

Peter Rowe's memories of fishing in Port Isaac

"Back in the 1940s there was no fibreglass so all the boats were wood, either clinker built or smoth. In those days the fishermen wore thick dark serge navy trousers with turn-ups. Their boots were hobnailed by Mar Lark who ran his shoe-makers shop from The Birdcage. The fishermen all wore Guernsey or Jersey jumpers which had different patterns for each fishing port. This was to identify the fishermen in case of drowning - that way it would be clear which village the fisherman was from. The Port Isaac pattern is a double rope.

All the fishermen wore a cap, except Mr Provis who wore a trilby hat, and most wore an apron to protect their clothes and thigh boots.

"At the end of the war, in the 1950s, the China Clay Pits became the big employer locally, sending a bus over for the workers. Money was good and regular."

"There was no fish shop in Port Isaac - everyone bought their fish from a van or from the boats."

Fish ... and chips

"There were two fish and chip shops in Port Isaac in the 1940s, the other very popular. One was run by Mrs Keat (now Wavehunters) and the other by Mrs Spry in a small cottage that is now part of Cupcakes."

In the 1940s there were about 15-20 small fishing boats, all mostly under 30 feet in length. On these bigger boats there would be four or five crew members. They sailed out with an engine to motor but then used a mizzon mast and sail to steady the boat when hauling pots. In those days they caught lobster, crab, mackerel, herring and pilchard.

Many of the young men were away fighting in the war so the fishing boats were mostly worked by the older men aged 50 plus."



Peter and his brother Jack fishing on their boat **FRANCIS KATE** in the late 1970s/ early 1980s

