

The Growth of Port Isaac and Port Gaverne

Prior to the 19th century little is known about the buildings that made up Port Isaac and Port Gaverne. At very low tides, the remains of the Tudor pier can be seen just inside the western breakers, suggesting a local community must have been here to need such civil engineering works. When John Norden visited Cornwall around 1584 he described Port Isaac as "Port Isaac a hamlet and haven: wonderfully increased by a bayndges of lime staves by Isating" Heals mentioned Port Gaverne "Port-kerna, a little cove for isher boats: and there was someyns a crane to lifte up and downe suche commodities as were thertaken in to be transported or brought in and solden: and thurbe have divers buyng/ing, now all decayed since the growng of Port Isaac." Port Gave was also mentioned "Port-quia a little haven and harbour for the former: muche increase by beingg asid" as were Teights and Torragoit. It was finally "Teislate a hamlet", "Teirraget a hamlet". From Norden's comments, we can infer that Port Gaverne was more prominent than Port Isaac in earlier years. Perhaps the building of Hepler caused our settlement to move over the more productive. A maritime survey of North Cornish fishermen carried out by Francis Boscawell a few decades later showed many family names, such as Bawn, Collins and Rowe, were as well represented in our parish then as now.



Part of Norden's 1584 Map

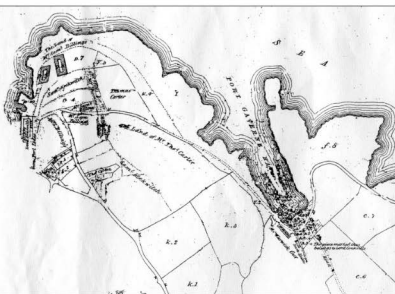
Title Map of 1840

This was the very first accurately surveyed map to show all the buildings here. Port Isaac was almost exclusively confined to the valley but torn, with a few inlets extending up Fore Street as far as the bottom of Back Hill, as well as the foot of Rose Hill, the house halfway down. Margaret's Lane, recently renamed 'Salios', is shown, and this can be seen on the earlier map from c1800. Field number 345 at the bottom Back Hill was called "The Kirn Path" and the grey squarish in the southern corner is the lime kiln. Note that the only route to Port Isaac from Port Gaverne was via Back Hill, the existing upper part of Fore Street not being made for some decades. The land to the north of Back Hill was known as Trewhitt Common, and mainly owned by Earl Folkeux. The boom time for pick-roads was westerward, or at the three Rothercliffs above the village: an area is uncoloured orange for storage. The Good Inlet cellar was demolished in 1975 to make way for the village school. The Mary cellar is now a public toilets, with signs of the old village on the coast path. The northern arm of the Providence cellar is now a village, with the one nearest the harbour called 'Providence'. Port Gaverne comprises the four fish cellars, Wynn's, Liberty, Rishagah and Urens, within the Union Inn, now Port Gaverne Inn, or of Pink Cottage (both shown on the earlier map), as well as Valley Cottage.

Ordnance Survey Map of 1840

Inside second half of the 19th Century the Ordnance Survey was tasked with mapping the whole country alvery large scale. They visited Port Isaac in 1840 and published their map the following year. A brief development has taken place above the village. Field 938 on the hill just above the terrace of houses built at each end; Upper Fore Street is now present, cutting through the terrace. The remnant soil of the Mary end Providence cellar has become a colliery, as today, so were presumably residential. There is a few other plots situated in the lower Trewhitt Lane, but between here and Port Gaverne open lands. New Road has not yet been built.

One of the earliest detailed maps of any part of the area is a nautical estate map of Earl Folkeux's Manor of Trewe. This is undated, but probably c1800 as it shows Port Gaverne prior to the building of the fish cellars in 1863. Port Isaac is just off the map, only the elevs above the village being shown. There are likely to have been already built up processes in huge quantities of pick and shingle at the end of the 18th century.



Part of Earl Folkeux's Manor of Trewe Estate Map c1800

Revised Ordnance Survey Map of 1955

The Ordnance Survey published a revised map in 1907 from a 1905 survey. Two important community buildings are now shown; St Peter's Church completed in 1882, and the Imprience Hall (now the Village Hall) in 1896. The increasing 25 was showed considerable development on the high ground between Port Isaac and Port Gaverne. The large houses on the Terrace have been constructed to take full advantage of the views. Such development was so doubtly permitted by the Incorporation of the railway to Foat Isaac Road station in 1895, a few miles inland. In 1889 Earl Folkeux tried to claim on Port Isaac development by offering his land opposite the Trewe cellar large house (what is now the council carpark and extending further round the other side of the cliff path). This was mainly unsuccessful (only the vicarage was built), as was a second attempt in 1911 when he tried to dispose of all of his land here. New Road is now in place. It is shown as gated at the northern end and may have been a toll road. The start of Treligat Terrace is shown, but there was no Hartland Road which it could connect. In Port Gaverne, Headlands has been built. In this prime cliff top location giving extensive views. The carrying of the railway also brought changes to Port Gaverne, as the fish cellars were welcomed into visitors in 1866. Church youth groups in town. London were spending two weeks holidays here for just under two pounds each – a large sum in those days. The old salt lofts were made into dormitories with rows of hammocks, and local concerts were given by the youngsters as a thank you for the hospitality they always received. This went on until the outbreak of the First World War.

Subsequent Growth and the Village Today

The 20th Century saw most construction on higher ground or reclaimed, with much of Towelita Lane, New Road and Treligat Terrace being built between the sea, continuing into the 1950s as well as later properties. Local authority housing began in the late 1950s with the terrace of houses in Trewhitt Lane opposite the Village Road. These were added to the 1900s up to the 1950s in Hartland Road. Immediately after the Second World War thirteen local authority pre-fabs were erected where the school

and Mayfield Drive are now. These were lived in until the latter part of the 1960s when the Mayfield Estate was built in 1967. The pre-fabs were demolished at the end of the 1960s, and the land remained undeveloped until the mid-1970s when Mayfield Drive was constructed on one side of Mayfield Road, and the school was sited on the other side in 1977. A spur for the increase in local authority housing at the top of the village was undoubtedly when, in the 1950s, many of the old properties in the lower village were converted into a building unit for habitation. Subsequently, these properties were saved by being used and improved, mostly now for use as second homes, and are the most important part of today's Port Isaac coastline and area. It is amusing to note the comment of Robin Fennel received from a sewer-painting officer many years ago that the best thing to do with the old village was to pull it down because none of it met modern building standards. It only he had been joking!

Sherswell estate was a private development completed in 1976, with 11 Sherswell Road the show house. The last major development was Hilson's Close, a housing association project of 40 homes, which saw its first tenants in 1989. A key part of the deal was the inclusion of a purpose built community garage to replace the old one in Treligat Terrace.

Those fish cellars in Port Isaac were erst while, but mainly converted to servicing air visitors. There was some minor development but with the sea, and a Cairns more was erected in 2014. Small shell or rebuilding continues, but the village remains essentially flat created 2000 years ago. The aerial shot of our villages taken by a Google Earth image dated 8th October 2006. The current local development plan sets aside growth to fill within a boundary drawn tightly around existing properties. So, for the foreseeable future at least, there should be little change from that Google Earth image.