

THE BLEAK HOUSE BAND

In the days before radio, television and the motor car, people organised their own amusements and one of these was the local band. At one time Feock had such a band, but it shut down and the instruments became available so Mr W. Trebilcock of Carnon Downs, who then lived at Bleak House, organised the Bleak House Band. He had formerly been a member of the Perranwell Band, later joined the St Keverne Band and still maintains his interest in band music.

The members of the band were:

Mr William Trebilcock	cornet
Mr Tom Trebilcock	euphonium
Mr Richard Trebilcock	E flat bass
Mr B. J. Marshall	baritone
Mr William Trebilcock (farmer)	drum
Mr R. Michell	tenor horn
Mr R. L. Michell	cornet
Mr Jack Marshall	"
Mr R. Moore	"
Mr Gordon Marshall	"
Mr Frank Marshall	"

The band used to practice in the front room at Bleak House or in the shed on the bank behind the house, and, at times, in the barn at Mr Trebilcock's farm (now Barn House).

At Christmas the band collected for Doctor Barnado's Home and on one occasion joined forces for carols with the Devoran Chapel Choir.

As the members married and moved away, the band broke up and was finally dissolved in 1929. Mr R. Michell still has the tenor horn and for a long time the drum was in the barn but finally disappeared. Mr W. Trebilcock has several photographs of the band when it was at its full strength.

This information was supplied by Mr W. Trebilcock and Mr R. Michell.

TREGYE

The earliest known plan of Tregye - from Doidge's Survey of 1737 - shows no principal house but at least two small ones and lists twelve fields, or closes, a wood and orchards still recognisable in the Tithe Map of 1842 (where a number of additional fields are shown) and indeed even to-day. For most of this time the land has been leased by successive owners to tenant farmers. The principal house, or The Mansion as it was once called, was built, it is believed, at the beginning of the last century, enlarged at the end, and substantially altered in recent years. Although occupied for a time by tenants or caretakers, the house has been, during three periods of its history, the home of a prominent local family, involved not only in the development of the house and grounds but in the economic and social life of the neighbourhood.

The name, spelt variously Tregye, Tregie, Treguy or Tregy - as in the earliest record, the Subsidy Rolls of 1327 - is thought to mean "the house of the dog". In the Feet of Fines of 1398, right of tenement was acknowledged as belonging to Henry Gourlyn and Margery, his wife, as a gift from John Nansmolkyn.

The 18th Century

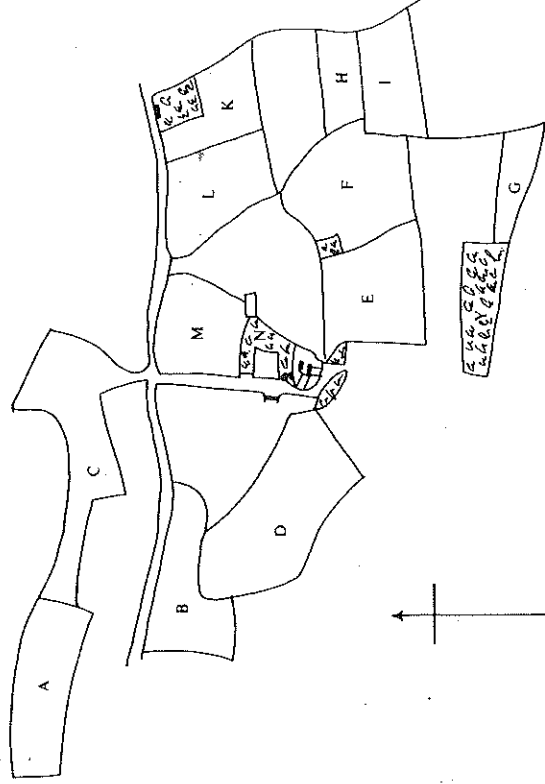
The earliest known document referring to ownership or tenancy is dated 1715 when an agreement was made on the assignment of tithes relating to about two acres purchased by Martin Bodinar of Newlyn in the parish of Paul from Andrew Jenkin of Feock, yeoman, and Willmot, his wife and the daughter and co-heir of Christian Hendra.

The earliest known resident, however, is Stephen Adams, and it would seem that the estate had been divided into two as it is mentioned in both the will of Stephen, who died in 1717, and that of his brother William Adams, who died in 1725. This suggests that the property may have been owned by their father and divided on his death between his sons - a late but in Cornwall by no means uncommon example of the "Gavelkind" system of tenure whereby, in intestacy, the estate descended to the sons in equal shares. Stephen's estate passed to his widow Martha and then to his daughters, while William's estate passed to his daughter, Ann Adams, who died in 1773, and then to her cousins Grace and Ann Cardell (see "Some Feock Wills and Inventories" elsewhere in this issue).

It seems likely that at that time all or most of the land was owned by the 3rd Viscount Falmouth and this connection with the Boscawen family has continued. An example of a

A PLAN OF TREGYE IN THE PARISH OF FEOCK

FROM DOIDGE'S SURVEY, 1737

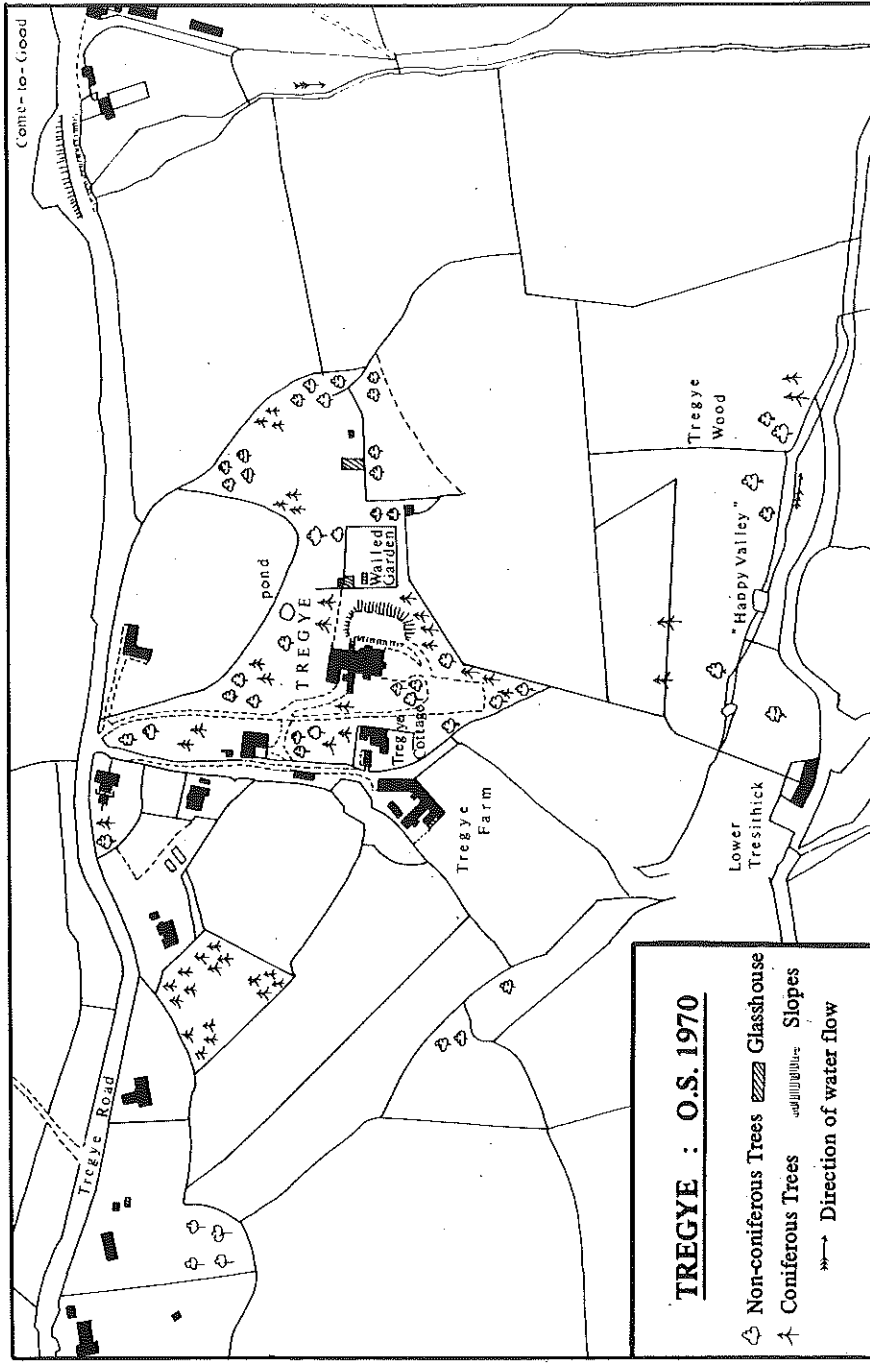


REFERENCE

- A Down Close
- B Gear
- C Way Close
- D Barn Close
- E Upper Beef Close
- F Lower d^o
- G Little Close
- H Outer Moor
- I Inner d^o
- K Lower New Close, House, etc.
- L Upper New Close
- M Well Close
- N House, Orchard etc.
- Y Little Wood

note - in this Wood your Lordship hath $\frac{1}{2}$ & $\frac{1}{6}$ Mr. Parsons $\frac{1}{6}$ & Mrs. Russell $\frac{1}{6}$

Total - 47 acres



TREGYE : O.S. 1970

- ⊗ Non-coniferous Trees
- ⊕ Coniferous Trees
- ▨ Glasshouse
- ↗ Slopes
- Direction of water flow

personal link was a bequest by Ann Adams - a sum of 40/- - to the executors of the late Lady Falmouth "as a token of my gratitude for a favour she once did me". In 1800, however, certain fields to the north of the Cannon Downs-Come-to-Good road and adjoining Killiganoon were sold by the next Lord Falmouth to Thomas Spry* of Killiganoon and Place. In a conveyance dated 26/27th June 1800, a total of 13½ acres were acquired by Thomas Spry - 6½ acres formerly in the occupation of William and Ann Adams which he himself was then occupying, and 7 acres formerly in the tenure of Philip Watkins and then of John Libby. Lord Falmouth's ownership and the occupants were confirmed by the Land Tax Assessment of 1800: that part of Tregye occupied by Thomas Spry was assessed at 12/6d., and that part occupied by John Libby at £1. 17. 11d.

John Libby, who lived with his wife Jenefer at Come-to-Good, was the son of Henry Libby of Kea, a tinner, who directed in his will that his elder son should teach young John his trade of ropemaking. During his lifetime John became a wealthy man and in his will, in which he is described as a gentleman, he left not only his leasehold tenements and estates of Come-to-Good and Tregye but other leasehold property in the parishes of Feock, Kenwyn and Kea, together with a house near Coinage Hall in Truro, a freehold property at Cliffs Meadow, Cannon Downs, shares in Wheal Fortune Tin and Copper Mine, and a substantial sum of money. At the time of his death in 1807 his nephew, James Penrose, was living at Tregye but the residue of his estate, of which Tregye would have been part, was left to James' elder brother William. The change of occupant at Tregye is confirmed by an amendment to the Land Tax Assessment.

1809-1850 (The Penrose Family)

A farmhouse of substantial size, by 18th century standards, must have existed for some time at Tregye - probably where Tregye Cottage stands today. The inscription "W. P. 1809" over the front door suggests, however, that the building of the present Tregye House was begun by William Penrose soon after he acquired the property from his uncle. This inscription is still to be seen above what is now the doorway on the right-hand side of the entrance lobby. But it was not until 1814 that William, then aged 43, brought a bride to Tregye: in March of that year he married Juliana, daughter of Matthew and Mary Roberts of Lemellyn in the parish of Probus, and in February 1821 their only son, William Roberts Penrose, was born. William Penrose's business interests in the Penpol Lead Smelting Works have already been referred to in "Feock I". His death in 1838, at the age of 66, and that of his son

only four years later, are recorded on a tablet in Feock Parish Church where William was a Churchwarden. All his freehold and leasehold property was left to his wife and to his friends the Rev. Francis Cole (who had been appointed Vicar of Feock in 1833) and Edward Michell, of St Clements, in trust for his son until he attained the age of 21.

On 25th May 1838, soon after William Penrose's death, a notice appeared in the West Briton offering to let for a period of 7 or 14 years Tregie House, the Stables, Coach-house, a Labourer's Cottage, 5 acres of orchards and some 54 acres of "excellent arable and pasture land" together with the adjoining tenement of Come-to-Good. The house was described in some detail: "pleasantly situated in a garden, has a southern aspect and commands most interesting and picturesque views of Falmouth Harbour and the river Fal. Comprises a cheerful Dining-room, 22 ft. x 20 ft., a Drawing-room of same dimensions, a Breakfast parlour and Book room, with 2 excellent Kitchens, furnished with every requisite, 6 good Bed-rooms, Dairy, Pantry, extensive Beer, Cider and Wine Cellars, Apple House, with Cider press, and other convenient offices. The Walled Garden (in which there is an excellent greenhouse) is stocked with choice Fruit Trees, and the Orchards are in full bearing".

Another advertisement appeared in May 1840 and, as it suggested, the land was then let separately. In an agreement signed on 14th November 1840, Juliana Penrose (presumably in her capacity as co-trustee of her husband's estate) leased to William Retallack and his two sons, Robert and Daniel, all yeomen of Feock, "all that estate and premises called Tregie containing about 54 acres of land . . . and all that estate and premises called Come-to-Good containing about 30 acres" for the term of 14 years at a quarterly rent of £130. The "Mansion House" and its walled gardens and orchards, the coach house and the labourer's cottage were excepted from the agreement, but it seems that by then both Mrs Penrose and her son were living elsewhere and required a caretaker at Tregye. Certainly by 1841, as the Census shows, their friend the Rev. Cole was occupying Tregye with his wife Susan, their three daughters and two servants, probably remaining there until his appointment as Vicar of St Issey in 1844. Two young gardeners, Samuel and Norman Mortimer, were recorded in the Census as living in the second dwelling at Tregye, presumably the cottage.

The Tithe Map of 1842 shows that, of the 54 acres of arable land leased to and occupied by the Retallacks, some were freehold and owned by Mrs Penrose (presumably as co-trustee), while the remainder were owned by Lord Falmouth

and leased to Mrs Penrose.

In July 1842, only three months after attaining his majority, and inheriting the house and freehold land at Tregye, William Roberts Penrose was accidentally drowned at Turnaweir Bar, Pill Creek, as he was sailing from his lodging at Pill to Truro, where he was articled to a firm of solicitors, Hodge and Hockin. His small boat was upset in a squall and, unable to swim, he tried to reach the nearby shore with the help of an oar but was drowned when the oar floated away.

Mrs Penrose died on 8th July 1850 at the age of 72 at her home at 47 Lemon Street, Truro - a woman of some wealth as family papers show that that part of her estate invested in mortgages and personal securities amounted to no less than £14,000. In her will, made a month after her son's tragic death, Mrs Penrose left her leasehold property at Tregye to her sister-in-law Ann Drew, the wife of Joseph Drew of Perranarworthal and William Penrose's sister. A Codicil made three years later, refers to her subsequent purchase of the freehold portion of Tregye - the house, walled garden, orchards and about 31 acres of land "formerly the freehold of inheritance of my late husband William Penrose deceased and which on the decease of my late son William Roberts Penrose descended to his uncle James Penrose Gentleman as his heir at law", and bequeathed this freehold property to her nephew John Elliot, the only son of her sister Mary, a surgeon of Kingsbridge, Devon, and on his death to his son William Henry Fletcher Elliot.

1850-1890

For almost forty years following Mrs Penrose's death (and indeed probably from the time of the Rev. Cole's departure in 1844) the house appears to have been occupied either by a caretaker or by a tenant. At the time of the 1851 Census, in March, the occupants were John Roberts, a lead-smelter and refiner, his wife and seven children while only a few weeks later, on 30th May, an offer was again made in the West Briton to let the house, garden, orchards, coach-house and stables "now in the occupation of Otho Cooke, Esq.", together with any quantity of land not exceeding 10 acres for a term of 3 or 5 years. Further advertisements appeared in 1852 and in 1853.

But perhaps the story of these forty years is really the story of Sarah, daughter of William Gerrish, builder, of Cannon Downs, who was mistress of Tregye for thirty of those years. In 1859, after the death of her first husband, Nicholas Tallack of Narabo, a waterman, Sarah married Daniel Retallack who was by then living at Tregye. His father, William Retallack, had died - at the age of 85 - in 1847 and

since his brother Robert had his own farm at Trevilla, it seems that the original lease of 1840 between Mrs Penrose and the three Retallacks must have been renewed by Daniel. The 1851 Census confirms that he and his wife Sarah were the occupants of Tregye with Sarah's daughter Catherine Tallack, then aged 12, and a young servant girl, and describes Daniel as "a farmer of 88 acres employing 1 man and 1 boy". These were probably Thomas Barrett and his grandson Thomas Woolcock Barrett, then aged 11, who were living in the second dwelling at Tregye. Thomas's wife Mary Ann was described as "char woman" - perhaps at Tregye?

During the summer of 1861 payment of £3.17.9d. was made by Mr Elliot to Messrs. Treseder and Farley for "labour at Tregye from 16th July to September 29th at 3/- a day" after deduction of 18/- for fruit sold. But in December 1861, Daniel Retallack died and within a few months the house, its orchards, garden and the 31 acres of land had been sold. A bond between John Elliot and his son, dated 22nd April 1863, refers to their concurrence in the sale, completed in or about the month of April 1862 for a sum of £1,850. The purchaser is not known but may well have been Lord Falmouth who already owned the other portion of Tregye.

Sarah remained at Tregye with her daughter and in February 1864 married for the third time. Her husband, John Dunstan, also a farmer, was born in Kea and was 13 years her junior. Recording John Dunstan, his wife Sarah and Catherine, now aged 22, as occupants of Tregye, with one servant, the 1871 Census describes Mr Dunstan as "a farmer of 85 acres employing 1 man and 2 boys". The cottage was occupied at that time by William F. Tregenza, farm labourer, his wife Susan and two daughters, Susan J. and Mary E. In 1873 Mr Dunstan was offering "modern farm buildings" for letting, and in 1880 and again in 1883 he was advertising for a farm labourer to live in the cottage and tend cattle - "none but good men need apply".

The Boscawen and Rogers Families (1890-1939)

Sarah Dunstan died at Tregye in November 1886, aged 65, but her husband continued to live there until 1889. In that year the 6th Viscount Falmouth died and Tregye became the home of his youngest son, the Hon. John Richard de Clare Boscawen, and his wife, Lady Margaret Florence Lucy, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Strafford whom he married in 1890. While extensive alterations were being made to the house the Hon. John and his wife lived at Porthgidden, Feock. A second floor was added, under a pitched roof which replaced the original flat roof and the initials "J.R. de C.B. and M.F. L.B." with the date 1891-2 can still be seen inscribed on the

east-facing gable end. In January 1892 the builders, C. & J. Harris, of Truro, were advertising for general masons required at Tregye.

The two semi-detached cottages at the entrance to Tregye were built about ten years later and most of the extensive landscaping which the Hon. John carried out in "Happy Valley" was completed at about the same time, as the pools in the valley are shown in the 1906 revision of the Ordnance Survey. The Hon. John became a County Alderman in 1895 (and headed the list of votes in 1901); in 1896 he and the Rev. Arthur Boscawen called a meeting in Truro to establish the Spring Flower Show and two years later the Hon. John became its Secretary. Kelly's Directories refer to him as "lord of the manor" and, after his death in 1915, to Lady Margaret as "lady of the manor" - roles clearly illustrated in a photograph taken some years earlier of a Boys' Brigade tea treat at Tregye with the boys seated at three trestle tables set up outside the front door, with the Hon. John on the steps about to give a word of welcome and Lady Margaret pouring tea from a large silver teapot.

After the First World War, Tregye became the home of Mr Edward Powys Rogers and his wife Charlotte, a member of the Williams family of Scorrier and sister of Mr J. C. Williams of Caerhays Castle, and formerly of Burncoose House, Perranwell. Mrs Powys Rogers lived at Tregye until the Second World War when the house was occupied by the armed forces.

There are still many who remember her as a friend and benefactress. She it was who, with the tenant of Tresithick, paid £75 to have electricity brought up to a few houses from the Carnon Valley in 1922; and who gave boots to local children at Christmas time. Like her predecessor, Mrs Powys Rogers continued the enrichment of the gardens with beautiful and sometimes rare plants brought back by expeditions financed by members of the family. Happy Valley - now fortunately being restored to its former beauty after many years - contains, for example, large marigolds which came from the gardens of the Vatican.

There are many stories concerning Tregye - its ghost, for instance, of a headless coachman driving four headless horses, said to appear on Midsummer Eve. Of greater substance perhaps is the story of the willow tree still growing over the old well to the north of the house. This well, built into a grotto at the head of a little stream, provided the water for the house until 1891, when the Hon. John had a second well dug, and the willow is said to have grown from a cutting of one growing over the original burial place of Napoleon on St.

Helena.

The second well at Tregye was sunk at a location chosen by a diviner, who predicted water at 35 feet. No water was found at this level and digging continued for some time. Surfacing at lunch time, however, the workmen dislodged a stone - at 35 feet - which released a torrent of water and tools left at the foot of the shaft have remained there to this day.

* Commander Thomas Spry, R.N. was born Thomas Davy but assumed his mother's maiden name by Royal Licence in 1779; he inherited Place, in the parish of St Anthony, through her, and later became an Admiral in H.M. Fleet.

MAIN SOURCES:

Wills - County Record Office, Public Record Office and Principal Probate Registry (Somerset House)

Land Tax Assessment, c. 1800, with Amendments - County Record Office

Title Apportionment - County Record

Census Records - Public Record Office

Royal Cornwall Gazette and West Briton - Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro

The Elliot Family Papers, Reading University