

I am very honoured to be asked to lay this wreath on behalf of Kernow Matters to Us to commemorate the murder of Cornish patriots by the English state. On this day in 1497, Michael Joseph (An Gof) and Thomas Flamank of Bodmin, were hung drawn and quartered for leading a Cornish army against the English government of the day.

People forget the reasons why this happened. The primary cause was the response by the impoverished Cornish population to the raising of war taxes by King Henry VII to raise money for his campaign against Scotland.

In 1496, after disagreements regarding new regulations for the tin-mining industry, King Henry VII suspended the Stannaries.

Then in late 1496 Henry's council approved a forced loan to which Cornwall contributed a disproportionately large share. The terms of the levy violated the Stannary Charter of 1305 which prohibited these taxes from being raised in Cornwall.

It is said, mainly by English commentators, that Michael Joseph and Thomas Flamank "incited rebellion" but the truth is that they led a popular uprising against an English centralising state.

Today, when we look at the millions of pounds in tax taken from Cornwall by the English central state and never returned, when we see our money spent on vanity projects in London such as another useless bridge across the Thames, when we see the English state spend £18million on ten minutes of fireworks but begrudges us pennies for our own

language, when we see our children assimilated into an English education system with our money spent on teaching them English only, and not being allowed to learn their Cornish language, culture or past by this alien system, then we know that these men were right.

They were executed at Tyburn on 27 June 1497. An Gof is recorded to have said before his execution that he should have "a name perpetual and a fame permanent and immortal". Thomas Flamank was quoted as saying "Speak the truth and only then can you be free of your chains". We need these men now, and many more men and women like them.

It is our job now, to commemorate these brave men who laid down their lives for Cornwall, and were punished viciously for doing so.