

PORTHWIDDEN AND TOM PHILLPOTTS

The figure of Canon Tom Phillpotts stands in the central niche of the South Porch of Truro Cathedral. When he died the Bishop paid tribute, from the pulpit, to 'A Life of Service'; more than half that life was centred on Porthgwiddden in Feock. Now he is almost forgotten and clues to his service have to be sought for in records of his time. Newspaper reports can be inaccurate and incomplete and this article is put together, tentatively, in the hope that further information may be forthcoming.

Porthgwiddden

The name, meaning "The White Haven" is mentioned as early as 1248¹ but the first reference to the house is in 1829 when it is described as 'newly erected'. (There are earlier records of the land and the farm house - See Map.)² In 1840, it was described as 'Spacious and Elegant Mansion, late residence of Edmund Turner, M. P., with a productive garden, orchard, meadow and arable land, delightfully situated eligible site for marine villas. The House with about 8 acres of walks and pleasure gardens (interspersed with Timber Trees, shrubberies and thriving plantations and with a large lawn shelving to the River) contains an Entrance Hall, large and lofty Dining and Drawing Rooms, a Library and a Boudoir, a Housekeeper's Room, Kitchen and back kitchen, Butler's Pantry, Cellars, etc. 8 good Bedrooms, Dressing Rooms, Servants bedrooms and a Water Closet Stables and Coach House'.³

It was bought in 1842 with the land on the south east side of the road to Restronguet Point by John Phillpotts.⁴ He was the brother of the Bishop of Exeter (whose diocese included both Devon and Cornwall), a Barrister, M. P. for Gloucester for 17 years and his London house was 14, Pall Mall.⁵

Tom Phillpotts

His son was born in 1806, and educated at Eton and Kings College, Cambridge, where he took his B. A. in 1829. He was ordained by the Bishop of Lincoln in 1830 and, in 1831, married at Brixton to Mary Emma Penelope, heiress of Ulysses Theophilus Hughes of Swansea. In 1833, he obtained his M. A. degree and the following year became a Curate at St Austell. In 1835, with his wife and one daughter, Emily, he went to Gwennap as Vicar; four more daughters were born there, Helen in 1836, Georgina 1838, Mary 1839, and Emma in 1843.⁵ In 1844 he became Vicar of Feock and moved to Porthgwiddden; Alice was born in 1844 and his only son, John Hughes, in 1845.⁶

Vicar of Gwennap

While at Gwennap he caused several small chapels to be built which were more accessible to the many miners, than the parish church.⁷ In 1839, at a clerical meeting in Illogan rectory, he said that he believed schools and mission chapels were necessary for evangelism - if "people would not come to the church, the church must be brought to the people".

He was also concerned for the physical wellbeing of his parishioners; when the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society aided Tresavean mine to install a man engine in 1842, he was one of the inspecting committee.⁸ This engine halved the time that miners spent in getting to and from their work and did away with the effort of climbing ladders, as men were conveyed up and down, by stepping on and off moving platforms.

Vicar of Feock

When he moved to Feock he again found that the church was in a rural area and that many of his parishioners were in the growing port of Devoran, two miles away; so, in 1847, a Church School was built there (with the aid of the National Society and Subscriptions) and it was licensed for Services. At the same time, the Feock school was rebuilt. The work of evangelism and teaching was carried on by the Vicar, two curates, the Schoolmaster and his wife at Feock and the Schoolmistress at Devoran.⁹

Devoran Church

This church was built by 1856 and was a community effort; the Rev. Tom produced the design (J. L. Pearson, the London architect, drew the plans); Mrs Agar of Lanhydrock gave the site and the endowment; Mr Robartes the East Window and the inhabitants of Devoran the West Window. (Did the Rev. Tom suggest the themes of Christ's baptism and teaching shown in the last window? At a Clergy Synod at Exeter in 1851 he had strongly supported resolutions re-affirming the necessity of baptismal teaching, and supported the plea for primary education.) He provided the money to build the Chancel and the past Curates of the parish gave the six dark serpentine columns that adorn it. There is a brass set into an ornamented recess inside the altar rails commemorating his parents and those of his wife to whose memory it was given. (His father died in 1849 in such a dramatic manner that the West Briton devoted a whole column to it, instead of the usual few lines, describing how he expired in an omnibus at Regents' Circus in London, how he was carried into a chemist's shop and a surgeon and a police constable were called and that the post-mortem revealed his heart to be of double size.) The Rev. Tom also gave £500 towards the cost of building the rest of the

church and the other money was raised by subscriptions.

Building started in September 1854; the masonry was done by William Gerrish of Carnon Downs and the woodwork by Salmon of Truro. It was finished by August 11, 1856 and on that day a procession set out from the schoolhouse, reciting the 84th psalm: "How amiable are thy dwellings, thou Lord of hosts". The Rev. W. J. Neame, curate of Devoran, the Rev. J. H. Kirwan, curate of Feock, the Rev. T. Phillpotts and many local clergy took part, together with a large congregation. At the close of the service, the granddaughter of one of the builders was baptised. In the afternoon, there was another service for nearly two hundred school children, and the Rev. Tom gave the address explaining the church to them as the House of God. ⁹

Gardening

In his younger days, Tom Phillpotts was a Judge at Flower Shows; in 1834, while he was still at St Austell, for the Tywardreath Gardening Society and at least four times between 1834 and 1840 for the Cottage Garden Section of the Royal Horticultural Society Shows at Truro or Falmouth. ⁹ For many years he was Steward for the Horticultural Section of the Bath and West Show. He was one of the earliest members and "a warm supporter" of the Royal Horticultural Society in Cornwall and on August 30, 1859 their Exhibition was held at Porthgwidden. It rained all the previous day and all night, but cleared by eight o'clock in the morning. Crowds came by road and by the steamers from Truro; the Miners Artillery Band played on the lawn in front of the house; the Exhibits were in a marquee to the south east, by the archery ground. Refreshments were served in another marquee and after lunch there were speeches. The Rev. Tom stressed the advantages of Cottage Gardens - "even drunkards have been reclaimed by work in them"; the aim of the show was not merely to exhibit pineapples and grapes, but to show the cottager how he could improve his condition and bring comfort to his family. It grieved the Rev. Tom to see how the owners of bigger gardens had withheld their support (only two exhibited besides himself). The Flower Judge was so impressed by the Cottage exhibitors that he offered to give them free seeds. (Mr Tresidder of Truro supported the Show with a fine collection of new varieties of shrubs.) At four o'clock the rain started again and there was a "general scamper for shelter"; it washed out this show and also any more Royal Horticultural Society exhibitions in Cornwall. ⁹

In 1860 the Gwennap Cottage Garden Society's exhibition was described as "the finest in the County". Had Tom Phillpotts started the Society when he was Vicar there?

Parish Work

He was not only interested in encouraging his parishioners to cultivate their gardens but was also careful of their health. In 1853 there was a general outbreak of cholera and attention was called to the danger of its spreading through the lack of sanitation. There was one case in Devoran and the Rev. Tom wrote to Alfred Jenkin, the Agar-Robartes Agent, about the lack of drainage and the continued correspondence lead to speedy action to remedy it. ¹⁰

The S.P.G.* was another of his interests that he recommended to his parishioners; in 1869 monthly meetings were held in Feock, supported by the Vicar and his family and the Curate, the Rev. A. W. Sowell, in order to create interest in mission work. At a meeting in Devoran, the Rev. Tom took the chair, read out a list of subscriptions for 1869 and expressed his sorrow at their decrease - speeches on the work of the society were followed by a collection! ⁹ (Devoran may have been the richer part of the parish, but it was probably beginning to feel the effects of the recession of mining.)

In May 1871 it must have given him great pleasure to present eighty candidates for confirmation in Feock church. Bishop Phillpotts aged ninety, had resigned in September 1869 and the younger and more active Bishop Temple was touring the diocese, holding services such as this all over Cornwall; in Feock he was afterwards entertained at Porthgwidden. When he came again in 1873, the service was held in the new church in Devoran and there were another thirty-two candidates. ⁹

Other Activities

In his work outside his parish, Tom Phillpotts' name most frequently occurs in the newspapers as the J.P. acting as Chairman of the West Powder Petty Sessions. (He held this office for nearly twenty years, until increasing deafness made it too difficult and he resigned in 1880.) His own parishioners occasionally came before him; in 1875 an argument between a Burley and his neighbours drew Tom Phillpotts' comment that to his knowledge it had been going on for years - a £10 bond was ordered so that the peace would be kept for twelve months. Shortly afterwards, Peter Collins of Feock was fined 40/- for using 'unjust scales' and he was given the option of having the scales forfeited or paying a £5 penalty.

The Rev. Phillpotts had no patience with drunkenness and several times said that he thought that the number of beer-houses was excessive, but he was meticulous in explaining any changes in the laws which related to them.

His interests were wide and many societies made use of

his knowledge and ability. In 1869, he was President of the Diocesan Training Institution for Schoolmistresses (in Agar Road, Truro, established in 1858 to follow up the training previously given at the Fairmantle Street school.) At the January meeting, at which he was present, the Secretary was requested to send a circular on the objects and advantages of the Institution to all the clergy in Cornwall.

In 1873, he is mentioned as Chairman of the Truro Savings Bank, which existed to encourage the habit of thrift for the small investor and of which he must have approved.

He supported the Royal Cornwall Infirmiry (now the City Hospital in Truro); in 1836 and 1846 he preached their Anniversary Sermon in St Mary's, Truro; in 1872 he was their very active President and also did a great deal to help to improve their financial position.

He was a member of the Royal Institution of Cornwall (the 'Museum' in Truro), attending some of the meetings at which erudite papers were read. In 1856 he contributed a concise and detailed report on a meteor which he and Mr Enys saw when they were crossing in a boat from Point to Restronguet, and Dr Barham, the Secretary, incorporated it in an article.¹¹

Later, the Rev. Tom was made a Vice-President, and after his death, tribute was paid to his personal interest in the welfare and prosperity of the Royal Institution of Cornwall.

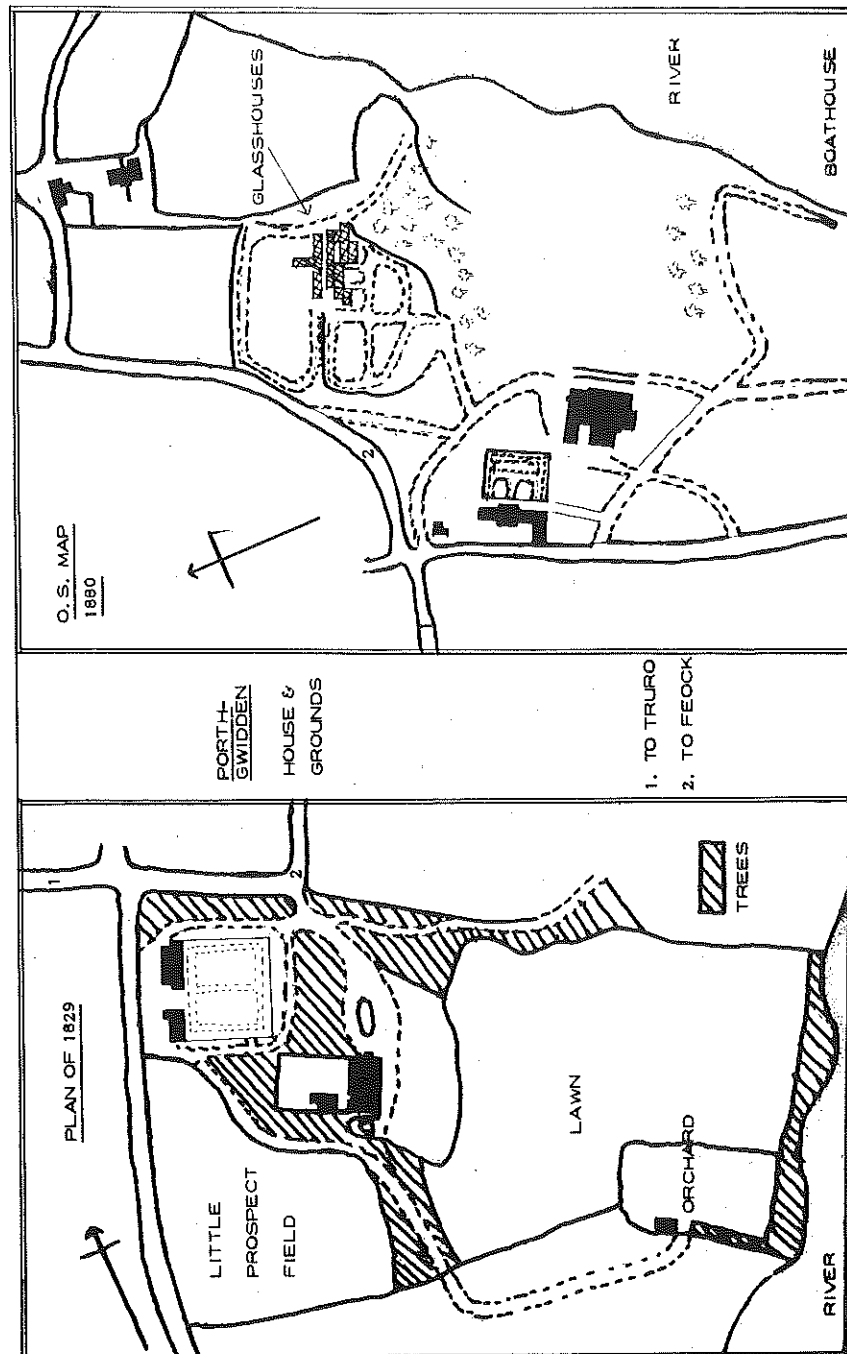
Agriculture

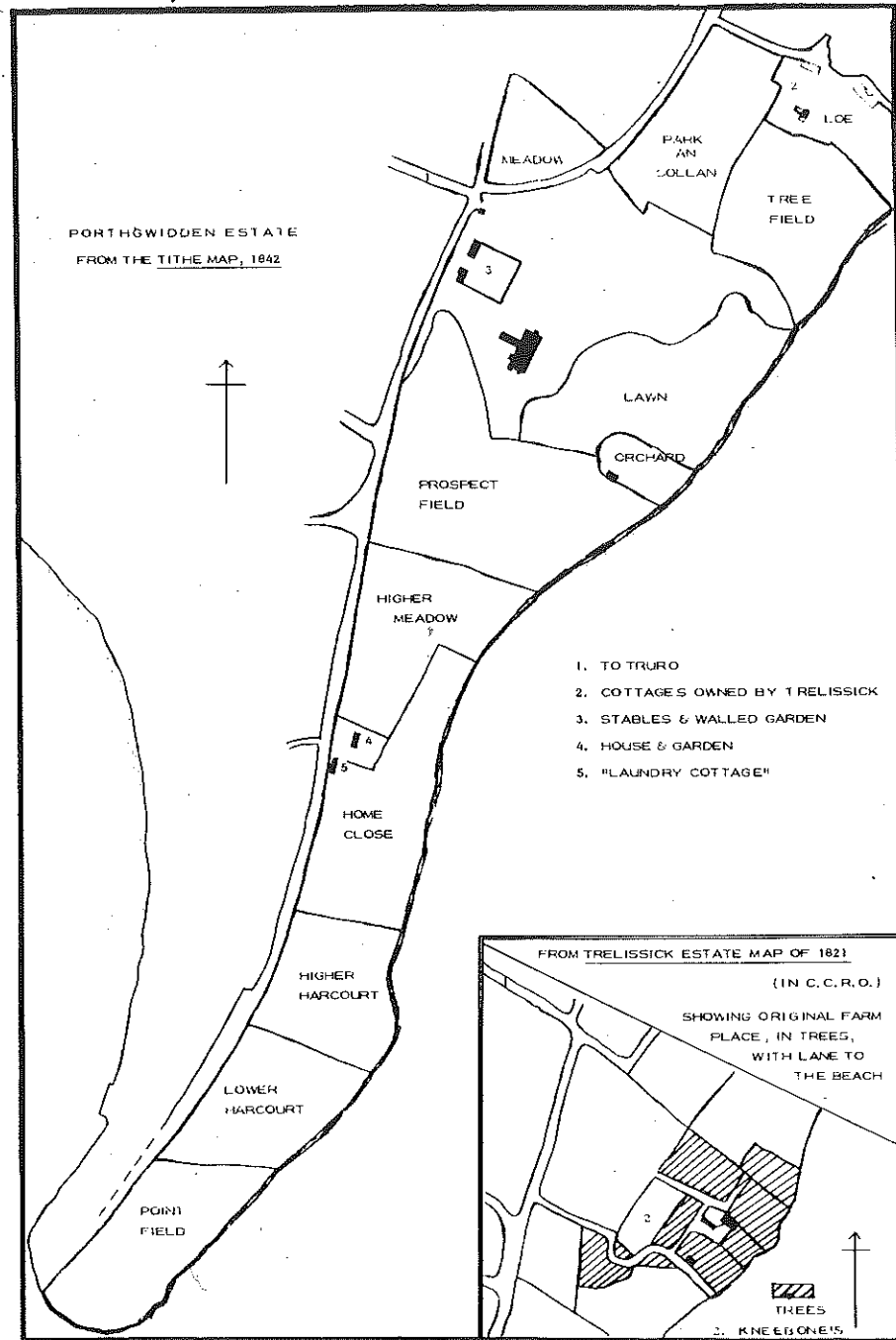
Farming was another of his interests. In the autumn of 1865, Cattle Plague spread from the continent to England and J. P.'s had to prohibit the movement of cattle to markets and fairs and, early in 1866, to enforce a general standstill order, which lasted for nearly a year. Tom Phillipotts gave a lucid interpretation of this Order and also published a pamphlet (printed by Heards of Truro) defending the action taken by the West Powder Magistrates.

He also published notes on Market Gardening in Cornwall in 1863 - probably with the idea that the "small farmer" could increase his earnings and take advantage of the up-country markets made available by the opening of the Penzance to London railway in 1859.¹²

He was a member of the Royal Cornwall Agricultural Society and in December 1865 helped to change their method of selecting Show Judges, from the time-wasting one of doing it at a General Meeting, to that of delegating it to a small Committee.⁹

This work in connection with farming was based on personal knowledge. He and C. D. Gilbert of Trelissick came to





Feock at about the same time and were friends. Tom Phillpotts acquired the Porthwidden Home Farm at Harcourt, possibly with Gilbert's advice at first, and worked it until 1867. When he sold the Live and Dead Stock, the list is very similar to that of the Trelissick farm (sold in 1858 after the death of C. D. G.) - some 150 sheep, with Leicester and Shropshire Down rams, a few pigs and 6 dairy cows, together with a large collection of implements, listed as supplied by the best firms of the time. Only the best was good enough for him. William Nicholls came to Harcourt Farm, as a tenant farmer, before 1861, from Gwennap¹³ and his descendant, John, was still there in the 1930s - had he followed his Vicar?

The Family

The household at Porthwidden was large. The 1851 Census lists the Rev. and Mrs T. Phillpotts and five daughters (Emily, the eldest, was away) a son, two governesses, six female servants and one male servant (Edward Green aged nineteen and born in Feock) - all living in the House. Those living nearby were the laundress (her husband was an agricultural labourer on the estate), a butler, coachman, bailiff and a gardener.

Ten years later there were only two daughters at home, the governesses had left and there were a butler, footman, cook, lady's maid and three housemaids living in. Geo. Austin was both gardener and bailiff, the coachman lived at the Lodge and the laundress was still at Laundry Cottage.

It was much the same in 1871, except that a groom was living in. The gardener, Cross, was Cornish born, but trained in Lady Ashburton's garden at Melchet Cross, Romsey and came to Porthwidden in 1869.⁹

Tom Phillpotts' third daughter, Mary, was an authoress who wrote short stories, published by S. P. C. K. in 1864 and for several years following, and three books, The Manor Farm, in 1869, Maggie's Secret, 1871 and Janet's Choice, in three volumes, published in 1872. They were highly praised in the reviews for their moral tone and pure style.

All his daughters married between 1860 and 1877; Emma became Mrs Arthur Tremayne (Carclaw) and Georgina, Mrs Richard Williams (Tregullow). His only son died in January 1871 of a chill caught while boating at Porthwidden.^{6 & 9}

In 1873 Tom Phillpotts was ill; he and his wife spent nearly a year on the continent, leaving Alice, his youngest daughter and her husband, the Rev. William Hopkinson, in charge of the parish. When he returned in June 1874, he resigned as Vicar after thirty years work in Feock.

Turnpike Trustee

Before considering his work in retirement, his interest in roads and building must be mentioned. 14 & 9 When the Truro and Redruth-Penryn Turnpike Trusts combined in September 1849, the Rev. Tom was one of the Trustees who took the oath for the true and impartial execution of their work. It seems probable that, as Vicar of Gwennap, he had previously been a Trustee for the road that ran through that parish.

He did not attend the monthly meetings unless he was concerned with the business to be transacted, but when he was present he usually took the chair and endorsed the Minutes of the meeting with his precise and legible signature. In December 1850 he was present when the Redruth-Penryn Trust finances were finally untangled and handed over.

Between 23 March 1859 and 26 November 1862, he attended eighteen meetings, because the subject under discussion was the replacement of the old and dilapidated wooden Boscawen Bridge in Truro, and he was on the Committee to oversee this work. The consent of the Admiralty had to be obtained before it could start, then plans and estimates were requested. It was decided to build in granite, with high arches; Mr Brereton's plan was accepted and Mr Eva's tender of £2,995. There were discussions of how to raise the money and Mr Tweedy, the Banker, was added to the Committee in February 1860. The Bridge was completed in November 1862 and all debts were paid off in a few years.

The Rev. Tom was in the chair in August 1855 when the flooding of the Lower Cannon road was under discussion (it was decided to raise the level of the road and negotiate with the causers of the trouble); in November 1864, when the Devoran Water Works requested permission to break the Turnpike road to lay pipes to connect their reservoir with the village and again in July 1866 when he supported a Feock parish petition against the Turnpike Surveyor who had placed a style across Tarrandean Lane (to Perranwell Station) in order to prevent the evasion of tolls.

In November 1865 the Rev. Tom proposed a £10 reward for the conviction of persons damaging the Trust's bridges. In January 1866, four men from Calenick appeared in the Truro Magistrates Court, before him and Mr W. T. Chappel (another Turnpike Trustee), charged by Mr Hicks (the County Surveyor for Bridges) with causing 30/- damage to Calenick Bridge in a drunken spree on Christmas Eve, by throwing five coping stones into the river. Even though they had replaced the stones on Christmas morning, two of the men were found guilty and ordered to pay £11-10-0, with the Magistrates' comment that there had been too much wilful damage lately and

that they were determined to impose the heaviest possible penalty. 9

The Bishop's Library

Between 1867 and 1869 when the Public Rooms in Truro (the building in Quay Street which now contains the Palace Theatre and other offices) were being erected, the Rev. Tom was Chairman of the Bishop's Library Building Committee. The entrance porch of the present S. P. C. K. bookshop is still inscribed "Bishop Phillpotts Library" and bears the arms of the Diocese as they were in 1869. The books were the aged Bishop's gift to Cornwall and are still there. To the north of the building there was to be a depository for the S. P. C. K. 9

Retirement - Feock Church

When the Rev. Tom resigned in June 1874, the Rev. Arthur Perry was appointed as the new Vicar, and Tom Phillpotts used his leisure to arrange for the rebuilding of the church. As soon as he had been appointed in 1844, he had had the nave enlarged to increase the number of "free" seats for his poorer parishioners; now he was determined to procure a better and more beautiful building. Piers St Aubyn was his architect, the old church was completely taken down, though much of the stonework of the windows, columns, arches and South Porch were saved and re-used.

In February 1875, the Hon. Mrs Gilbert laid the Foundation stone, "a ceremony which her ladyship performed with considerable grace". 9

William Gerrish, who had built Devoran Church, had retired, so Clemens of Truro was commissioned for the masonry and Salmon did the carpentry as before. The new church was two feet wider than the old and the chancel twenty feet longer. The Rev. Tom gave the Reredos, with the central panel of mosaic and the low stone screen, based on the design of one that he had seen in a palace in Florence. The Misses Phillpotts contributed the East Window, designed by Morgan of London on the theme "Thy brother shall rise again", in memory of their brother John. When the Rev. Tom undertook his improvement of the old church in 1844, he had placed glass in a window of the transept showing the arms of his uncle Bishop Phillpotts and his own. 15 These arms were retained and their glowing colours can still be seen in the upper part of the West Window of the transept.

In August 1876, Bishop Temple re-consecrated the church; many robed clergy were present and a large congregation. Afterwards luncheon was served in a marquee lent by Captain Woodward of H. M. S. Ganges and erected in a nearby field. The Rev. Tom responded to the speeches and said that

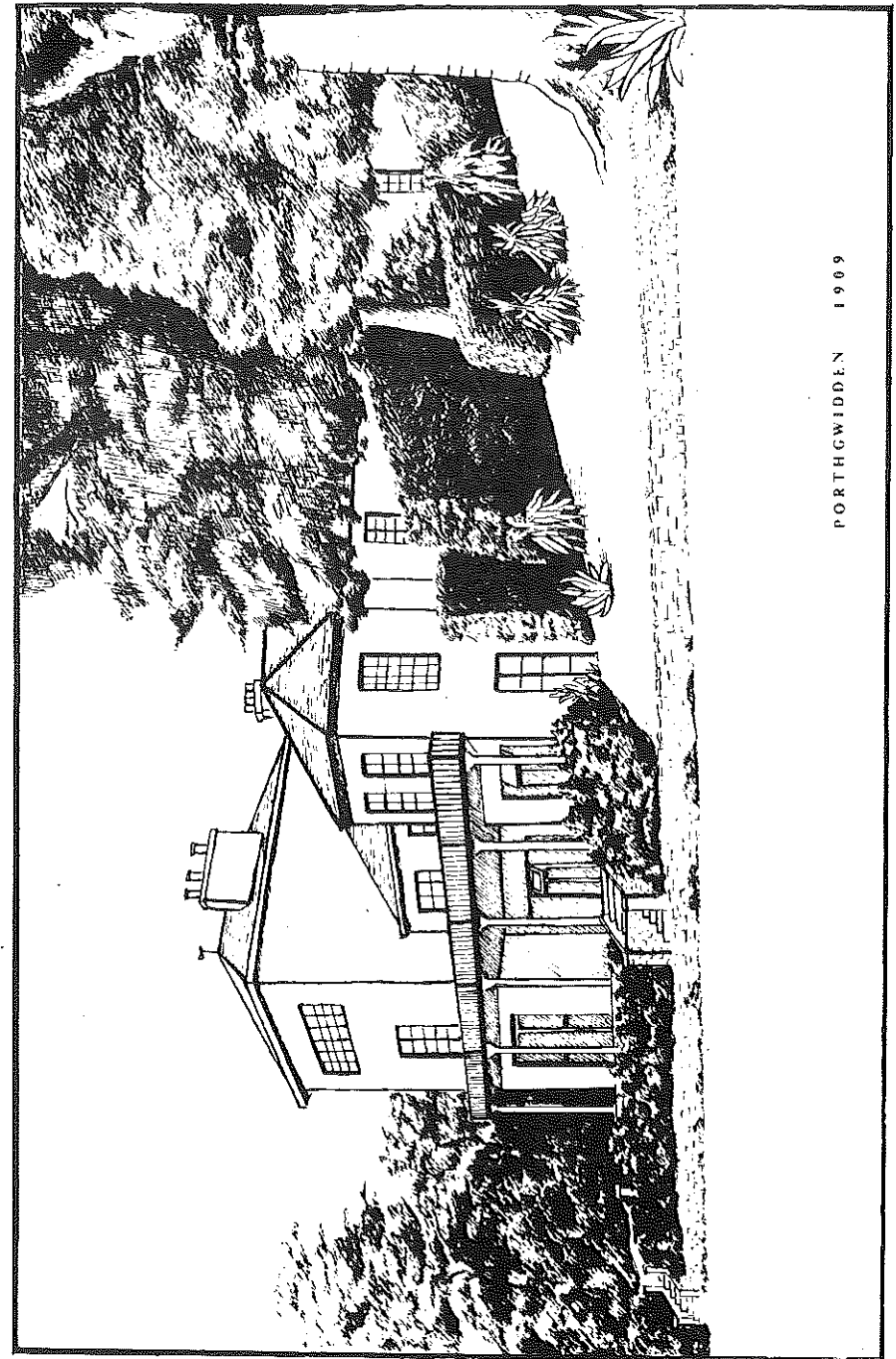
it was the completion of work that had been a dream for years and not the first or second time that he had to thank God for allowing him to be the instrument of building new churches to Him. Many had subscribed (including especially his young friend, Carew Davies Gilbert). They included those who seldom came into the church and he rejoiced to see so many Dissenters present. (The total cost was between £2500 and £3000.) 9

Porthgwidden

At some time, probably earlier when the family was at home, the House had been considerably enlarged (see maps) and the stable block erected, (the clock in the tower is dated 1855). Part of Park-an-Gollan and the Treefield were turned into a large walled garden and a range of glasshouses was built in it. (This may have been after the arrival of Mr Cross the gardener in 1869). Cottages above Loe Veau were acquired from the Gilberts and remodelled. The one standing back from the road (now called Gunfield Lodge) has a tiled inscription let into the end wall, "T.P. 1875". Both cottages were divided into two and the one on the road is said to have been occupied by the gardeners. Mr Cross must have had a considerable staff under him to tend the extensive and well laid-out grounds. After Tom Phillpotts' death, a choice collection of orchids together with stove and greenhouse plants were sold and were fully listed in the Gazette of October 2, 1890. Somewhere there must have been a goldfish pond and fountain, because in 1887, whilst everyone was at the Queen's Jubilee Fete at Trelissick, the water was stopped and the fish stolen.

A boat house was built near the beach; there are references to the Rev. Tom's yachts as far apart as 1857 and 1889. In 1877 he is mentioned as a member of the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, who made "useful suggestions" and in 1885 he supported the local regatta at Loe beach by throwing open the Porthgwidden grounds. In 1889 there was an exciting race over a fourteen mile course, between his big yacht "Georgina" and C. D. Gilberts' "Little Windflower", in which the latter won by six minutes. 9

His first wife died in March 1880 and in August 1882 he married, at the age of seventy-six, Mrs Mary Elizabeth Webber, the widow of an army captain, from Yorkshire. She died in 1924 aged ninety-one, so was, at the time of her marriage, aged forty-nine. Porthgwidden must have been a lonely place in between for him and it is not known if he kept up his custom of giving a New Year supper for his employees and their wives, the Bible Class and adult members of the choir. The total was usually around forty or fifty and when



PORTHGWIDDEN 1909

they had finished their meal the Hall was cleared for games. ⁹

The Cathedral

In the same year that Feock church was completed, the Diocese of Cornwall was separated from that of Devon and Bishop Benson was enthroned at St Mary's in Truro in May 1877. In the November of that year, he called his first Diocesan Conference in the Truro Public Rooms. There were two speakers at it, the Bishop on the Organisation of the Diocese and the Rev. Tom Phillpotts on the siting of the new cathedral and its financing. A Committee was appointed to consider this last and he became its Secretary. Truro and the somewhat dilapidated St Mary's church were approved and the land around it was acquired. While abroad he had studied European cathedrals and was determined to "avoid above all things, poverty of detail and cheapness of execution".⁷ In the summer of 1878, J. L. Pearson's plan was accepted (he had been the architect for Devoran church in 1853); it retained one aisle of the old St Mary's and created a building unified with it. The site was cleared and the Cathedral Foundation Stone was laid in May 1880 by the Prince of Wales. ¹⁶

Meantime the organisation of the Diocese was proceeding; in January 1878, the first Canons were created and the Rev. Tom became Canon Phillpotts of St Aldhelm's stall; he was also made President of the Chapter and Chaplain to the Bishop.

The collection of the £95000 required began, although it was a time of financial depression in Cornwall. Bishop Benson left to become Archbishop of Canterbury and was succeeded by Bishop Wilkinson, who aroused the enthusiasm of the "Ladies of Cornwall", to raise the £15000 for the interior fittings (See Feock II, p. 41). By 1887 the Chancel and Transepts were completed.

Canon Phillpotts was on the committee to organise the Consecration Ceremony, which had to be postponed until November so that Archbishop Benson could be present. It was a full week for him (he was eighty years old). On the Sunday he preached the last Sermon in the temporary wooden church in High Cross, on "The Old and the New" taking as his theme, "You desire to pray in the Temple, pray in yourself, but first be yourself a temple of God." (The Bishop was so impressed by this sermon, that he ordered that it should be published.) On the Monday, the Canon was on the platform of a large Liberal-Unionist rally in Truro and on the Thursday there was the three hour Consecration Service attended by the Prince of Wales, the Archbishop, twenty-two Bishops and nine additional sections of choristers, from other cathedrals, as well as the Cathedral clergy and choir and a congregation of 2500. On the previous night there was hail, rain and wind and this continued for most of the day with only occasional

gleams of sunshine. In the evening, he and Mrs Phillpotts, with 350 other guests, attended the Mayor's reception for the Archbishop.

Among the gifts to the new Cathedral were the Bishop's Throne, in memory of Bishop Phillpotts (who had wished to create a separate diocese and had suggested either Bodmin or St Columb churches as possible cathedrals); the Canon's stall, given by the family in memory of the Bishop and an Almsdish, worth £100, given by Canon Phillpotts.

£87000 had been raised by 1887 and building continued (it was finished in 1910 - free of debt).

Canon Phillpotts chose the South Porch (opposite Cathedral Lane and at the junction of the "Old" and "New") as his special gift. He offered an additional £500 to decorate it with mosaics; Pearson insisted on sculpture, to be in-keeping with the rest of the Cathedral, but at a cost of £1500. The Canon raised this money by the sale of a much loved picture - by Romney of Lady Hamilton (a recumbent figure in a pink dress, set in a woodland scene). Years before, it had belonged to a friend and he had always admired it; he could not then afford the £50 asked for it and he was allowed to have it for £30. It was loaned to a Winter Exhibition at the Royal Academy and while he was in Rome, a dealer sent him a telegram asking him to "name his price". Being reluctant to sell, he asked £3000. The offer was accepted and the Porch was completed. ¹⁷ (On the West Wall there is a Latin inscription commemorating the Canon.)

Death

In 1890 he was seriously ill and went to Newquay hoping to benefit from the change of air, but he became worse and in June, was brought back to Porthgwithden. At his special request, he was driven round the Cathedral on his way home. He died on Saturday July 20 and was carried to his grave in Feock churchyard on the 22nd, followed by his family, the clergy and choir of the Cathedral and by very many other mourners. On the following Sunday, tribute was paid to him at the Cathedral Services; in the evening, the Bishop preached his memorial sermon, "A Life of Service". His grave is unmarked but the lychgate at Feock commemorates him and his thirty years work as Vicar there.

The churches at Devoran and Feock and the Cathedral itself are monuments to his life and faith. Years later, his statue holding a model of his porch, was placed in the central niche of the "Phillpotts Porch".

Porthgwithden

Porthgwithden was left to his daughter Emma (Mrs A.

Tremayne) and her children and they let it to a series of tenants. In 1891, the Hon. John Boscawen was there while Tregye was being enlarged; in 1896, Mr and Mrs H. Bolitho occupied it; a few years later, Mr W. H. Spottiswood lived in it and laid out a private golf course in the fields between the gardens and Laundry Cottage. Between 1908 and 1919 the Trefusis family, including Lady Mary, who did so much for the English Folk Dance Society, were the tenants and lived there until 1914. At some period a generator was installed at the Harcourt Home Farm and electricity was conveyed to the House and to Laundry Cottage through heavy underground cables. (In 1910, Henry Edward was electrician at Trelissick, could he have been responsible?)

Between 1923 and 1930, Mr and Mrs H. K. Neale were the owners and Polgwynne was built in part of the grounds. In 1935, it had passed to Mr and Mrs K. Holman¹⁸ and during the 1939-1945 war they made it a centre for local Red Cross activities. Mrs Holman sold the property in 1956 and applications for development were made; a change of use to a nursing home received conditional permission, but that as a hotel was refused. In May 1961, conversion of the House into flats was agreed and this was started by Mr B. Burton, who sold to Lt. Col. D. F. Grant, who completed it in 1971. Before this, the stables and coach house had been converted into Clock House, which includes the walled garden with the fish pond, the magnificent camelia and magnolia, all of which may date back to the time of the Rev. Tom.

The House and grounds, with the exception of the Lodge, have now been acquired by a consortium of leaseholders of the flats and Porthgwithden Estate Limited was incorporated on June 19, 1974. Much restoration has been carried out on the House itself; the grounds which have been neglected, are being restored to some semblance of their former glory. The present owners are intent that this gracious residence, set off by its terraces and parkland with views over Carrick Roads, shall, in these changing times, retain as much as possible of its original atmosphere.¹⁹

* S. P. G. - The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

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19. I should also like to thank all who have given me verbal information and especially the present occupants of Porthgwithden

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Suggestions from readers concerning material or sources are always welcome.