

ST. PETER'S CHURCH, 1884 - 1984

When Canon Carter was installed as Prebendary at St. Endellion in 1881, the Bishop preached on the 145th. Psalm, verse 4: 'One generation shall praise Thy works unto another.' He related the history of the collegiate church and made a public appeal for help towards building a house of God at Port Isaac - for which plans had already been drawn up. Canon Carter wrote in his diary shortly afterwards that 'this task of bringing the Church of England teaching and worship to a hitherto neglected parish, met with plenty of delays and difficulties.' A year later the foundation stone was laid, and on August 5th. 1884, Bishop Wilkinson dedicated the new Church of St. Peter's. Canon Carter remembered the occasion 'as a red-letter day in the story of Port Isaac'. The church was built at the cost of £1,400 to accommodate about 300 worshippers. The money was collected by donations from the rich and poor alike. Offerings had been made of the necessary furniture and ornaments. All was ready for August 5th. The church was crowded by clergy and lay people from all parts of the diocese as well as by the villagers themselves. The Bishop thanked and encouraged everyone involved in the planning and building of the church. Apparently, however, this joy was short-lived when only 25 years later the building showed signs of weakness - especially in the west wall. It was feared that the whole church would need renewal. As Canon Carter records 'this reflected little credit on those who were responsible for selecting and preparing the site of the church'. It wasn't until 1913 that Port Isaac was constituted as a separate parish when a living was created by the donation of a portion of the benefit of St. Endellion, and Reverend W. T. Martyn was appointed as the first vicar of the parish. Despite all problems both structural and otherwise, St. Peter's church still lives to tell us the tale.

S.C.