

Coming and going ...

“roads too narrow for buses or coaches”

Today it's hard to imagine life in Port Isaac, or indeed anywhere in the country, without a car. It hasn't always been like this. In fact, Joan Murray recalls how she, and her friends, would often walk to Delabole or St Kew for a dance and then, at the end of the night walk home again. “We thought nothing of it!”

“Most people walked or, if they could afford it, purchased a bicycle. It was not unknown for seamen to walk to Fowey to join a ship. Putting into Wadebridge was akin to putting into a home port, with a walk home and an early start the next morning to return. Most of the footpaths in the Parish were used by farm labourers going to and from work.” George Steer

Port Isaac Road Station opened on June 1st 1895 and closed on October 3rd 1966. It was steam trains up until 1965 when they changed to diesel. Southern Railway provided a direct link to Launceston, Okehampton, Exeter and Waterloo and Great Western from Paddington to Bodmin Road and to Wadebridge and Padstow. Horse drawn vehicles transported loads of mackerel and shellfish from Port Isaac to the Station for the 4pm train to Billingsgate. This train was locally called The Perisher because of the perishable fish it was transporting.

It wasn't until the 1920s that buses began to be the link between the village and the station and in 1930 the Southern National Bus Company, that operated from a shed next to the Co-op, took over. It connected with some of the trains at Port Isaac Road Railway Station, and then wended its way to Wadebridge via Trelill and St Kew Highway.

The three garages at the top of the village did a good trade in using their cars to meet the visitors off The Atlantic Coast Express train that brought visitors from Waterloo

“Mr Prout was always waiting for us when the train pulled into Port Isaac Road Station”

Daily buses to Wadebridge were provided by Prout Bros from Trelawney Garage; the 14-seater charabanc started from the Town Platt. Hackney carriages could be hired from any one of the three garages at the top of the hill - Trelawney, Central or the North Cornwall Transport Co Ltd. During the summer Prouts ran excursions on most days of the week to Tintagel and Boscastle, Looe and Polperro, Mevagissey and Fowey, St Ives and Lands End.

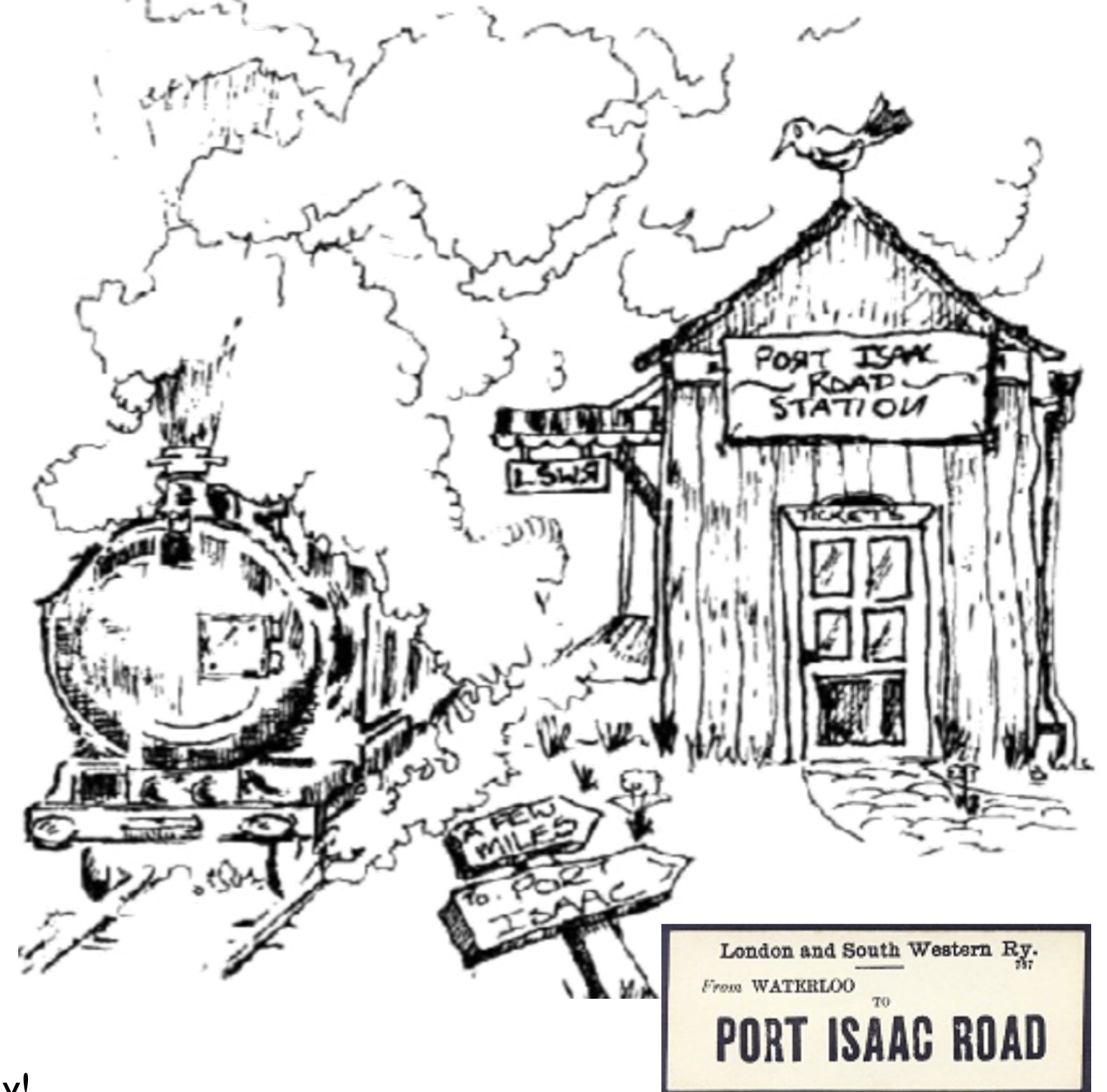
Dick and Mark Prout started their haulage businesses using horses. Dick kept his horses at Mills Bottom and operated his business from sheds in the grounds of the Manor House. He had the franchise from Southern Railway to deliver goods from the station. Brother Mark had the franchise from the Great Western Railway hauling goods from Wadebridge. Allegedly the brothers had a falling out as, on one Chapel outing to Polzeath, Dick took most of the children and lightweight adults leaving the heavyweights for Mark! They say that the brothers didn't speak to each other for years after this spat!

When Dick Prout exchanged his wagon and horses for a Ford flat-back lorry it was eventually housed in a shed that was, in time, modified as a dwelling, now called The Carriage House. Dick Prout also had a hearse that could be raised and tied to the beams and lowered onto the lorry as the need arose.

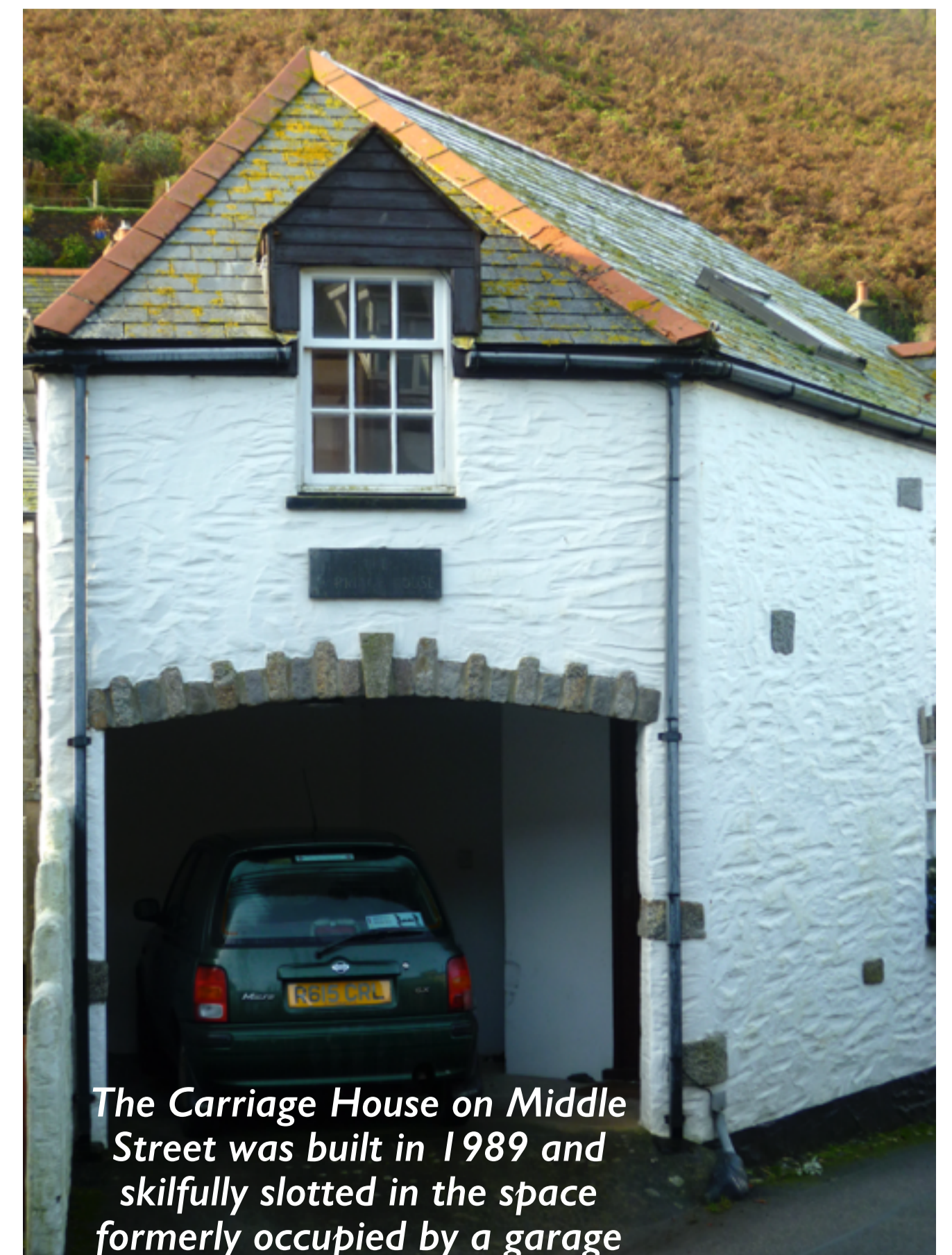
He also had an underground petrol store by the Manor House and when the main sewers were being laid, one unsuspecting smoking workman nearly uncovered the store the hard way!



“... the final stretch along the Camel Estuary was the most beautiful train journey - at the end of the line, a different world awaited, one of oil-lit farms and golden un-peopled bays, of shipwrecks and haunted woods.” John Betjeman



an alternative to walking up Church Hill



The Carriage House on Middle Street was built in 1989 and skilfully slotted in the space formerly occupied by a garage

taken from THE REAL VOICES OF PORT ISAAC