

Over the years *Trio* has been very lucky with contributors who regularly write “historical” articles including George Steer with his ‘Ramblins’ and David Castle with ‘Backalong’. Neither are with us any more but one of their legacies to the village are their *Trio* anecdotes of days long gone. Jon Cleave’s Lobber’s Point, along with lots of other contributions, add to this rich heritage. Here are just a sample of a variety of things “historical” (or “hysterical” as Ann Steer used to say) - to read the full articles go to our touchscreen or our website - www.portisaacheritage.co.uk

Some years ago my wife and I lived at Twelvevoores, Trewetha. Prior to that Mrs. Cann had lived there for many years when it was called Homeleigh.

Recently a local farmer told me it was known in the old days as Green Gripes. I wonder if any of your readers could explain the origin of such a name.

E. Tipton, Wadebridge.

July 1982

(Re, Mr. Tipson, July)

My family lived at Trewetha from 1906 onwards. "Green Gripes" is the name of the two fields at Short Lane - just before "Gwelva". "Twelvevoores" used to be "Duller's Tenement".

Mrs. Sam Blake.

August 1982

Dear Sir, The path across the back of the allotments leading up on to Lobber - Father always called it 'Rowland's Way' - nets used to be dried up there, wheeled up in a wheelbarrow by the fishermen. Sorry I cannot confirm it though!

Mrs. Jim May senior.

Dear Sir, The name 'Rowland's Way' refers to a path which led from the beach at Port Isaac, up the cliff and on to the bottom of the allotments. This path was used by a fisherman named 'Rowland' who lived at Lower Trefreock, and was his shortest route home; hence the name 'Rowland's Way'. The name is still used by local people when referring to the cliff below the allotments.

R.L.Brown, Port Isaac.

Dear Sir, Re the correct name of the footpath area near the allotments. The correct name is 'Rowland's Way'. I was told many years ago that a fisherman named 'Rowland' (I do not know if it was his Christian name or his surname) kept his boat in Silvershell Gully on the shingle. His 'way' home to Lower Trefreock was up the cliff by way of a chain handrail fastened to the cliff face. This was still there when I was a boy and was frequently used by us. Hence the name 'Rowland's Way'.

Ian C. Honey, Port Isaac.

Dear Sir, In the deeds for our property ['Rogues' Retreat'] it mentions "...part of field known as 'Rawline's Way'." HENRY VIII's PIER

Dear Sir, An article about Port Isaac in the 'Daily Mail' of 24th. August refers to 'the old part of the village (with a pier built in Henry VIII's days)'. Can anyone tell us exactly where this ancient pier is located? I certainly never heard my late husband tell about it.

Elizabeth May, Wicthy Garden, P.G.

On page 24 of my recently published book I wrote, 'A rough rectangle of large stones, to be seen inside the east breakwater at low tide, is the base of the Tudor pier from which corn would have been exported'. The stones look like the base of a stone wall when examined carefully and I am pretty sure that they are remnants of a breakwater which may have been reached by a path down from Lobber, rather like the old Rowland's Way that led up from Silvershell Gully. Robin Penna.

October 1991

TIDDLY WINKS

Tidlights was a very small, close-knit hamlet, almost everyone was related. Tiddly Winks was the lowest cottage facing Letterbox Green, and the cave was in the garden at the back, built into the old Cornish hedge. Some farm workers would come and remove the stone from the altar of the body was collected, these experts in hedge building would quickly put back the stones. The contents would stay until it was safe to distribute them.

I suppose 'Tiddly Winks' could be connected with 'tiddly' meaning 'slightly drunk'. Ed.

April 1996

Dear Trio

I enjoyed the write-up in Lobber's Point about the Liberal Club. As a young man I spent many hours there with Harry May and Jess Steer and my father, Leslie Keat, who later became a member.

I remember well the day when Harry May made the dent in the wall, for I was playing against him and watched it happen. In the same match, another of his shots just missed Edgar Bates' head as he ducked out of the line of fire. As I watch modern snooker on the television I think back and my children chant, 'We know, Harry May wouldn't have missed that!'

There was also a keen group of draughts players. The two champions to spring to mind as I think back are Dick Rowe and Bill Oliver.

At that time no ladies were allowed in the Club and the phrase 'sex discrimination' had no place in our vocabulary. Should it be necessary to reach one of us, someone would knock on the door and wait outside for one of the men to answer and pass on the message.

John Tinney Keat
Telford
April 2000

Local footpaths from two who know

In answer to Robert's (Manders) article in last month's *Trio* about local pathways and their names, we would like to correct one or two things. For instance, Shuggy's Ope - who was Shuggy? We have never heard of the name. The names of the Opes are:

Higher Ope from Rose Hill to the Pentus

Lower Ope from Rose Hill to opposite the Golden Lion

Temple Bar was never Squeezed Belly Alley, it was always Temple Bar or The Entry. At one time there was a cobbled path from Temple Bar across the road and leading into Chapel Court. This was used by the village people in Fore Street as a short-cut to worship at the Wesley Chapel and also to have access to the village pump in Middle Street.

Doctor's Meadow was never Doctor's Meadow. The correct name is **Doctor George's Field**. Doctor George was the doctor for Port Isaac in the 1800s. The field was on the right as you come from Hicks Corner down to Trewetha Lane and was where they held the Rowlands Fair every year at Hollicome time. We can remember swing boats, roundabouts, stalls and fortune tellers and in particular Mr Marwood Cummins from Delabole. He would park his horse and wagon in Spry's Coal Yard (now a row of four garages). The side of the wagon would open up to display the most wonderful selection of homemade sweets and rock, Turkish Delight, chocolate covered muffins, coconut squares, jelly sticks, barley sugar twists, liquorice wheels and more ... Joan's favourite was the cinnamon rock and she always bought a stick for her Uncle Joe. I used to take home a slab of nut toffee to be broken up into small pieces with a hammer. That's what my old folk liked.

Such memories we have and this is why we like to keep the names of the old village paths as they always were - it is our history.

Yvonne Cleave & Joan Murray
September 2014

HOLICOME

Yes - Hollicome was an annual, great event, held on Ascension Day, Holy Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, consisting of many caravans with the roundabouts and swings belonging to well-known names of Birsheil, and Hatherly and various stalls and shows. The typical sweet stalls with home made rock, peppermint, nut, and cinnamon, from Delabole Cummings, Dawe, and Hawke from Bodmin. The chief stall to be patronised would be the one who put an extra 'comfit' (now sugared almond) in your packet if you spent a few extra coppers at one purchase. Comfit was recognised as Hollicome Sweet. It was all gathered together, sometimes at the end

January 1987

BIRDCAGE COTTAGE

Surely the most unusual cottage in the village must be the 3-storey high cottage called The Birdcage. Stuck high above the main heart of what is arguably one of the most picturesque villages in Cornwall, this pentagonal building, with its slate hung elevations, draws the eye as one negotiates the steep hills to the harbour. It is not known exactly how old the Birdcage is but it would appear to be between 150 and 200 years old. It was built by a man called Valentine Powell Richards and, appropriately, was acquired by a Mr. John Lark in the middle years of the 1900s when it was used as a cobbler's shop. The National Trust acquired the cottage in 1980 under the will of Mrs. Alec Gorton and for some years it was let. However, in recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find a suitable tenant for the Birdcage due to its tiny proportions and therefore it was decided that the most appropriate use would be to make it into a holiday cottage so that others might enjoy its wonderful character. The National Trust has put a large amount of work into restoring the building to its original character. The slate peggy roof and hangings were removed and replaced in the traditional manner using chestnut laths and wooden pegs. Lime plaster has been used inside and the exterior has been painted with white limewash in the traditional manner. Unsightly electricity cables have been removed and the chimney rebuilt using old bricks in the original design. The stairs are only 12" wide in places and the ceilings only 6" high, making it very difficult to put furniture into the cottage. However, trap doors, or 'coffin hatches', came in very useful when installing the double bed. It is obviously not going to be a cottage suitable for those with a wide girth or indeed much above average height! It is hoped that the cottage will be let from the middle of February 1995 and we believe it will be exceptionally popular with its wonderful position, superb views and idiosyncratic character. The title 'tenants' have already taken occupancy in advance of the official opening - a pair of herring gulls on the roof! If anyone wishes to have a holiday at the Birdcage it may be booked through the National Trust Holiday Bookings Office, PO Box 336, Milcombe, Wiltshire, SN12 8SX Telephone 01225 791199.

Simon Ford,
Countryside Manager, North Cornwall.

March 1995

Backalong

Looking back at Port Isaac signs

At the top of Church Hill at the junction of the St Endellion to Longross road was a signpost which read, 'PORT ISAAC Impractical for Motors'. It's a pity it's not there any more. Apparently it was the traffic chaos at the bottom of Church Hill.

In the 1930s and 40s, at the top of Back Hill (opposite the bus shelter), was a cast iron signpost which indicated 'TINTAGEL' on one side and 'TINTAGEL' on the reverse. It would appear that the Highway Department could not make up their minds even in those days!

When Leslie Howe Bellish introduced traffic signs in the mid 1950s, the speed limit signs at the top of Port Cavenish Hill and in Church Hill were duly installed without cementing them in. The young lads of the day included very soon found out that the signs could be moved round so that they read opposite to that intended.

Port Isaac had a resident policeman until the early 1970s and his Station House was 18 Trefreock Terrace. A small office the outhouse was used as the back of the house. To detain people from

Rowland's Way

Many years ago, the area around the allotments near Lobber was known as Rowland's Way. I was said that a fisherman named Rowland, who lived at Trefreock, walked over the fields and climbed down into Searchy Gully (Silvershell), where he kept his boat moored. Apparently he thought that this was a quicker way than walking down Church Hill. I have never seen or heard of any proof of this.

PORT ISAAC ROAD STATION

How many people can remember when Port Isaac still had its own railway station? Opened in June 1893 and closed in October 1966. A mere 31 miles away, perched 400 feet above sea level and in St. Kew Parish actually, near to Trellill. It was the direct link to Launceston, Okehampton, Exeter, and Waterloo in one direction. Until 1963 there were

steam trains, but in the last two years local trains consisting of the comparatively modern diesel 'multiple-units' were used.

The train in my picture is the Padstow to Exeter afternoon one usually called 'The Perisher' for the 'Perishable Goods', it had a van full of fish from Padstow at the rear! More familiar to holidaymakers was the 'Atlantic Coast Express' from Waterloo. In later years it was driven by streamlined 'West of England' class locomotives.

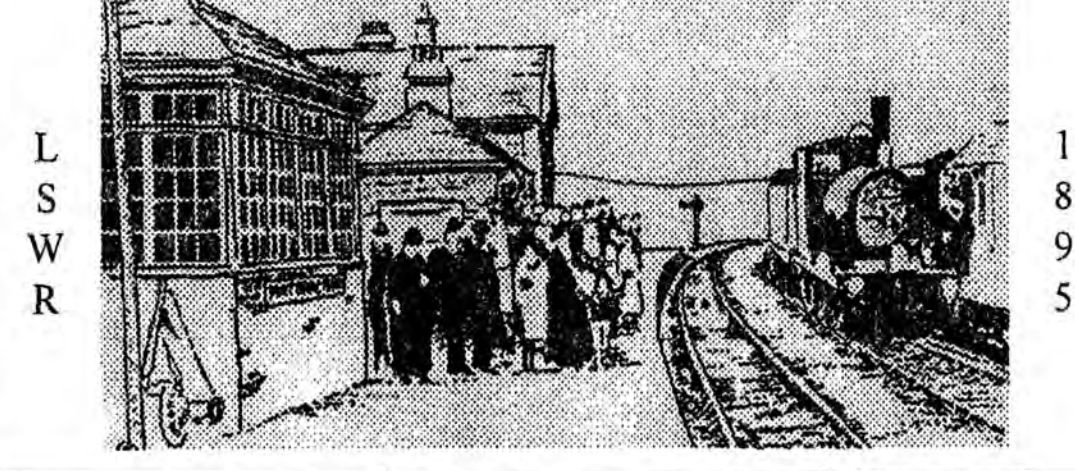
The venerable engine shown is a T9' class 4-4-0, built 1899 in Glasgow, stabled at the Exmouth Junction shed in the 1940s and withdrawn in June 1961.

The station buildings and yard are now the premises of Messrs. W.T. Tucker & Sons.

Robin Penna.

The 'Perisher' leaving the station at about 4.20pm.

March 1985



An 'Artist's Impression' of the first London and South Western train to arrive at Port Isaac Road Station on the first of June 1893

June 1995

Lobber's Point

Get on. It must be nearly a year since Lobber's first point was published and it was fully intended to dwell (in part at least) on local institutions. You know, jumble sales and the like. Anyway, it has occurred to me that for the past twelve months I've done little but nag and jaw about various local irritations. You know, dog mess, council tax, garbage disposal, un-helpful people, dog mess, parking, car spaces and, of course, dog mess. All very fine, but not really painting much of a picture of everyday life (did I mention dog mess, by the way?).

Now, for many of you, the fore-boding dungeon beneath the Penhalligon Rooms must be a mystery. Perhaps it is. The entrance to Port Isaac's catacombs? Someone once ran up to me, panic-stricken, 'He's gone!' she said, 'Gone into that that place. The door beneath the Penhalligon Room stairs. He've gone where his father and granifer before him went. He've joined the Liberal Club!'

And there, in a room that still reeks of stale tobacco even though smoking has been banned for at least ten years, in a room where faded velvet drapes prevent any daylight from entering in, there is a full size billiard table. In Port Isaac, if you wish to vote Liberal Democrat, you must first be proficient at snooker or billiards.

Many of us have misspent our youths in there. My own were in the glorious hey-day of Harry May, Jess Steer and Jack Rowe's dog, Oi. When Oi sat next to you, as you watched a game, you weren't ...

March 2000

Do you know their real names?

For many years, men in Port Isaac have been know either by their nicknames or derivatives of their family names.

When the school register was called and there were several boys with the same surname, the full names were used and these remained throughout their lifetime. For example, William John Honey was always known as William John; Samuel Dyer Thomas was Sammy Dyer; William Harris Steer was William (Bill) Harris; Jack Lovell Brown was Jack Lovell.

April 2000

February 2010

David's backalong blog - "I'll call you"

Today take the telephone system for granted, but the Port Isaac Exchange started just after the World War 1. It was based on the area of St Endellion Parish, with the Exchange in Richard Prouth house, Fennel, next to Priests of Peace. Richard Prouth was the agent for the L & SW Railway and had the contract to take parcels and fish boxes/fish barrels to the Station. The telephone exchange was in the front room of Fennel House. Initially it had 40 exchanges, 10 in the village and 30 in the parishes of Bodmin exchange. The manual operators were Richard Prouth's daughters, Ashley and Auna.

Some of the early subscribers were L. Chapman & Sons - PORT ISAAC 2, Trelawney Garage (John & Mark Prouth) - PORT ISAAC 3, O. Sherrill, Baker's - PORT ISAAC 10, H.M. Coopers - PORT ISAAC 25.

By 1935 the demand for telephones increased in the Parish increased and a semi-automatic exchange was built in Doctor's Meadow. This handled all local calls without an operator. All other calls were connected to Bodmin exchange by dialling 0. The building of Doctor's Meadow was enlarged in the late 1950s.

The growth of the telephone system changed in the 70s when STD dialling was available throughout the UK.

David Castle

October 2013

David's backalong blog

People trading in Church Hill years ago

Mrs Tremain used her front room as a shop selling 101 things such as haberdashery, small household goods, some fishing gear and even glass eyes, for those unfortunate people who lost an eye! No 12 Church Hill is named Tremain Cottage.

A little further up through a courtyard entrance was Harry Norman, a local preacher who had a book and shoe repair business. You could watch him working at his last as you walked by.

Also in Church Hill was a tinsmith, Mr Crockford, who repaired kettles, pans and other metal household goods. He also made metal model boats and displayed them in his window hoping to sell them to the passing visitors.

September 2013

A follow-up on last month's Backalong Blog

Further to David Castle's 'Backalong' article in last month's *Trio*, there were other outlets and things of interest on Church Hill.

Above Mr Norman's shoe workshop level was Dan Mutton who cowered on the famous Cutty Sark and next door was Mr Jack Collins who was quite a famous singer in the 1920s and 30s.

Further up the hill lived Mr Edgar Bates who had one leg considerably shorter than the other. He was a reserve postman and used to deliver telegrams to outlying farms for sumpence (2p per today).

Up again was Mr Dick Pooley who had a son, Derek, who became a Professor in the nuclear industry.

Across the road is the entrance to the Old Mill which played a major part in Port Isaac's history. Further up on the right was the Port Isaac Conservative Club. This closed down about the time that the Liberal Club opened in 1911. The Snooker table was transferred to the new club and is still played on to this day, well over 100 years later.

Across the road was the Killing House where animals were slaughtered from Mr Worden's Homer Park farm at the very top of the hill. The meat was then sold in his butcher's shop opposite Tremain Cottage.

Up a bit from there is the Old Quarry, now a private car park, where men used to break stones in various sizes. Lots of the fishermen used to do land jobs when they couldn't get to sea. My father used to say that when the Inspector or someone they didn't like visited, the men were adept at making stone chippings fly around their head - they never stayed long!

Near the top, another Port Isaac butcher, Mr Jack Hicks had a piggy.

Church Hill today, like all the narrow streets in the old village, is nearly 100% holiday homes.

October 2013

OLD TREWETHA MINE

I had cause recently to do some research on the old mining activities in the Trewetha area and I thought your readers might be interested in some information which I came upon of which I had no previous knowledge, although I had always known that there was an old mine in Trewetha. According to old mining records the old Trewetha mine, also known as Wheel Boys in the 18th century, was the largest producer of antimony in the United Kingdom and was intermittently worked from a very early period up to a little after the mid 19th Century. In 1906 the mine was re-opened for exploratory purposes, but no production resulted. The mine was noted for the discovery of 'Bournonite' and a collection of copper, silver, lead and antimony ores were sold to the British Museum in around 1825 for the sum of £1,000. It seems that the Parish has yet another claim to fame!

John Sprouill.

June 1989

Port Isaac Local History Group What's in a word?

Some ages ago, a streaker was a person who 'laid out' or prepared bodies for burial. Somehow I can't imagine my grandmother, who performed that operation (or maybe Charlie Honey!) being a streaker in the present day's interpretation of the word. Neither can I imagine some people that I know mending shoes, no matter how expensive the shoes were. But a 'snob' was a high-class shoe repairer.

If words can change their meaning so drastically, then I wonder why I get so annoyed by the change of names of places in Port Isaac, eg The Temperance Hall to The Village Hall via The Social Hall, the stream through the bottom of the village from the lake to the leat and The Entry to Squeeze-belly-alley. To me the linking factor is history.

One definition of 'lake' is that it derives from the Old English 'laen', meaning a small stream. Am I the only one who thinks that the word in common usage until WWII is much more appropriate than, say 'leat', which was a mining term?

November 2005

Finally, did you know that Port Wen (used in Doc Martin for Port Isaac) was originally found in the Arundel Charter of 1250 as the name of Port Quin?

George's ramblins

Those of you that navigated the lower reaches of Trewetha Lane during the summer may have noticed that the water feature by our bungalow has been switched off. What you might not know was that, in conjunction with SWW and TJ Brent, it was designed as a focal point for gossiping, a place where hot feet could be cooled and a watering place for passing pigeons, prides of cats (or whatever the collective noun for cats is) and Jeremy Brown's dog. Jeremy, apparently, is teaching his dog to sing. He has a wonderful range - the dog that is - from basso profundo to top tenor. Should find a star spot with the Fishermen's Friends next year! We think we might turn on the water feature again early next year if we get a sharp frost, especially on pension days!

Talking of pensioners, I was giving Peter Rowe a hand with marking out the football pitch at Homer Park. Liz usually helps but she had nipped off to photograph people's innards or whatever she does. Pete was doing all the loustering (*) and I was providing the technical backup like holding the end of a piece of rope or the end of a tape measure and explaining the intricacies of Pythagoras' Theorem and 3,4,5 triangles because we wanted to get the right-angles vitty (**). We ended up with loads of stakes in the ground and the field looked like a hedgehog.

'How's that?' says Pete. 'Near nuff' says I. 'Near nuff's no good,' says Pete, 'Got to be zact'. 'Well, 'tis zack' says I rather testily. 'That's near nuff then' says Pete.

We got most of it right by eye anyway - so much for geometry.

October 1999

Did you know, for instance, that John Wesley came to Cornwall first in 1741 when he was 40, and in all visited 36 times. He came to Port Isaac on more than half of those visits, the first time in 1747 and the last in 1789.

He didn't stay long in 1747, the natives were none too happy and when Quaker Scantlebury saw a mob converging on the beach and the skittle all he quickly lost interest in John Wesley at his door.

After the disruption of 1835, when the Methodists split into various factions a Wesleyan Superintendent, came to the village and one kindly lady of the opposite faction suggested that 'they should go to hear him in a spirit of

peace and pull'n from the pulpit!'

On another occasion, the Rev Aquila Barber was hooted down by a mob of sailors, fishermen, pilots and strumpets. Who said that religion is boring? All the Methodist factions came together in 1932 but my memory is of armed neutrality until well after that.

See you at the Exhibition, there will be much of interest, FOOD, and we shall be selling our first book.

zzz.pi./snore
July 2000

Taxes

Finally, after Gordon Brown's budget, I was thinking of taxes and how to avoid them. Taxes have been with us for yonks and even income tax has been around for 200 years. It was temporary - to help us beat Napoleon. Politicians were always weasly with words. One of the old taxes was the Hearth Tax of 1662. You were exempt if you were on poor relief, if you didn't pay Parish rates or if your house was worth less than £1 per annum. The tax was 2/- (10p) per hearth, payable in two instalments at Lady Day and Michaelmas. People were blocking up their fireplaces in droves to escape the tax. An interesting point was that, in St Endellion parish, Dorothy Grenville had a house (manor, mansion) with 22 hearths. There were only a dozen places in the whole of Cornwall with more and they were owned by people who were seriously rich. I haven't seen Richard Sloman since I read about the tax, but I wouldn't mind betting (10p) that Roscarrock was owned by said Dorothy Grenville.

April 2004

A spy in the camp!

I wonder how many Port Isaac people know that there was once a real live spy staying in the village?

My grandparents were Richard and Sarah Parsons and they originally lived in a house opposite the 'Wheelhouse'.

My grandfather, who was a shoemaker - Cordwainer in an earlier terminology - had a workshop at the rear of the Golden Lion where he made boots and shoes for the villagers and also for the local 'gentry'. He was also a teacher of the violin and he used to give lessons at home after work.

In the early 1900s they moved from the bottom of the village to the top of Front Hill - now Fore Street - where they became one of the first to set up a 'Guest House' in Port Isaac. The house was called 'Tredethlyn' and it has subsequently been renamed 'Trehowey'.

In July 1914, when the clouds of war were gathering over Europe, a distinguished looking gentleman of German origin booked to stay with my grandparents for two days - July 24th and 25th - telling them he was on a walking holiday in Cornwall. He asked if he could have a room of his own where he could dine and, because he had heard my mother playing the piano when he arrived, he asked if she would play to him in the evening after he had eaten.

After he had had his meal, my mother, who was then a young woman of 23, went to move the tablecloth, but he asked her to leave it as he wished to sit at the table while she played. ...

November 2002

February 2006

George Steer