

Holicome Fair

School Log 1881

Monday May 23rd - School as usual - rather small, especially in the "upper part" of school, children preparing for Holicome

Thursday and Friday May 26th & 27th - Holicome - school closed on account of the feast.

"Holicome is a derivation of Holy Come and was held two weeks before Pentecost which was at Whitsun. When I was eight or nine years old in the early 1930s, Holicome events were held in a field at Trewetha behind my parents bungalow (Gwelva). It was a two-day event that welcomed travelling stalls and tinkers and knife grinders, circus acts like tumblers and jugglers (no animals), fairground rides and, best of all, the travelling sweet shop from Delabole." David Hoskins

That sweet shop made quite an impression. Yvonne Cleave remembers Morwood Cummings from Delabole parked his travelling sweet shop in front of the coal merchants (now the four garages on Trewetha Lane, just down from the Village Hall). Everything was homemade - sticks of rock with Port Isaac written through the middle, jelly sticks with nuts, barley sugar, honey-combe, coconut mushrooms, peanut brittle that you had to crack with a hammer, peppermint creams, liquorice wheels. Joan Murray's favourite was cinnamon rock and she always took a stick home for her Uncle Joe along with a slab of toffee. Then there was Mr Kinsman who had a garage in Bodmin. He had a horse and wagon and parked on the Platt selling sweets and chocolate.

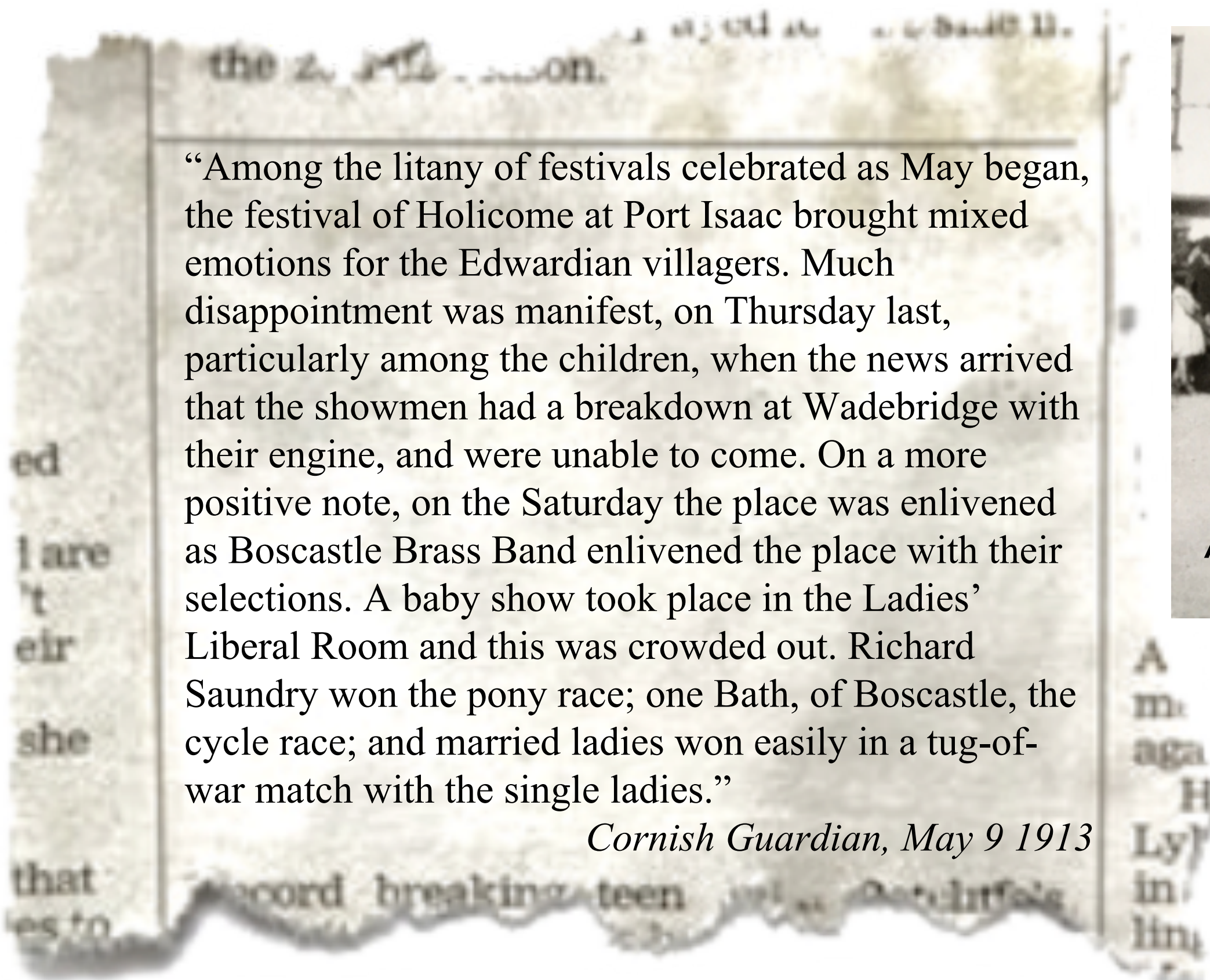
Joan Murray also has fond memories of Mr Cummings and his mobile sweet shop. Plus the "wrestling" (wrestling). John Glover who lived in Port Isaac was a Champion Cornish Wrastler and, along with his brother Steve, who lived in Delabole, took part and Joan remembers sitting on hay bales in the field behind Gwelva to watch the sport. John was one of a group of Cornish "wrastlers" who went to the London Palladium in the 1930s where they performed three turns each day for a fortnight - the management apparently said that the Palladium's entertainment value had improved by 100% at the end of the stint! Dave Hoskin recalled wrestling bouts with either Walter or Jack Billing who were also Cornish wrestling champions ... John was one of a group of Cornish "wrastlers" who went to the London Palladium in the 1930s where they performed three turns each day for a fortnight - the management apparently said that the Palladium's entertainment value had improved by 100% at the end of the stint!



John Glover - Port Isaac's very own "wrestling" champion - and one of the trio who went to the London Palladium to perform



A small men's choir set up outside what is now Nathan Outaw's Fish Kitchen



"Among the litany of festivals celebrated as May began, the festival of Holicome at Port Isaac brought mixed emotions for the Edwardian villagers. Much disappointment was manifest, on Thursday last, particularly among the children, when the news arrived that the showmen had a breakdown at Wadebridge with their engine, and were unable to come. On a more positive note, on the Saturday the place was enlivened as Boscastle Brass Band enlivened the place with their selections. A baby show took place in the Ladies' Liberal Room and this was crowded out. Richard Saundry won the pony race; one Bath, of Boscastle, the cycle race; and married ladies won easily in a tug-of-war match with the single ladies."

Cornish Guardian, May 9 1913

"The travelling Rowland's Fair came every year at Holicombe time and parked up in Doctor George's Field. Doctor George was the village doctor in the 1800s (see page 170). The field was on the right as you come from Hicks Corner down to Trewetha Lane. There were swing boats, roundabouts and fortune tellers."



taken from THE REAL VOICES OF PORT ISAAC

Holicombe attracted travelling tinkers who came along every year to sell their wares. They always put up camp on the land that is now the council car park overlooking Port Gaverne - note the old Headlands Hotel in the background of the photograph.