

# The memoirs of John Trevan 1834

## Port Isaac ... Trevan chronicled the village and its inhabitants ...

Port Isaac a small fishing town, but the largest and most thickly inhabited place in this parish. It contains about one hundred and forty dwelling houses, inhabited mostly by seafaring people.

Being as mean, dirty, tumultuous place as can well be conceived, therefore a refuge for all tag, rag, and bobtail from all quarters and without the least control or government, the streets narrow and filthy as almost to render them impassable in the time of wet weather.

It contains open place of worship which is a commodious Wesleyan Methodist chapel which about fifty-five members of society are attached thereto.

Port Isaac is fast going to decay, not being near so lovely as formerly, as many respectable families once resided here, and all the better most houses are occupied by poor families ...

In the course of a very few years, there will not be a place for vessels or boats to lay, except on the raised rocks, in consequence of all coal vessels ballasting and carrying off the beach which is very fast diminishing ... There were formerly quays on both sides of the cove but very little more than their foundations now remain ...

The names and number to family of the inhabitants in Port Isaac, whom they married, and from whence they originally came is as follows: and Trevan listed every resident in the Parish ... here are just some of his observations ...



Honour Martyn

**MARTYN, Honour**, an old virgin by repute. Honour is a very eccentric funny old dame and has for several years attended to the coal business for Mrs. Richards of Trewint ...



Must my Poker fly - John and Polly Adams

**ADAMS, John Mason** ... married Polly Buller of this place, whose family is extinct, by whom have several children ... one that resides home with them is proper fool and tool to Methodist miscreance, the latter the daughter has a child by an old lame miscreant of a Baptist preacher that came here by the name of Burroughs. Jack is fond of a tippie, and his wife, Poll, being a queer kind of woman, Hunt him out at the public house and differ with him sadly there, and when he comes home and frequently exclaim at such times, 'My dear Jack, surely must my poker fly'. Jack had a sister named Polly who lived to the age of fifty years but who never attained to more than three foot in height ...



Uncle Jan in the Badger Hole - John Barrett

**BARRETT, John**, Seaman, the last of a family who have been settled here for a long time. At the time John Barrett was a young man, which is some sixty years since, press gangs were stationed about at different ports and, among other places, one gang at Padstow, and in their excoritions and excursions to pick up men, used to pay a visit to Port Isaac and that at all times, and all hours. On one occasion, they came over and put the young men all on the alert, and John Barrett for safety run up the valley from Port Isaac to Tresungers estate and got into a furze brake and popped his head and shoulders into a badger hole, but all the rest of his body out. He was actually seen and laughed at in that position by an husband-man. John Barrett married Elizabeth Halford. Family - 2.



John Prideaux

**PRIDEAUX, John**, the Town Crier, originally from Cargreen, near Saltash. Resides with Annis Old, by whom he has had a family.



Catch for Catch - Richard Teague

**TEAGUE, Richard**, Husbandman and Sheep Farmer ... He has been a noted smuggler in his time, and up too every kind of idle pursuit ... He and some other person, some years since on a fine moonlight night, went to drag the river under Trehinnick for salmon ... they heard some person approach on horse back and they skulked immediately under ... But it proved otherwise, for the person caught a glance of them, dismounted, hitched his horse to a bush, and proceeded on the bridge, bellowing out 'You damned rascals I have caught you at last'. He then lay down and leaned out over to look under the arch to see who they were, when Teague snatched hold of his collar and dragged him headlong into the river, and there ducked and beat him unmercifully until they almost killed the poor devil before they let him go.

**CLEMENTS, Richard**, late Husbandman, and a very queer fellow was he ... Dick, at the time of the threatened invasion by the French last war, was attached to a sea fencible company raised and trained here. The officer had had the greatest difficulty training Dick to march and keep step with the rest of the company, he not knowing his right leg from his left. At last, the officer struck on the plan of putting a thumb beam [thumb beam - a rope of hay or straw made by twisting the material around the thumb], one of straw round one leg, and one made of hay round the other of Dick's legs, so that in the drilling of Dick, the officer, instead of saying 'Right, Left, Right, Left.', would give it out 'Hay, Straw, Hay, Straw.' Dick was a very eccentric character in most things. He married Elizabeth Skinner, by whom he had five children.



The Art of Exercising - Richard Clements



Quidding a boy - John Worth

**WORTH, John**, Seaman. A bachelor. A very ancient family, likewise the last of that name in this place. He is a plain honest good kind of man, rather hard of hearing. If at any time a boy offend him, he never beat him or say anything to him then, but leave it until the first opportunity that he can lay hands on him, then, with much ceremony, he take out a large quid of tobacco out of his mouth and poke it into that of the boy and there hold it and squeeze it for some time. It being great sport to the boy's playmates to witness the scene.