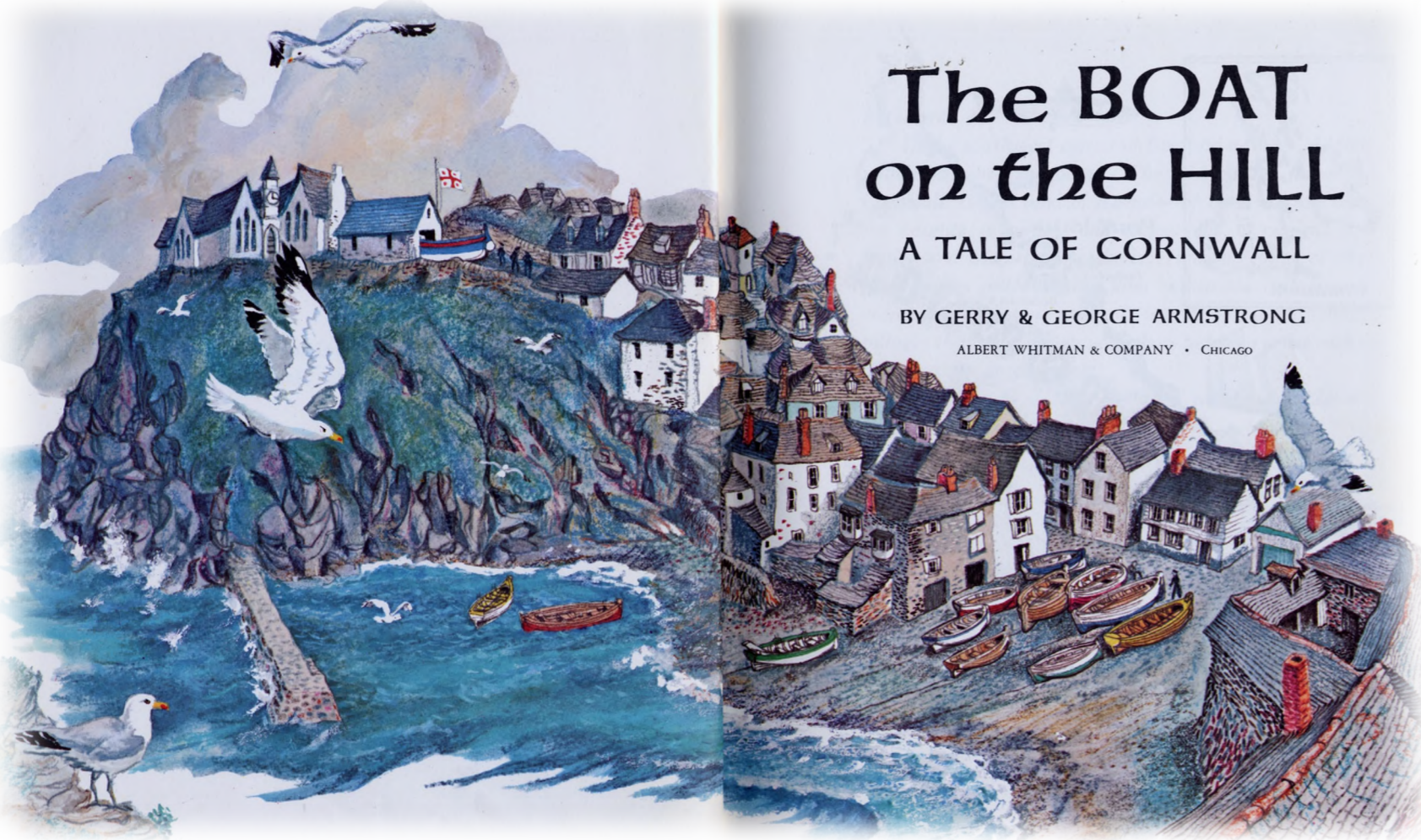


This delightful book was written by an American couple, George & Gerry Armstrong, and published in 1967. They lived in Wilmette, Illinois with their two daughters and were folk musicians. Gerry was also a professional artist and he drew all the illustrations in the book. They visited Port Isaac to gather the background material for their book. Like many stories that seem too fantastic to believe, this one is based on unusual facts. The lifeboat was once kept on the hill and once an inventor did have the temerity to suggest a lifeboat launching machine - although there his resemblance to Mr Forthred stops.

The tale is very close to home; of people coming to live in Port Isaac and how some people fit in and others are full of big ideas and change that never works ...



The BOAT on the HILL

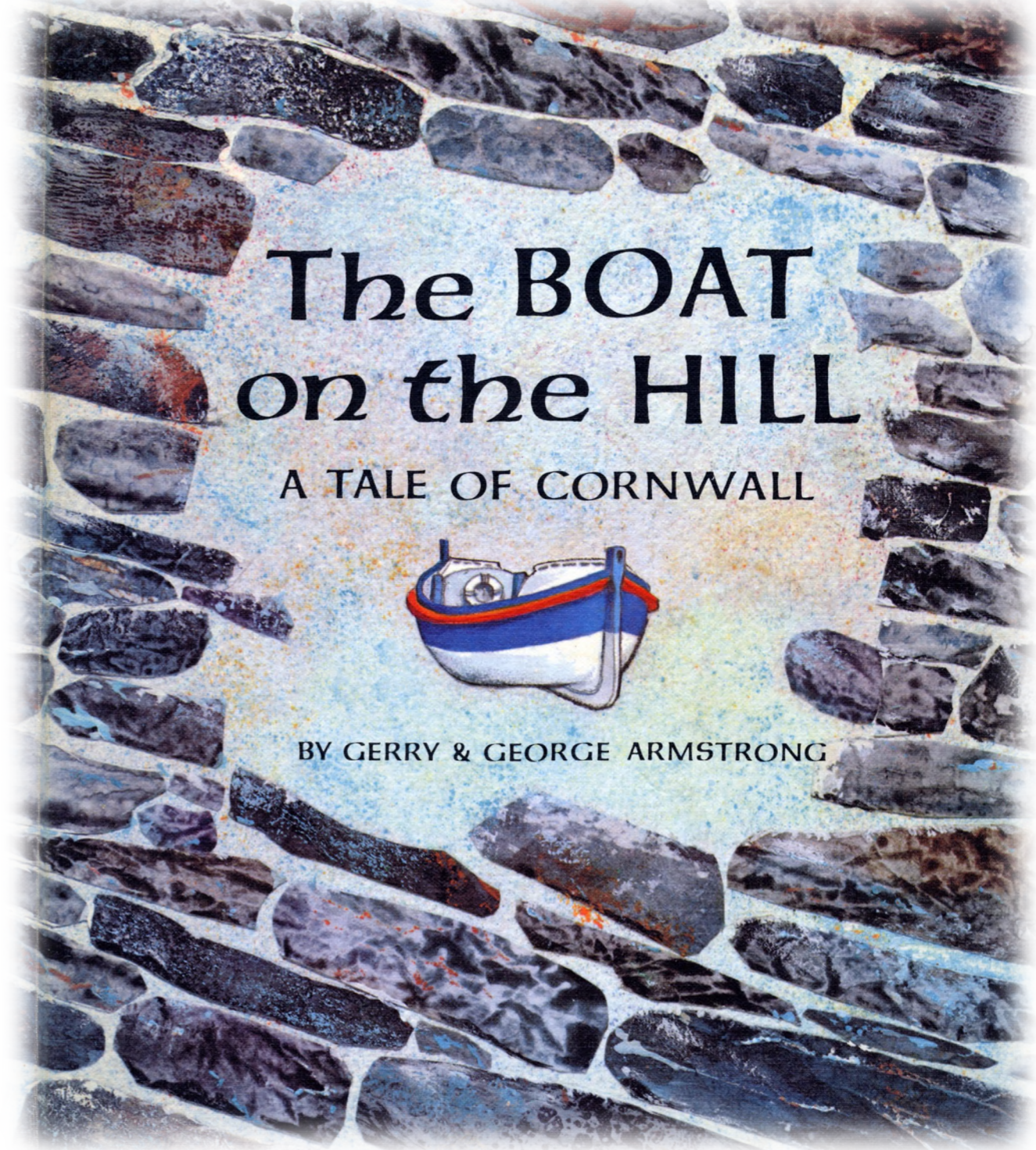
A TALE OF CORNWALL

BY GERRY & GEORGE ARMSTRONG
ALBERT WHITMAN & COMPANY · CHICAGO

Foreword

In the southwest corner of England a finger of land points out into the ocean. The end of this finger is Cornwall. It is a land of legends—of King Arthur and his knights, of pirates and shipwrecks, of ancient tin mines and May Day festivals. It is the land of the little fairies called piskies who live in the hedges and crannies of the stone walls. It is a land of quiet fishing villages that nestle in snug harbors between great rocky cliffs jutting into the sea

It is in one of these villages, named Port Isaac, that this story takes place.



The BOAT on the HILL

A TALE OF CORNWALL

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Cecil, always known as Pop, Brimble and his wife, Mrs Brimble - "Let's move to a small town on the seacoast and do nothing but read and rest"... for a week!



Pop and Mrs Brimble organised a choir and a dance band; they bought a store and a little donkey to deliver supplies to customers; and "on two afternoons a week, they closed the store to go exploring. They went to look for fairy tools in the old tin mines and for pirate treasure in the caves. They visited with fishermen mending their nets, the housewives hanging out their wash ...



"When fishermen were in trouble, the coastguard station would fire one signal rocket to call for help on the beach. A second rocket meant that the lifeboat was needed ... The Brimbles stood and stared as men and women rushed past them. In a moment they heard another noise, a strange creaking and rattling and scraping noise. And there was the lifeboat - being pushed and pulled right down the narrow main street ..."



Then Mr Forthredred arrived in Port Isaac. "We must have progress" he said, "Trade in the donkeys for motor cars. Put motors on the boats. Widen the roads. Make everything faster and flatter and modern." "What are your plans for Port Isaac?" asked Pop fearfully. "You see before you, my good man, the inventor of the great Lifeboat-launching Machine. I will build it right on the beach... I am going to bring Progress to Port Isaac."



Mr Forthredred convinced the Town Council that Port Isaac needed to change



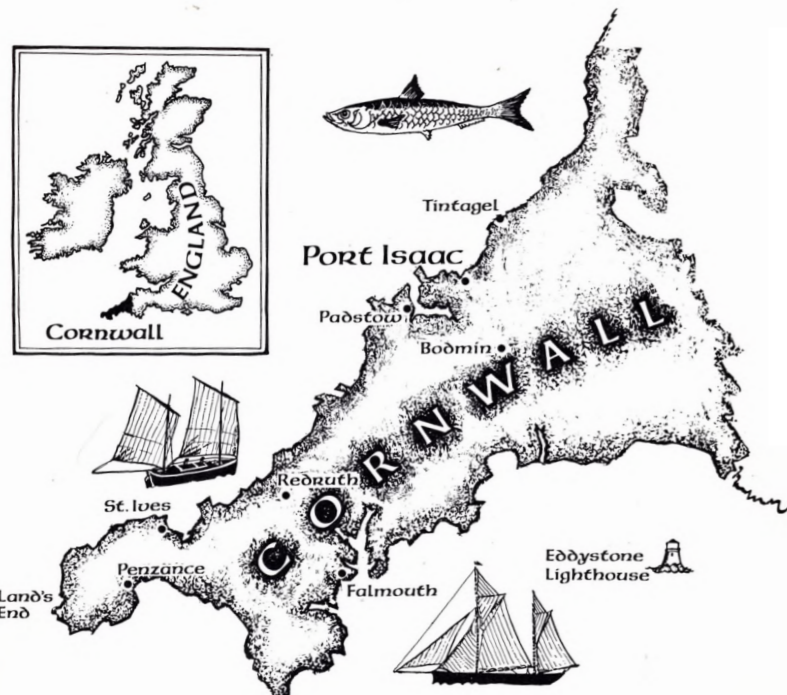
One night there was a great storm and a small boat was in trouble off Port Isaac. Outside the Lifeboat House the "volunteers were standing around with their hands in their pockets. Some were staring silently out to sea ..."



"Pop leaped into action, 'Get the old boat!' he cried. And the men came, glad to help, as they had done so many times before. Pop flung open the door of the boathouse, and many hands reached for the ropes. Down the rain-slippery street the volunteers ran, tugging the boat along, shouting directions to each other. Down the street, across the beach, and into the water with a splash went the boat. Men seized the oars and sent the lifeboat skimming through the waves. No one took time to glance at the machine or to listen to Mr Forthredred..."

"Down on the beach below, Mr Forthredred's machine ground and clanked, spitting smoke and leaking oil, shaking and shuddering. But the lifeboat did not move."

"I suppose you'll be going back to London since your machine is no good" said Pop. Mr Forthredred folded his arms. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I am planning my next improvement for Port Isaac. I want the train to run right into town. ... Unfortunately some houses will have to be torn down to make room for the train track ... And what do you mean by saying machine is no good? It will work splendidly next time. There was just a little sand in the gears." "Sand? From a beach?" asked Pop ... "Well, perhaps the piskies threw sand in your machine to tease you." ... a strange eerie music sounded in the still twilight ... "It must be fairy fiddles," declared Pop. "Turn your coat inside out or you'll be pisky-led!" "Bosh!" cried Mr Forthredred. "I am going to find out who is playing that queer music. ..." He snatched his jacked, stalked across the beach, up the path, and over the hill. And that was the last anyone in Port Isaac ever saw of Mr Forthredred. Some people think he caught a train back to town. Pop believes he was pisky-led.



A CORNISH DANCE

Tune - Traditional Words by Gerry Armstrong

On a moon-lit night, on a Cornish site, if you be-lieve the ancient whid-dles, To the frog's bass drum, the pis-kies come gai-ly dan-cing to the crick-ets fid-dles. Tho it tis-gles in your toes, do not fol-low where it goes, for the pis-kies are very very clo-ver. Turn your coat in-side out, turn your-self straight about, or you'll have to serve the fair-ry folk for -ev-er fairy tales