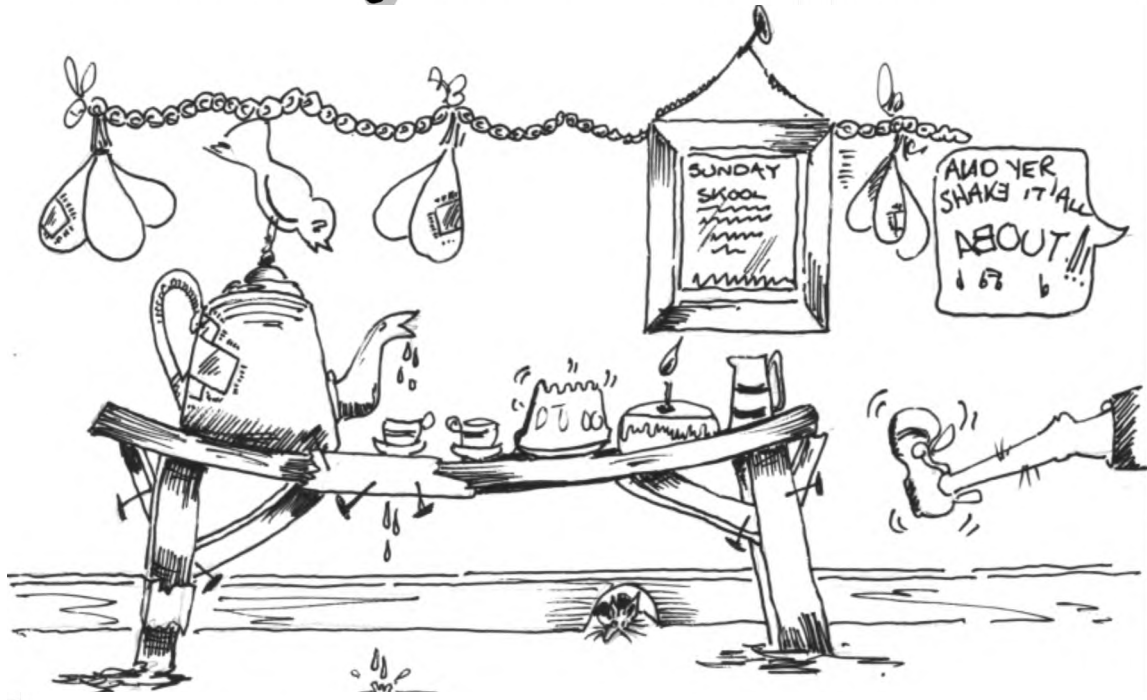


In the first four years of the new millennium, *Trio* reproduced a monthly history of a variety of things Port Isaac, written by James Platt, a Port Isaac boy now residing in the Netherlands. Here are just a few snippets from some of these stories ... if you want to read the whole story look on the PISCES website or buy one of James' books that are available in the village.

The Sunday School Christmas Party



The St Peter's Sunday School Christmas party was always held in the Church Rooms. It was celebrated ahead of Christmas proper, in which capacity it did much to sustain both the religious and secular spirits of the season.

To make space for the festivities, the bigger items of PT Club equipment were ignominiously shoved away in a corner. Shaky trestle tables and still shakier chairs were then set up in great longitudinal lines on the splintery wooden floor of the Church Rooms to respectively bear the repast and to seat all those who were to partake of it.

December 2002

The Fruiterer

by James Platt

Directly behind the Pentus and fronted by a narrow stretch of pavement stood Mr Altair Bunt's shop and his adjoining house. Altair himself was known generally, if not more affectionately, as 'Tair'.

Tair was of relatively slight build although not thin. His shoulders stooped a little. He had thinning hair and an appreciably smiling face in which his critical eyes summed up his customers from above a rather large nose. He invariably wore a long brown dust coat.

were sharp, they were not nearly as sharp as Tair.

On another shelf of the rack, and in season of course, you would find a basket of unappealing looking apples, justifying in their presence Tair's title of 'Fruiterer'. Tom Saundry in Middle Street sold apples which looked almost identical so Tair may well have been a customer for Tom's orchard produce. Tom had his own orchard deep in the Port Isaac valley below Pennant.

May 2001

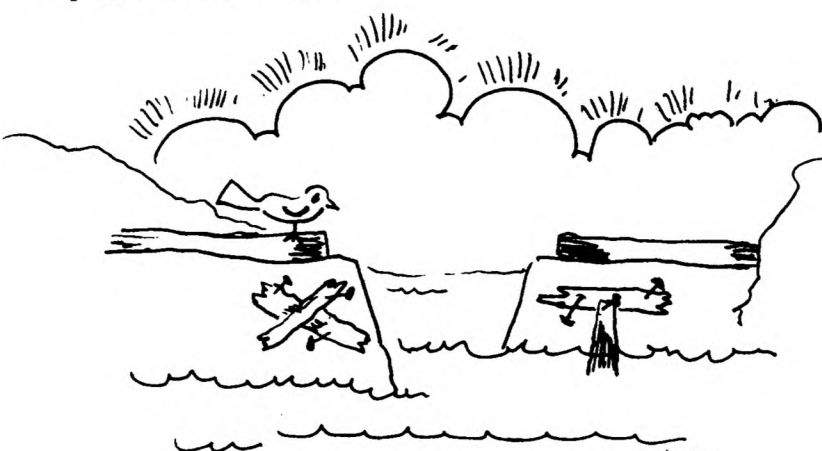
The Ebb Tide

by James Platt

The tide always has, and always will, go out and then come in again on the Port Isaac beach. Even the car park supervisor from his command post on the slipway is powerless to stop its flood, much though he might like to.

The one variable to be considered is just how far the tide will rise up the beach before it calls a halt to its advance, and how far down it will go before deciding that enough is enough.

Towards the end of March this year the tide went into its appropriately named ebb phase.



May 2002

TO A PASTY

by James Platt

The traditional fondness of Americans for apple pie 'like mom used to make' is deeply rooted in their culture. The memory of such apple pies recalls home and the best of times, when life was perceived to have been easier and the days invariably brighter than those currently being endured.

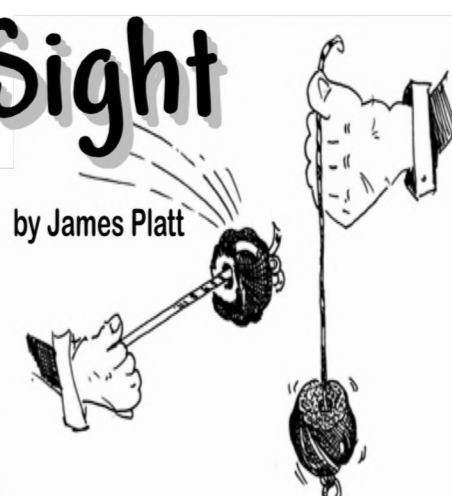
If pressed to provide their own equivalent in nostalgia, Cornish people, whether in exile, or resident yet in the 'dear county of the saints', would be unlikely to go directly to apple pie, unless perhaps it had a handful or two of blackberries thrown in and a spoonful of cream dolloped on the top. No, their first stop would without doubt be the much copied but rarely imitated pasty of the kind that mother made.

October 2001

Not a Goggle in Sight

He was as thin as a Blair promise and as light as seeds from a dandelion clock - so much so that he was nicknamed 'Shadow'. He was likeable and trustworthy, always steady. His disposition was even. He could be relied on. Shadow was thereby in heavy demand as much in the autumn when conkers were ripe for dislodging from the ends of perilously high pendant branches, as in the springtime when there were crow's nests to be got at up at the top of tall and bendy trees, swaying in the wind. In the whole extent of St Endellion parish there were only two conker trees that we knew of. One of them spread its boughs over a fair part of the yard in front of Mr Bob May's Archer Farmhouse at Trewetha, where it was to all intents and purposes inviolate as far as our intentions were concerned. The second was located a little way up into the Port Quin valley at the centre of a sloping wood - a reasonable target for us, and as such to be forever blessed.

Regardless of the absolute inevitability that all of the conkers on any conker tree would ultimately fall to the ground for collection by the sharper-eyed and more discerning among us (on a first-come first-served basis), custom



surprise on his face as blood dripped from the point of the three inches or so of skewer protruding below the back of his hand.

After the hole was drilled, a length of string was wormed up through it from bottom to top, to be secured at the bottom by a multiple knot

November 2004

Mentors & Tormentors - 'Boss Richards' - A Cornish Headmaster

Mr C Victor Richards was headmaster of the Port Isaac County Primary School during the post-war decade.

Not a single one of his pupils had any idea what the initial 'C' stood for, but they were all well aware of what he stood for, and that was, put simply, no nonsense from any of them. He was authority personified and the nickname 'Boss' with which he had been dubbed, and by which he was universally known, fitted his pre-eminent position in village life like a well worn glove.

Assisted by a dedicated staff of three, Boss was, from nine to four, five days a week, the undisputed lord and master of the hundred and fifty or so children of the village and its surrounding district who attended the school.

November 2001

How many?

by James Platt

Response	Actual number
Hardly any	One
Not many	Two
One or two	Three
Two or three	Four
(gathered together in thy name)	Five
Pretty few	Six
A fair few	Seven
A brave few	Eight
More than a few	Nine
Some	Ten
A handful	Eleven
Several	Twelve
A baker's dozen	Thirteen
A dozen or more	Fourteen
Lots	Fifteen
Piles	Sixteen
Loads	Seventeen
Heaps and heaps	Eighteen
A score	Nineteen
A score or more	Twenty
Pretty many	Twenty-one
Dozens	Twenty-five
Crowds	Thirty
Some many	Thirty-five
Scores	Forty
Tons	Forty-five
A hell of a lot	Fifty
Great Whacks	Sixty
Thousands	Seventy
Millions	Eighty
Legion	A hundred
The whole boiling	They were many
	Standing room only

April 2003

Doctor

by James Platt

Across the bottom of Trewetha Lane from the pump, on a high tamarisk fringed bank facing St Peter's Church across Back Hill, was the home of Dr Sproull, local GP, family counsellor and friend to the multitude.

His house was a rambling building with a gravel-covered yard, big by local standards. The doctor's surgery, a meeting place for those both sound and halt of limb, was appended to the house like a squat afterthought.

'New Statesman'. She didn't like to pick it up - danger lay in touching such a publication, let alone reading it!

The Labour Party was, to all intents and purposes, either unknown or otherwise unwanted in the village. The Conservatives had adherents but their grip on local political life was precarious. They were smug people regarded as 'our betters' and, as such, Conservatism was not 'for the likes of we'.

December 2000

A rose by any other name

by James Platt

The nicknames on this list, given in no particular order of precedence, were current in the Port Isaac of fifty years ago and many of them have happily covered the course up to the present day. The list is not in any way definitive as there were others as well, but it does serve to illustrate the true art of nicknaming. Here we go.

Marshall, Goblin, Mo, Shadow, Buh, Ghandi, Bollicks, Eyesnot, Guiseppe, Otch, Figgy Duff, Ido, Billy Pom Pom, Bill Pink, Nibs, Tinker, Cogs, Arker, Monk, Tibby, Texas, Pills, Trapper, Cowboy Joe, Hellfire John, Lightning Lynn, Bill Bumps, Boss, Digger, Cloth, Tuffy, Yankie, Flynn, Teddy Bush, Gaggy, Ding Dong, Taffy, Ningy, Harry Bluff, Cockeye, Cap'n, Tommy Ducksegg, Minnow, Wiffle, Boo, Scudda.

Any one of these nicknames that conjures up an immediate vision in the readers mind, for good or ill, possesses the highest quality. In a single word the nickname will have encapsulated and summed up an entire personality forever.

July 2003

CHAPMAN'S

by James Platt

On the left hand side of Fore Street, just down from Little Hill, Chapman's grocery shop, a remote branch establishment of a Wadebridge based purveyor, occupied the ground floor of an austere looking three-storey building.

A sign, "L. Chapman & Sons", jutted slightly out from the building at the first floor level. It was a long sign, the letters running in vertical sequence from top to bottom. Two plate glass windows of passable size on the ground floor shed light onto the activity within the shop, when there was any.

A long marble topped counter stood on each side of Chapman's shop, one to the left and one to the right as you entered. There were at least five shop assistants; three devoted to dispensing the perishables on the left, and the others handling the dried and tinned goods on the right.

June 2001

Verbal Tics

by James Platt

Dennis O'Keefe wrote the song in 1951. I think, although I am not sure, that it was Gracie Fields who made the song famous. The definitive version of the song in my opinion however came from the eternally great Joseph Locke. Joseph Locke could sing the telephone directory and turn it into a hit. Gracie's cracked top notes, her biggest aspidistra included, were never exactly my cup of tea.

October 2002

The Rivoli

by James Platt

Alongside where Bellevue Terrace opened onto Back Hill stood the neat cottage of Mr & Mrs Charlie Lobb. A well-manicured evergreen hedge facing onto Back Hill enclosed its small front garden. The same stand of evergreens, which made up this hedge continued, albeit in a creeper angled riot of wild abandon, right down Back Hill as far as the entry to St Peter's Church.

Charlie was a kindly man with a common touch. He owned a set of garages and lockups right at the top of Back Hill, fronting onto New Road. The garages ran all the way back behind the Church Rooms towards the wall of the Coastguard station. There was a repair and servicing shop at the front, a jarkish barn in which, to judge from the floor, much oil had been spilled over an extended period of time. In the floor, an inspection pit loomed like a fearful black hole. Charlie's mechanic was Bert Keat, who was a permanent grizzled presence imping in and out of the dimness.

Right at the rear of Charlie's garages was an extension, which was arguably the most important building of its time in Port Isaac. This was the legendary 'Rivoli', converted by Charlie into an entertainment institution which hosted a weekly cinema, and which had been the venue for more dances and concerts than could safely be forgotten.

concrete floor was anti-pathetic to the soles of shoes and the friction generated made keeping time with the music, on the occasions that the music was in time, a near impossibility.

The liberal use of ballroom chalk to promote ease of gliding served to turn the floor of the 'Rivoli' into a passable imitation of an ice rink. Feet shot off in all directions placing the owners in positions very incompatible with the kind of dance floor decorum, which Victor Sylvester might have admired but which was the stuff of life to the 'Rivolians'.

For the cinema, the hall boasted several rows of 'shilling' seats, many of which, prior to the salvage, may have graced a cinema more conventional, but never more illustrious than the Rivoli. These seats filled and were covered in faded threadbare blue plush. Dust puffed around every backside lowered onto one of them. When there were dances held in the Rivoli, the seats were removed and stored at the back of the building.

Given the popularity of the cinema, a lot of the seats were tacitly understood to be regularly spoken for.



the remains of an original Rivoli poster

Rosie saw it, of ejecting boys from cinema performances whenever the vestige of an opportunity presented itself. This was a game in which all the players knew their roles and played them to the hilt.

In front of the plush seats at the 'Rivoli' were a number of wooden benches - long, hard, rude of construction and backless. These were the 'sixpennies' where all the boys sat. Prior to the lights going down, the boys, under Rosie's beady eyes, were obliged to maintain a modest decorum. Few were ever evicted prior to the commencement of a film, but Rosie

April 2001

It'll never catch on!

by James Platt

During the mid morning break at Sir James Smith's Grammar School, Camelford, a select group of classmates, consisting of Pat Sleeman and Dick Richards from Tintagel, Mike Ferrett from Boscastle, Dick Creeper from Camelford and me, regularly got together to discuss, and as often as not to re-enact, various elements of programmes we had listened to on the wireless on the previous evening.

This critic's forum was an avid follower of musical and comedy programmes. Special attention was directed to reviewing Cyril Stapleton's 'Show Band Show' and anything involving Ted Heath and his Music was like manna from heaven. When 'Hancock's Half Hour' was broadcast, we could not be contained. We wrote down and recorded as many Hancock jokes and situations as we could recall, to be filed away against their eventual resurrection for insertion in the Christmas school concert.

those of an age whose preference was directed more at Ruby Murray than at Bill Haley and his Comets.

For the most part in fact, the type of popular music that we were exposed to was unrelated to popular taste and was chiefly governed by what the presenters deemed appropriate. The famous 'Uncle Mac' presented a 'Children's Favourites' programme on the wireless in which it was a rare day when the 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', a segment of 'Sparky's Magic Piano' and the Luton Girl's Choir version of 'Nymphs and Shepherds' were not all featured. 'The Dam Buster's March' was about as adventurous a play as Uncle Mac ever achieved.

It didn't take any of us long to warm to Bill Haley's 'Rock around the clock' when we came to hear it. The newspapers advised that the number was to be played in full on the BBC's ultra-highbrow 'Third Programme' in a wireless study exploring branches of American



and Lil Pattenden jived in the 'Rivoli' aisle in a great moment of 'Rivoli' history, while more than a few mouths of those occupying the plush seats were motivated to resemble prunes.

It was good and fitting to hear 'Rock Around the Clock' lead off the musical accompaniment to the Royal Air Force display at the conclusion of HM the Queen's Golden Jubilee Pop concert celebrations. That pop concert came to exceed all expectations in its demonstration of how music has developed in fifty years, not all of it

August 2002

THE GOALMAN

by James Platt

No more than fifty yards up Trewetha Lane above the pump, set back behind a small paved yard, Harold Spry the coalman had a tin roofed garage where he maintained his stock of coal and his ramshackle flat backed delivery lorry.

July 2001

Physical Training

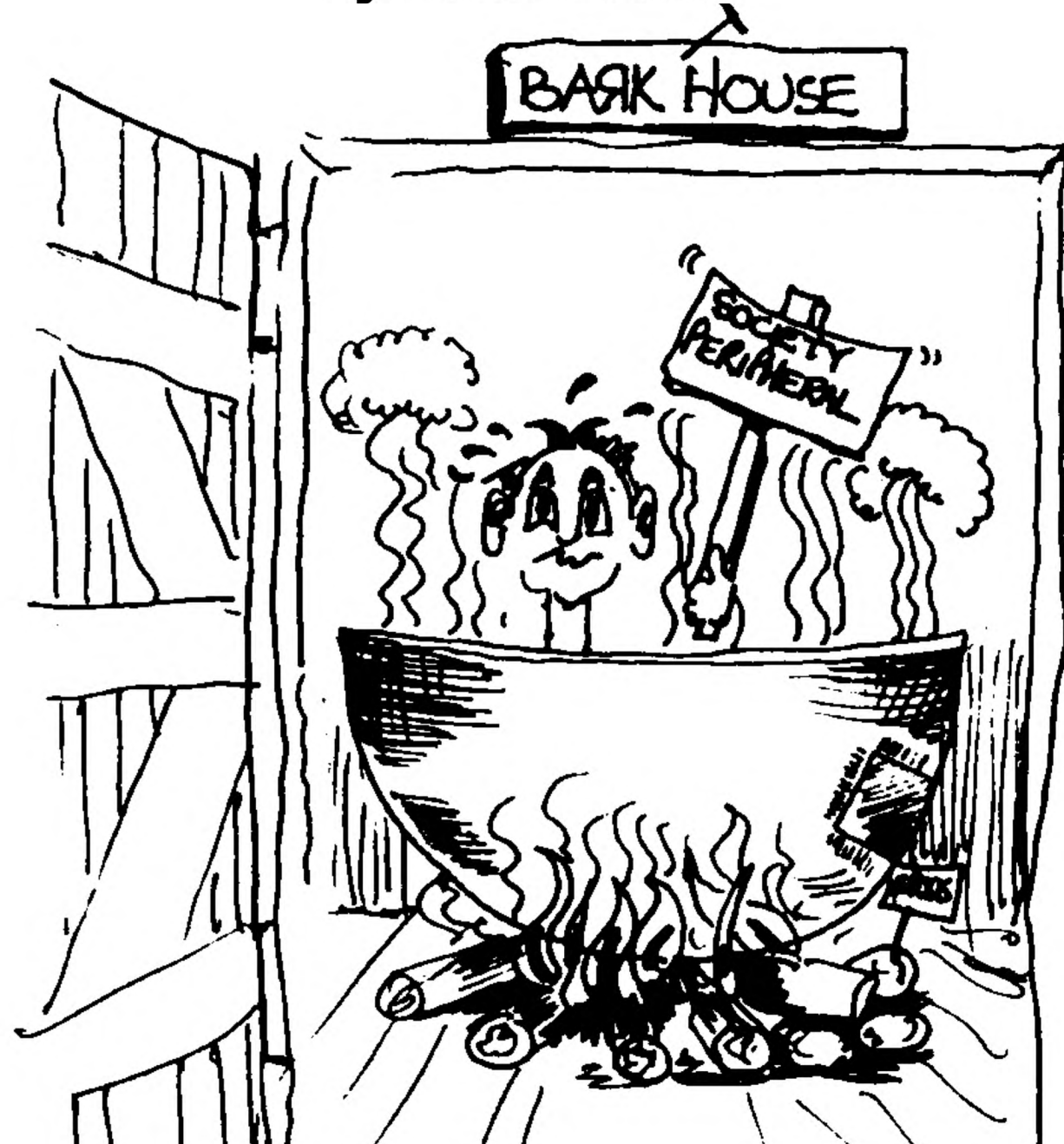
The St Peter's PT Club, otherwise known as the SPPTC was a Port Isaac institution in the early 1950's welcoming all ages of boys to its fellowship. Although from its title it was clear that the SPPTC met in principle under the auspices of the church, its regular gathering place being the Church Rooms, its membership in practice was wholly ecumenical.



February 2002

About Nets

by James Platt



The classified advertisement pages in 'Trio', taken as a whole, suggest a business scene in the parish of St Endellion that must be as dynamic as it is diverse.

April 2001