

of danger. There was also some danger of fire from the gases given off by the mud. The top of the bed was level but the bottom followed the contours of the underlying rock; in some places the tin was 6 or 7 feet thick, in others the men had to work lying down and sometimes had to cut away the rock in order to reach into the depth of 7'. The workings remained dry although at high tide there was 12 to 14 feet of water above them.

The tin stuff and waste was wheeled to the tram waggons in E-E, taken to the passes, F-F, and shot into waggons in A-A, which were taken to C where the entire waggon was hauled up the shaft. This was the first mine in Cornwall where the whole waggon was raised; previously the load had been transferred to kipples before it was lifted to the surface. These works were directed by Mr Charles D. Taylor and his method was a great improvement on the previous attempts.

The Royal Institution of Cornwall has recently purchased an oil painting by T. May showing the artist's impression of the mine in 1874. This picture will be hung in the Mineral Gallery at the Museum, Truro. It shows the engine house on the shore below Point, other surface buildings and a tram hauled to the surface in the cage. There are now no visible remains of this mine and it is uncertain how long the operation lasted.

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Main sources used in the above account:

- 1 Transactions of the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, vol. IV, 1838
- 2 Report on the Geology of Cornwall, Devon and West Somerset. H.T. de la Beche, 1839
- 3 Four lectures on Geology and Mining. George Henwood, Mining Journal 1855
- 4 Tin Stream Works at Restronguet Creek. Charles D. Taylor 1873
- 5 British Mining, Robert Hunt F.R.S. 1884

The two widely read weekly papers in the 19th century in this area were the 'Royal Cornwall Gazette' and the 'West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser'. Each paper, price 4½d, contained eight large pages of close print, six columns to a page. The aim was the maximum amount of information on national, international and West of England matters. No space was allowed for illustrations, except perhaps a tiny diagrammatic ship above the shipping news, and there were no photographs. Occasionally Devoran, Point and other small places are mentioned to report local events of church, chapel, school, sales or lettings of properties etc., or quaint or tragic happenings.

One incident found in the West Briton of 31st March 1843 gives an account from the Lent Assizes of a robbery at Quenchwell. The smart action of the Police constable of Kenwyn (William Row) and the severity of the sentence viz. transportation for ten years, makes one think that committing a crime in those days was more hazardous when a quick getaway was impossible. The facts as reported are these: Thomas C. aged 25 was charged with having feloniously assaulted and put in bodily fear Margaret Nicholls, and robbed her of nine sovereigns, eleven shillings and a fourpenny piece, and other articles.

When examined, Margaret Nicholls said 'I live at Quenchwell in Feock and on Wednesday, 8th February, I was going to Devoran to wash, about 25 minutes past five in the morning. It was dark and wet and I had my umbrella up before me. I was going along and the prisoner came and touched me. He put one hand on my eyes and one over my mouth and put his leg in front and tipped me over, and I fell with my head in the umbrella on the ground. The prisoner was a next door neighbour. When I was down I cried 'Lord have mercy upon me, don't kill me. Murder, Murder.'

'While I screamed murder he put his hand in all round my flesh feeling for my pocket. He could not find my pocket the side he was feeling and he put his hand round the other side and found it, and he broke my pocket. When he got it - my

pocket - he went away. I don't know which way he went, I was so much flurried. I had in my pocket nine sovereigns and 8/4 in a calico bag, 3/- loose and a snuff box, a pin cushion, a small knife, two nobs of sugar (laughter), a thimble and a padlock.'

William Row, constable, said he went in search of the prisoner on the 8th February near Bissoe Bridge, about a mile from his home. 'I asked him whether he was on the Falmouth road that morning. He told me he was not. I told him I should like to see what money he had. He told me he had 11/- or 12/- shillings. I told him I should like to see it. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a calico bag which contained nine sovereigns and 11/10d in silver. I told him there were nine sovereigns there and he said he did not know how they got there. I took him in custody and he endeavoured to get away. I found the things I now produce: two nobs of sugar, four keys, a thimble and the money.'

Perhaps after this adventure Margaret Nicholls decided to invest her savings in a safer place.

A sad case of a boyish prank is found in the Gazette of 6th February 1863. On a Saturday afternoon some boys were playing at the foot of Green Lane Devoran, near the then proposed railway station. One boy called Cock, lately employed on the line, had some gunpowder belonging, it was supposed, to Messrs Sharp. Cock said to the deceased, Keasley, aged eleven, the son of a porter on the quay 'If you will sit down on that stone I will blow you up.' Cock put a match to the powder which exploded. The other boys ran off leaving Keasley injured with severe burns about the abdomen, a young woman passing at the time went to his assistance, and he was taken home and attended by Mr Greenwood, surgeon. After great suffering the boy died.

The simplicity and innocent enjoyment of rural life comes out in the report of a visiting menagerie (West Briton 1st June 1855). 'This pretty little valley (Perran Wharf) was disturbed from its tranquil state on Friday last by Wombwells Menagerie settling down in front of the Norway inn, and music from the excellent band which accompanied it soon brought

together the inhabitants of Devoran, Mylor, Ponsanooth and other surrounding villages who availed themselves of the opportunity of seeing the wild animals.' Bathy's Menagerie paid a similar visit in June 1857.

Sorrow came to the Sampson family in November 1872. Mr W. Sampson aged 53, an agent for the Devoran Company and also holding management positions in tin smelting works at Bissoe and Llanely, was very near sighted and suffered from gout. By mistake he drank Burnett's disinfectant, thinking it was Bitter Waters, to relieve his gout. His wife gave him warm water and bicarbonate and summoned Mr Sharp but all this failed. Mr Sampson died and his widow received £1000 life insurance.

Two sailors at Devoran had a lucky escape in October 1866. They were destroying rats in a vessel on the quay, using sulphur, pepper and quicksilver. On going to see the effect on the rats they were overcome and had to be removed to pure air where they remained in a comatose state for over an hour.

Times were so hard in 1880 that at Perranarworthal a soup kitchen was organized twice a week between 5th December and 25th March 1881. Some parents had help from relatives. Unfortunately an expected remittance failed to arrive from a son in the colonies for Mrs Grace E. aged 68, the wife of a porter. On being told at the post office that nothing for her had arrived she went home and hanged herself with a rope from a beam in the kitchen.

Divorce was most unusual for ordinary folk in the last century, but a case is reported at Feock in June 1896 (Gazette). A Petty Officer in the Royal Navy and his bride were married on Christmas day 1890 and they lived together until December 1892. Then the husband sailed away to China on H.M.S. Plover, but before leaving he arranged for his wife's maintenance and also for his wife's cousin to live with her. In the late summer of 1894, while the P.O. was still far away, his wife allowed another cousin, Mr H., to lodge at her home for weekends. The companion noticed signs of attachment between her cousin and Mr H. and decided to

cease sleeping in the same bedroom as she was embarrassed when Mr H. came to the room and kissed the wife. The ship returned from China in December 1895 and the P.O. returned to Feock in February 1896. Alas, it could not have been a happy reunion, for on the 14th May 1895 a child had been born to the wife. Divorce proceedings followed, the costs being charged to the co-respondent.

## THE OLD VICARAGE

In February 1974 the new Feock church hall was opened; it is built on the site of the old hall which, in its turn, replaced the old vicarage burnt down in 1896; this was reported in the Royal Cornwall Gazette on March 5th. 'A fire of a very serious nature broke out this morning about 2.30. A messenger was at once despatched to Truro and the Fire Brigade was summoned....and by 4.30 were ready to start with their engine, but through some cause or other, the coachman was not called. This caused a delay of over half an hour and it was after 5 before the Brigade could get away. When they got to Feock they found that it was too late to render any service, everything by this time being burnt to the ground owing to the very strong wind that was raging. Great fears were entertained as to the safety of one of the children of the vicar but happily he was rescued uninjured. In less than half an hour from the time the fire was found out, the roof had fallen in. Mr Mermagen's valuable library of 2000 volumes, the collection of a lifetime, was completely destroyed.'

At the next meeting of the Truro Fire Brigade Committee it was decided to connect the telephone to the house of the driver at a cost of 42/- and to purchase 600 feet of hose for £24. 4. 0, which would make the Fire Brigade 'very efficient'. Later in the year Feock Post Office was connected to the Telegraph system and in 1897 the present vicarage was built.

The old vicarage is fully described in the Terriers, which were lists of the property owned by the church in the parish, sent at intervals to the Bishop. In 1726 it was built mostly of stone but with a 'linney' and part of the back wall of 'clobb', the roof was of thatch. On the ground floor there were a kitchen and hall, both with lime ash floors, a parlour which was 'planned' and a cellar with 'no floor but the country'; in the linney were a dairy, a pantry, a little cellar and a staircase leading to a small gallery which gave access to 'three little chambers all planned and ceiled'.

By 1744 the kitchen had been floored with stone, part of the roof had been 'covered over with tiling stones' and one room