

CONTENTS

	Page
Feock South of Trevilla	1
Methodism in Penpol	7
Barges	13
Rowing Races at Carnon Mine	15
The Bleak House Band	16
Tregye	17
Some Wills and Inventories of the Adams family of Tregye	26
A Talk given by the late T. J. Trebilcock edited by F. Trebilcock	31
Porthgwidden and Tom Phillpotts	38

Printed by
University of Exeter
Printing Unit

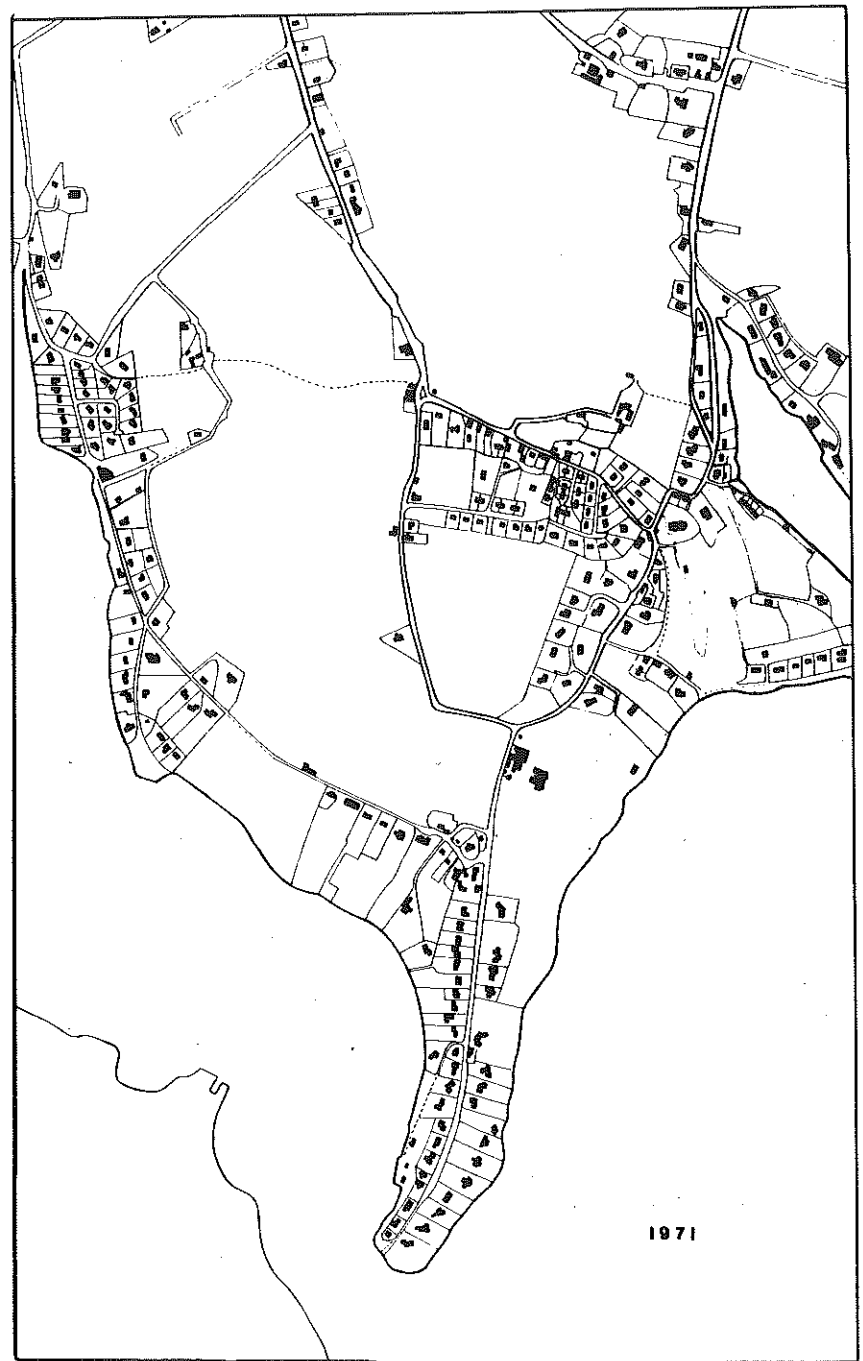
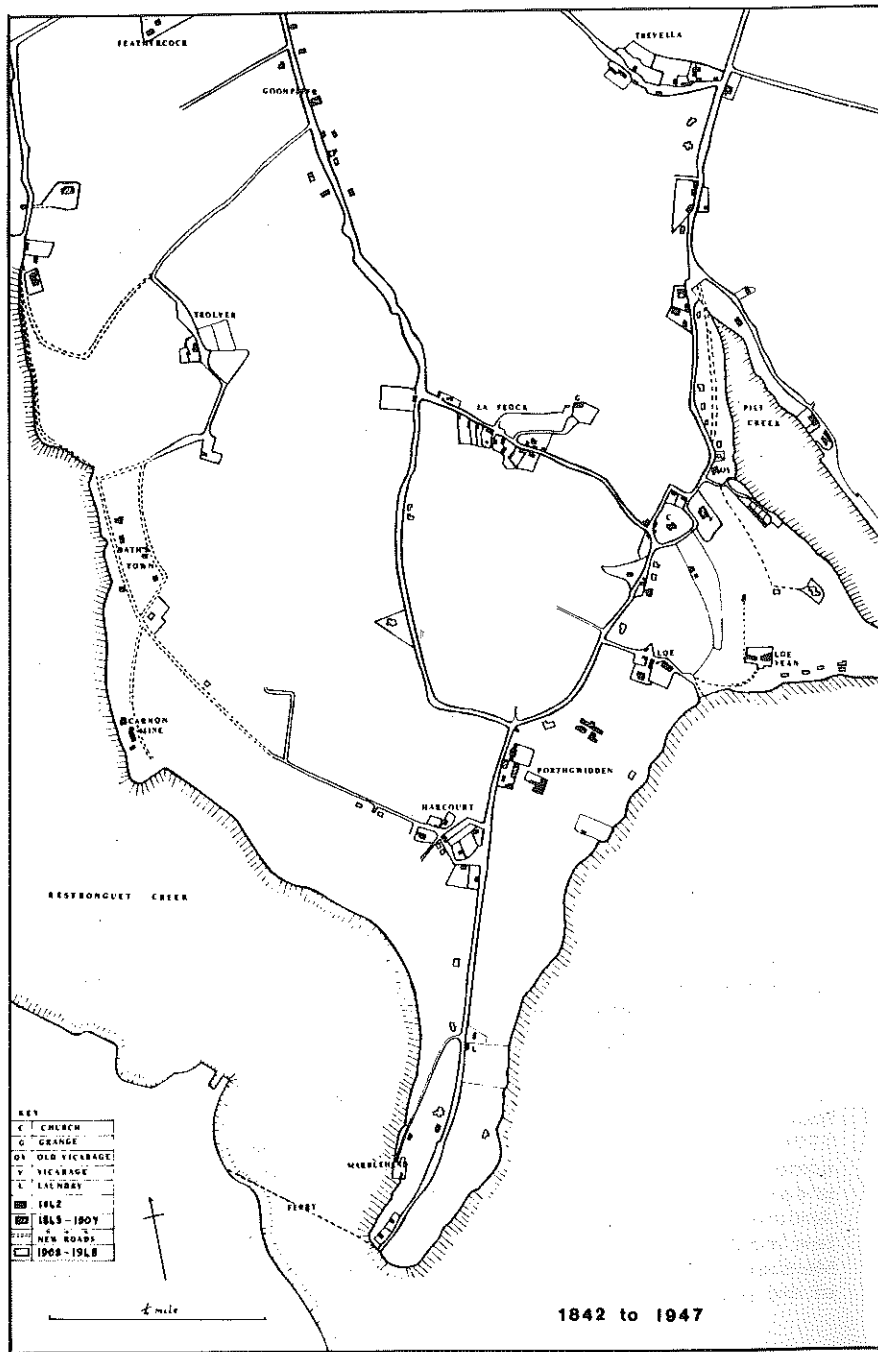
FEOCK SOUTH OF TREVILLA

This essay is an attempt to give some idea of the people and their occupations during the 19th and early 20th century in the small portion of Feock parish shown on the accompanying sketch maps. Porthgwidden is not mentioned here as it is fully dealt with in another article in this book. Both maps are based on the outline given on the Tithe Map of 1842 and show the housing development between that date and 1970. Field boundaries have been omitted for the sake of clarity.

In 1841 there were 71 houses with a population of 362, an average of 5 per household; only 10 people had reached the age of 65 and 45% were children under 17 years. By 1871 the population had risen to 522 and 22 new cottages had been built; the proportion of old people to children remained the same, wives usually outlived their husbands. By 1971 there were just over 340 houses and bungalows averaging 3 per household. Now nearly over a quarter of the people are over 65 and only 20% are children. Most of the new building has taken place since 1960.

The only industries were mining and ship building, both carried on on the eastern side of Restronguet Creek. The Cornish Copper Company had the mine at Yard from 1833 to 1843 where they were mining under the water on the same principle as described in our previous book except that the main tramway had no drainage channel beneath it and the ore had to be transferred to kibbles to be hoisted to the surface. A 40 inch engine was used for pumping and by 1836/37 the work force had risen to 212. During this year they sold 122 tons of black tin at an average price of £51-11-3 per ton. Unfortunately the mine was abandoned in 1843 as it was rendered unprofitable owing to the low price of tin; the entire produce had amounted to £52,615 while working expenses were £65,692 and royalties £2,933, making a loss over the 10 years of over £16,000. The Copper Company also rented Marblehead Quay from which the ore was probably shipped.

Shipbuilding was carried on by the Ferris family whose name appears in the Parish Marriage Register in 1680. The founder of the shipbuilding was Peter Ferris, born in Feock in 1776 and living at Marblehead in 1841 (C). He had 13 children; some of his sons and grandsons continued the business. One great grandson, William, is listed as a shipwright in 1923 (K). Another great grandson, Norman, who died recently, told me a few months before he died that he was still building a boat. Members of the next two generations are still living in this part of the parish.



The main occupation was farming. The farms, rented from the large estate owners, were between 40 and 80 acres, and were at Trevilla, Harcourt, Loe, Church Town, La Feock, Pill and Trolver.

Henry Bath farmed Trolver, about 50 acres, and when he retired to one of his newly built cottages at 'Bath's Town' (see Map), his son Edward took over the farm. The old farmhouse at Trolver is still used as outbuildings and the present house was the first house in the parish to be built of concrete (Sale Catalogue, Trelissick). Edward farmed here until he and his wife were killed in 1872 on the way home from Truro, when "their horse became restive on the steep descent so was pulled to the side of the road to avoid the even steeper descent near the railway viaduct, but the trap capsized and both were thrown out. Mr Hugo of Feock took them in his trap to the Cornwall Infirmary but both died of head injuries. They leave two sons and two daughters, the eldest son is in America." (G) This must have happened at the top of Arch Hill just below the present mini-roundabout. The farm was then taken over Thomas and Ralph Michell, who were there until 1914; it then went to Henry James who was still there in 1939 (K).

In 1841 (C) the land at Trevilla, north of the road, was leased to Daniel and Robert Retallack and farmed by John Retallack. Daniel and Robert were then farming Tregye. By 1851 (C) Robert was living at Trevilla - 60 acres - and this land remained in the family until 1910 (K). Another Robert Retallack had La Feock Grange - 80 acres - by 1889 (K) and this family stayed there until the 1930s when the last male member was dragged by the bull which he was leading and was killed. At this farm the clove oven was often used for baking until the Retallacks left.

The land south of the road at Trevilla appears to have changed hands frequently during the last century. The Retallacks had it in 1871 (C). It was later farmed by Richard Williams, who also had land at Loe, east of the church, where his descendants are still living.

The name Williams occurs in the Parish Marriage Register in 1732. In 1851, John Williams had 12 acres at Loe, besides land at Trevilla, and in 1883 (K) Richard Williams is given as a fruit grower, from 1930 to 1939 Mr N. A. Williams is listed as 'florist, Flowers and Fruit' (K). They were among the earliest people to send flowers to distant markets and also introduced violet growing to this area.

During this same period there was another fruit farm at Loe which was run by the Searle family, whose ancestors were farmers at Harcourt in the 1820s; another brother was a market gardener at Church Town.

Owing to the mild climate and nearness to the sea, which alleviated the problem of frost, winter flowers such as violets, anemones and early daffodils were profitable crops in the early part of the present century, but rising costs for freight and packing materials after 1950 made it very difficult to get a satisfactory living and the trade has practically died out. Mr Bersey, one of the first violet growers is still living in the cottage at Trolver into which his family moved when it was built soon after 1840.

Among the tradesmen the oldest family who remained here are the Chegwyns. John Chegwyn, mason, lived at Trevilla in 1841 (C) and must have been there in 1820 when his eldest son was born; he had four sons who all became masons, and by 1871 there were 17 grandchildren. There was still a John Chegwyn, mason, here in 1939 (K) and Miss Chegwyn died at Penpol in 1974.

In the early part of the last century shoes and boots were hand made; the best known bootmaker in 1841 was John Lilly who had been born in Kea. Three of his sons became shoemakers and in 1861 (C) his wife and daughter gave their occupation as Bootbinders. This family also kept the Post Office at La Feock in 1873 (K) and continued to do so until after 1950. Their cottage is still known as the 'Old Post Office' and is one of the oldest surviving cottages which have not been seriously 'improved'. It had a lucky escape during the last war when a bomb fell just opposite but did not explode; it was not discovered until several years later. The first telephone was installed here soon after the old Vicarage was burnt down in 1894 (G). Another member of the family kept a shop at Trevilla until 1923 (K) and there are still descendants living in this same part of Feock.

A village shop was a necessity for those who had no means of transport. In 1841 there was a grocer at Ponsmain, Elizabeth Crowle; her son carried on and is given as Grocer and Draper in 1873 (K), and was still there in 1883. Her brother James, who lived in the next cottage, was a blacksmith and also farmed 9 acres; his son and grandson were blacksmiths. The name occurs in the Marriage Register in 1745.

By about 1880 the Misses Mary and Elizabeth Crapp had a shop at Churchtown which was later named the Feock Supply Stores and was still being run by 'Miss M. Crapp and Mrs Oates in 1936 (K). There was a William Crapp, born in Feock in 1813, who later lived at Trevilla. New premises have been built on to the original cottage which remains unaltered externally and the shop and Post Office are in the new building.

In 1893 Thomas Brabyn is given as a Grocer and Tea Dealer (K). He was a descendant of the Thomas Brabyn who

came to this part soon after 1800 and had two sons, William and Thomas, who remained in the parish; one was a gardener and the other a shipwright, and between them they had 17 children. Miss Brabyn, the last to bear the family name, lived at Laundry Cottage, Restronguet and died in 1972.

The only inn was at Lane End, La Feock. This was kept by John Green, son of John Green who was living in this district by 1827 (C). The inn was carried on by the same family until about 1914 and they are now living at Penelewey.

The first public transport was started in the early 1900s by J. H. Trenhail, farmer at Feathercock, who ran a waggonette to Truro on Wednesdays and Saturdays; by 1930 he was running a daily omnibus to Truro; this was continued by Mr Richards until the Western National took over.

There were many living in the district in the 19th century whose livelihood depended on the sea; fishermen, barge-men and sailors. As the sea-going trade from Devoran and Point increased, more young men from here went to sea. There were also profitable oyster beds in the creeks, but, largely owing to overfishing, this industry declined after 1861 and only a few older men carried on. When a cottage at Yard was sold in 1919, the rights to fish certain oyster beds were included in the deeds.

This part of Feock seems to have been a self-sufficient little community; the roads remained the same as they were on Martin's map of 1748. Life centred around the church, chapels at Goonpiper and Penpol, the Reading Room built in 1894, the school and later the village hall. Many of the descendants of the old families, of whom I have only mentioned a few, are still here. In spite of the influx of 'foreigners' during the past twenty years, there is still a friendly village atmosphere.

REFERENCES

1. Report of the meeting of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, 20th July, 1873
2. Mining Journals, 1835 and 1852
3. Census returns, 1841-1871 (C)
4. Kelly's Directories, at the Royal Institution of Cornwall Library, Truro (K)
5. Royal Cornwall Gazette (G)
6. Parish Registers for the late 17th and early 18th century, by kind permission of the Vicar

METHODISM IN PENPOL

The centenary of the erection of the present Methodist chapel was observed in 1962, the building having been opened for public worship on Thursday, January 30th 1862. Unfortunately, at the time of the celebration very few contemporary details of the earlier occasion were then available, and, indeed, none at all in respect of the origin of the church itself; but despite this handicap, a very interesting and otherwise informative brochure was very kindly prepared by the then Assistant County Archivist, Mr Richard Potts, B. A.

Within recent years, however, the discovery of some old class tickets, some manuscript notes, and the account book of the period, has afforded a small but useful amount of information regarding the earlier history of the Methodist society in Penpoll.

It is known that in 1841 the short-lived Perranwell Circuit was formed from Truro, surviving as a separate unit until about the year 1852, when, with one or two exceptions, all its chapels were added to the Gwennap Circuit. The Truro Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minute recommending the formation of the Perranwell Circuit, (quoted by Theodore Hawken in one of his series of articles in the West Briton, and published in the issue of the 1st May, 1913), makes no mention of Penpoll in the list of chapels composing the new Circuit, but it does appear to have been one of the societies transferred to Gwennap in 1852. It would therefore appear that the Penpoll Methodist Society was founded sometime during the eleven years from 1841 to 1852, an assumption which finds support from both a single class ticket which has survived, and a reference in one of the title deeds of the property. The class ticket is one of admission to Wesleyan membership issued in June 1847 to one Elisabeth Pascoe, its Circuit of origin being that of Perranwell. There are good grounds for the belief that this lady was at that time associated with the Methodist cause at Penpoll, and that the ticket indicates that she had now become a member there. The title deeds reference is to an Indenture of Lease, dated the 29th September 1856, by which "John Samuel Enys, Esq., and Charles Glynn Prideaux Brune, Esq., Trustees under the Will of John Davies Gilbert, Esq., deceased; the Hon. Anne Dorothea Gilbert, Widow and Relict of the said John Davies Gilbert, granted to Richard Harris, ... all that plot ... of ground situate at Penpole, Feock, containing about six poles, together with a Building then or then lately used as a Meetinghouse or Chapel erected and built thereon. (Penpoll is correctly spelt on the title-page of the document.)