

## **A light goes put but Pip's legacy lives on**

**By Simon Parker**

“What Pip Richards did at Carwynnen, by bringing English Heritage, the county archaeologists, the landowners and Cornwall Council together, was one of the most inspiring and worthwhile projects I have ever witnessed.”

So said photographer Colin Higgs, who catalogued the remarkable five-year process that led to the re-erection of a 5,000 year old Cornish chamber tomb near Camborne.

Pip Richards, who has died after a long illness, was buried last week in a private ceremony at a plot in view of her beloved Carwynnen Quoit, the ancient monument she worked tirelessly to have reinstated after it had lain in ruins for half a century.

The Neolithic structure had been an abandoned and forlorn pile of stones since the 1960s, before members of the Sustainable Trust, led by Pip, began the campaign to rebuild it. And, watched by several hundred enthusiasts and supporters, its 10 tonne capstone was finally hoisted back into place on Midsummers Day 2014. Measuring 11ft by 8ft by 1ft, the great granite slab was dropped into position by crane.

As a result of the achievement, Pip was presented with a number of awards for her work.

Colin Higgs, who became friends with Pip during the many years of struggle to gain permission to reinstate the quoit, added, “The amount of red tape that she had to go through never daunted her and in the end the support she got was amazing. I am so glad she is buried there.”

Brought up in London, Pip Richards studied textile design at Leeds University and worked for Yorkshire Television for several years, including a long stint on Emmerdale.

She was married to Joe Fenn, who this week described his wife's many achievements as “unbelievable” – she was always doing something for others.”

The couple, who have two children and three grandchildren and were together for 36 years, lived at Keepers Cottage in the heart of the old Clowance Estate at Praze-an-Beeble, near Camborne. Pip originally bought what was then a derelict property back in the 1970s, and she and Joe set about completely renovating the house and garden.

Shortly after moving in, she fought to save 75 acres of woodland – Crenver Grove and Fox Grove – from development. And it was that success that led to the formation of the Sustainable Trust (Sustrust), a self-funded charity with the stated aim “to advance the education of the public in the principles and practice of sustainable development.”

Involved in numerous community groups, Pip was a hard worker, particularly in her role as director of Sustrust. But perhaps her most obvious legacy is Carwynnen Quoit, which again stands proud after five millennia, thanks to one woman's tenacity.

Numerous groups were involved in the reconstruction project, including several schools which took part in outdoor lessons at the site. Children from Troon, Crowan, Kehelland, Penponds and

Archbishop Benson schools chose items for a time capsule which was buried deep beneath the ancient monument. Pip also produced a book and app to record the project.

At the time she said, “We decided to let children choose what should be in the time capsule. So among the objects is a teddy bear, a jar of local honey to help people from the future to identify the plants of today, hair from members of the team to help with DNA identification, 2014 coins, a serpentine heart pendant, a golf ball, badges from Troon Cricket Club and Camborne Rugby Club, a St Piran’s flag, a pasty key-ring, and a cartoon telling the story of the quoit.”

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and SITA Cornwall, the excavation revealed 2,300 objects - many of them Neolithic – in the surrounding area. Also known as The Giant’s Frying Pan and Pendarves Quoit, it was probably covered by a large mound of earth, similar in construction to Trethevy Quoit, Lanyon Quoit and Chun Quoit.

Before she died Pip began work on The Lost Landscapes of Pendarves, a large historical investigation of a largely unexcavated area of West Cornwall. A decision on whether the project will be funded by The Heritage Lottery will be made next month.

A private burial was held for close family and friends and a public celebration of her life will take place, again in view of Carwynnen Quoit, on land that is to be renamed Pip’s Field, on Saturday July 2.

Colin Higgs summed up the feelings of many when he said “Cornwall has lost a real champion, of that there is no doubt.”

For more details about Carwynnen Quoit visit [giantsquoit.org](http://giantsquoit.org)