

Port Gaverne, Trewetha, Trelights and Port Quin



Trelights

"Trelights is a hamlet almost out of sight of the highway, tucked away amidst the elms in a basin like dip, at the head of Port Quin valley. It is home to a well-knit, self-supporting community."

The names Warwick and Guy are embedded in the history of Trelights since 1066 when a 'de Guye' came over with William the Conquerer. Guys have been associated with and married into families roundabout ever since then, until the last generation.

All those years ago, in the Royal gift, the Manor - the Great House - with its home farm and a few peasant cob cottages round it, was the hub of the village. The only approach, a gated drive from the Church, bordered with giant trees, wound round the Manor and on past the hovels and up the hill, developing into a mere cart track as it went between them and emerged past the rear of the Chapel on to the road to the Monastery of Roscarrock.

When Doctor Trevan built his villa, some 150 years or more ago, he used the granite flagstones from the Manor to pave the back entrance and the granite posts and balls for his entrance gates - they are still there today. The great rise on which the Manor stood is the foundation for the Council Villas standing there today.

Port Gaverne

"Port-kerne, [PORT GAVERNE] b. 10. a little cove for fisher-boates; and ther was somtymes a crane to lifte up and downe suche comodities as were ther taken in to be transported, or brought in and unloden: and ther have bene divers buyldinges, now all decayde since the growing of Portissick."

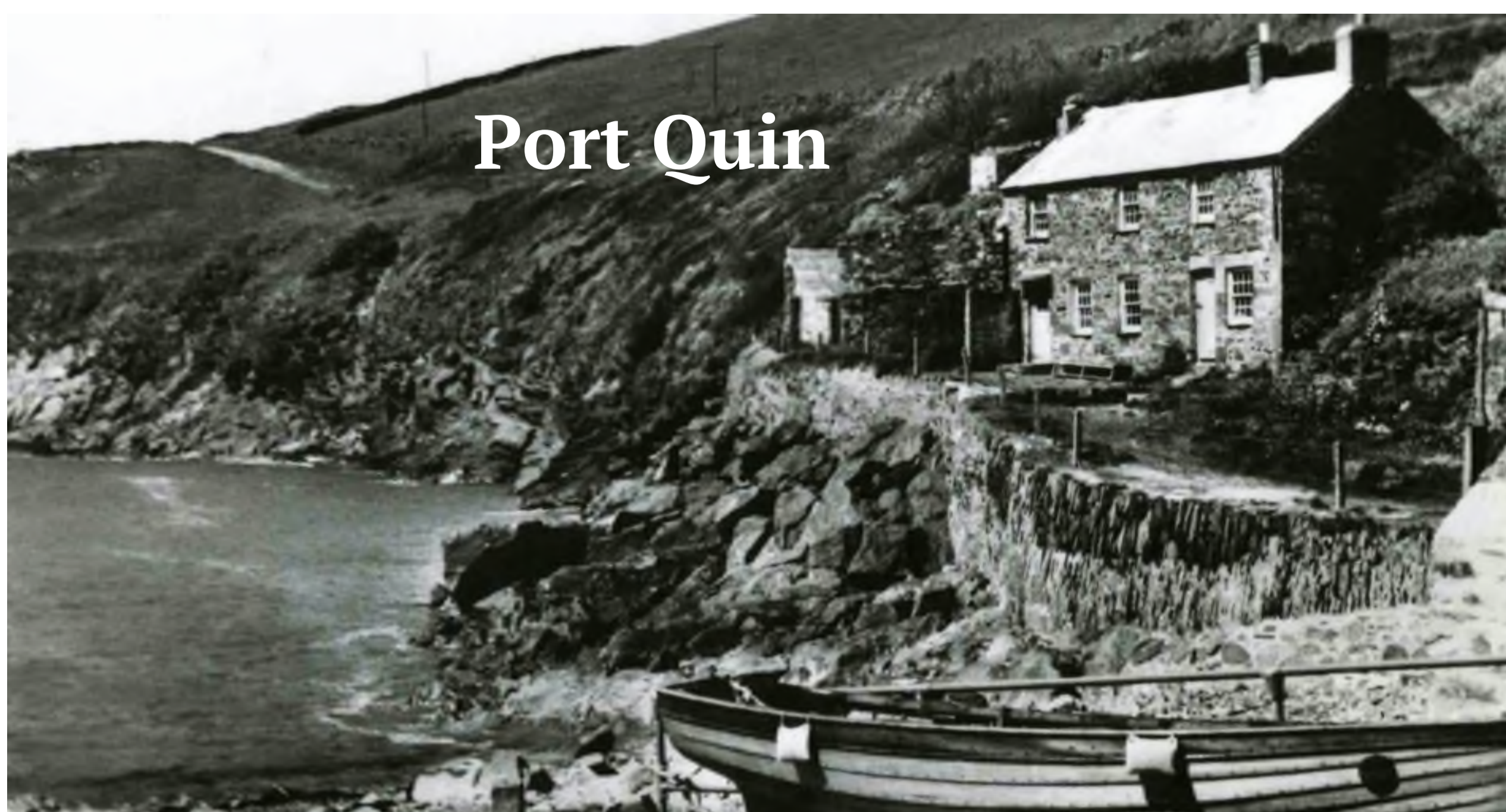
John Norden, 1584



Port Gaverne, the sister port to Port Isaac, is an independent hamlet that was a busy trading port in days gone by. It is likely that before a pier was built in Port Isaac in Tudor times, Port Gaverne was the busier and more important port.

In 1802, the first fish cellar was built by Warwick Guy. Three more quickly followed - the *Venus*, *Liberty*, *Rashleigh* and *Union* Cellars (known as *Pilchard Palaces*) - and records suggest that during the late summer pilchard season they handled around 1000 tons of fish a week.

By the late 1820s the fish were declining and the business savvy Guy family turned their hand to shipping and the slate trade. At one time over 100 ships a year came to Port Gaverne to transport the slate from the Delabole Quarry.



Port Quin

"... Across stupendous cliffs, as full of flowers as a rock garden, is another little fishing port - Port Quin, an empty Port Isaac, mournful and still. For here the old cottages are nearly all ruins; the harbour is deserted, the gardens, once so trim, are grown over with elder and ash saplings, honeysuckle and fennel. The salting sheds are in ruins too. The story is that the whole fishing fleet of the village went down in a gale, and thirty-two women were left widows." John Betjeman



Venice Cellar



Carolina Cellar

"Port-quin, a little hamlet and harbour ner the former, muche increasinge by fishinge also."

Norden, 1584

In this restricted valley bottom site both Venice and Carolina fish cellars are most likely utilising the footprints of former Tudor fishing buildings.



Trewetha



"...just a few minutes walk out of Port Isaac - the little hamlet of Trewetha ..."

Most people grew their own vegetables after the war but for those who did not, or could not, or couldn't be bothered, there were weekly deliveries. The Blake twins, Sam and Will, who lived at Trewetha Farm, assisted by Bill Masters (aka Bill Bumps), made a tour of Port Isaac with their horse and cart, every Saturday morning during the growing season. The big old Shire horse pulling the cart probably enjoyed the job, a very welcome break from his weekday duties dragging heavy farm machinery across muddy fields.

"According to old mining records, the old Trewetha mine, 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 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 "Bourmonite" and a collection of copper, silver, lead and antimony ores were sold to the British Museum in 1825 for the sum of £1000."

John Sproull

taken from *THE REAL VOICES OF PORT ISAAC*