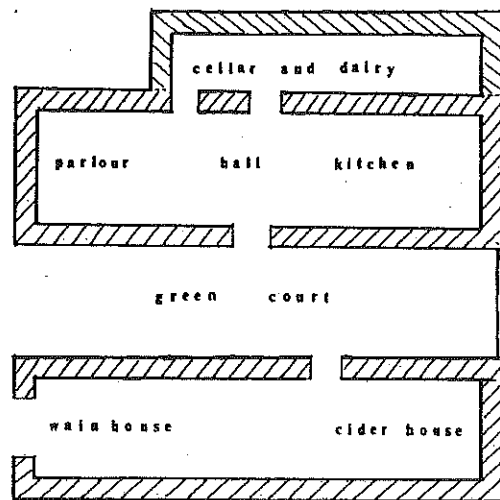


THE GROWTH OF CARNON DOWNS


18

had been made into a small study. The length of the dwelling house is given as 54 feet and its breadth 26 feet; there were also two outhouses, a wainhouse and a ciderhouse, each 16 feet broad and 20 feet long. Both terriers mention a barn and stable at the end of the house built of cobb and 'on the fore side of the house' a green court and a little garden.

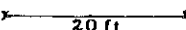
The house was probably considerably changed during the years, but the measurements given in 1744 were similar to those of the old parish hall which was demolished in 1973, and it seems likely that this was rebuilt on the original foundations, possibly using the old stonework. 'Cobb' or 'cob', which is a mixture of mud and chopped straw, makes an excellent wall as long as it is kept dry, but can disintegrate rapidly if the roof is removed, so the barn and stable have disappeared, and the ground on which they stood is now used to park the modern steed, the car.



POSSIBLE PLAN OF
OLD VICARAGE

 stone

 cobb

Scale  20 ft

The fact that there are still traces of three tumuli and of an old fort (the Gear) south of Tregye Road suggests that this area was inhabited in prehistoric times. A flint arrowhead was dug up in one of the gardens in Tregye Road about six years ago.

When the name Carnon Downs was first used is uncertain. Martin's map of 1748 gives Haleginick (now Algarnick), Killiganoon, Tresithick, Ringwell and Lower Carnon. Map 1 is a sketch from the tithe map of 1842; reference to the census of 1841 shows that some of these buildings were groups of houses. There were four landowners: Lord Falmouth, Sir Charles Lemon of Carclew, Anna Maria Agar of Lanhydrock and the Hugos who owned Tresithick. Except for Tresithick very little freehold was sold until about 1920.

South of the Truro-Falmouth road, where the land is more fertile there were 5 sizeable farms in 1841: Higher Devoran (formerly called Dinnis's) farmed by W. Williams who also had Carnon Crease, Carnon Treliiver and cottages at Chycoose; Tregoose covering 150 acres and keeping the same boundaries until it was sold in 1972; Tregye occupied by Juliana Penrose who sublet the farmland; Tresithick, also sublet and Killiganoon where Thomas Simmons lived and let a part of the estate to W. Hearle.

On the poor land north of this road there were a number of small holdings, most being between five and eight acres, which had been broken in from the open moor during the 18th century. Leases in the County Record Office show that it was customary to let the land for 99 years on three named lives at a low rent, the lessee cleared, cultivated and fenced the land, built a house, was not usually allowed to cut timber and in some cases could be inspected by the agent. If one of the named lives died the new lease was given on payment of a fine. Earlier leases show that prior to these enclosures the nearby farmers had rights of turbarry, grazing and furze cutting on these lands.

The small holders were poor men so they and their sons were obliged to have other work; this was found in the mines

at Kea and Gwennap which were within walking distance; on the railway or docks at Devoran; carrying ore from the Bissoe area to the smelting works at Point and farm labouring, although in most cases this was done by the farmer's family.

Using the Census Returns from 1841 to 1871, which is the last year for which full details are released, also considering an area larger than that covered by the maps, going to the northern boundary of the parish and west to the Carnon Valley, there is very little change in the number of houses during this time, although this is the period when Devoran was growing rapidly.

After 1871, owing to the closure of the Copper Smelting works at Point and failure of the mines, the population decreased, very few new cottages were built until after the end of the 1914 - 18 war and by that time some of the old cob dwellings had been left empty and had disintegrated. I have seen a cob cottage on the Point road fall into a heap of rubble within six months after losing its thatch.

This was a sparsely populated area; 390 people in 1841 of whom half were children up to sixteen years (there were only fifteen aged 65 or more); by 1871 the total had risen to 460, slightly less than half were children and still only 27 old people. Only one old man lived alone, most widowed people had an unmarried daughter at home or, in a few cases, lived with a married child. The average household was five.

Carnon Downs seems to have been a district in which families stayed for several generations. The 1851 census was the first in which the parish of birth had to be given; of the 87 households, 44 had either the husband, wife or both Feock-born, most of the others were from adjacent parishes, mainly Kea, and only three were born outside Cornwall. By 1871 a few had come from more distant parts of Cornwall, even as far away as Launceston, but still only one more 'foreigner' from Devon.

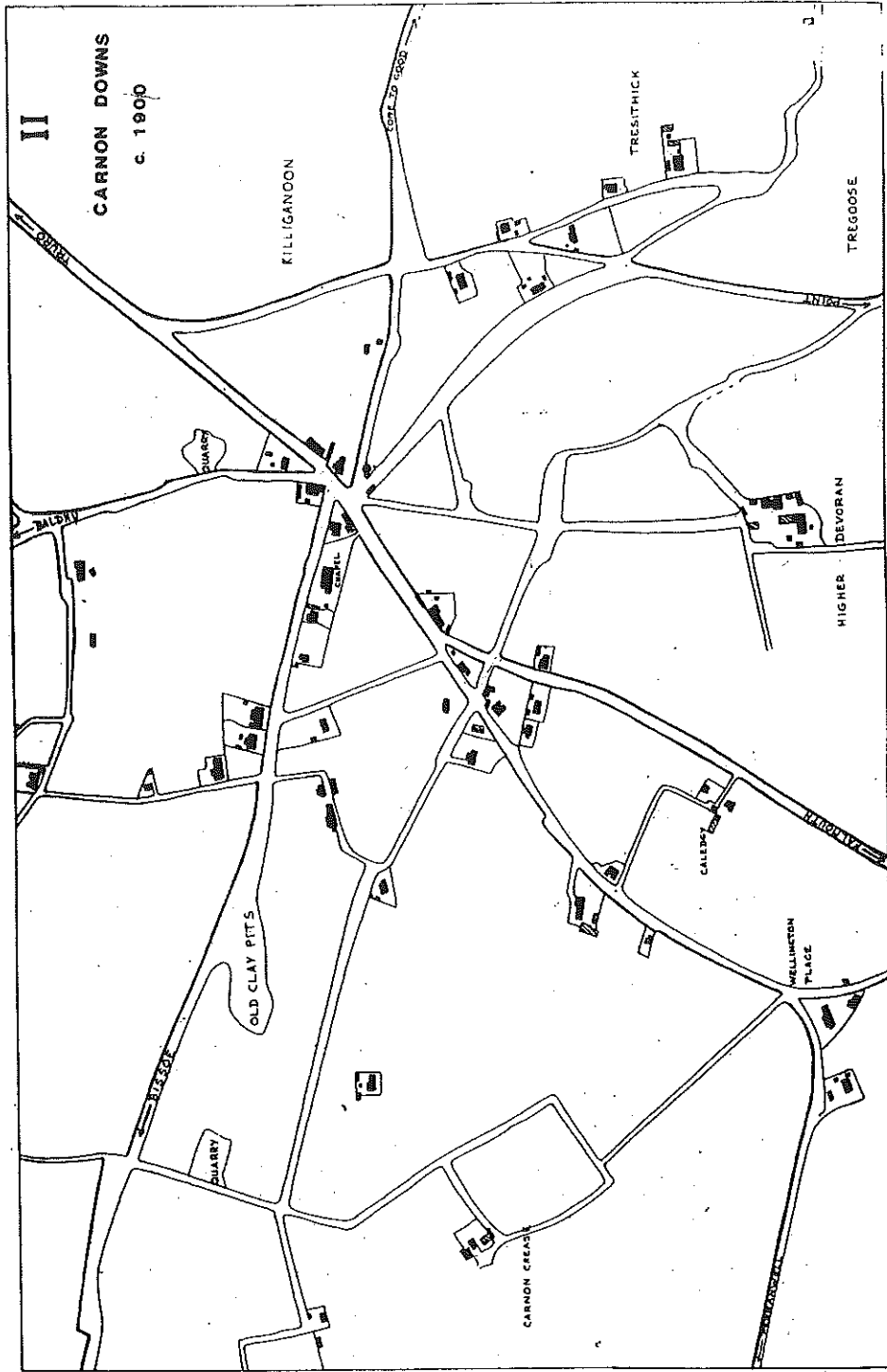
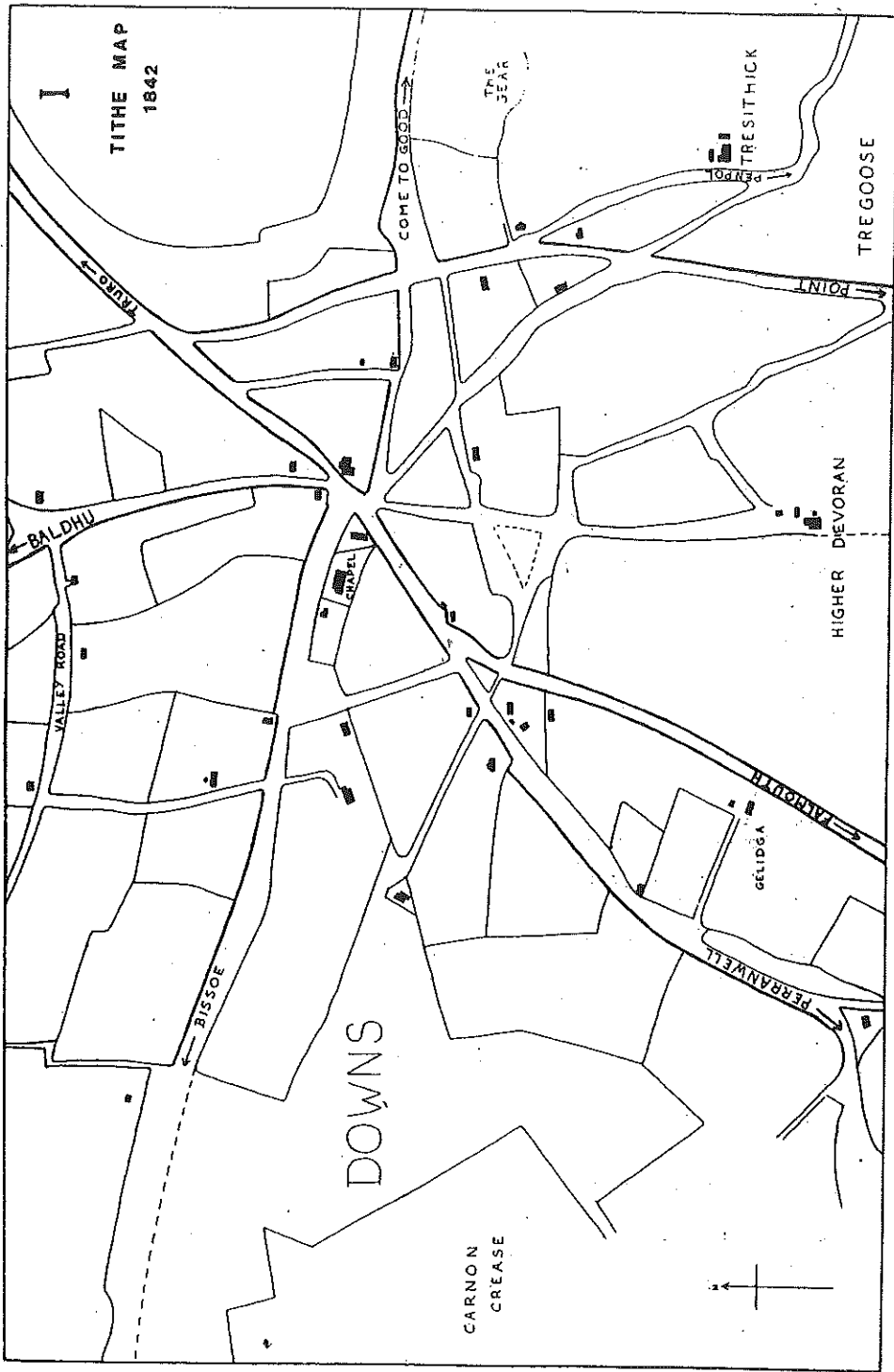
The most striking change was in the employment. In 1841 almost half the males and two females worked in the mines, but 1871 only ten young men were miners. This change was

partly due to the slump in mining (previous to 1871 Cornwall was producing up to 50% of the world's copper), and also to the fact that there was work to be had on the railway and docks nearer home.

The sons of the farmers and tradesmen nearly always followed father's occupation. Take as an example Mr and Mrs A, a young couple both Feock-born with two children in 1841; he was a carpenter, became a wheelwright and finally a builder and undertaker. His eldest son was apprenticed to him as a wheelwright, then became a ship's joiner, married a local girl and moved to Devoran; the second son joined father and eventually took over the business; the third son became a pupil teacher at the age of thirteen. By 1871 the grandson was a shipwright's apprentice. This family is also typical of the change in attitude to education. In 1851 none of his children was at school, by 1871 all the younger ones had a few years schooling and all the grandchildren between four and twelve were at school.

As an example of an employed worker take Mr B., a waterman. He and his wife were both born in this district in 1800 and had seven children all living at home in 1841; none of the boys was old enough to work. Father next had a job at the Smelting Works and finally became an agricultural labourer. The eldest son was apprenticed to a carpenter and left the parish, the next two sons and two daughters were farm labourers as were two grandsons, another grandson was a carpenter. In this family only the youngest boy had any schooling but in 1871 all the next generation was at school up to the age of ten.

Finally a widow of forty-six with nine sons and a daughter all living near Quenchwell, in a cottage which has since disappeared; the age range was from twenty-two to four years, which gives the usual average of two years between births. In 1841 her four eldest sons were miners, then came the girl at home and five more boys. By 1851 the two eldest had left the district, the next five worked on the Tram and the girl and the youngest boy were farm workers. By 1861 mother had died; all the boys, except one, married local girls and had managed to get cottages near each other; one of the



original miners returned with his wife from Gwennap and he and the unmarried brother were working at the Vitriol works in the Carnon Valley.

It is interesting to compare the age groups in 1871 with 1971. The following figures are only approximate and refer to the whole parish except Devoran. In 1871, half the population was under seventeen and only 6% over 65 years; now only 20% are under seventeen and 25% are over 65, of whom quite a number are living alone, compared with five in 1871. Throughout the last century the average household was five, today it is between two and three.

Owing to the slump in mining which began in the 1870s, there was nothing to attract new people and the population was the same in 1901 as it had been thirty years earlier. Map II shows the houses at the beginning of this century; a few more have been built. The shaded areas show additions made between 1880 and 1907, mainly additional farm buildings. Some of the waste along the roadsides has been taken in and a few old tracks have gone, there were still the remains of two quarries and of the clay pits from which the fireclay for the smelting furnaces had been dug. Where the Carnon Downs Garage now stands there were a smithy and a carpenter's shop; there was a shoemaker's wooden workshop on the verge outside Algarnick House, and a duck pond at the entrance to the present village hall; there was no Post Office until 1934, only a Post box in a wall on the corner of the Quenchwell road.

Map III shows the development since 1907; the first growth came after the 1914-18 war when houses and bungalows were built on both sides of the main road (marked I on map). These were dependent on rain water and often had to carry drinking water. Lighting for the whole district was by lamps and candles, the paraffin was brought round by an old man with a donkey cart, when the donkey died he is said to have pulled the cart himself. There was no electricity before 1922 when Mrs Powys Rogers of Tregye and the tenant of Tresithick paid £75 to get it brought up from Carnon Valley, at first this served only a few houses and it was not until 1947 that the more remote places were connected. Houses built

between 1830 and 1940 are marked II on the map; these were nearly all built by local tradesmen. In 1946 Carnon Downs was declared a Development Area; it was soon after this that the semi-detached council houses in Gig Lane were built on a field which had been called Paradise. All houses built before 1950 are shown shaded, later developments are in outline. Mains water pipes were laid in 1953 and connected by 1957; a sewerage scheme was drawn up and the first connections made in 1964. Street lamps came in the 1960s.

The first buildings after 1950 were the bungalows in Manse Road; council houses at Carnon Crescent; bungalows near Wellington Place; on the main road west of Gig Lane and on Tregye road.

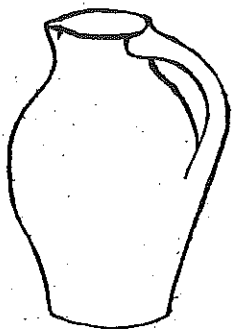
Then, because their cow died, an elderly couple who had a holding between Valley Lane and Quenchwell Road, sold their land to a development company who also bought the adjacent farmland and started the first speculative development. These are bungalows with either two or three bedrooms, a garage and a small garden which the owners have made attractive; part of the land has been reserved for a school.

The Knights Meadow estate began when Mr Knight retired. This was also a company development but includes some semi-detached bungalows; since then the village has grown rapidly on the western side. Ground has been reserved for a bypass round the south-east of the village. There are now three village stores, a hardware shop and a hairdresser. The smithy which stood near the corner of Smithy Lane and was the last of the 'shops' in this part of Cornwall has now become a pottery.

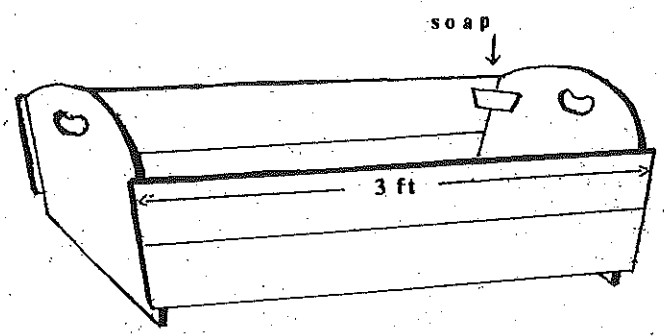
Fortunately a farsighted committee raised the money and bought the site for the village hall before the land was sold for building; although the hall was not built until 1970, it proved so popular that another room has been added and it is a flourishing centre of village activity, providing a meeting place for the Old People's Club, Women's Institute, Old Cornwall Society, Drama Group, Gardening club, Winemaker's club and many others. It is also hired for exhibitions which last several days and attract visitors from all parts of the county.

We have been asked for an explanation of some of the names in this area; they are:-

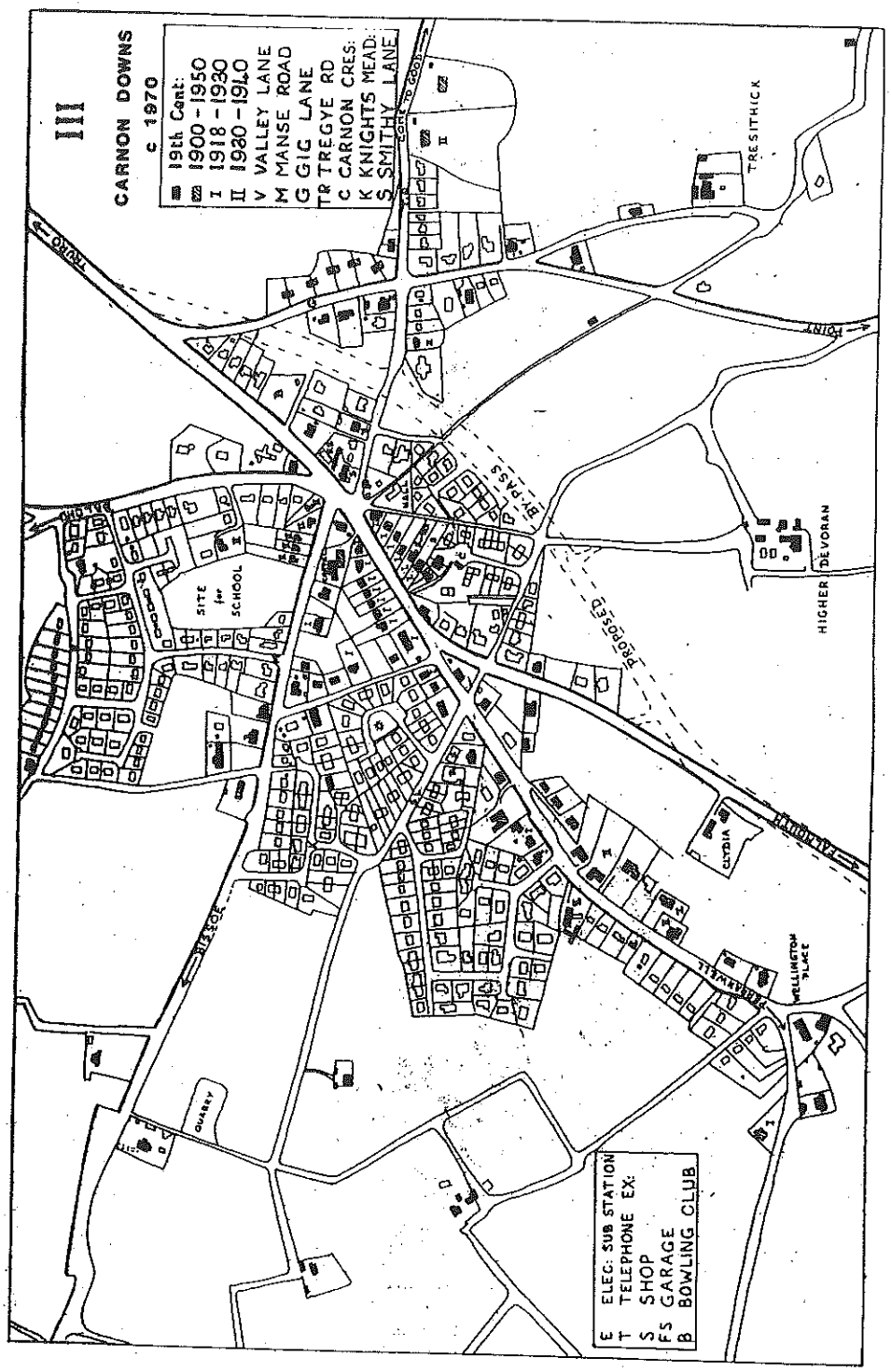
- Forth Noweth
- The Stettin
- Staggy Lane
- Parc an Creag
- Carnon Crease
- Woon Lane
- Cowlings Lane
- New Road
- A short lane
- Muddy lane
- Enclosure of the Barrow
- Middle Carnon
- named after William Woon
- who had a cottage there
- named after the previous
- owner of the land

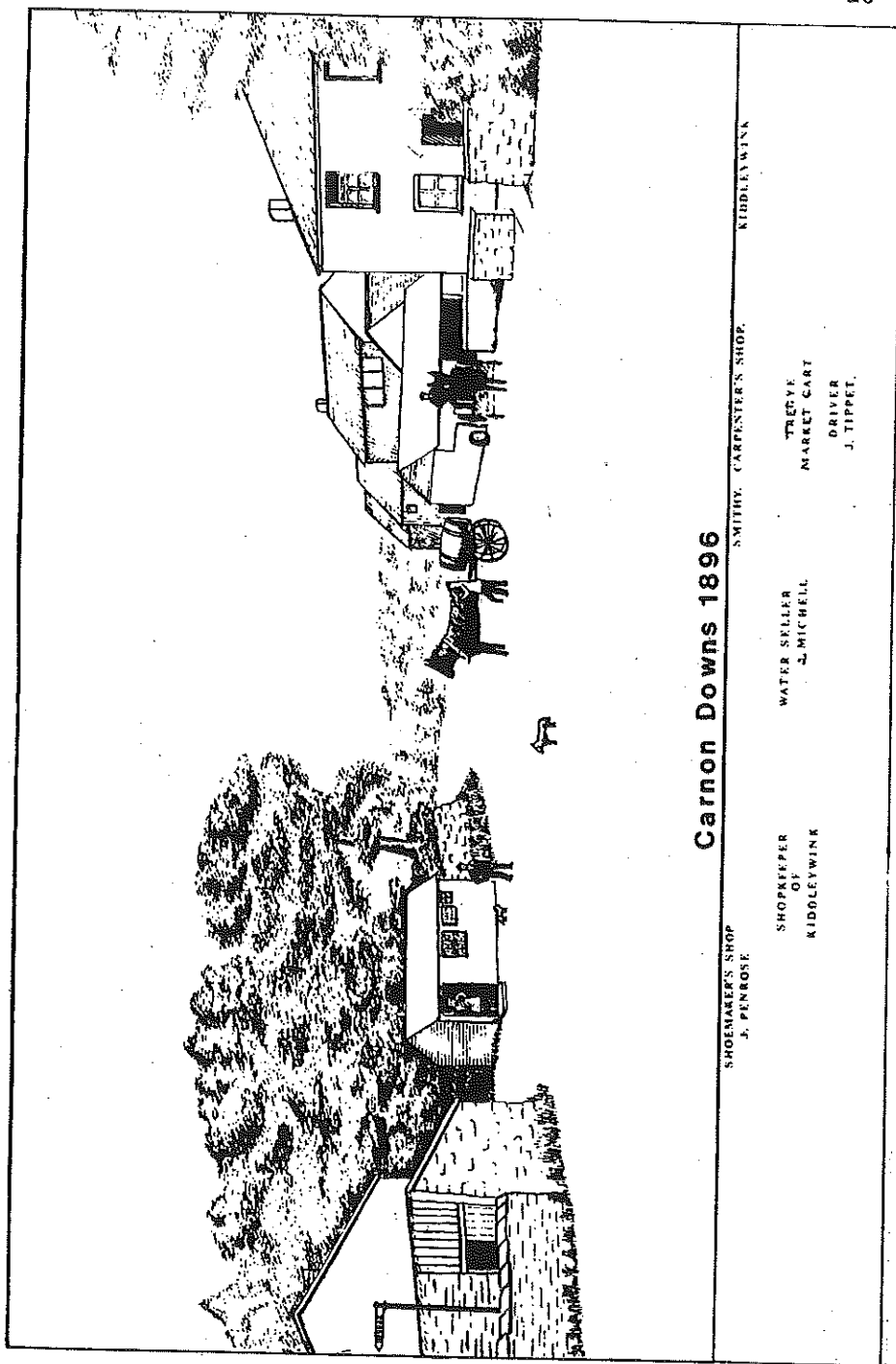


Cornish Pitcher



Wooden Washing Tray





Carnon Downs 1896

SHOEMAKER'S SHOP
J. PENROSESHOPKEEPER
OF
KIDDLEYWINKWATER SELLER
J. MICHELLTREYVE
MARKET CART
DRIVER
J. TIPPET.

SMITHY, CARPENTER'S SHOP.

KIDDLEYWINK

SHIP OWNERS IN THE PARISH OF FEOCK In the 19th century

This note is based on an analysis of the owners of ships built on the Truro river during the 19th century as shown in the Custom House registers. It is therefore incomplete since many people must have not been included. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this preliminary survey will be of interest as it gives some idea of the pattern of ship owning and may serve as a basis which others can expand.

As is well known the ownership of small vessels was divided into 64 shares, and even these shares were sometimes held in partnership. Ships were seldom owned by one man and quite often the number of owners holding shares in a vessel of no more than 90 tons could exceed 20. Shares often changed hands quite frequently and were also used as securities for loans and mortgages. Thus an accurate picture of ownership is sometimes difficult to obtain. In addition, the occupations of the owners are often entered in registers in a somewhat erratic manner and the same man can appear, for example as a carpenter, a master mariner or a shipowner in successive entries.

The system of ownership for new vessels seems to have varied from yard to yard. For instance, ships from John Stephens' yard at Point Yard were usually built for one managing owner with perhaps one or two partners, whereas those from Charles Dyer's yard at Sunny Corner Truro seem to have been ordered for relatively large syndicates of small shareholders, many of them tradesmen from Truro. The owner of the building yard was often a major shareholder in a new vessel and sold his shares soon after launching, presumably to recoup the cost of building. In the same way, sailmakers and shipwrights often had a few shares in a new ship, perhaps in part payment for their work. Ownership of shares in small merchant craft was widely distributed in England in the last century; this tendency is shown in Feock which was well placed for maritime activity. This preliminary study had provided the names of 99 owners who held shares at various times in 107 ships, all built in the Truro river area. These owners came from all walks of life; 50 were connected with shipping, but 49 had less direct links with the maritime world.