noall, "It's really exciting to be able to provide a platform to show the work of Cornish artists alongside those

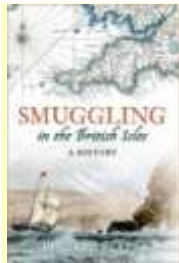
working elsewhere in the UK and Europe. It's a valuable opportunity to view local artist's work in a wider context and a chance to see international work that's never been exhibited in Cornwall before." Other exhibiting artists are: **Oliver Braid, Rita Heck, Anna Howarth, Doug Jones, Hayley Lock, Randy Richmond** and **Charlotte Young**. The resulting exhibition combines diverse practices, from sculpture to moving image and paper cutting, to produce a show that confronts our attitudes towards tradition and folklore and explores the blurring lines between historical fact and fiction.

John Knill was born in Cornwall in 1733, becoming a well respected, if somewhat eccentric, customs officer and mayor of St Ives, In 1782 he commissioned the building of the Knill Mausoleum in St Ives. In his will Knill bequeathed the town a sum of £25 for a celebration and procession to take place every five years. The people of St Ives have faithfully fulfilled this legacy since 1801. The Knill Family motto, ***Nil Desperandum***, is carved on the Knill monument and translates from its original Latin to 'Never Despair', a sentiment worth remembering in these times of financial instability.

***Nil Desperandum*** is co-curated by Sally Noall and Phil Rushworth. The use of Knill house has been kindly donated by Scott Lovelock, who currently holds the lease to the building and will be opening the shop as an antiques dealership in the forthcoming year.

***Nil Desperandum***, at Knill House, 50 Fore Street, St. Ives runs from the **12th to the 24th of December** and is open **Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm** and **Saturdays 10am – 6pm**.

<http://mafineartcontemporarypractice.wordpress.com/2009/12/06/nil-desperandum-opening-friday-11th-december/>



Read the book! This fascinating book by award-winning author Richard Platt tells the story of British smuggling [Click here](#) to buy

St Ives Bay is the first inlet sheltered from the Atlantic storms, and it should come as no surprise to learn that north-coast smuggling started this close to Land's End. John Wesley noted of the town that 'well-night one and all bought and sold uncustomed goods'.

The collector of customs here was at one stage John Knill, who, it appears, dabbled in smuggling a little himself. While he was mayor (in 1767) he paid for the fitting out of a privateer, which was used as a smuggler. He also built a steeple nearby to serve as a landmark for his vessels, and left some curious provisions in his will to ensure that his memory lived on in the town.

One story links Knill to a boat loaded with china that ran aground at the Hayle side of Carrack Gladden. The crew escaped, and someone removed the ship's papers since they implicated Knill and a squire of Trevetho. Roger Wearne, the customs man of

the time, helped himself to some of the cargo, but got no further with it than the ship's side. As he was climbing down, one of the locals noticed his bulging garments, and a few well-aimed blows ensured that the china was worthless. [158] Matthews ref

[http://www.smuggling.co.uk/gazetteer\\_sw\\_13.html#fn158](http://www.smuggling.co.uk/gazetteer_sw_13.html#fn158)

## THE CORNISH RIVIERA

Described by **SIDNEY HEATH**

Pictured by **E. W. HASLEHUST**



**BLACKIE AND SON LIMITED**  
**LONDON GLASGOW AND BOMBAY**  
**1915**

A lofty hill to the south of the town, has a pyramidal erection of granite in memory of John Knill, born in 1733. The obelisk bears three inscriptions: "Johannes Knill, 1782"; "I know that my Redeemer liveth"; and "Resurgam". After serving his [Pg 50]apprenticeship to a solicitor, Knill became Collector of Customs, and afterwards Mayor of St. Ives. Long before his death, which took place in 1811, he erected this mausoleum on Worvas Hill, but it was never applied to its purpose, as he was buried in London. Among the provisions of a curious will he ordained that "certain ceremonies should be observed once every five years, on the festival of St. James the Apostle; ten pounds to be spent in a dinner for the mayor, collector of Customs, and clergyman, and two friends to be invited by each of them, making a party of nine persons, to dine at some tavern in the borough; five pounds to be equally divided

amongst ten girls, natives of the borough and daughters of seamen, fishermen, or tanners, each of them not exceeding ten years of age, who shall, between ten and twelve o'clock of the forenoon of that day, dance for a quarter of an hour at least, on the ground adjoining the mausoleum, and after the dance sing the 100th Psalm of the old version, to the fine old tune to which the same was then sung in St. Ives Church; one pound to a fiddler who shall play to the girls while dancing and singing at the mausoleum, and also before them on their return home therefrom; two pounds to two widows of seamen, fishers, or tanners of the borough, being sixty-four years old or upwards, who shall attend the dancing and singing of the girls,[Pg 51] and walk before them immediately after the fiddler, and certify to the mayor, collector of Customs, and clergyman, that the ceremonies have been duly performed; one pound to be laid out in white ribbons for breast-knots for the girls and widows, and a cockade for the fiddler, to be worn by them respectively on that day and on the Sunday following". The observances have been duly carried out since the death of John Knill. The next observance will be in 1911, and when once at St. Ives the present writer was fortunate enough to witness the quaint ceremonies that are enacted every five years around the mausoleum of John Knill, who has succeeded in making a posthumous name for himself at a very trifling cost.

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/28609/28609-h/28609-h.htm>

#### **Preventative men**

However, many people feel that contrary to legend, Cornish Wreckers rarely attacked or killed wrecked sailors, or lured ships onto the rocks. They acquired the name because they plundered the wrecks. When the vessel Postilion was driven ashore on the North Coast in November 1732, the ship was certainly plundered, but not until every crew member aboard had been helped to safety ashore. Custom Officers, or "Preventive Men" who tried to deter the locals found on many occasions that when they had successfully retrieved the cargo, their storehouses were broken into later by local people reclaiming what they considered to be rightfully theirs. It was a bloody business. Many wreckers and not a few Customs men were killed in pitched battles over the booty. Once the cargo had been removed, the wreckers would strip the ship of every saleable asset, right down to its timber and sails. The pickings from wrecks could be substantial, and some of the "Preventive" men could not resist the temptation to help themselves at times. One such, Sir John Knill, was Collector of Customs at St. Ives between 1762 and 1782 and Mayor in 1767. Even though he published a scholarly pamphlet on the prevention of wrecking, he is said to have dealt in looted cargo as enthusiastically as the next man.

<http://www.mouseholecottage.co.uk/history.php>