



Perran-ar-worthal

Local History Group

The Enys family of Penryn

Terry Chapman, a local historian spoke to a packed house of the Perran-ar-worthal Local History Group on 30th April 2019 about the Enys family of Penryn. He has spent some time working on the Enys family archives which are now accessible via the website: enysfamilyarchive.com and will also reside at the Cornwall Records Office.

Enys is one of the oldest estates recorded in Cornwall and one of the best documented going back to the 13th century. The first house disappeared in the 14th century and by the 16th century the house on this site was E shaped. Sadly this Elizabethan house burnt down but its footings are to be found under the current house. Enys, meaning island, indicates its isolation from other settlements, but the influence of the Enys family on the surrounding areas, especially Mylor, was great. It includes architecture, as the clock tower in Mylor is a copy of the one at Enys, but also as landlords. There are accounts showing that an agricultural labourer, John Anthony, paid £2/10s a year for rent for a cottage and Enys would have been their employer too. The family provided employment for many as servants gardeners and gamekeepers as well as farmers but also provided education. There was a school built by Catherine Enys, shown in photos and it appears on the map of 1880, but it can no longer be seen and the site is completely overgrown. Girls were taught needlework and boys prepared for farm work. The family were also involved in Politics with several as High Sherrifs from Samuel Enys in 1708 to Frances in 1876 and later, John Davies Enys becoming a District Councillor.

The family lost their fortunes in the civil war but Samuel Enys built up a wine trade with Spain and started to buy back properties the family had sold. Eventually the new house was built by John Samuel Enys in 1833. The cast iron beams were made at Perran foundry. At the height of their influence, the tithe

maps show land owned by the Enys family throughout the county, from the Lizard to Liskeard with 41 farms.

The house has large gardens, famous for the bluebells in the paddock, which were helped to multiply by the fact that the family were given a dispensation not to plough this area during the second world war. A waterwheel made in a foundry in Penryn fed water from the ponds to the house. The house has some false windows to preserve its symmetry and although it is not large, being only 2 storeys high, the servants wing ran to 30 rooms. The world's oldest birch bark canoe was found at Enys and has since been repatriated to Canada

The family were known for their philanthropy including the donation of a village water pump to Mylor and an extension to the vestry at St Gluvias Church. They supported Masonic lodges and the local cricket team and organised tea treats on the lawns at Enys House

During the Second World War, The Royal Dutch Navy were billeted at Enys and later the house became a boys boarding school for a few years. In 1991 "Miss Betty" died leaving no issue, so it is now owned by a descendent Wendy and Christopher Rogers, who are renovating the house and garden.