

# Ted and Ruth Robinson

Ted was born in Bury, Lancashire in 1915. He claimed to have had a poverty stricken childhood and was sent out to work as soon as he was old enough. Thus he only had an elementary school education but he was proud and self-willed and determined to better himself.

He was working as a travelling salesman for Salmon's postcards when he met Ruth Pinder. She lived in Newquay where her father, Douglas Pinder, an artist, had his gallery. They married and after an unsuccessful attempt at running a business in Polperro, they came to Port Isaac in 1936 and took on The Wheelhouse. They later moved across the road to The Harbour Café which they ran until 1954. Upstairs was a restaurant seating about forty people. Downstairs was Ted's shop that sold postcards, pottery, semi-precious stones, jewellery, Ted's drawings and watercolours and various wooden items that Ted decorated in pokerwork. It was a hard life, particularly for Ruth; she cooked all the meals on a domestic electric stove plus Primus paraffin stoves for heating coffee, hot water etc. There was no frozen food and they didn't have a fridge.

Ted is perhaps best remembered as the man who invented the name Squeezee Belly Alley! He invented a tale about somebody having trouble getting through Temple Bar and being advised to "squeeze-ee-belly". He repeated it for so often and so long that the name stuck with visitors – if not with locals!

Tragically in 1954 their only son, Tony, died of a heart aberration aged just 16. But life, albeit a much sadder one, went on and by 1971 they had acquired the little shop opposite the former Port Isaac Stores which Ted ran as a gallery. He mass produced black and white line drawings of local scenes which he sold as

prints, sometimes hand colouring them as well. Accompanied by his never-failing sales patter, they sold amazingly well.

Ruth also painted in a style that echoed her famous father's work and was an extremely talented artist. However, she was always content to take the back seat.

Ted died in 1990 and Ruth died in 1998. They are buried in St Endellion alongside their beloved son.



Paint Corner

Port Isaac's Old World Charm