

CREEKSIDE IN St. JUST

If you've been sailing on the Fal you've probably noticed the three houses - well 2 bungalows and a house - on the cliff top south of the entrance to St. Just Creek. As joint owner of one of them, I am biased, but they probably have the best panoramic views on the Fal. But what is their history and how does it link them together?



The Creek in the early 1950s. Only Bar Point, Trecarrell and Point House can be seen on this side of the Creek. Messack House has no staff quarters and you can clearly see the cottage on Messack Point that was demolished in c. 1970.

From the sea, the bungalow on the left is called Trecarrell. It was built as a holiday home for Captain (Carl) Charles de Vaux Harding of Cheshire in 1936

(Trecarrell being as near as he could get to 'House of Carl' in Cornish!). The bungalow was built on Trewithen Estates land before the planning legislation of 1948 stopped new properties being built on the banks of the Fal. Carl Harding's agreement with the Estate stipulated that "... a house (with a building cost) of not less than £650 should be built within 12 months".

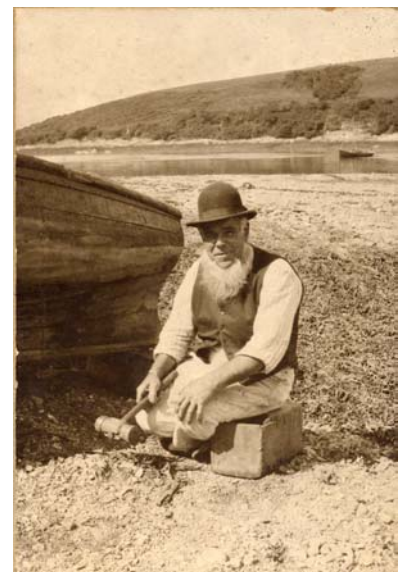


The Creek and River Fal in the 1930s.

My Grandparents Sidney and Joan Harper were close friends of the Hardings and came to stay with them in 1936. Joan Harper, who had some money in her own right, liked the area so much that she approached George Johnstone of Trewithen and bought a plot next door to Trecarell for £387 10s on which the larger house, Bar Point, was erected in 1937/8. As Bar Point was almost twice the size of Trecarell at that time I don't know how impressed the Hardings were!

Bar Point was designed as a holiday home by an architectural practice in Truro - Cowell, Drewitt and Wheatley. The actual design was undertaken by a newly qualified architect, Mr Rundle, who was asked to prepare a design while Mr Wheatley was on holiday. That design was accepted by my Grandparents and to a great extent the completed house is what you see today. Mr Rundle later retired to Bowling Green, a close in St. Just. Two building firms were asked to tender - Nicholls and Nicholls of Portscatho and William Smith & Sons of St. Austell. Smiths won the contact at a tender of £2087 0s 0d - a sum that Mrs. Harper thought 'very expensive'!

When war came, and with it evacuation from the large cities, Bar Point housed evacuee families who occupied the



W. Pasco (Fred's father) in the late 19th century.

house until 1943. The first was a Mrs. Bourne with her family from London. Placed in Bar Point by the Billeting Office in Truro, Mrs. Bourne was the wife of a London fireman and she left in late 1941. An inventory taken at the time shows a very few lost items.

Little has been recorded of further evacuees although Jeanette Andrew, former local schoolteacher, remembers a family from West Ham who took silver candlesticks to the beach to place on sand castles. She thinks that their name was Goddard. Later evacuees came from Bristol but there is no evidence that they stayed at Bar Point. John Garnett, who lives at Trecarrell, also knows of someone who lodged with the Hardings in 1943.

After the war, Sidney and Joan decided to move permanently to Bar Point and took up residence in March 1946. However, within two years, Sidney was suffering from terminal cancer and he finally died in August 1948. My Grandmother, both of whose daughters were by now married, realised she would be lonely and asked for her son-in-law Jack Jordan to find her a companion. Jack put out feelers from his doctor's practice in Worcestershire and as a result Mary Boucher, a farmer's daughter from Worcestershire, became Joan Harper's companion in March 1949.



The black shed on the Bar (1963), cut off by high tide, before its level was built up in the 1980s

In the meantime some changes had been made to Bar Point with the hall extended into the sunroom whose pillars were part filled in with side-walls and windows.

Meanwhile, Mary Boucher had put down roots in Cornwall and liking it so much decided that St. Just was where she wished to stay for the rest of her life. So, she approached Trewithen Estates, still under the stewardship of George Johnstone, to buy the plot behind Bar Point and on the left of the drive approaching Bar Point. The land was purchased, planning permission granted and Bosca built and completed in 1955.

Bar Point originally had a garden of over one acre within an area to the south given over to chickens. As Joan Harper began to near her 60s, she decided that this was going to be too much work.



An aerial view of St. Just creek, taken in the early 90s only emphasises how narrow the Roseland peninsular is. Nare head and the Gull rock are in the background.

Viscount Simon, the then Chairman of the Port of London Authority had, for some years, stayed at the house on Messack Point, which has now been demolished. He and Lady Simon enjoyed Roseland so much they offered to buy the former chicken run from my Grandmother, sought planning permission and built the bungalow which its on the right of Bar Point looking from the sea - Carrick View. This was completed in 1960.

There is one more property in the small community near the boat sheds at St. Just. Point House is on the right of the drive. This cottage was originally a coastguard lookout and 70 years ago, together with Pasco's Boat Sheds and Milly's Cottage (on the right at the bottom of the hill), would have been all that was visible to the casual visitor. Planning Regulations will ensure that this little cluster of 6 houses grows no further.

Peter Healy

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