

**AHG Issues:**  
**Responses to a questionnaire sent out by Trond Trosterud**  
**2 December 2007**

The following are answers to the questionnaire sent out on 27 November 2007. The answers below have been discussed between us both and the text below reflects our agreed position on the questions posed. The text of the questionnaire is given in italic type. Our comments are given in roman.

*The 1st AHG meeting roughly grouped issues around a SWF in three groups*

- Consonant issues (the written representation of consonant sounds)
- Vocalic length issues (including ways to indicate pre-occlusion)
- Vowel system issues

*The two first issues proved to be the main stumbling blocks. It was agreed that a common agreement had to be reached on these issues. The third set of issues, relating to the vowel system, will have to be worked out during the period leading up to the second AHG meeting. Specifically, we would like to ask advisers for their opinion on the following problems:*

**Issue 1: Vowel length and its representation in the SWF**

*The underlying phonology of KK postulates a three-way distinction in vowel length: short, half-long (=long in polysyllabic words), and long (in monosyllables). It can be said that Neo-Cornish has repeated a development which took place in the traditional language: under the influence of English prosody, half-long vowels were shortened. At the same time, phonemic status shifted from consonant quantity to vowel quantity.*

We do not believe that it is really true to say that KK indicates short vowels by doubling the following consonant. The doubling of consonants lengthens the consonant in question, and as a result the preceding vowel is understood as short. Few, if any, of KK speakers actually understand this, since they, like the inventor of KK himself, invariably pronounce long consonants as short.

There is, moreover, an assumption among KK speakers that the vowel written as <y> is short, whereas <i> is long; as a result they pronounce <gwin> ‘wine’ as [gwi:n] but <gwynn> ‘white’ as [gwin] because of the vowel graph, not because of the doubled consonant. It is therefore not uncommon also for KK learners to pronounce KK <pryv> ‘reptile’ as [prɪv] and <bys> ‘world’ as [bɪz].

*KK is the only form of Revived Cornish which aspires to such an early prosody. However, it can safely be stated that apart from a very few speakers no one pronounces the half-long vowels of KK anything other than short. e.g. KK <gwydhenn> [ˈgwi:ː\ΔEn] → standard RC [ˈgwɪD@n], [ˈgwɪDɪn]*

We read this transcription as KK <gwydhenn> [ˈgwr:ðɛn], standard RC [ˈgwɪðɛn], and [ˈgwɪðm]. This is mistaken since the attested vowel here shows vocalic alternation, and all varieties of revived Cornish apart from KK pronounce the word with [e] as the stressed vowel: UC **gwȳth**, **gwedhen**, UCR **gwēdh**, **gwedhen**, RLC **gwith**, **gwehan**, **gwidh**, **gwedhan**.

*As prosody is normally the part of the pronunciation of a foreign language which is most difficult to learn, this change was to be expected. Indeed, most speakers of Revived Cornish don't even know that they are not pronouncing the vowels in question as intended, or they don't hear the difference. It is improbable that this feature of Revived Cornish will ever change in a way which would reflect the orthoepy of KK more closely. We may ask ourselves if this should not be acknowledged. At the moment, the unrecognised discrepancy between the recommended orthoepy of KK and the way the language is actually pronounced results in IPA transcriptions (e.g. in the Gerlyvrik) which differ from the spoken de-facto standard to a significant degree, e.g. KK <kemmer> (normatively [ˈkEmmEr] but {often/in use}[ˈkEm@r])*

We read this transcription as KK <kemmer> ['kɛmmɛr], standard RC ['kɛmər], and agree that the theoretical phonology of KK is not realized by speakers of RC who write KK.

***Question 1.1: Should half-long vowels still be distinguished orthographically from short ones in the SWF even they are not part of the phonology of 99% of today's Cornish speakers?***

No, half-long vowels should not be distinguished orthographically from short ones in the SWF. The SWF should support the phonology of RC, in both its RMC and RLC varieties.

Some commentators believe that half-length almost certainly had ceased to be part of the phonology of Cornish well before the date 1500 given as the target date for KK. Whether it did, or whether its loss was somewhat later is irrelevant, because all other varieties of Revived Cornish attempt to revive the language of a period later than that, and do so by distinguishing long and short vowels only. While it may be argued that on historical grounds the to attempt to distinguish half-long and short is questionable, from the point of view of Revived Cornish it is unnecessary. Neither Jenner, Nance, Caradar, nor Gendall mention the question of half-length in their descriptions of Cornish phonology. It must also be pointed out that Ken George himself does not use half-length when speaking Cornish.

*The same applies to geminate consonants which Anglophones normally find very difficult to pronounce. Indeed they are not a regular feature of any variety of spoken Revived Cornish. Many KK teachers don't even mention their existence and tell learners that double consonant spellings are a purely orthographical device to indicate that preceding vowels are short.*

***Question 1.2: Should the SWF still try to tell learners to pronounce geminate consonants even though it seems improbable that a significant number of speakers will ever master this feature?***

No, the SWF should not try to tell learners to pronounce geminate consonants. The SWF should seek to encourage users to improve their pronunciation in areas in which success can be achieved. We do not believe that an orthography can *both* represent long/short consonants + neutral vowel length and a long/short vowels + neutral consonants at the same time. The two models are mutually exclusive. George's view that geminate consonants survived into Early Middle Cornish may well be correct, but even so geminate consonants did not persist and do not normally occur in any variety of revived Cornish, either RMC or RLC (the one common exception is **gwella/gwelha** which many speakers pronounce with a distinctive **ll/lh**).

***Question 1.3: Should IPA transcriptions in dictionaries continue to indicate a prescribed pronunciation which the vast majority of fluent speakers in Cornwall never use or even know about?***

No, IPA transcriptions in dictionaries should not indicate a pronunciation that is foreign to the practice of RC. Had George's theoretical reconstruction really been feasible, gemination would be common by now, given all the "paedagogical experience" which KK claims. We have made transcriptions of fluent speakers like Matthew Clarke and Ken George. Their phonology conforms to the RMC standard, though both speakers have some RLC features in their speech (such as [u:] for KK <oe>), and Clarke sometimes pre-occludes.

Dictionaries should be practical. Vowel length in monosyllables is an important distinction which must be marked. Consonants are short in RC as they are in English. Transcriptions in RC should reflect this.

(Even Nance did not find it necessary to mark vowel length in polysyllables, apart from compounds in which one or both elements have a long vowel.)

**Question 1.4: How should vowel quantity be marked in the SWF?**

The SWF should mark vowel quantity in monosyllables, by the application of graphs attested in the traditional language.

**Q. 1.4.1) by doubling consonant graphs (to mark short vowels) as in KK?**

No, short vowels should not be marked in the SWF with a consistent doubling of consonant graphs. Doubling of some consonant graphs (**rr** and **ll**, and **mm** and **nn** where they pre-occlude) is acceptable. A universal doubling of consonants, however, produces word-forms which are alien to traditional orthography.

This “solution” of doubling consonant graphs is based on a false premise. KK posits geminate consonants. If they existed, as in Finnish or Italian, there would be a rationale for “retaining” them (from a KK perspective). But to take the KK learner’s error in interpreting these as markers of short vowel length is, in our view, perverse. Traditional Cornish did not mark short vowels by doubling every consonant. It had a system of its own (even within the great variety of orthographic forms).

KK does not in all cases indicate length by doubling and is frequently ambiguous.

|  |                              |                                     |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| KK <b>bys</b> [bɪ:z] ‘world’   | UC/UCR <b>bȳs</b> [bi:z]     | RLC <b>bês</b> [be:z]               |
| KK <b>bys</b> [bɪ:z] ‘until’   | UC/UCR <b>bys</b> [bɪz]      | RLC <b>bis</b> [bɪz]                |
| KK <b>es</b> [e:z] ‘ease’  | UC/UCR <b>ēs</b> [e:z]       | RLC <b>aiz</b> [e:z]                |
| KK <b>es</b> [e:z] ‘than’  | UC/UCR <b>es</b> [ɛz]        | RLC <b>ez</b> [ɛz]                  |
| KK <b>nos</b> [no:z] ‘night’   | UC/UCR <b>nōs</b> [no:z]     | RLC <b>nôz</b> [no:z]               |
| KK <b>nos</b> [no:z] ‘token’   | UC/UCR <b>nōs</b> [no:z]     | RLC <b>noz</b> [nɔz]                |
| KK <b>nos</b> [nɔs] ‘yonder’   | UC/UCR <b>’nos/nos</b> [nɔz] | RLC <b>noz</b> [nɔz]                |
| (George has [nɔs] for ‘yonder’ in GKK but has changed it to [no:z] in the Gerlyvrik.)                          |                              |                                     |
| KK <b>dons</b> [dɔns] ‘dance’  | UC/UCR <b>dōns</b> [do:ns]   | RLC <b>downs</b> [dɔns]             |
| KK <b>chons</b> [tʃɔ:ns] ‘dance’   | UC/UCR <b>chōns</b> [tʃo:ns] | RLC <b>chons/chaʷns</b> [tʃɔns]     |
| (George has [tʃɔ:ns] for ‘dance’ in GKK but has changed it to [tʃɔns] in the Gerlyvrik.)                       |                              |                                     |
| (Admittedly the vowel here is problematic. KS settled on short <b>dauns</b> [dɔns] and <b>chauns</b> [tʃɔns].) |                              |                                     |
| KK <b>pan</b> [pa:n] ‘what’  | UC/UCR <b>pan</b> [pan]      | RLC <b>pan</b> [pan]                |
| KK <b>pan</b> [pan] ‘when’   | UC/UCR <b>pan</b> [pan]      | RLC <b>pa(na)</b> [pa(nə)]          |
| KK <b>pann</b> [pan] ‘cloth’   | UC/UCR <b>pan</b> [pan]      | RLC <b>padn</b> [pa <sup>d</sup> n] |
| (George has [pa:n] for ‘what’ in GKK but has changed it to [pan] in the Gerlyvrik.)                            |                              |                                     |

Although **nos** and **chons** and **pan** have been changed in the *Gerlyvrik*, there is no evidence that any speaker of KK has been made aware of the change.

**Q. 1.4.2) by doubling vowel graphs (to mark long vowels)?**

No, long vowels should not be marked in the SWF with a consistent doubling of vowel graphs. What is being suggested here? Cornish has two vowel lengths, long and short. The long vowel phonemes in RMC are /i: e: æ: o: u: y: ø:/; they occur mostly in stressed monosyllables. There are short phonemic equivalents of all the long vowels, namely /i e æ o u y ø/; these are typically realized as [ɪ ɛ ə ɔ ʊ ʏ œ]. There is also an unstressed vowel /ə/ and there are eight diphthongs /ei æi oi ow æw iw ew 'i:ə/. Is it being suggested that **ii ee aa oo uu** and **yy** be used? We would not support this (though we see a use for **oo**).

**Q. 1.4.3) by diacritic marks on vowels as in KS up to revision 15?**

**Q. 1.4.4) by a mixed system as in KS 16??**

We do not believe that either of these statements is correct. KS suggests that as far as possible RC should follow traditional scribal practice in the representation of vocalic length. This has always been the case. The apparent difference between KS 15 and KS 16 has to do with words like **dèl** being normalized to **dell**. Diacritics are used only in cases where the vowel is unexpectedly long or unexpectedly short. The basic rule is very simple: a vowel is long before a voiced consonant, a voiceless continuant, or before **st**, and short before a voiceless consonant, a double consonant or a consonant cluster. This rule follows the practice of Jordan and others. To put it more formally:

In KS a vowel is long before a voiced consonant, before the voiceless continuants /θ/ and /x/, and before the cluster **-st**.

In KS a vowel is short before a voiceless consonant, before written double consonants <ff>, <ss>, <mm>/<bm>, <nn>/<dn>, <ll>, <rr>, before consonant clusters with **-r**, and before the cluster **-sk**.

This can be explained in a table. The overwhelming majority of Cornish words fits this pattern.

*Long*

**mab** [mæ:b] 'son'  
**ged** [ge:d] 'leads'  
**mog** [mo:g] 'smoke'

**uj** [y:dʒ], [i:dʒ] 'screech'  
**gov** [gɔ:v] 'smith'  
**bedh** [be:ð] 'grave'  
**coth** [ko:θ] 'old'  
**begh** [be:x] 'load'  
**best** [be:st] 'animal'  
**craf** [kɹæ:f] 'greedy'  
**tas** [tæ:z] 'father'  
**clém** [kle:m] 'claim'  
**den** [de:n] 'man'  
**hel** [he:l] 'hall'  
**gor** [go:ɹ] 'knows'

*Short*

**top** [tɒp] 'top'  
**fyt** [fɪt] 'fit, bout'  
**bryck** [brɪk] 'brick'  
**box** [bɒks] 'box-tree' (counts as *k*)  
**sqwych** [skwɪtʃ] 'spasm'

**whaff** [wɛf] 'gust of wind'  
**coss** [kɒs] 'itch'  
**cam**, **cabm** [kæm], [kæ<sup>b</sup>m] 'bent'  
**penn**, **pedn** [pɛn], [pɛ<sup>d</sup>n] 'head'  
**dall** [dæl] 'blind'  
**berr** [bɛɹ] 'short'  
**scarf** [skɒɹf] 'scarf, joint'  
**horn** [hɔ:m] 'iron'  
**fors** [fɔ:ɹs] 'energy'  
**part** [pɒɹt] 'part'  
**nask** [næsk] 'yoke'

This can be explained in a table. Note that some of the examples are simply not attested though we have made up some. This is also indicative of how really marginal the use of the diacritics would be. They are essential to indicate the correct pronunciation, but they mostly occur in loanwords, and not really very many of them.

*Anomalous Short*

**\*Bòb** [bɔb] ‘Bob’  
**\*Tèd** [tɛd] ‘Ted’  
**\*lòg** [lɔg] short for **logrym** ‘logarithm’  
**jùj** [dʒʊdʒ] ‘judge’  
**\*Bèv** [bɛv] short for ‘Beverly’  
**–dh** (no examples)  
**\*Ròth** [rɔθ] ‘Roth’  
**cògh** [kɔx] ‘red, scarlet’

**còst** [kɔst] ‘cost’  
**gàs** [gəz] ‘your’ short for **agas**  
**gwrèm** [g.rɛm] ‘hem’  
**gòn** [gɔn] ‘I know’

*Anomalous Long*

**shâp** [ʃæ:p] ‘shape’  
**pât** [pæ:t] ‘pate’  
**hòk** [hɔ:k] ‘hawk’  
**còch** [kɔ:tʃ] ‘coach’ (usually **còcha**)

**Pâsk** [pæ:sk] ‘Easter’

**lâss** [læ:s] ‘lace’  
**–mm, –bm** (no examples)  
**–nn, –dn** (no examples)

KS makes use of diacritics for three other purposes. From KS 16:

1. Since unmarked **u** represents the phoneme /y/ (pronounced [y:], [i:] or [ɪ], [ɪ] depending on the following consonant), diacritical marks are used to indicate the phoneme /u/: **û** [u:] and **ù** [ʊ].
2. A set of words which have special variant pronunciations are marked with the circumflex: compare **bras** [b.ræ:z] ‘treachery’, with **brâs** [b.ræ:z], [b.rɛ:z] ‘great’ and **tal** [tæ:l] ‘pays, must’ with **tâl** [tæ:l], [tɔ:l] ‘forehead’.
3. A very few homophones may be distinguished by the use of the circumflex, e.g. **a** [ə] ‘from’, **â** [a:] ‘goes’; **da** [də] ‘thy, to’, **dâ** [dæ:] ‘good’; **ev** [ɛv], [e:] ‘he’, **êv** [ɛv] ‘drinks’; **eth** [e:θ] ‘eight, vapour’, **êth** [e:θ] ‘goest, went’; **ke** [ke:] ‘hedge’, **kê** [ke:] ‘go’; **on** [ɔ:n] ‘we are’, **ôn** [ɔ:n] ‘lamb’. (This is similar to the Welsh practice, where the circumflex distinguishes *cân* ‘song’ and *can* ‘flour’; *dôl* ‘meadow’ and *dol* ‘doll’; *gwên* ‘smile’ and *gwen* ‘white f.’; *hÿn* ‘older’ and *hyn* ‘this’.)

In our most recent version of KS we suggest representing, in monosyllables, the long and short sounds of the phoneme /i/ by <i> for [i:] and <y> for [ɪ] respectively. This means that we write **gwin** [gwi:n] ‘wine’ but **gwynn/gwydn** [gwm/gwr<sup>d</sup>n] ‘white’. This follows common KK practice. It also allows us to write the threefold opposition **min** [mi:n] ‘mouth, edge’ ~ **myn** [mm] ‘kid goat’ (no pre-occlusion) ~ **mynn/mydn** [mm/mr<sup>d</sup>n] ‘wishes, will’ (with pre-occlusion) without recourse to diacritics; cf. **jyn** [dʒɪm] ‘engine’ with a short vowel but no pre-occlusion. It also means that KS 15 **scríff** ‘writing’ now appears as KS 16 **scrif** (we write final [v] as <v> now, in monosyllables, thus removing the need to double the final letter in this word and others like it, e.g. **chif** ‘chief’).

The system of marking length in KS is more consistent than in KK, it is also clearer and closer to the traditional scribal practice. The number of diacritics have been greatly reduced by the adoption of <i> ~ <y> and final <v>. Unlike in KK, mispronunciations of forms like [prɪv] for **pryv** ‘reptile’ will be impossible, since the form will be **preiv**.

It is our view that the KS system is robust, *accurate*, simple, easy to learn and to teach, and should be used as the basis for marking vowel length in the SWF.

Regarding length before **-sk** and **-st**, we have the following examples:

*Short in RC before final -sk*

**cosk** ‘sleep!’: *cosk* OM 97  
**dysk** ‘teaches’: *dysk* BM 91  
**lesk** ‘cradle’: *lesk* AB: 69c  
**lesk** ‘burns, will burn’: *lesk* OM 1290  
**losk** ‘corn smut’: *losk* AB: 178a  
**mesk/mysk** in *in mesk/mysk* ‘among’; *in agis*  
*mysk* PA 5a; *yn mesk* PA 131b  
**nask** ‘yoke!; will yoke’: *nask* BK 860  
**pesk/pyisk** ‘fish’: *pyisk* AB: 121a; *péisk* AB: 18c, 143c  
**rusk** ‘bark’: *risk* AB: 51c, *rísk* AB: 32a.

*Long in RC before final -sk*

**disk** < \**dywysk* ‘remove, doff’: *dysk* OM 1416  
**Ēsk** ‘Exe river’: *Kaer Esk* ‘Exeter’ AB: 5a; *Kar-ésk*  
AB: 222; *Kar-ésk* AB: 224; *Karésk* AB: 252a; cf.  
*Careesk* ‘Exeter’ rhyming with *pesk* ‘fish’ JTonkin  
**gwisik** ‘clothing; husk, pod’: *guéisk* AB: 33c  
**Pâsk** ‘Easter’: *Pâsk* AB: 241a; *Pask* AB: 113c

*Short in RC before final -st*

**còst** ‘cost’: *cost* RD 2231  
**jyst** ‘joist, beam’: *gyst* OM 2482  
**lyst** ‘list, contest’: *lyst* RD 223

*Long in RC before final -st*

**best** ‘animal, beast’: *bést* AB: 43a  
**bost** ‘boast’: *bost* PA 242d  
**brést** ‘brass’: *brést* AB: 109b  
**cast** ‘trick’: *chast* PC 1884-85;  
**chast** ‘chaste’: *chast* TH 33  
**cost** ‘coast, region’: *cost* OM 1552  
**Crist** ‘Christ’: *cris* PA 4b  
**croust** ‘crust, lunch’: *croust* OM 1901  
**doust** ‘dust’: *dowst* TH 6  
**Est** ‘August’: *mys est* BM 2073; *East* AB: 14, 44a  
**Est** ‘East’: *ést* AB: 251a; *Noor East* JBoson  
**fast** ‘firm, fast’: *fast* CF 41  
**fest** ‘fast, very’: *fest* CF 7  
**just** ‘flail’: *fjst*, *vjst* AB: 22a; *vjst* AB: 166b  
**gast** ‘bitch’: *gást* AB: 3b; *gést* AB: 14c  
**gwest** ‘lodging’: *gwest* OM 356  
**hast** ‘haste’: *hast* PA 159a  
**last** ‘nastiness’: *last* PA 202b  
**lost** ‘tail; penis’: *lost* TH 9; *lost* AB: 116c  
**lest** ‘will hinder’: *lest* BM 3751  
**ost** ‘host’: *óst* AB: 252a  
**prest** ‘always, soon’: *prest* PA 15b  
**test** ‘witness’: *test* BM 3751  
**trest** ‘trust’: *trest* BM 494  
**trest** ‘trusts; trust!’: *trist* TH 39 x 2; *trest* CW 1676  
**trist** ‘sad’: *trest* PA 232d  
**west** ‘west’: *west* PC 2744; *weyst* BM 784.

## **Issue 2: Vowel quality and its representation in the SWF:**

**<i>, <y>, <e>, <ei?> /i/ /ɪ?/ /e/, /ɪ/**

*Revived Cornish is a living language, and as such has gone through a development of its own. The phonology of almost all present day speakers does not recognise a phonemic distinction between /i/ and /ɪ/. Indeed, both are treated as long and short allophones of one and the same phoneme /i/ [i:, ɪ]. It can therefore be argued that the SWF should take actual modern usage into account. This is all the more important since reconstructions of the vowel system of the traditional language differ in this respect and cannot be reconciled. It seems to us that in this impasse, the only way forward is to leave the decision to today's speakers by recognising how they deal with this issue. The result is clear: Revived Cornish has a two-way phonemic distinction between /i(:)/ and /e(:)/.*

We agree with this assessment, and this assumption (that RC has only /i(:)/ and /e(:)/ and that the SWF should represent this and nothing else) is a part of the KS specification.

*On the other hand, the phonology of KK recognises three front vowel phonemes /i/, /ɪ/, and /e/ which are spelt <i>, <y>, and <e> respectively. All other Middle Cornish based orthographies only recognise two phonemes, viz /i/ and /e/, which are spelt <y> and <e> in UC and <y, i> and <e> in UCR. RLC only distinguishes between the two phonemes /i/ and /e/ as well.*

*UCR (and to a certain, unsystematic extent, UC) shows Vocalic Alternation, a phenomenon described by Williams, in stems which have /ɪ/ in KK, e.g. UCR <bedhaf> 'I will be' :: <bydh> 'he/she will be'; KK <bydhav> :: <bydh>.*

We believe that George simply didn't recognize Vocalic Alternation in Cornish, in part because it does not occur in Breton, and in part because it isn't written in Welsh, which has <byddaf> ['bʌðəv] :: <bydd> ['bi:ð]. KK spellings like \*<bywnans> 'life' and \*<ynys> 'island' are the result of George's not having recognized vocalic alternation. KD has already agreed that 'life' should be spelt <bewnans>. Some users of KK are also unhappy with the form \*<ynys> and would prefer the attested form <enys>.

*The phonology of KK does not recognise Vocalic Alternation except in one verbal paradigm, viz the imperative of <bos>, 'to be': <bedheugh> 'be! (pl.)' :: <bydh> 'be! (sg.)'.*

*In Revived Late Cornish, the reflex of KK /ɪ/ has merged with /e/ and is spelt accordingly whereas the reflex of /i/ has not. The latter tends to diphthongise in final stressed position, as in RLC <chey> [tʃəi], 'house'.) E.g. KK, UC, UCR <pysk>, <bys> [pɪsk], [bi:z] (often: [pɪsk], [bi:z]) 'world' → RLC <pêsk>, <bêz> [pe:sk], [be:z].*

In fact the vowels in **pysk** and **bys** are pronounced differently. We find that UC and UCR users say [pɪsk] with a short vowel and [bi:z] with a long vowel, and RLC speakers say [pɛsk] with a short vowel and [be:z] with a long vowel. In Neil Kennedy's dictionary the words are written **pesk** and **bêz**; Richard Gendall wrote "**pesk** [pýsk]" (i.e. [pɛsk]) and "**beaz** [bêz]" (i.e. [be:z]). Nance and Williams give **pysk** not **pýsk**.

*One of the suggested compromise orthographies, KS, recommends using the digraph <ei> for MC /ɪ/, LC /e:/ in this type of words, whereas the second, KD, advocates keeping MC <y> and telling speakers of RLC to pronounce it [e] in stressed syllables. Another possible solution would be to spell <y> in the written representation of MC and <e> in that of LC although that would probably result in too big a distance between word-forms in the two variants, since many words would be affected.*

Strictly speaking, KS recommends using the digraph <ei> for RMC [i:], RLC [e:]. We do not believe that there was a phonemic /ɪ:/. We do recognize that this is the KK recommendation, and if there are users who say [ɪ:] then the solution works for them too.

*To further complicate matters, it is apparent that most users of KK interpret <i> and <y> as the written representations of the long and short version of only one phoneme, /i:/. Thus there is a strong contrast between the orthoepy of KK and how most users of the orthography actually speak. E.g. KK <pysk> ‘fish’, <pryv> ‘snake’, and <bys> ‘world’, with the recommended pronunciation [pɪ:sk], [pɪ:r:v], and [bɪ:z] respectively, are normally pronounced [pɪsk], [pɪrɪf], and [bɪz].*

We believe that the SWF should present forms which will help users to pronounce these words more correctly.

**Question 2.1: How, in your opinion, should this degree of variation be accounted for in a Single Written Form?**

**Q. 2.1.1) allow variant spellings, e.g. MC <bys>, LC <bes>**

No, we do not believe that variant spellings for the “**bys/bes** words” is a good idea. The word for ‘necessary’ for instance, is [re:z] in all varieties of RC (KK **res**, UC/UCR **rēs**, Gendall **reze**, Kennedy **rêz**). If **res** were alongside **bes**, RMC speakers could hypercorrect to \***rys**. Similarly, the word for ‘month’ is [mi:z] in all varieties of RC (KK **mis**, UC/UCR **mÿs**, Gendall **meez**, Kennedy **mîz**). If **mÿs** were alongside **bys**, RLC speakers could hypercorrect to \***mes**.

**Q. 2.1.2) use an umbrella spelling, e.g. <beis> for both pronunciations**

Yes, we believe that the SWF should use the umbrella spelling <beis> for both pronunciations. We also believe that the SWF should use the following other umbrella spellings:

- <boos> for both pronunciations in the “**bos/bous** words” (KK **boes** [bo:z] ‘food’, UC/UCR **bōs** [bo:z], Gendall/Kennedy **booz** [bu:z]).
- <meur> for both pronunciations in the “**meur/mêr** words” (KK **meur** [mœ:r] ‘food’, UC **mur** [my:r], UCR **muer** [mø:r], Gendall **mear** [me:r], Kennedy **mêar** [me:r]).
- <tus> for both pronunciations in the “**tus/tîz** words” (KK **tus** [ty:z] ‘people’, UC/UCR **tÿs** [ty:z], Gendall **teez** [ti:z], Kennedy **tîz** [ti:z]).
- <brâs> for both pronunciations in the “**bras/broaz** words” (KK **bras** [bra:z] ‘big’, UC/UCR **bras** [bræ:z], Gendall **broaz** [brɔ:z], Kennedy **braoz** [brɔ:z]).

It is generally agreed that the two etyma **pysk/pesk** ‘fish’ and **in mysk/in mesk** ‘among’ have short vowels in most varieties of RC. So these would not be what we call “**bys/bes** words”, and would not be rewritten **peisk** or **meisk** which few people have found acceptable spellings for those two words. For these we would be happy enough to retain the variant spellings **pysk/pesk**. We are here therefore dealing only with such items as **preiv** ‘reptile’, **gweidh** ‘trees’, **beidh** ‘be!, will be’, **deidh** ‘day’, **feidh** ‘faith’, **peis** ‘prays’, **breis** ‘mind; womb’ and **beis** ‘world’. It should be noticed that the spellings <preif>, <beith>, <deith>, <feith> and <breis> are all attested.

In the texts the spelling **beis** ‘world’ is attested 3 times, whereas **beise** occurs 6 times. There is thus ample warrant for the spelling **beis**. The variant **beys**, however, is attested 167 times and indeed is by far the commonest spelling in the texts for the word. A thoroughgoing authenticist might perhaps prefer to write <beys> in RC rather than <beis>. But there are difficulties with this suggestion.

Writing <beys> and allowing either [birz] or [be:z] as a pronunciation, would have a knock-on effect elsewhere in the system. **Seyth** [səiθ] ‘seven’, **gweyth** [gwəiθ] ‘work’ and **bleydh** [bləið] ‘wolf’ would all have to be written with <ei> as **seith**, **gweith**, and **bleidh**. This would then mean that <ei> represented a diphthong and <ey> was an “umbrella” graph for either of two simple vowels. But <ay> is used for a diphthong, not a simple vowel, in **may** [mæi] ‘so that’, **ay** [æi] ‘aye!’, and <oy> for a diphthong in **joy** [dʒɔi] ‘joy’, **moy** [mɔi] ‘more’, **rejoycya** [rə'dʒɔisjə] ‘rejoice’. It would be unsystematic to write a simple long vowel <ey> but diphthongs with <ay> and <oy>. In addition in KS <ai> is the equivalent of <ê> in **paint** [pe:nt] ‘paint’, **trailya** ['tre:ljə] ‘to turn’, etc., and thus represents a simple vowel. It is simpler and more logical for learners to have <i> in the simple vowels **ai** [e:], **ei** [i:]~[e:] and <y> in the diphthongs **ay** [æi], **ey** [əi], **oy** [ɔi]. (KS maintains the same logic for the simple vowel **au** [ɔ] and the diphthong **aw** [aʊ].)

**Q. 2.1.3) spell affected words in in a conservative way which would allow speakers of both variants to deduce the pronunciation, e.g. <bys>; MC rule: <y> = /I/; LC rule: <y> = /e/ when stressed, /I/ when unstressed**

No, we do not believe that spelling the “**bys/bes** words” in a “conservative” way is a good idea. We consider the suggestion that <y> could be read as [e:] by RLC speakers to be quite intolerable. The “conservatism” is simply a suggestion that KK practice be retained, and we do not believe that this suggestion is defensible. Further, this would not address the **mys** ‘month’ problem described in our answer to Q. 2.1.1 above. Using <y> for [i:] or [e:] would mean that <y> will be [ɪ] in **gwydn/gwynn**, [j] in **yehes**, [i] in **kelly**, **gwely**, [i:] or [əi] in **chy**, **why** and possibly [e:] in **bys**. The last variation is simply too complicated for learners and is prejudicial against RLC users and their reasonable expectations.

### **Issue 3. The distribution of <-i> vs. <-y> in final position**

*Another issue which has been identified is the distribution of <i> and <y> in unstressed final syllables. KK spells words like <gwari>, <gweli> etymologically in accordance with its morpho-phonemic principles.*

We feel obliged to point out that what KK spells is not necessarily meaningful. What KK spells is the reconstruction of one researcher. What the texts spell is more meaningful.

*Users of UC/R object to seeing <i> in this position because the medieval scribes invariably used <y> there. It has been pointed out that many users of KK misinterpret <i> as the representation of long [i:] and consequentially pronounce the cited examples as [gwɑri:], [gwɛli:]. On the other hand, using a phonetic spelling for these syllables - while making the word-forms look closer to those in the traditional corpus - would result in alternations like <gwary> : <gwariow>, <gwely> : <gweliow> which could make learning parts of the morphology more difficult (but not without parallels, e.g. Eng. happy ~ happier).*

**Question 3.1. How, in your opinion, should KK <i>, <u> in unstressed open ultima be spelt in the SWF?**

The only words containing final unstressed in RC are **Jesu** ‘Jesus’ and **teylu** ‘household’. These items are best discussed under final **-u** (e.g. **tu**, **tru**, etc.). We assume that the question is only about **-i vs -y**.

**Q. 3.1.1) morpho-phonemic spellings like <gwari>:<gwariow>**

No, we do not believe that morphophonemic spellings are the right way to treat final unstressed [i].

**Q. 3.1.2) phonetic (and ‘authentic’) spellings like <gwary>: <gwariow>**

**Q. 3.1.3) ...**

There is no difficulty in writing **gwely** ‘bed’ pl **gweliow** ‘beds’, **gwary** ‘game’ pl **gwariow** ‘games’. Indeed such spellings conform to the rules in KS: final unstressed /i/ is written <y> but the stressed diphthong [i:ə] appears as <iow>. KS enables the distinction to be made between **-iow** and **-yow**, where the first has a stressed diphthong and the second a [j]-glide. From KS 16:

[i:ə] is not a true diphthong, since in verse it is treated as a disyllable with stress on the first element. It is written <ia> in KS and occurs in forms of the conditional of **bos** ‘be’, e.g. **bian** [ˈbi:ən] ‘I would be, we would be’, **bia** [ˈbi:ə] ‘he would be’, **bias** [ˈbi:əz] ‘you would be’, and **bians** [ˈbi:əns] ‘they would be’. It is also found in **bian** [ˈbi:ən] ‘small’, **lias** [ˈli:əz] ‘many’, and in the name **Maria** [məˈri:ə]. Note the distinction between **provia** [pɹəˈvi:ə] ‘provide’ and **profya** [pɹɔfjə] ‘offer’. Other words which are written with <ia> are **agria** [əˈɡri:ə] ‘to agree’, **ania** [əˈni:ə] ‘to annoy’, **aspia** [asˈpi:ə] ‘to spy’, **cria** [ˈkri:ə] ‘to call, to name’, **destria** [desˈtri:ə] ‘to destroy’, **dian** [ˈdi:ən] ‘entire’, **gockia** [ɡɔˈki:ə] ‘to be foolish’, **sians** [ˈsi:əns] ‘whim’, **skians** [ˈski:əns] ‘wisdom’, **trial** [ˈtri:əl] ‘trial’, **inia** [iˈni:ə] ‘to urge’. In a few words, <ie> and <io> are used, e.g. **biowgh** [ˈbi:ouɣ] ‘you (pl.) would be’, **tiogow** [tiˈjɔɡou] ‘farmers’ (from **tiak** [ˈti:ək] ‘farmer’). The verbal adjectives of verbs in **-ia** are regularly **-ies**: **agries** [əˈɡri:əz] ‘agreed’, **anies** [əˈni:əz] ‘annoyed’, **aspies** [asˈpi:əz] ‘espied’, **cries** [ˈkri:əz], [ˈkɹɔjɪz] ‘called, named’, **destries** [desˈtri:əz] ‘destroyed’, **inies** [iˈni:əz] ‘urged’.

*Phonetic spellings in final unstressed closed syllables would lead to even more variation between singular and plural forms, e.g. <seythyn : seythunyow>. If a more phonetic approach were chosen for open syllables, there would still be a case for phonemic spellings in words like <seythun>, <kegin>.*

**Question 3.2. How, in your opinion, should KK <i>, <u> in unstressed closed ultima be spelt in the SWF?**

The word for ‘week’ is not attested in Middle Cornish. Lhuyd, however, writes **zeithan** (AB: 148c, 249a) and the word is **sithen** in the Bilbao Manuscript. It has clearly been analogically reshaped to conform with other feminine etyma in **-en**. KK’s **seythun** pl **seythunyow** is based on George’s notions about reconstruction, evidently because Breton has **sizhun**. UC/UCR have **seythen**, **seythennow**; Kennedy has **seithan**, **seithednow** (and **zeithan**, **zeithednow**). This item should be spelt **seythen**, **seythennow**/**seythednow** in the SWF.

Unstressed final vowels are *schwa* for most speakers of RC. KS does tend to prefer to retain etymological spellings where the stressed syllable in the plural has a vowel quality: **colon** ‘heart’, **colonow**; **holan** ‘salt’, **holanow**; **pellen** ‘ball’, **pellednow**/**pellennow**. We recognize that this has an advantage to the learner.

#### **Issue 4. The diphthongs**

**KK <iw>, <yw>, <ew>, <uw?>; UC <yw>, <ew>; UCR <ew>; RLC <iw>, <ew>**

*This issue is linked with the question of <i> :: <y> :: <e>. A coherent solution for both issues would be preferable. It is universally recognised that present day Cornish speakers normally don’t pronounce the KK diphthongs <iw> and <yw> any differently. However, KK representatives on the AHG have made the point that learners should aspire to a pronunciation in which these diphthongs are distinguished. How that is to happen when most of the teachers don’t make the distinction themselves is another question, however - but in probably not one which concerns the orthography of the SWF.*

Just as geminate consonants should not be a part of the SWF, the “aspiration” alluded to here should not be supported by the SWF. The graph <iw> does not occur *at all* in the traditional texts, so the distinction KK makes is an example of George’s reconstructionism. The texts give (normalizing the spelling here) **dew/dyw/du/duw** ‘god’, **diu/du** ‘black’, **gew/gu** ‘woe’, **gew/gu/guw** ‘spear’, **glew/glu** ‘sharp’, **pew/pyw/pu** ‘who’, **plew/plu** ‘parish’, **trew/tru** ‘alas’, **tew/tu** ‘side’. The texts rhyme **tu/glu, glew/tru, pew/tu, guw/tu, gu/trew**, and **yw/tew**. While some RMC users may “aspire” to an “ideal” pronunciation the fact of the matter is that the distinctions made by KK are not supported by anything in the traditional language. We do not support the use of <iw> in the SWF.

*As RLC distinguishes between two diphthongs, /iʊ/ and /eʊ/, the radical UCR solution of writing KK <iw>, <yw>, <ew> (and <uw>) as <ew> indiscriminately - apart from etymological <yw> in a few cases - does not seem feasible. Both main variants of spoken revived Cornish distinguish two diphthongs, /iʊ/ and /eʊ/ (often pronounced [uʊ] and [əʊ] respectively).*

First, the remark “the radical UCR solution of writing KK <iw>, <yw>, <ew> (and <uw>) as <ew> indiscriminately” is *wholly untrue*. UCR does not write “KK diphthongs” *in any way at all*. UCR was based upon the texts *without any reference to KK*. Williams did not consult KK when he regularized the spellings of the texts for UCR. He consulted the traditional texts. Second, UCR is not “indiscriminate” in its use of the graph <ew>. UCR writes **Dew** ‘God’, **bew** ‘alive’, for example, but **pyw** ‘who’ and **gwyw** ‘worthy’. The choices (regarding these diphthongs) made in UCR had to do with frequency in the texts more than any other reason. UCR does, it is true, always write **dew-** ‘two’ of dual forms of nouns, rather than attempt to distinguish **dyw-** from **dew-**, but UCR practice here is entirely in accordance with the texts. It is worth noting that in his 1938 Dictionary Nance noticed that the texts confused *deu-* masculine with *dyw-* feminine.

**Question 4.1. Should the SWF take this feature of the revived language into account or try to maintain etymological distinctions, at least in writing?**

Since there are only two diphthongs in the texts [iʊ] and [eʊ], and [eʊ] tends in disyllables to become [oʊ], there is in principle no need to use more than the two representations <yw> and <ew> e.g. in **dhywgh** ‘to you’, **yw** ‘is’, **gwyw** ‘worthy’, **pyw** ‘who’ and **bew** ‘alive’, **tew** ‘fat’, **tewl** ‘dark’. However, since there are a fair number of homophone monosyllables ending in [iʊ], distinguishing a few of them with historical spellings can be considered useful. Since <ew> is reserved for words in [eʊ] (which themselves often vary with <ow> in disyllables), only <yw>, <u>, and <uw> are available for these words.

**du** [diʊ] ‘black’ UC/KK/UCR *du*, Kennedy *diu*. Distinct from **Duw** ‘god’ and **dyw** ‘two’ f.

Cf. Breton *du*, Welsh *du*, Irish *dubh*. In the texts: *du* x1, *dv* x1, *mîz Du* x1.

**glu** [gliʊ] ‘sharp’ UC/KK/UCR *glew*. Cf. Welsh *glew*. In the texts: *glu* x2, *glv* x2, *glew* x2.

**gu** [giʊ] ‘woe’ UC/KK/UCR *gew*, Kennedy *gew*, *go*. Distinct from **gyw** ‘spear’. Cf. Welsh *gwae*, Breton *gwa*. Cf. also *govy* ‘woe is me!’ and **tru** below. In the texts: *gu* x15, *gv* x2, *gew* x4.

**lu** [liʊ] ‘army’ UC/KK/UCR/Kennedy *lu*. Distinct from **lyw** ‘colour’. Cf. Breton *lu*, Welsh *llu*, Irish *slua*. In the texts: *lu* x2.

**plu** [pliʊ] ‘parish’ UC/KK *plu*, UCR *plu*, *plew*, Kennedy *pleaw*, *plu-* in place-names. Cf. Breton *plou-* in place-names, Welsh *plwyf*. In the texts: *plu* x6, *plew* x4.

**tru** [triʊ] ‘alas!’ UC/KK/UCR/Kennedy *tru*. In the texts: *tru* x18, *trew* x5.

**tu** [tiʊ] ‘side’ UC/KK/UCR/Kennedy *tu*. Cf. Breton *tu*, Welsh *tu*, Irish *taobh*. In the texts: *tu* x14, *tew* x6.

**gyw** [giw] ‘spear’ UC/UCR *gu, gew*, KK *gyw, gw*, Kennedy *giu*. Distinct from **gu** ‘woe’. Cf. Welsh *gwayw*. In the texts: *gu* x11, *gyw* x2, *gew* x4.

**lyw** [liw] ‘colour’ UC/KK *liw*, UCR/Kennedy *liu*. Distinct from **lu** ‘army’. Cf. Breton *liv*, Welsh *lliw*. In the texts: *lyw* x7, *lew* x1.

To judge from rhymes in MC the unstressed vowel **-u** in **Jesu** is pronounced /iw/. It can be assumed that **teylu** likewise is to be pronounced [ˈteiliw], though the common pronunciation [ˈteili] should not be proscribed.

**Question 4.2. Should the diphthong <uw> /yʊ/ which has recently been described by Keith Bailey, be part of the SWF?**

No. We believe that the diphthong /yʊ/ described by Keith Bailey is a fiction. It is also difficult to imagine learners succeeding with such a sound when they are not able to distinguish KK /iw/ from /yw/ either. Wherever it occurs in the texts the graph <uw> is nothing more but a variant way of writing /iw/. It occurs in **duwow**, **duwow** ‘gods’, the plural of **Du**, **Dyrw**, **Dew** ‘God’, in **duwon**, **duwan** ‘grief’ and sporadically in other items. The combination <uw> is useful to disambiguate what would otherwise be homographs. It is not a separate diphthong, however, and has no independent status. We propose to accept the following words with <uw>:

**burwgh** [biʊx] ‘cow’ UC/KK/UCR *bugh*, Kennedy *beuh*. Cf. Breton *buoc’h*, Welsh *burwgh*, Irish *bó*. In the texts: *buch* x1 (OC); *bugh* x2; *bewgh* x1, *bew* x1; *byuh* Lhuyd at least 2

**Duw** [diʊ] ‘God’ UC/UCR *Dew*, KK *Dyrw, Duw*, Kennedy *Diu*. Distinct from **du** ‘black’ and **dyw** ‘two’ f. Cf. Breton *Doue*, Welsh *Duw*, Irish *Dia*. In the texts: *Du* x400+, *Deu* x50+, *Dev* x250+, *Dew* x200+, *duwow* pl x2, *duwaw* pl x1.

**duwon** [diʊən] ‘sorrow’ UC *duan, dughan, duwhan*, KK *dughan*, UCR *dewan, duhan*, Kennedy *Diu*. Distinct from **du** ‘black’ and **dyw** ‘two’ f. Cf. Breton *Doue*, Welsh *Duw*, Irish *Dia*. In the texts: *duon* x5, *dewan* x6, *dewhan* x2, *dewon* x1, *dewen* x1, *duwon* x4, *duwen* x1.

We have seen that the Cornish Language Board has a list of words which they would like to see spelt with <uw>.

**Duw** ‘God’. We agree.

**duwon** ‘grief’. We agree.

**gluw** ‘intense’. We disagree. In the texts this word is represented thus: *glu* x2, *glv* x2, *glew* x2.

There is no justification for <uw> here; we prefer **glu**.

**guw** ‘spear’. We disagree. In the texts this word is represented thus: *gu* x11, *gyw* x2, *gew* x4. There is no justification for <uw> here; we prefer **gyw**.

**guw** ‘woe’. We disagree. In the texts this word is represented thus: *gu* x15, *gv* x2, *gew* x4. There is no justification for <uw> here; we prefer **gu**.

**pluw** ‘parish’. We disagree. In the texts this word is represented thus: *plu* x6, *plew* x4. There is no justification for <uw> here; we prefer **plu**.

**Gwenuwver** ‘Guinevere’. We disagree. In the texts this word is represented thus: *Gwynnever* x1; *Gwynnewer* x2; *Gwynuwer* x2. There is no justification for <uw> here; we prefer **Gwynnever**.

**ruw** ‘king’. UC/UCR *ruyf, ruy*, KK *ryw, ruw*. We agree, in part. This word is peculiar. It occurs in the Old Cornish Vocabulary once as *ruy* ‘king’ and once in the expression *gurhemyn ruif* ‘king’s decree’. George seems to think the word is \**reg-* and Breton *roue* and is some Celtic word *reg-*. Norris and others connect it with OC *ruif* < \**remus* ‘oar’. If *ruif* ‘king’ is really *rex*, why is the vowel not long *i*: cf. Irish *rí, rí* and where does the final segment come from? In UC and UCR the form is kept as it was in the Old Cornish Vocabulary; George has advanced it along

with *duw* ‘god’ (cf. Breton *doue, roue*). Since both forms occur in Revived Cornish we suggest accepting ***ruyv***, ***ruy***’, and ***ruw***. The words ***mytern*** and ***kyng*** are far more common in Cornish anyway: *matern* x6, *materne* x2, *mightern* x4, *myghtern* x115, *myghterne* x2, *mytern* x19, *myterne* x2, *king* x1, *kyng* x4, *kynggys pl.* x1, *ruy* x1, *ruif* x1.