



# Perran-ar-worthal

## Local History Group

### **“Tell a Tale” meeting Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2018**

Members of the Perran-ar-worthal local history group held a well-attended open meeting to report back on the research they are carrying out and the stories they have uncovered about this area.

Chris Burton has been researching the great houses of the area and told us about Tullimaar whose first owner was Benjamin Sampson. He was a carpenter who became the manager of the Kennal Vale gunpowder works and married the daughter of the Foundry director. It later became the residence of a Romanian Princess and was then owned by Sir William Golding, author of *Lord of the Flies*.

Lizzie Archer and Dave Ward spoke about the history of pubs in the village. Lizzie showed us documents for the Royal Oak including wills. The Royal Oak was originally called the Crown dating back to at least 1769 and the Treweek family were named. In 1788 there is a report of a fire. By 1809 Richard Lawrence and his wife were the owners and in 1811 there is a fine reported for brandy “tickling.” By 1815 the name Royal Oak appeared as they collaborated with the Prince Regent (another village pub which seems also to be called the Plume of Feathers) to provide food for the Fair. Other pubs in the area included the Norway Inn, the Anchor and Hope and the Miners Arms. Dave reported that the Beer Acts of 1830 and 1840 allowed beer houses to develop. These were often farm houses which had obtained a 2 guinea beer only licence. These may have been behind the tales of local ale houses known as ‘Kiddliwinks.’ Lizzie appealed for any further information particularly about the landladies and landlords of the Royal Oak.

Stuart Douglas has been researching the Trafalgar Way which is the route taken by messengers to relay the news of Nelson’s death from HMS Pickle which arrived in Falmouth on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov 1805 . The route followed Cove Hill, St Piran’s Hill, passing the Royal Oak, and onward to Truro via Carnon and Killiow. Stuart has organised a blue plaque for the pub, and is liaising with the 1805 Society to get the route marked as a walking route with links to cycle routes and rail connections.

Carrie Langford and Chris Ryall spoke about the Oral History project they have been working on in collaboration with Dr Gary Tregidga from Falmouth University. They have borrowed recording equipment from the university and interviewed some of the village’s older residents about their memories of the village. Part of the recording of the interview with Billy Teague was played to give a flavour of the project; Courtney Oates has also given an interview, and hopefully interviews of other locals will be recorded in the near future.

Paula Robinson talked about Blankednick, a farmhouse (now a B&B) with three/four converted barns and a cottage - referred to recently as a ‘straggle’ of properties. The first

mention found so far is in 1713. As is not unusual, there are several variations of the spelling of the name. An apprenticeship of a 12 year old is mentioned in 1784 and in 1806 Benjamin Sampson held a lease. There is reference to mining setts between 1825 and 1838 but the 1840 tithe map and notes shows land use as arable and orchard, and there are several occupants shown in the 1841 census. The extent of the land varies, but some was probably used for the Truro to Falmouth railway line. In 1892 'a singular fact is that the 3 largest farms in the parish contiguous to each other are managed by widows'. There is a possible chapel connection - from William Carvasso at Cosawes Barton around 1780. 'There was no chapel in the neighbourhood but at a farmhouse about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile distant we had a preaching once a fortnight...'

Ruth Ward has been investigating growth and change in the village particularly using census data. The peak population was in 1841 with 1,755 inhabitants, a little higher than today's total of 1,533(2011 census) but with many more houses now. There is also evidence of changing occupations in the village especially with the numbers involved in mining. Although there has always been a strong agricultural workforce, in 1831 44% of occupations were given as 'labourers not in agriculture' (many of these were possibly involved in mining). Using the parish enumerator's survey of 1851 it is clear that many jobs then were involved with mining and transport (foundry worker, wheelwright and miner appear as jobs), although many of these occupations will have been carried out in the valleys adjacent to the village. There is also mention of pollution from the surrounding works affecting the village. In D.B. Barton, 'Essays on Cornish Mining History' there is mention of a court case against the owners of Perran Arsenic Works for serious pollution causing the death of farm animals, and even the local vicar stated that he waited to see which way the wind was blowing before visiting Mellinsey. By the 1881 census 'labourers not in agriculture' was down to 6% of the workforce.

A visitor from Carclew asked for help with her own research. Mandy Tomkinson is trying to find out more about the history of the Carclew estate which belonged to the Lemon and Tremayne families.

- 1920s sale...any information?
- Fire in 1934 ...does anyone remember it?
- In 1939 Arthur Pearce Jenkin let Carclew be used as a refugee camp but it closed in 1940. Any memories/stories?
- In 1944 The American Army used this before the practise for D Day at Slapton Sands where many died. Any memories/ stories from this period?
- In the 1950s it was dismantled... are there any pieces of the ruins in walls or houses in Perranwell ?