

The memoirs of John Trevan 1834

- **Whales** are not infrequently seen here. Not many years since a whale came into the cove at Port Isaac, about the time of high water, supposed to be sick, happening to strike on a rock it blew the water to an immense height ...

- **Grampus** [*an old term for dolphins in general, now more usually applied just to Risso's Dolphin*]. The Grampus likewise at times is seen here in the autumn and by their blowing and splashing the water and coming so near the fishing boats, as sometimes to cause considerable alarm ...

- **Sharks** of various kinds visit this coast at all times of the year. A shark of extra ordinary size and furious aspect was caught last year, it measured nine feet four inches in length and three feet two inches and a half round its longest part...

- **Seals.** In fine weather seals may be seen at all times playing about at Pine Haven and Fairlee [*Varley*] sands ... As one that was caught there was kept at Port Isaac, and at times carried round the country for a show, but some person or persons out of envy or spite opened the door one night, where it was kept, and let it out, when it immediately set off towards the sea. In scrambling through the streets it was met by a country jowder or fish carrier who was almost frightened out of his wits, thinking he had met the devil ...

- **Rays** are the most plentiful about Christmas they are frequently of amazing size ...

- **Porpus's** [*Porpoise*]. It is a very fine sight to see the turnings and gambollings of these sea hogs ... The Tunny fish appears to be of the same specie as the porpus ...

- **Monk.** The monk is as curious a fish as is ever seen on our coast. The time they are mostly caught is about July and August and at times they attain a very large size. They are never made use of as food ...

- **Divelfish** [*Devilfish - John Dory*]. This fish noted for its awkward form and monstrous large mouth is not infrequently caught in autumn.

- **Sunfish.** These fish likewise visit this coast in July and August and are always seen and caught with a gaff while they lay asleep on the wave of the water on a fine calm sunny day ...

- **Cod & Ling.** These fish come on the coast in vast shoals from Christmas to Ladyday ...

- **Conger.** The conger is caught here at all times of the year but they are most numerous in the spring. Some of them are very large and exceedingly vicious ... a very large one was laid out on the beach amongst other fish for sale, when it rose up more than half its length in the form of a serpent and made a dart at a child ...

- **Turbot.** The Turbot is rather a scarce fish ...

- **Mackerel.** These fish are seen in great shoals and are taken by the hook and line in the summer and sometimes they are caught in the herring season in the herring nets ...

- **Pilchard.** This is the most important of all the fishing on this coast ... The fish make about £3.10s per Hhd now in the Italian market but the Neapolitan Government at present lay an import duty of eighteen shillings per hogshead, and the Tuscan about the same ...

- **Herrings.** The herring fishing was some years since very prosperous, ten or dozen of large boats coming in twice in the course of a night and shake out so that in fact the beach at Port



Shooting of the Sean in Port Isaac Bay

Isaac would be almost covered with fish every morning ... People from the country from thirty miles around coming here for herrings ...

- **Halibut.** The halibuts in general are scarce and seldom caught on this coast.

- **Pollack and Wrath** [*Cornish dialect for Wrasse*]. In the spring of the year these fish are caught by setting what is called a tramble which is a net made in the common form of a herring net but having two others attached to it one on each side ... but at other times they are caught from the rocks and cliffs with the hook and line with a worm that is caught in the rocks at low water for bait but this is not infrequently attended with danger as two boys named Chalk and Martyn, apprentices to Mr. Bishop of Treore were washed off a rock and drowned ...

- **Tubb and Gurnet** [*both species of Gurnard*]. It is the best of sport when these fish are plenty to go out fishing for as fast as a person can bait two or three lines each line with two hooks attached thereunto so fast may they fish be hauled in.

- **Longnose** [*Garfish Belone belone*]. In the time of the pilchard fishing, quantities of these fish come on the coast.

- **Lobsters.** This is by no means an unprofitable fishing, several boats are employed in this occupation in the summer season, manned generally by the old invalided seamen. They not infrequently make forty shillings a week each.

- **Crabs** are likewise caught in the same pots with the lobsters ...

- **Blubers** [*Jellyfish - the Blue Jellyfish*]. Some summers the blubers are plentiful, but this last year they have failed. These fish cause a curious sensation to the hand when squeezed, something similar to the sting of nettles.

- **Cuttle.** In the autumn of some seasons these fish are not infrequently caught in the herring nets, they look very curious by having so many feelers.

- **Starfish** some summers, are abundant on this coast.

And a vast variety of other fish as the plaice, soal, bream, dogfish, etc., etc., besides oysters at Fearlee Sands, Port Isaac Bay, and on some flat rocks inside the entrance of Port Isaac Haven, commonly called the flats. They were first brought from the Mumbles and sown by the old Captain Francis Richards and crew, about seventy or eighty years since.