

A Brief History of Lanreath Parish



The Parish of Lanreath is steeped in history. The name itself derives from the 11th century 'Lanredoch', a combination of Lan (from Lann), meaning the site of an ancient Christian community, and Redoch, a corruption of Raydhogh, who was an early Celtic Christian. The name literally meant the site of Raydhogh's church. In the 16th Century the name was softened to Lanreatha and the final 'a' was dropped sometime after that. It is now pronounced Lan~reth.

The Bronze and Iron Ages

During the Bronze Age and the later Iron Age most of Britain, including Cornwall, was populated by diverse groups of warring tribes that were thought to share a common linguistic heritage with similar groups whose influence was felt over a huge area of what is now Europe and Asia Minor. These extensive tribal groups are commonly referred to as 'Celts'. Recent historians, however, dispute the use of the term 'Celts' to describe inhabitants in Britain and Ireland during the Bronze and Iron ages on the sole basis of linguistic connections with the Celtic tribes elsewhere in Europe. It is their contention that the term 'Celtic' to describe a separate identity in Britain covering culture, monuments, art, and peoples, both ancient and modern, was not in use until the 18th century.



Bury Down Iron Age hillfort (courtesy of Google)

Evidence of such an Iron Age settlement may be found in a commanding position on the western slope of Bury Down, located about 1.5 miles to the north of the village of Lanreath. The fort consists of two oval ramparts, quite widely spaced with diameters of 170m and 195m. The outer rampart is now very indistinct but the inner retains much of its original structure with a maximum height of 4.5 metres.

What is more certain, however, is that throughout the Iron Age many people lived in hill forts surrounded by walls and ditches. This allowed the settlement to be defended against attack from rival clans; protect valuable stock from cattle rustling; and provided a highly visible symbol of wealth and power. Inside the fort, families would typically live in simple round houses made of mud and wood (wattle and daub), thatched with straw. The community would be supported by rudimentary agriculture including the raising of livestock and poultry.



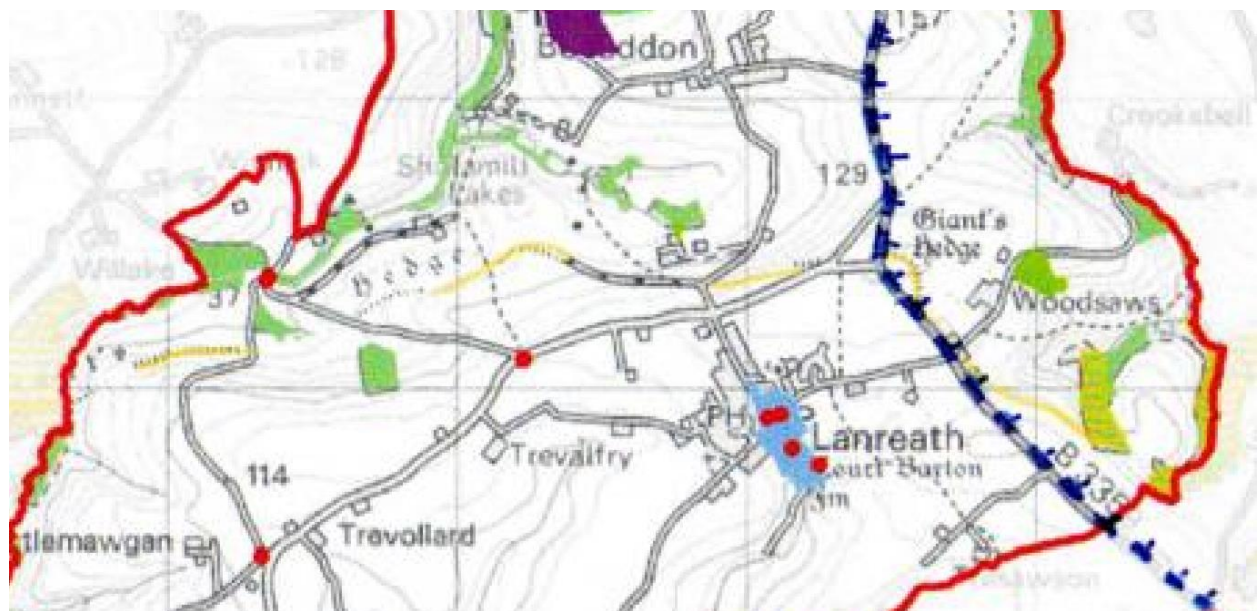
Inner rampart of the Iron Age Fort

The Romans

Following earlier invasions by Julius Caesar in 55 BC and 54 BC, the Romans finally invaded and started to settle Britain in 43 AD. The Romans established a small number of forts in Cornwall, the nearest being at Nanstallon, to the north of Bodmin. There is no direct evidence in the Parish of the Roman occupation of this part of Dumnonii, a tribal kingdom that then extended across modern Devon and Cornwall which the Romans referred to as Dumnonia. The 'Comprehensive Gazetteer of England & Wales, 1894-5' states that there is a Roman causeway on Bury Down but this is not supported by any contemporary archaeological records. Late in 1982 a metal detectorist found a hoard of 103 Roman coins on the foreshore of the river at Lerryn in the adjacent Parish of St Veep. This would indicate that there was Roman influence, if not necessarily Roman presence in the vicinity. The Roman occupation ended in 410 AD when the then Roman Emperor Honorius, beset by troubles closer to home with the Visigoths, issued the infamous 'Rescript of Honorius' which, in precis, informed the Roman cities in Britain that, when it came to defence, 'you are on your own folks!'.

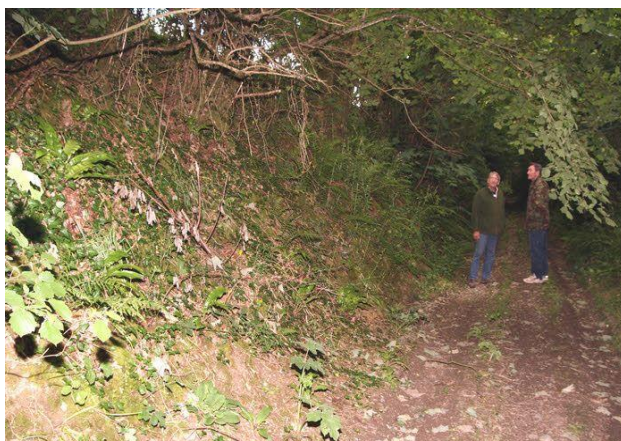
The Dark Ages

By the time the last Romans left Britain, the Angles, Saxons and Jutes were already making merciless incursions on South and East coasts of England. With the loss of Roman bureaucracy, written records of the next several hundred years are sparse and Britain descended into what is now referred to as the 'Dark Ages'.



One major scheduled monument that is thought to date from this period in history is known as the 'Giants Hedge'. To quote Historic England: "*this monument, which falls into seven areas, includes parts of a linear boundary extending between the settlements of Looe to the south east and Lerryn to the west.*"

The majority of the monument lies within the Parish of Lanreath. The linear boundary originally would have measured approximately 15km in length, of which 3km does not survive and 2.8km is protected in differing-sized sections.



At its best preserved, the bank is approximately 3.5m wide and up to 2m high whilst the ditch measures 3m wide and up to 0.8m deep. The whole follows a sinuous course hugging, wherever possible, the position just below the crest of the hillside. It passes through four different parishes and its true purpose is unknown. It may possibly have been constructed to defend the area between the Looe and Fowey rivers”.

This area may have formed part of the kingdom of Marcus Cunomorus, a Welsh nobleman who is thought to have ruled Cornwall in the early 6th century. He was believed to have had his seat at Castle Dore, near Fowey. Given Castle Dore’s connection to the Tristan Memorial Stone at Fowey, Cunomorus may have been the basis for King Mark, uncle of Tristan, in the Arthurian legend of Tristan and Isolde. Local folklore, however, has a different view of the origins of the Giant’s Hedge as memorialized in the rhyme:

“One day the Devil having nothing to do, built a great hedge from Lerryn to Looe.”

The Age of the Saints

By the end of the Roman occupation of Britain the official religion was Roman Christianity. Despite this, traditional pagan religions still held sway over much of this area. A major force for change, in the 5th and 6th centuries, was the introduction of Christianity from Wales, the Mediterranean and Gaul; the start of what is now called ‘The Age of the Saints’. The earliest religious communities took the form of a settlement enclosed in a circular bank known as a Lan (Llan in Welsh). These may have contained a chapel, perhaps a burial ground and even a few houses. It was from a similar community that the origin of the name Lanreath is thought to have derived. The original site of the Lan in Lanreath is thought to be on the same site as the current parish church and named after Raydhogh, or Rhydock, an obscure figure, possibly a holy man from Wales, whose connection with Lanreath is unknown.

The current church of St Marnarch is dedicated to Saint Manaccus, a 6th century pre-Congregational Saint of Wales, otherwise known as Mancus, or Monach. In his book, *‘Lives of the British Saints - The Saints of Wales and Cornwall and such Irish Saints as have dedications in Britain’* published in 1911, Rev. Sabine Baring Gould describes St Mannacus , or Mancus as a Bishop and Confessor.

Gould states that: *“The Lanreath church in Cornwall is dedicated to Saint Monach or Manaccus. William of Worcester says he was a bishop, and that his body reposed at Lanreath. In Bishop Stafford’s Register his name is given as Managhan. He was probably Irish. The Lanreath Feast is now observed on August 3rd, although, according to William of Worcester, the commemoration formerly was the Thursday after Whit-Sunday. In the Young Women’s Window in St Neot church he is represented in Episcopal vestments.”*

Other sources suggest that St Mannacus may have been Abbot at Caer Gybi in Holyhead, Anglesey, working with Saint Cuby of Caernarvon to whom the parish church in the adjacent Parish of Duloe is dedicated. St Manaccus may also have been one of three Cornish hermit saints, St Mybbard, St Mancus and St Wyllow who were beheaded by the pagan ruler Melyn ys Kynrede in what is today the parish of Lanteglos-by-Fowey, near Fowey, Cornwall.



Part of the ‘Young Women’s Window’ of St Neot church.
The caption below the figure in red ecclesiastical robes reads “Snt manoc ora pro nobis” or
“Saint Manoc pray for us”.

The Saxons

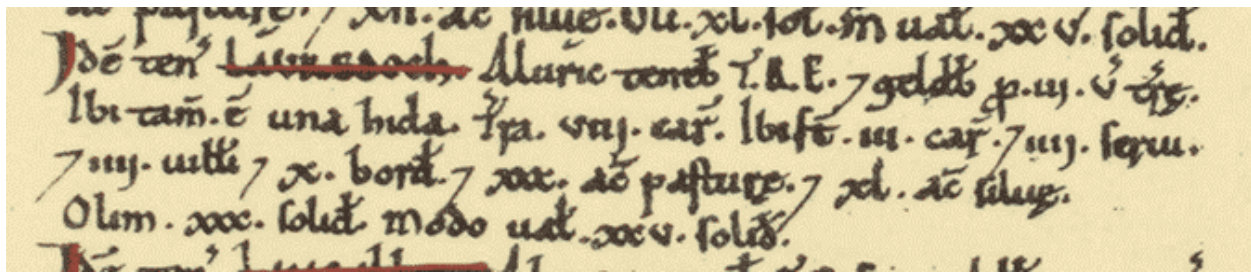
Throughout the 'Dark Ages' Anglo-Saxon military, political and cultural dominance moved inexorably northwards and westwards. Following many skirmishes between the Saxons and the tribes of Dumnonia, the Dumnonian tribes and their Viking allies suffered a major defeat by the West Saxons under King Egbert, at Hingston Down in Cornwall in 838. As a result of this defeat Cornwall came under a nominal Saxon governance for the next two centuries until the arrival of the Normans in 1066. While the Kings of the house of Wessex, up to and including King Harold, exercised a measure of control over the church lands in Cornwall, the extent of Saxon influence on daily life in the county is unclear. Saxon influence was certainly more evident in the eastern part of the county. A farm within the Parish of Lanreath is named 'Tresawson' which is thought to mean 'the place of the Saxon' and, just prior to the Norman conquest, the Lord of Manor of Lanreath was called Aelfric, a name of Anglo-Saxon origin. Many of the minor kingdoms of Dumnonia were thought to have been absorbed into the Saxon Hundreds developed during the 10th century. A Hundred was an administrative area and Lanreath Parish was, in late Saxon times, located in the Hundred of Fawton, as recorded in the Domesday Book, which was otherwise known as West Wivelshire, or sometimes, simply, 'West'.

The Normans

Following his defeat of King Harold at Hastings in 1066, William the Conqueror was quick to establish his authority in Britain, replacing much of the existing nobility with faithful Norman knights and establishing a relatively unified feudal political and social system across the country. Cornwall was, in some ways, an exception. William of Worcester, writing in the 15th century, states that Cadoc, as the last survivor of the Cornish royal line, was appointed by William 1 as the Earl of Cornwall for the first couple of years of Norman rule. It was not to last. A revolt based at Exeter forced the new King to march into Cornwall in 1068 after which he gave most of Cornwall instead to Count Brian, son of Eudes, Count of Penthièvre in Brittany, who had fought with William at Hastings. When Brian died, leaving no heirs, William gave Cornwall to his half-brother Robert, Count of Mortain, the second- largest landholder in England.

In 1085 King William commissioned a comprehensive survey, or census, of all of the resources and taxable values of all the boroughs and manors in England. In 1088 the results of the survey were written up into one of the most comprehensive records of contemporary Britain for several centuries; the Domesday Book.

The census was broken down into 'Manors' and in the Domesday Book the Lanreath manor appears as 'Lauredoch'; see below:



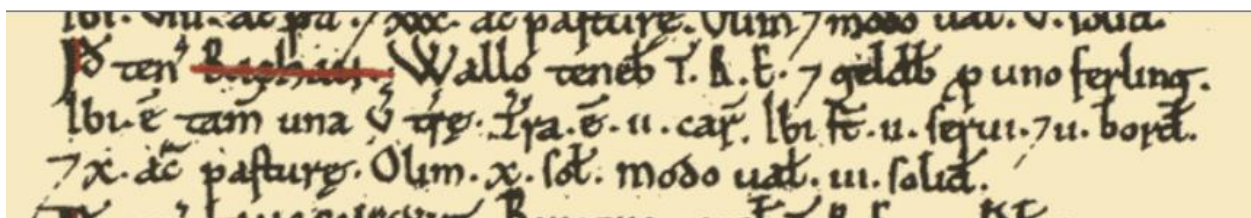
Lanreath was recorded as having a total population of 18 men (the number of women and children is not recorded), these comprised: 4 villagers, 10 smallholders and 4 slaves. It was tax assessed at 1 exemption unit, which is considered to be a very small amount, and was taxed on $\frac{3}{4}$ of this.

Lanreath had 8 Ploughlands; a ploughland being a measure of the amount of land which could be ploughed by an eight-oxen plough team in the course of the year. To manage this there were 2 lord's plough teams and 1 men's plough team, which would suggest that a significant amount of the ploughlands were left fallow each year.

Other resources included 30 acres of pasture (land used permanently for grazing) and 40 acres of woodland. In 1086 Lanreath had 3 cattle which, presumably, did not include the oxen for the plough teams, and 60 sheep.

The value to lord in 1086 was £1.3 (26 shillings) whereas the value to lord c.1070 had been £1.5 (30 shillings).

The Lord of Lanreath in 1066 was Aelfric and the Lord in 1086 was Richard (son of Turolf). The Tenant in Chief, the King's principal baron who held land directly from the King, was Count Robert of Mortain. The Tenant in Chief did not own the land; the title to the land remained with the King with the Tenant in Chief paying rent by way of services to the Crown, including the supply of knights in times of conflict or war.



Interestingly, Treacan or 'Baghan' as it appears to be called in the Domesday Book (I can't read their writing – see above!) merited a separate entry having 2 smallholders, 2 slaves, 2 ploughlands and 10 acres of pasture. Modern Treacan is located on the Northwest edge of the Parish of Lanreath close to the border with Boconnoc Parish.

One Lanreath legacy from the Norman period is the Parish church. During this time a new stone church was erected to replace the pre-Norman structure. Although most of the church we see today was built in the early gothic style much later in the 15th century, with later 19th century additions, the original Norman north wall and north transept survive, as do the Norman font and a small decorated Norman stone altar.

Late Medieval Period.

Lanreath remained a principally agrarian feudal community throughout the medieval period. Manors, not villages, were the economic and social units of life in the Middle Ages. Under Norman law the land belonged to the King who claimed allodial (overall and inalienable) title to all lands in England (and Cornwall). The King parcelled out large tracts of land to feudal barons under a process of infeudation. These barons would then subinfeudate their lands into manors for their own knights and followers. The lords of these manors would, in turn, through various forms of tenure, let out a portion of their lands to peasants. Peasants who held tenure on a portion of land also had to work on their lord's land and pay taxes to their lord as well as a tax, or Tithe, to the church, of 10% of their farm produce. Throughout the chain was an obligation of allegiance and the requirement to provide fees and services to their respective feudal master in the chain.

This strict feudal convention and its application to landholding in Cornwall is, however, subject to challenge. Historian, John Hatcher, argues that the system that prevailed in Cornwall both prior to and after the establishment of the Duchy of Cornwall in 1337, varied significantly from the feudal systems that applied elsewhere in the country ¹. In summary, the argument put forward is that the bulk of tenantry in Cornwall held land not by hereditary tenure, with rents and obligations regulated by custom, but by a 'conventional tenure' comprising a 7-year lease at a free market rent with negligible service obligations and no absolute right of renewal. Provided that an incumbent tenant was prepared to pay any increased rent that may be demanded by their Lord, they may have been given 'right of first refusal' when the lease came up for renewal. This was not always the case. The incumbent could be 'gazumped' (to use a modern expression) by a challenger for the tenancy who was prepared to offer a higher rent. It is argued that this led to far greater flexibility and changes in land tenure, and a more precarious position for tenants, than pertained elsewhere in Britain.

A search of online records in the National Archives indicates that there were probably three manors in what is now Lanreath Parish during the late medieval period; Lanreath Manor, Botelet Manor and Treire Manor. Lanreath Manor appears variously as Laureathe Manor, Lanreathe Manor and Lanrethow Manor.

Parts of the administrative structure of a medieval manor can still be traced in the village of Lanreath today. Court Barton farmhouse would have served severally as; the home of the Lord of the Manor; the building in which the manorial court was held; and as the 'home farm' or 'Barton' for the 'demesne', the estate lands retained by the Lord of the Manor for his own use.

The Manor Court was the lowest form of court and only dealt with civil matters over which the lord of the manor had jurisdiction, this would include; misdemeanours; disputes involving a lord's free tenants within the manor; the enforcement of feudal services owed to the lord of the manor by his tenants; and the registering of new tenants who had acquired tenancies by inheritance or purchase, for which they were obliged to pay a fine

(fee). The jurisdiction of the court was limited to the population living within the manor boundaries, including those manor lands that had been sub-contracted to others. The operation of Manor courts was gradually superseded during the 15th and 16th centuries by civil courts operating under the jurisdiction of the Crown. The activities of the Manor Court were recorded in the Court Rolls. The Court Rolls of Lanreath Manor for the years 1598 and 1599 are available for view at the Cornwall Record Office.

Fines and the stocks were used as punishments in local manor courts. The stocks remained a traditional punishment for minor offences including vagrancy, drunkenness and swearing up until the mid-19th century. Their use has never been officially abolished in law! The last recorded use of the Lanreath stocks was during the incumbency of Rev. John Buller, in the late 19th century, when a man was placed in the stocks for drunkenness.



Lanreath Village stocks, stored in the porch of St Marnarch's Church. Note the uneven number of leg holes!

To the north of the Parish Church is an enclosed area of land known as the Glebe field. Glebe lands were typically donated by the lord of the manor to the rectory for support of the rector (parson or parish priest) either for the provision of food or through the payment of rent. The Glebe lands once extended to 93 acres, however, most of the Glebe lands in Lanreath have been sold off and built on. The freehold of the remaining Glebe land in Lanreath is now held by the Diocese of Truro.

A particularly revealing record of the precariousness of title in medieval Lanreath is to be found in the National Archives online register. The record concerns the Manor of Lanreath and is thought to date from between 1290 and 1315. The record is of a Petition made to the King by Joan de Ciriseaux, widow of John de Ciriseaux against Martin Sencher. The online summary of the petition records that:

“Ciriseaux requests that the king write to his chancellor that he proceed to judgment on the pleadings of Ciriseaux and Sencher, as the petitioner's late husband, with the assent of his father, endowed her with the manor of Lanreath with the advowson of the church there for which the petitioner's mother gave to Richard Ciriseaux 100 marks, but after their death the king granted the keeping of the lands and marriage of the heir to Sencher and he entered her manor whereby Ciriseaux by writ of summons caused him to be brought before the chancellor where he had nothing to say for the king or himself except that he had could not answer without the king.”

In addition to the vicissitudes of daily life, the 14th century was a period of great suffering not just in Cornwall but throughout Britain and Northern Europe. A period of cold winters and wet summers resulted in a series of failed harvests which led to a devastating famine in the years 1315 - 1317. The weather slowly improved but it was not until several years' later that harvest yields returned to pre-famine levels. The famine was exacerbated by an epidemic among cattle known as the 'Great Cattle Murrain' that arrived into Britain from continental Europe and spread to all parts of the country by 1320. The exact nature of the contagion is not known but it resulted in high mortality rates among cattle and oxen which, by some estimates, reduced the population of these animals by more than 60%. By the time these two afflictions had run their course much of the population would have been weakened and, having survived the third rider of the apocalypse; famine, they were soon to be subject to a visitation of the 4th rider in the form of a pandemic later to be named the 'Black Death'.



An illustrated page from the Apocalypse in a *Biblia Pauperum*, illuminated at Erfurt, central Germany, around the time of the Great Famine. Death sits astride a mantichore, a mythical creature, whose long tail ends in a ball of flame representing Hell, while Famine, in the midst of the flames, points to her hungry mouth.

As with the earlier cattle murrain, the 'Black Death' is thought to have originated in Asia and spread along trade routes into Europe. The first known case in the UK was a seaman who arrived by ship in Weymouth, Dorset from Gascony in June in 1348 ². It reached Cornwall in 1349, peaking in 1350/1 before breaking-out again in 1352. The true impact of the 'Great Pestilence' on the overall population of Cornwall is unrecorded although some estimates suggest that 30% of the population perished, with towns such as Truro and Bodmin losing half of their population. Manorial records indicate that two manors in East Cornwall suffered death rates of between 50% and 60% ³.

An interesting local aside from the latter part of the late medieval period concerns the activities of a group of licensed privateers and pirates who operated out of the nearby port of Fowey. Known as the 'Gallants of Fowey', these privateers were given royal licenses to attack and seize French vessels in the English Channel during the latter part of the 100 Years War. The activity proved lucrative and continued to flourish long after the 100 years' war ended in 1453, with acts of piracy against Breton, Norman and Spanish vessels. One Fowey Privateer, John Wilcock, in the ship 'Barbara' reportedly seized 15 ships off Brittany in May and June 1469. Now more of a problem for the Crown, than a solution to a problem, Edward IV dispatched a commission to Cornwall to 'arrest all mariners, masters, pirates, victuallers of ships' of Fowey, Bodinnick, and Polruan'. The independent Cornish seafarers and their ships were removed to England and placed in custody. At least one of their number, by the name of Harrington, was executed. Although this colourful local chapter does not directly involve Lanreath, it is reputed that Sir Hugh II Courtenay (1427 – 1471) of the adjacent estate of Boconnoc had a pecuniary interest in the privateer activity in Fowey.

Tudor Period

Polydore Vergil, an Italian cleric, was commissioned by King Henry VII to write a history of England. The final document 'Anglica Historia', published in 1534, states that *"The whole country of Britain is divided into four parts, whereof the one is inhabited by Englishmen, the other of Scots, the third of Welshmen, the fourth of Cornish people ... and which all differ among themselves either in tongue, either in manners, or else in laws and ordinances."* This concept of a separate Cornish national identity was gradually eroded during the Tudor period by an administrative centralization and the gradual imposition of a religious homogeneity.

The imposition of taxes by the English Crown were resented by the Cornish and considerable unrest was caused when, in late 1496, Henry VII raised taxation to pay for his war against the Scottish. The terms of this new tax levy violated the Stannary Charter of 1305 and simmering Cornish resentment finally boiled-over into a full scale Cornish Rebellion. Michael Joseph (An Gof), a blacksmith from St. Keverne and Thomas Flamank, a lawyer of Bodmin, gathered a force of lightly armed men and started to march towards London with the intention of forcing the Crown into making concessions.

The rebels included at least two former MPs, Flamank (MP for Bodmin in 1492) and William Antron (MP for Helston in 1491-92). An army some 15,000 strong marched into Devon, attracting support in terms of provisions and recruits as they went.⁴

From Devon, the army moved on to Wells in Somerset, where they were joined by James Touchet, the seventh Baron Audley, an impoverished member of the old nobility. At Wells they also issued a declaration of grievances but, as they marched further east, it became evident that the King was in no mood to make concessions and the only recourse was to settle the issue by force of arms against the King himself.

The army marched virtually unopposed until it reached Guilford where it skirmished with a small force of mounted spearmen sent out from London to test their resolve. They then marched through Kent, home of Wat Tyler's earlier 'Peasants Revolt', in the frustrated hope of garnering further local support before encamping at Blackheath, close to Greenwich, on the South bank of the Thames overlooking the City of London. It was here where battle was finally joined with the King's forces at the Battle of Deptford Bridge on the 17th June 1497. The armies were mismatched in numbers, arms and leadership with 25,000 of the King's men arraigned against a remaining Cornish force of between 9 - 10,000 that had neither artillery nor cavalry. The Cornish forces were heavily defeated and the leaders were all caught and executed. In modern times a plaque on a wall in Greenwich Park commemorates the battle, (pictured below courtesy of Chris Angove).



The fallout from the rebellion was significant, with severe monetary penalties being extracted by Crown agents from some parts of Cornwall, with some Cornish estates being seized and handed to more loyal subjects.

Not, perhaps, the most auspicious introduction for Cornwall to the new Tudor dynasty. However, it can be argued that the Rebellion did have at least one positive impact. In 1508, in the year before his death, Henry VII issued the 'Charter of Pardon'. The Charter established the rights of the Stannary Parliament in Cornwall to veto English legislation in that *'no statute, ordinance, provision or proclamation, hereafter to be made by us, our heirs or successors, or by the aforesaid Prince of Wales, Duke of Cornwall for the time being, or by our council, or the council of our said heirs or successors, or of the said Prince, be made, unless with the assent and consent of the aforesaid twenty and four men, so to be elected and named, [from the four Stannaries within the County of Cornwall]'*,

How much these events impacted on Lanreath is not known. Not being a tin producing area it may have been less affected by the circumstances surrounding the Cornish Rebellion than other parts of the County.



Court Barton

Lanreath Manor changed hands at least three times during the 16th century with Christopher Chydley (aka Chudleigh) mortgaging the ownership and title from Hugh Trevanion before it was acquired in 1598 by a wealthy lawyer and landowner from Devon, Charles Gryles. Charles and his wife Agnes (nee Tubbe) had 8 children. He started building a new Jacobean manor house, now known as Court Barton, (or simply 'Court') in the centre of the village, adjacent to the Church. The building was possibly incomplete when Charles died in 1611, as the two-storey porch was added in 1612.

Thereafter the manor remained with the Grylls family (aka Grills or Gryles) for 5 generations until it was sold to the Buller family in 1718 and subsequently, via a purchase by Admiral Spry, to the Carlyon family who retain ownership of the remaining estate to this day.

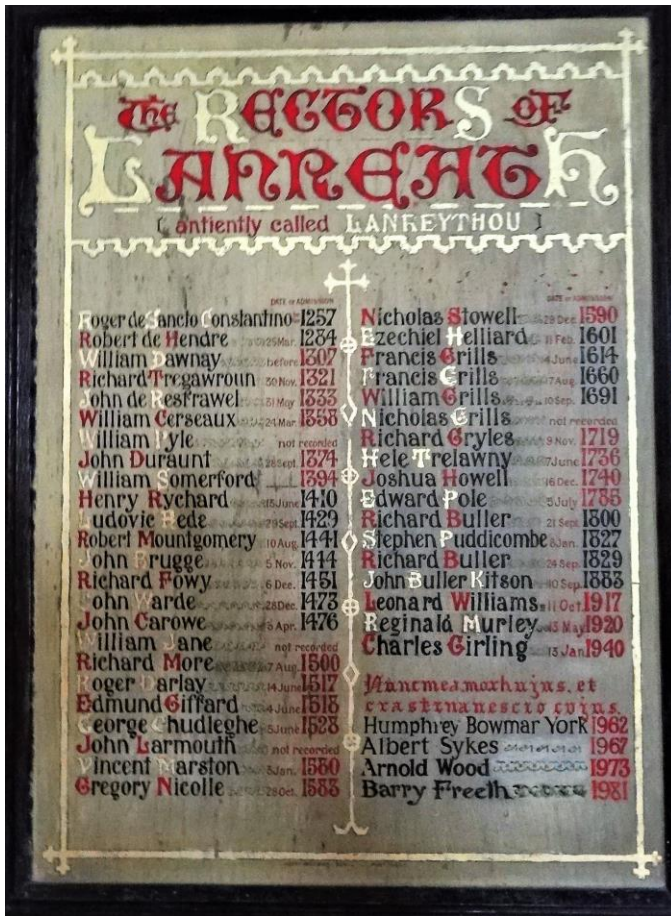


Elaborate Fireplace in the 1st floor parlour of Court Barton

“Fireplace with restored 4-centred granite arch flanked by elaborate carved oak herms supporting a decoratively carved overmantle with lunettes, 3 round arches with carved pilasters and decorated spandrels with elaborate heraldic shields within the arches” (to quote Historic England).

Charles and Agnes Grylls are memorialized by a splendid wooden monument erected in the chancel of St Marnarch's Parish Church by Charles's son John in 1623. The woodcarvers who created the memorial may well have been the same craftsmen that fashioned the fireplace in Court Barton – see above.





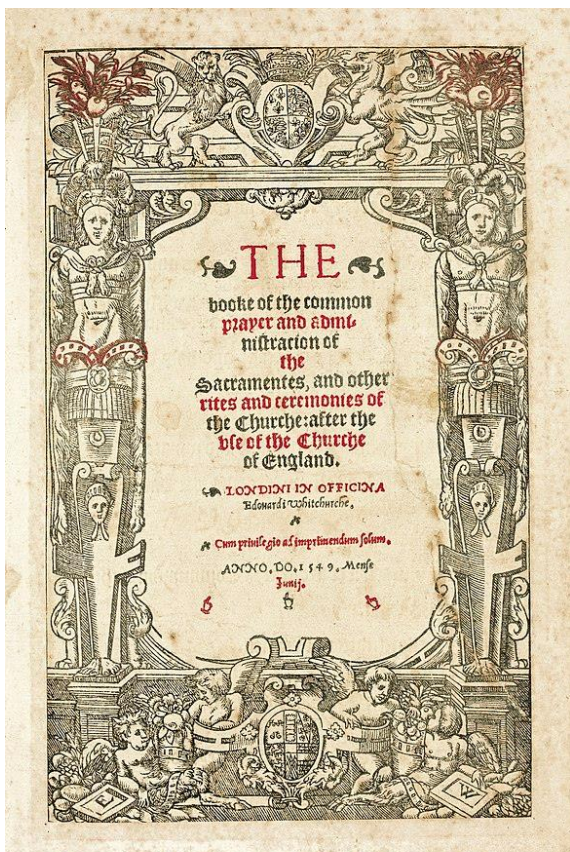
The church living was in the gift of the Lord of the Manor of Lanreath by way of the rights of 'advowson' that came with the manor. As Patron, the lord of the Manor could propose a nominee for the Rectorship of the church whenever it fell vacant. In addition to assuming the pastoral duties of Christian ministry to the Parish, possibly assisted by a curate, the Rector would also benefit from the property and income attached to the position, which included the parish tithes. The tithes alone were a substantial source of income. Records for 1842 show that the land in Lanreath subject to tithes amounted to 4,500 acres, attracting an annual tithe of £522.1s.0d (approximately £58,500 in today's money using one of the most conservative indexes of inflation over the intervening period, but possibly worth as much as

£390,000 as compared with the average working wage at that time !) The Lord of the Manor's 'proposal' for a new incumbent required the approval by Diocesan Bishop which, in practice, was rarely withheld. It is perhaps not surprising that the five successive generations of Rectors of St Marnarch's church from 1601 until 1736, all bore the surname of Grylls!

The religious and civil ferment brought about Henry VIII's break with the church of Rome and the subsequent dissolution of the monasteries during the Reformation, reverberated throughout the late Tudor period. The Act of Supremacy was introduced by Henry VIII in the year 1534. Under the Act the English monarch was declared to be "the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England". This was followed by the passing of the Treasons Act, which made it an act of treason punishable by death to disavow the Royal Supremacy.

The Reformation did not finally reach Cornwall until after Henry had died. In 1547 Henry was succeeded by his 9-year-old son, Edward VI. During Edward's short reign, the realm was governed by a regency council. The council was first led by Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford, who, through Machiavellian manipulation of the council, secured for himself the position of 'Lord Protector of the Realm', and appointed himself

the 1st Duke of Somerset. Through the influence of Seymour, a staunch advocate of evangelical Anglicanism, a more authoritarian application of the Protestant faith was to be imposed throughout the realm, particularly in parts that had, up until then, failed to toe the Protestant line. One of Somerset's principal mechanisms for enforcing a rigid Anglican orthodoxy was the imposition of the Book of Common Prayer, issued in 1549 by Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and one of the leading lights of the English Reformation during Henry VIII's reign. The Book of Common Prayer was intended to unify Anglican services throughout the kingdom. The prayer book contained English language liturgical rites and banned religious processions and other forms of Catholic 'idolatry'. Its most contentious requirement, however, was that the Mass was to be said in English.



This requirement acted as a red rag to the bull of the Cornish people's attachment to their catholic faith, their language and their culture for, at this time, most of the Cornish in the west of the county only spoke English as a second language, if at all.

Not to be thwarted by regional obstinacy Somerset dispatched Royal Commissioners to Devon and Cornwall to see that the prayer book was implemented and Mass said in English. These officials were also authorized to remove all symbols of Catholicism and enforce Cranmer's prohibition of images. A local and strongly protestant archdeacon, by the name of Sir William Body, was deputized the task of destroying religious shrines; a task he took to with a ruthless commitment motivated as much by avarice as protestant zealotry. His actions both alarmed and angered those whose shrines were desecrated.

It all came to a head when Body was pursuing his activities in the proximity to St. Keverne and Helston. The local people formed a mob and, led by their parish priest, Martin Geffrey, marched to Helston to confront Body. The day did not end well for any of the principal protagonists in this confrontation. Body attempted to hide in a house but was dragged out and murdered by the mob. Shortly afterwards the murderers were arrested by the local Justice of the Peace supported by a local militia. Eight of the murderers were hanged whilst Geffrey, as their leader, was taken to London where he was subsequently hung, drawn and quartered.

Rather than subduing further protest this was, perhaps, the spark in the tinderbox. An armed camp of Cornish rebels was set up at Bodmin from where a list of demands, framed in very blunt and uncompromising language, was sent to the King. Fuel was added to this smouldering resentment when, on Whitsunday 1549, the order was given to implement the Book of Common Prayer and strike back against Cornish resistance. The first seat of the subsequent conflagration that came to be known as the 'Prayer Book Rebellion' was not in Cornwall, but in Sampford Courtenay in Devon. Having endured one Sunday of English liturgy, which the congregation of Samford complained was "lyke a Christmas game." they forced their priest to revert to the old Mass. Seymour was in no mood to brook such insubordination and justices arrived the following week to ensure that Sampford heard Mass according to the prayer book. One of the local farmers, William Hellyons, came into dispute with the parishioners by advocating acceptance of the reforms. Hellyons was overwhelmed by the Catholics and taken to a building, near to the church, where the argument became heated and he was run through with a pitchfork. Following this act of violence, the justices fled.

The mob, having tasted a small victory, decided to march to Exeter to further their protest against the English liturgy but found the city gates locked against them. Large numbers of Catholics from across Devon came to join the Sampford men and city of Exeter remained in a state of siege for over a month. Meanwhile, the Cornish rebels, under the leadership of the Mayor of Bodmin, Henry Bray, and two staunch Catholic landowners, Sir Humphrey Arundell of Helland and John Winslade of Tregarrick Manor, in the adjacent Parish of Pelynt, marched east to join the Devon rebels. The two rebel armies joined forces in early summer at Crediton with a combined force estimated at 7,000 men.

Although the initial retaliation was slow in developing, the Crown eventually mustered a royal force under the command of Sir John Russell comprising 8,000 well-trained professional soldiers including Italian and German mercenaries. The rebel army fought tenaciously but suffered a series of defeats with heavy losses in the early part of August 1549. Nine hundred rebel prisoners were subsequently slaughtered on the orders of Russell at Clyst St Mary, in Devon, at what was to become known as the 'Massacre of Clyst Heath'. The rebellion eventually ended where it had started with a final calamitous defeat of the remaining rebel army at Samford Courtenay.

The rebel leaders were eventually all captured and suffered horrendous executions. Their lands were forfeit and, under orders from Cranmer and Seymour, a programme of violent reprisals was instigated by Russell's forces throughout Devon and Cornwall. It is estimated that up to 4,000 Cornishmen were killed in the uprising, with another 1,000 or so who were hanged afterwards: this in a county with a population, at the time, of less than 70,000 people.

All of John Winslade's estates were given over to Sir Peter Carew, with the exception of a few manors, which included Tregarrick Manor in Pelynt, which John Winslade had previously made over to his wife.

The impact of the Prayer Book Rebellion and its aftermath on the Manor and Parish of Lanreath is not recorded. However, if the Parish did survive the political and religious tempests of the late Tudor Period unscathed, this tranquillity was not to last.

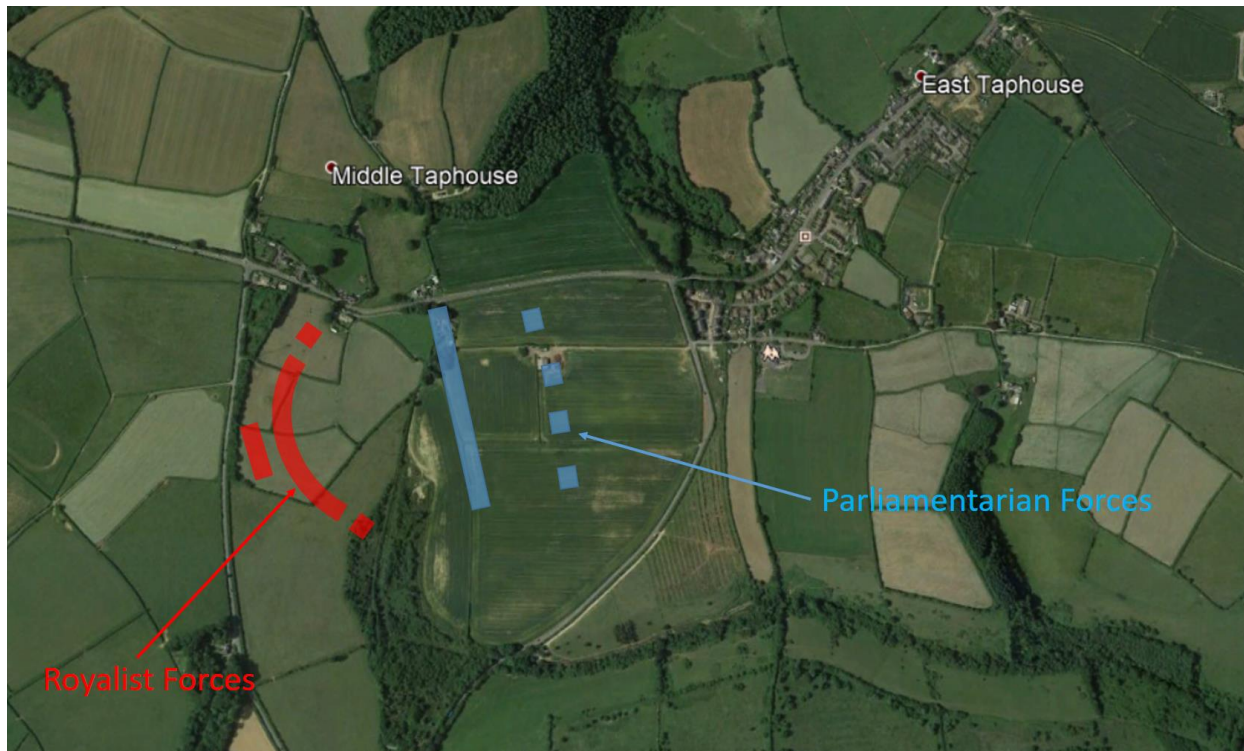
Stuart Period

Despite the unease felt by the Cornish gentry at Charles the First's repeated dismissal of Parliament and his imposition of additional taxes, the majority of Cornwall remained loyal to the King at the outbreak of Civil War in August 1642. There were some notable exceptions who supported the Parliamentary cause including Lord Robartes of Lanhydrock, John St Aubyn of Clowance, Nicholas Boscawen of Tregothnan.

In August of 1642 Sir William Hopton began to raise a Royalist Army in Cornwall, initially comprising local 'Trained Bands'. Trained Bands were local militia regiments organised on a county-wide basis under the Lord Lieutenant. Membership of these local militia was compulsory for freeholders, householders and their sons and they received a measure of military training under professional soldiers. The militia men were, however, reluctant to fight away from home, particularly when this entailed crossing the River Tamar into Devon so Hopton began to supplement the Trained Bands with volunteers.

Hopton's initial efforts to take the fight to the Parliamentarians, firstly at Plymouth and then at Exeter, met with defeat. With a shortage of stores and ammunition and with a number of his troops deserting him, Hopton retreated back to Bodmin in Cornwall. One of two pursuing parliamentary armies marched west from Plymouth and encamped at Braddock Down. By the fortuitous capture of three Parliamentary warships that were forced by stress of weather to seek refuge in Falmouth Harbour, Hopton was resupplied with much needed stores, powder and ammunition. Thus resupplied, Hopton's forces engaged with the parliamentary army at Braddock Down on 19th January 1643. After a couple of hours of inconclusive exchange of musket fire the Cornish infantry charged the Parliamentary positions driving the Parliamentary army back into a disorderly retreat. There were 200 or so Parliamentary casualties, with a thousand or more Parliamentary soldiers taken prisoner and all for the loss, by some accounts, of two men from the Royalist Cornish army. The result was a resounding victory for the Royalist forces and temporarily secured Cornwall for the Royalist cause.

The exact geographical location of 'Braddock Down' is disputed. *"Traditionally it has been located between Boconnoc and Braddock Church and the majority of Civil War historians reflect this view. As a result of research into the site of the battle carried out by Mr R Wilton, and published in 1985, the Ordnance Survey (Pathfinder 1347. SX 06/16. 1:25000) has moved the location of the battlefield approximately one mile to the north-east of Braddock Church to a position close to Middle Taphouse in the triangle formed by the A390 and the B3359"*⁵



Battlefield positions at the start of the 'Battle of Braddock Down'

(Picture courtesy of Google Earth. Troop positions courtesy of The Battlefield Trust
<http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/media/431.pdf>)

Hopton secured another Royalist victory later the same year against a separate Parliamentarian force lead by The Earl of Stamford at Stratton, in North Cornwall.

The tide of the Civil war ebbed and flowed over the next 18 months, and in the summer of 1644, the Parliamentarians under Lord Essex, encroached again on Cornish soil with the intention of seizing Launceston and Bodmin. On this occasion the King himself led an army into Cornwall. The King, accompanied by his fourteen-year-old son (the future Charles II), his entourage and his Generals, stayed first in Liskeard, at the home of the Mayor, Joseph Jane, at what is now called Stuart House. He then moved his base to the great mansion of Boconnoc, four miles north of the village of Lanreath. At least some Royalist forces were camped in Lanreath and there is a local tradition that, on at least one occasion, King Charles himself visited the village. The contemporary diary kept by the Royalist, Richard Symonds, records that on *'Munday morning (26th August 1644) the King's and Queen's troopes removed from hence to Lanreath, 3 myles nearer the sea'*. This diary, interestingly, also described Lanreath church in some detail including a reference to the monument to Charles and Agnes Gryles which is described as *'a pretty neate monument, fairly coloured and guilt'*, and a reference to the two *'seates of the south yle belonging to this family'* (the Gryles). Possibly with an eye on the Royal coffers, and for future reference, the diary also records the annual income of local estates, *'John Gryles of Court in the Parish of Lanreath 700l per annum (£700)'*. Compared with the

average wage at the time this would be equivalent to £1.7 million today. The whole Grylls family are thought to have been ardent Royalists, a loyalty which was subsequently to cost them dearly.



The two 'Gryles' family seats in Lanreath Parish Church as described in the Civil War diary of Richard Symonds, backed by the ornately carved wooden Rood Screen that survived the Reformation mainly intact.

On this occasion the winds of fate were blowing in favour of the King and, through a combination of misinformation (Essex was led to believe, incorrectly, that the Cornish population would rise up in favour of the Parliamentarian cause) and ill-fortune (reinforcements expected by sea into Fowey were left stuck in Portsmouth due to westerly gales), Essex and his army were routed by the King's forces at the Battle of Lostwithiel.

This proved to be a major setback for Parliament in Cornwall but, on the other hand, it was also the last major victory of the Civil War for the Royalists. The King was grateful for the local support that he received during this campaign and it is recorded that before

the King left the area he knighted some local gentlemen in Liskeard including John Grylls of Lanreath.

The King also issued an open letter of thanks to the inhabitants of Cornwall for their support and assistance, a copy of which is displayed in St Manarch's church in Lanreath.

This Royalist triumph was finally reversed by the Parliamentarians under Sir Thomas Fairfax leading the 'New Model Army' at or near Tresillian Bridge, close to Truro, on 12 March 1645. For the next 15 years Cornwall, together with the rest of England, was ruled as a republic under the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Wales under the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. As a penalty for his support of the Royalist cause, Sir John Grylls had to pay a hefty fine of £582 (approximately £1.4 million in today's money) in order to retain control of Court Manor and his estates.



Bishop Jonathan Trelawny

Any reference to the involvement of the leading lights of local society with the political and religious tensions of the Stuart period would be incomplete without reference to Bishop Jonathan Trelawny. In a complete reversal of earlier Cornish support of Catholicism in the Tudor Period, Trelawny was both a staunch royalist and a committed protestant. Born in the adjacent village of Pelynt in 1650, ordained in 1673, he rose rapidly through the ecclesiastical ranks and was appointed Bishop of Bristol in 1685. King James II was a Catholic and was eager to relieve Catholics of some of the constraints imposed on them during the Reformation. In 1687 the King issued 'The Royal Declaration of Indulgence'. Under this declaration the population were granted a broader religious freedom than had

previously obtained. Penal laws enforcing conformity to the Church of England were suspended and people were allowed to worship in their homes or chapels as they saw fit. It also ended the requirement of affirming religious oaths as a condition for obtaining employment in government office. Trelawny, along with six other Bishops, strongly objected to these additional freedoms for the Catholic minority and petitioned the King against the Declaration. Trelawny was rewarded for this intervention by being arrested and incarcerated in the Tower of London under charges of seditious libel.

Trelawny was tried three weeks later and, after mounting a defence of religious conscience against the charge of sedition, he was acquitted and subsequently became the hero of what has become the unofficial 'National Anthem' of Cornwall.

'The Song of the Western Men', or simply 'Trelawny' as it is more commonly known, was penned by an Anglican clergyman Robert Stephen Hawker in 1824. Some of the song's lyrics are more a flight of imagination than an accurate representation of the historical narrative as there was no Cornish Army mustered in Trelawny's defence after he was locked up in the Tower. The song does, however, draw on a sense of Cornish unity, identity and pride evident whenever it is sung today.

In addition to the Parish Church, Court Barton and some of the older cob cottages in the village there is another important building that existed at this time, with links back across the previous three centuries; the Punchbowl Inn. Located in the centre of the village, at times acting as a court house and later a coaching inn, it is the last survivor of the village's three pubs. The oldest part of the premises dates from the 13th century although the main part of the inn is 15th century. It is reputed to be the very first licensed public house in the land in 1620. Evidence of this claim is hard to come by, particularly as the first licensing law 'The Ale Houses Act of 1551' came into force nearly 70 years earlier in 1552. Under the Act no-one was to be permitted to keep an ale-house without being so licensed by the Justices at Quarter Sessions. There was a separate requirement in 1617 for those running inns to hold licenses, from which the claim of the 'first licensed public house' may arise. Inns were establishments that offered food and accommodation in addition to selling alcohol.

No self-respecting inn of this antiquity would be complete without a connection to the supernatural and the Punchbowl is no exception. In addition to a ghost dressed in black reported to drive a coach pulled by headless horses through the parish on a dark night, there is a strange tale of a black cockerel, that is reputed to haunt the Inn. Local folklore would have it that an old rector of the parish was dining at the inn (or in other versions at the Rectory). His dinner guest that evening was the new young curate who had, unfortunately, fallen in love with the rector's young and beautiful wife. On his way to the cellar to get another bottle of wine the Rector fell to his death down the stairs. Fowl play or not, (please excuse the pun!), the very next day a large black cockerel suddenly appeared in the village and began attacking everyone in sight. When the angry bird flew in through the window of the Punch Bowl Inn to roost in the clove oven in the Inn's kitchen, the quick thinking kitchen maid closed the clove oven door and shut him inside and a mason was called to block it up for ever. Unfortunately, this colourful tale does not bear any detailed historical scrutiny. The nearest tentative parallel would be the Rector, Reverend Richard Buller, who, at the age of 87 resided at the Rectory in the late 19th century. He employed a curate, who also resided at the Rectory, and was supported in the running of the Rectory by his unmarried granddaughter, Alice. Strangely, the church records did not record his death, as required by law.



The Punchbowl Inn sign

18th Century onwards

Mining

The history of Cornwall over the next 200 years was written mainly, not by conflict, but by the changing fortunes of the mining industry, which saw a period of great productivity and wealth followed by collapse and significant hardships for the mining communities. At its peak the copper mining industry employed up to 30% of the county's male workforce and came to involve not just the mining and refining of ore, but also smelting. In the early part of the 19th Century Cornwall was the world's largest producer of tin and produced 2/3rds of the world's copper.

The Cornish monopoly on the supply of copper waned as global exploration resulted in the discovery of abundant supplies elsewhere in the world and the price of copper

collapsed. Many mines closed in the 1890s, giving rise to the “Cornish diaspora”, as miners left Cornwall to seek their fortunes in other mining areas across the world. This led to the saying that ‘if you find a hole anywhere in the world there will be a Cornishman at the bottom of it’.



The Virgin Gorda copper mine, in the British Virgin Islands

By way of an example, on the south-eastern tip of the Island of Virgin Gorda, in the British Virgin Islands, lies the ruins of a 19th century copper mine. If you ignore the turquoise sea lapping at its base, the engine house is identical to those that dot the coast of Cornwall. Its beam engine, manufactured by the Perran Foundry, Cornwall, in 1836, had been shipped out from a redundant mine in Cornwall together with the 30 Cornish miners who, together with 170 local men, women and children, worked the mine. The mine produced copper ore commercially from 1835 – 1862 with the ore being shipped to Wales for smelting. Once commercial supplies of copper had been extracted the mine was sold to a

Cornish mining company in 1882 that attempted, unsuccessfully, to extract commercial quantities of molybdenum, gold and silver.

In the four decades from 1860 to 1900, about a fifth of the Cornish male population migrated abroad. In total, a quarter of a million people left Cornwall between 1841 and 1901. The population of Cornwall today is nearer to 500,000 (outside of the holiday season!).

A small number of mines in the Parish of Lanreath, on the outskirts of the village of Herodsfoot, enjoyed a brief boom in the 19th century. Once a parish in its own right, Herodsfoot now straddles two civil parish boundaries. The majority of the village lies in Duloe Parish with the western fringes being located in Parish of Lanreath.



The ruins of the Herodsfoot mine

There had been adit mining in Herodsfoot as far back as the 16th century but its heyday was the period from 1844 to 1884. The introduction of deep mining facilitated by steam power, to operate the pumps and lifts, produced a rich supply of lead together with commercial quantities of copper, silver and tungsten. At the peak of its production, the Herodsfoot mine was one of the most profitable mines in Cornwall.

Explosives Manufacture

In addition to mining activity, the Parish of Lanreath and village of Herodsfoot had another somewhat precarious and unpredictable industrial neighbour. The East Cornwall Gunpowder Company was based on the site of what is now the Deerpark Forest holiday centre. The explosives factory was established by Quakers in 1845 to provide blasting powder for the mining industry. The factory was based on the site of an existing charcoal works and water mill that exploited timber from the thickly wooded hillsides; charcoal being an important constituent of gunpowder. Other ingredients for gunpowder such as saltpetre and sulphur were imported by barge into Lerryn, in the adjacent Parish of St Veep, and then shipped overland by wagon to Herodsfoot. The factory was a volatile neighbour and a precarious workplace with major explosions occurring at the site in 1850 with 2 fatalities and in 1857 with a further 4 fatalities. In the latter accident, the shock wave was felt as far away as Liskeard and Lostwithiel. Two more explosions occurred 1876 resulting in a total of 5 fatalities. On each occasion, despite widespread devastation, the factory was re-built and continued in operation under various owners until 1965 when the site was sold to the Forestry Commission.

Fishing

Fishing was also an important industry in Cornwall that supported coastal communities over many centuries. Although Lanreath is an inland Parish, located some 4 miles from the southern coast, it is closely connected to the fishing ports of Looe, Polperro and Fowey.

Cornwall initially made its fishing reputation through pilchard fishing. Pilchards were drawn to the Cornish coast to feed in late summer. At its peak in 1847, 40,883 hogsheads or 122 million pilchards were exported from Cornwall from the four main Cornish ports of Falmouth, Fowey, Penzance and St Ives. Once ashore, the fish were salted and pressed, with the oil being collected as a by-product and used for heating and lighting. Pilchards

were exported to many parts of Europe but the shoals of fish diminished in the 20th century, mainly due to over-fishing, and pilchard fishing had all-but died out in Cornwall by the 1960s. This was followed by a brief resurgence in the industries' fortunes with the arrival of huge shoals of mackerel that provided a much needed lifeline for local boats. This lifeline was ultimately severed by over-fishing by much larger boats arriving off the coast of Cornwall displaced from their traditional fishing grounds by the Cod-wars and other factors. (for an interesting insight into the fortunes of the local fishing community in the 20th century refer to 'Once Aboard a Cornish Lugger', by Looe fishing skipper, Paul Greenwood – ISBN 978 1 4456 5061 6).

Free-trade

Another traditional Cornish enterprise that flourished during this period was the exploitation of 'free-trade' – otherwise known as smuggling. Although further from continental Europe than other coastal areas in the East of England, Cornwall's rugged coastline, seafaring traditions and remoteness led to the ideal combination of opportunity and lack of legal enforcement. Although the romantic view of smuggling is of barrels of French brandy being hauled over beaches on moonless nights, the earliest smuggling was the export of tin to France.

The more traditional view of smuggling came into being in the late 18th century. The financial demands of fighting, and subsequently losing, the American war of Independence had drained the national coffers and precipitated a national economic collapse. In a desperate attempt to stave off national bankruptcy the government imposed punitive taxes, particularly on luxury items. The tax on tea reached 110%; brandy and gin attracted a total duty of some 250%, with the tax on tobacco peaking at 1900%.

Although the economic downturn was felt throughout Britain, the coastal communities of Cornwall suffered disproportionately. High quality salt from France and Spain was required to preserve pilchards, the principal industry of local fishing communities. Taxes on imported salt rose to 40 times the initial cost. This put the price of salt beyond the reach of the Cornish fishing industry and coastal communities faced financial ruin and starvation. The supply of boats, skilled seafarers and the availability of goods from across the Channel in France, available at a fraction of the cost, was an irresistible incentive that led to a boom period for Cornish smuggling. Even if caught, juries were favourably disposed to the trade in which nearly every section of the community had a stake either as investor, supplier or customer. The few smugglers that were captured and brought to trial were often acquitted by local juries.

The nearby fishing port of Polperro was the home and base of one of the more interesting characters in the history of smuggling in this locality. Zephaniah Job was an original 'merchant banker' with broad commercial interests in many local enterprises, including the financing of smuggling operations. As a licensed banker he had his own promissory bank notes printed in London and managed the transfer of funds to suppliers in Guernsey for the goods purchased by local smugglers. He also had close connections with the local

gentry including managing the financial affairs of, and providing substantial loans to, Sir Harry Trelawny, descendant of Bishop Trelawny. Sir Harry, the owner of the nearby Trelawne estate and a local magistrate, was said to have been willing customer for goods 'imported' by the smugglers of Polperro.

The Punchbowl Inn in Lanreath Village is reputed to have links with the 18th century smuggling trade aided by a sympathetic Rector who may have found a new and lucrative use for the secret passage built under the old Rectory a century or so earlier to hide Royalist fugitives. It is rumoured that the parish church may also have been used as a warehouse for 'goods in transit', at this time. It is also possible that the local folk-lore regarding the ghostly driver of a carriage drawn by headless horses in the vicinity of the village was promoted to keep prying eyes away from the nocturnal activities that smuggling entailed! To quote a line from Rudyard Kipling's poem, "Watch the wall, my darling, while the Gentlemen go by!

The end of the Napoleonic wars was the beginning of the end of wholesale smuggling activity. Returning soldiers provided ample new recruits for the Revenue Service and increasing prosperity from the boom in copper mining in Cornwall made the risk / reward balance of smuggling less attractive.

Farming

Despite the changing fortunes of the mining and fishing industries, the economy of Lanreath in the 18th and 19th centuries remained firmly rooted in farming. Most of the land in Lanreath was owned by prosperous absentee landlords who lived far away from the Parish. A list of 36 tenanted and owner-occupied farms and smallholdings in Lanreath recorded in 1903 show that the majority (76%) of farmland was owned by a single landowner, the Trelawne Estate. At this time only 7% of the farmland in the parish was being worked by farmers who owned their own land. The land ownership profile of the parish was to change over the next 100 years as the Trelawne Estate sold off a greater part of their land holdings associated with Botelet Manor in 1913, but the majority of farms continued to be managed through tenancy rather than through direct ownership.

Fields were generally smaller than they are today and, before the introduction of mechanisation, most of the work on the farm was carried out by horse power and farm labourers, which provided hard but essential employment in the Parish. In 1900, Court Barton Farm, which had 85 acres under cultivation, employed a staff of between 10 and 12 men. Farms tended to be 'mixed' farms with a combination of dairy, beef, sheep and arable farming. Kelly's Directory of Cornwall, published in 1889, records that the principle crops grown in Lanreath Parish were wheat, barley and turnips. In the 19th and early 20th century dairy farming would have been of limited scale due to the difficulties of getting access to wider markets for the perishable milk, butter and cheese produced by a farm's dairy. Cattle and sheep would be driven to market for sale, with markets being located in Lostwithiel, Doublebois, Looe and Liskeard. This would entail a lengthy trek, taking 3 to 4 hours to cover the 15 miles from Lanreath to Liskeard. The market in Liskeard, originally

granted a charter by Richard, Earl of Cornwall (brother of Henry III) in 1240, was held on The Parade and Bay Tree Hill in the centre of the Town until replaced by the covered market in Dean Street in 1903. The Liskeard market finally closed in 2017 marking the end of an 800-year-old market history.

The Parish held an annual 'Lanreath Garland Fair' to show off its livestock. The West Briton newspaper of 1st March 1816 contained the following notice:

*'To farmers, butchers and graziers etc, Lanreath Garland Fair, annually held on the third Tuesday after Shrove-Monday, will now fall on the 19th day of March, and it has for several years been considered one of the first show fairs of cattle in the county, and is duly understood, that this year will far exceed any former, as farmers in the vicinity have kept their cattle to promote this highly esteemed fair.'*⁶

In addition to the Garland Fair, two further fairs were held; one on Whit Monday and the other on November the 15th but these died out just before WW1. Farming then, as now, had to contend with the vagaries of the British climate. A series of poor harvests between 1845 and 1851 combined with an almost total failure of the potato crop in 1845, due to potato blight, led to much hardship. Not only were potatoes the staple diet of the labouring population but the crop was of significant commercial value for growers in this part of Cornwall. Large quantities of potatoes were shipped to the London Market from Looe and other nearby ports. The loss of the potato crop led to widespread famine among the poorest in the community and a significant hit to the income of smaller farmers in the area.

In 1979 the Lanreath WI collectively wrote a detailed and engaging history of farming in the parish from 1900 – 1980. This fascinating and awarding winning document is supported by rare photographs of farming life and farming characters and would be an excellent candidate for digitising for future reference and reading by a wider audience.

Methodism

John and Charles Wesley began the introduction of an evangelical and inspirational interpretation of existing Anglican doctrine, starting what would later be known as the Methodist Movement. John Wesley, in particular, had a profound effect on the working classes of Cornwall with his message that all could find God's grace and salvation through living a holy life as an outcome of faith. The Methodist doctrine also struck a chord with its insistence that 'works' as well as faith were essential to the whole of Christian living; this included caring for the poor, for prisoners, for widows and orphans and, obliquely, the pursuit of social justice.

John Wesley visited Cornwall a total of 33 times between 1743 and the end of his life in 1791. He preached widely and, as his message was not always welcomed by the established church, much of his preaching was in the open air, in barns and in cottages. Huge crowds of up to twenty thousand people were reportedly drawn to open-air meetings in places such as Gwennap Pit, close to Redruth. John Wesley may even have preached at Botelet Manor, in Lanreath.

The Botelet Farm blog: <https://botelet.wordpress.com/page/3/> records that:

“The minister at Connon Chapel in St Pinnock parish in Cornwall wrote his memoirs. His name was Reverend Norman Stuart Lobb and from his book entitled ‘Reminiscences of a Family Story’ I quote:

“In the 1770’s Sir Harry Trelawney became an evangelistic preacher, and in 1777 he established the congregational Church in Looe and became its first pastor. During his evangelistic period he became associated with John Wesley. The Tamblyn tradition claims that Sir Harry brought or arranged for Wesley to preach to the tenantry of his manor of Botelet, in the parish of Lanreath, during Wesley’s 1780 visit to Cornwall. On August 21’s Wesley did pass through Looe on his way from Plymouth to St Austell, and his road via Fowey was very near to Botelet. This is all I can verify from Wesley’s Journal, but the tradition is so full of detail that one feels there must be some truth in it. It is positive that young Francis Tamblyn was converted under the influence of Wesley’s preaching. The tradition says that Wesley stood upon the ‘upping stock’ in the yard at Botelet and preached to a crowd of country folk on the text, “Think ye that they were sinners above all men? I tell ye nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.””



Methodist Chapel and Schoolhouse Lanreath

There is no doubt that Methodism took a firm hold in Cornwall and by 1851, 60% of people attending a religious service in Cornwall were Methodists. Methodism became a key part of Cornish identity and many of the things we think of today as being Cornish, including male voice choirs, brass and silver bands and carol singing, all developed in Methodist communities.

Two Methodist chapels were established in Lanreath Parish, one located in Meadow Road, and the other at Mount Pleasant on the road to Lanteglos Highway. Both have since been converted to private housing.

Schooling

Formal education for the children of normal working families was unknown in rural areas during the early 19th century. In 1829 the Rector of Lanreath Parish, the Rev'd Richard Buller, established and funded a school in the study of what is now The Old Rectory. In these early years a total of 68 children attended the school, the majority of whom were enrolled with no cost to the children's parents. The school later moved to a separate building in the Rectory gardens and, in 1868, a dedicated school building was erected on Glebe land on the outskirts of the village opposite what is now the Village Hall.

The Cornwall Record Office retains copies of *'a handbill and poster dated 1894 for 'A Midsummer Day's Queen', a pastoral play by children of school in rectory garden in aid of new classroom fund'* and *'Handbill dated 1895 for performance of 'King Lear' at school in aid of classroom fund'*. Of more whimsical interest, the Record Office also holds copies of the school accounts for 1868-1869 detailing a separate account for a *'galvanized finial for the roof'* and another for *'2 dozen inkwells'* for the school. The school flourished for over a century and, at its peak in the early 1900's, the school had up to 93 pupils taught by three teachers. In 1939 the number of pupils was down to 60. Pupil numbers saw a temporary boost during WWII when 50 children from Camberwell in London were evacuated to the village to be joined by further evacuee children from Bristol and Plymouth. The Methodist Church school house and the Rectory were both pressed into service to provide additional classrooms. After the war, however, the number of pupils continued to fall with less than forty on roll by 1951. The school was finally forced to close in 2007 with only eleven pupils on roll.



Lanreath School, Class 3, with their teacher in 1912

Politics

Before the Reform Act of 1832, Cornwall returned 44 MPs to Parliament, many from what became known as 'Rotten Boroughs'. A prime example was the village and ancient borough of Mitchell in central Cornwall which, in 1821, returned two members of parliament from a total of seven eligible voters. Between 1784 – 1796 this seat was held by David Howell, son of Joshua Howell, the then Rector of Lanreath. Other more local examples were the Boroughs of East and West Looe, both of which were enfranchised in Tudor times, with each entitled to return two members of Parliament. At the beginning of the 19th Century West Looe had just twelve registered voters. In reality, the control of the selection of MPs fell to the local landowner or 'Patron'. In West Looe, at the turn of the 19th Century, this was the Buller family who also owned Lanreath Manor at the time. Such was the power of patrons, particularly their influence and patronage in the political and legal establishments, that when the inhabitants of West Looe attempted and failed to widen the local franchise through application to the courts, John Buller returned himself, with his brother Charles, as MPs in the 'General Election' of 1826.

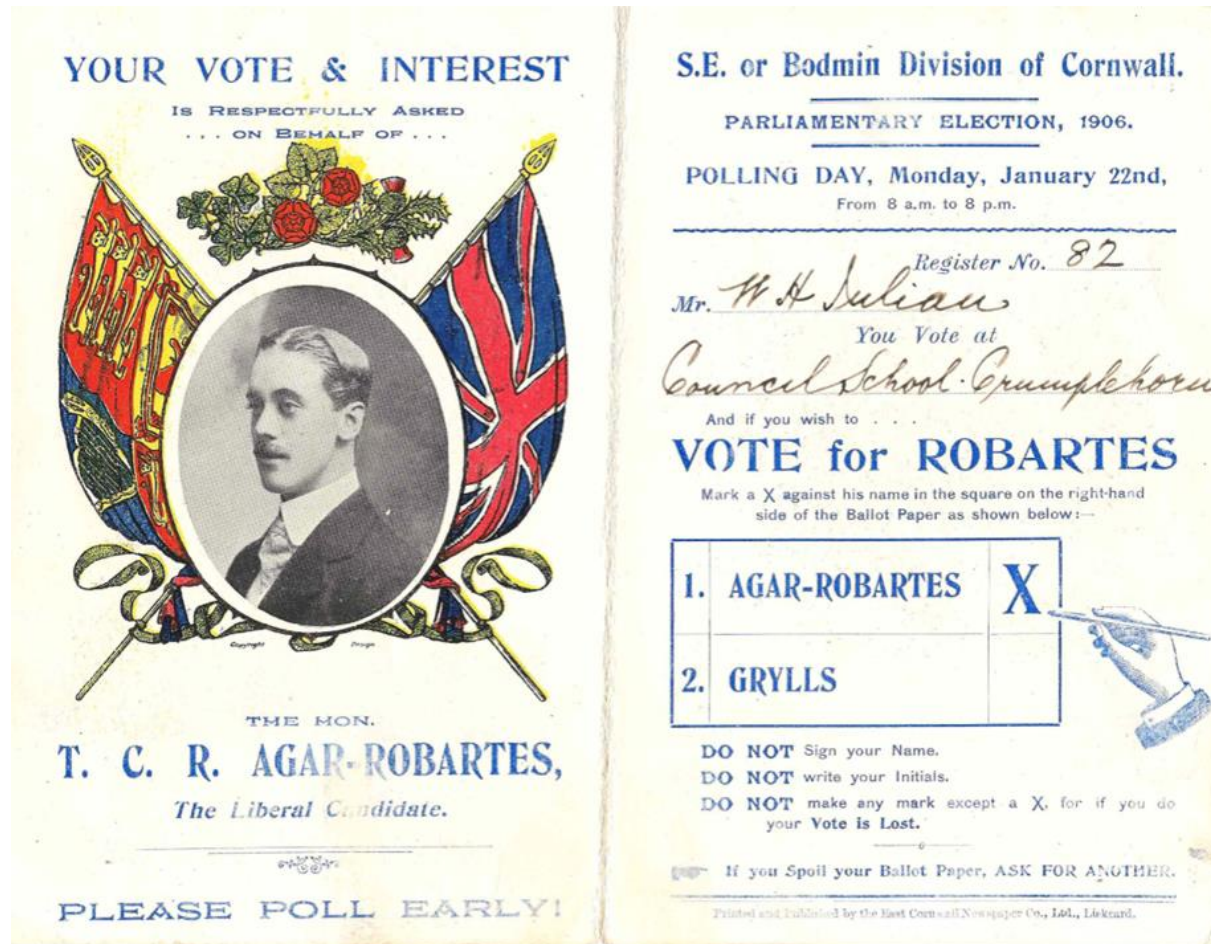
The 'West Britain', a 'Reform' newspaper and therefore opposed to the electoral status quo, wryly reported the 'election fever' in 1812 as follows:

*"The close boroughs, of course are unagitated, Liskeard, St Germans, Michell, St Mawes etc. etc. enjoy profound repose. When the day of the election comes, the freemen will be informed whom it is that their patrons 'favourably recommend' for the honour of their votes. There can be no doubt that the recommendations will be successful, and the electors will have the honour to eat venison and drink wine with the new members, if they should be present, if not, with their Lord's stewards and friends."*⁷

The Parish of Lanreath lay outside of the local Borough constituencies of East and West Looe, Fowey, Lostwithiel and Liskeard. Prior to 1832, the Parish of Lanreath would have been represented in the House of Commons by the two Members of Parliament for Cornwall who, though elected by a limited franchise, generally came from a relatively small group of large land owning dynasties in the County. Prior to an expansion of suffrage in the late 19th Century, only those men who possessed freehold property within the county valued at forty shillings (£2) or more per year, for the purposes of land tax, were allowed to vote in the election of the two MPs for Cornwall; it was not necessary for the freeholder to occupy his land, nor even in later years to be resident in the county at all!

From a brief review of the political landscape of South East Cornwall in the late 19th century it would be tempting to draw a parallel between the ascendancy of Methodism and similar non-conformist faiths, and the non-conformist political leanings of those of the local population who were allowed a vote at the time. The Whig party, and their successors, the Liberal Party, held the parliamentary seat in what is now the Parliamentary Constituency of Southeast Cornwall, which includes Lanreath, from the mid-19th Century through to WW1. The picture is perhaps not quite this clear, in that

some of the elected MPs were Liberal Unionists, a faction of the Liberal Party that objected to Irish Home rule and who became aligned with, and were subsequently absorbed into, the Tory Party.



In the canvassing flyer (above) from the 1906 General Election, the unsuccessful contestant H.B.Grylls, was standing as Liberal Unionist. His connection to the old Grylls family of Lanreath Manor, if any, is unknown.

As an interesting aside, it was not uncommon in the latter half of the 19th Century for a party to field more than one candidate in a General Election even when there was an opposition candidate on the ballot paper. Although this may seem a precarious party political strategy, with the risk of splitting the vote for a particular party and losing the seat to an opposition candidate, this never actually happened and the party fielding two candidates always won the seat.

Following the introduction of the universal franchise in 1918 and throughout the 20th century, South East Cornwall has been a 'swing seat' variously held by either a Liberal or a Conservative MP. The most recent upswing in this constituency, as with the rest of Cornwall, has been to the Conservative Party.

The Two World Wars

As with every other community in the land, the onset of the Great War saw the majority of able-bodied men from the parish headed for the horrors of the Western Front. Eighty of Lanreath's young men served in the Great War. This represented approximately 36% of the male population of all ages in the Parish at the time. Of the eighty who served in the Great War, only 66 returned.

The World War of 1939 – 1945 also took its vengeful toll with a further four men from the village making the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The sacrifices of those who gave their lives serving their country in the Great War and in WWII are recorded on the War Memorial in front of the Parish Church.

The adjacent village of Herodsfoot was one of the few 'Thankful Villages' in Britain and the only such village in Cornwall, having lost no men during the Great War. It is also a 'Doubly-Thankful Village' in that it lost no men in WWII either.

Village Institutions and Facilities

Throughout the last century, in addition to a depleting number of public houses, the village contained a village shop and a Post Office. The Post Office was established in 1895, and the original sub-postmaster, Richard Harris, also ran a cobbler's business from a room adjacent to the Post Office.

In the early days the post was delivered six miles, on foot, to the Lanreath Post Office, by a postman from Duloe. After the mail had been sorted it was delivered around the Parish, again, on foot. By the time he retired in 1934, at the age of 81, it was estimated that Richard Harris had walked over 75,000 miles carrying mail – the equivalent of walking three times around the Equator!

The first telephone was installed in the back kitchen of Post Office in 1906, although the village did not receive its first public telephone box until the 1930's. Until then, anyone wishing to use the 'village' telephone had to walk through the Harris's kitchen to get to the instrument. Richard's son John recalled that as often as not folk, as early technophobes, would exclaim: "Mrs Harris: I can't use this thing! Can you ring my sister for me at this number and tell her so and so.." and Mrs Harris would make the call as requested.

The original thatched village shop was located on St Marnach's Road and was owned and run by the Lean family for nearly a hundred years until the shop changed hands in 1944. The shop also changed premises to a new location on Court Meadow Road, in 1948, fitted with a fine bay window for displaying wares. The shop sold groceries, fruit, sweets, ice cream, cigarettes and tobacco, drapery, boots and shoes, fancy goods, paint and wallpaper and in 1950 it even added a small lending library!



The shop eventually closed as a separate enterprise but the Post Office with a shop continued in various locations, including what is now Rowan Lodge, before finally closing in 2006.

The community secured funds to purchase and convert what was then village public toilets into a shop and Post Office. The new Lanreath Shop and Post office was opened in 2007 in time for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The premises were then further extended and the new Shop and Post office, run by a paid manager and volunteer staff has, once more, become a centre of village life.

Other hubs of village life in the last century were the two village pumps, drawing water from wells at either end of the village. Water from the pumps was fetched by those who lived in the village in buckets and earthenware pitchers. The lower pump was built into a recess in the side of Well Cottage and the clank and rattle of the pump must have been a source of some irritation to the occupants. The pumps were in use well into the 20th century as mains water, as with mains electricity, did not come to the village until early in the latter half of the 20th century.

In the early part of the 20th century there was also a blacksmiths shop located adjacent to the Village Green. In 1919, the village carpenter and wheelwright, Aldie Harris, operated out of a premises on St Marnarch's Road, from where he also fulfilled the role of village undertaker.

Visitors

The coming of the railways brought a new income stream to sections of the community as people from more crowded urban parts of this island sought out the moors, wooded valleys and spectacular coastlines of Cornwall as a holiday destination. Many of the local farms started to offer Bed & Breakfast accommodation as a way of bringing in additional income.



Holidaymakers in the 1920's

The change in demand for self-catering holidays in the latter part of the 20th century coincided with an amalgamation of existing farms and the building of large modern stock barns, milking parlours and implement sheds which rendered a substantial number of smaller traditional stone built barns redundant. Planning regulations in the latter part of the last century did not support these buildings being converted into permanent dwellings so many saw conversion into holiday units.

The poems of John Betjeman, the novels of Daphne Du Maurier and, more latterly, the television series 'Poldark', have done much to showcase the mystique and beauty of the County, attracting visitors not just from the UK but from Europe and many other parts of the world.

In addition to the provision of accommodation a number of visitor attractions sprung up across the Parish. Perhaps the earliest was Lanreath Farm and Folk Museum run by John and Lila Facey. Located in the centre of the village, the museum, now sadly closed, started out as collection of agricultural implements and machinery amassed as a hobby by John, a retired farmer, in the 1960's. It soon grew to include a wide and eclectic range of artefacts, from the earliest wooden washing machine to a reconstruction of a 18th century farmhouse kitchen. The latter was complete with a high back settle and an open cooking fire with firedogs, hanging kettles and a clove oven.

Other ventures were to follow. In 1979 four man-made lakes at Shillamill, established on the site of an old water mill, were stocked with carp, tench, perch, roach and rudd and became a mecca for coarse fishermen. The site also provided a camping and caravan site to which was later added three pine holiday chalets. The site was eventually sold to a holiday chalet marketing company based in Potters Bar. Now called 'Stonerush Lakes' the enterprise has expanded to become a large development of upmarket chalets for holiday rent or purchase.

Porfell Wildlife Park and Sanctuary opened in 1989 as a simple farm park but has subsequently expanded to include a range of animals from across the world. In 2010 it was further expanded to include a Maasai village complete with roaming zebras and ostriches. A comparison of the Great Rift Valley of Kenya with the somewhat cooler and damper climate and environs of Lanreath is an interesting one!

Life on Celluloid

To quote Andy Warhol, Lanreath has had its '15 minutes of fame' preserved on celluloid and in digital media

In the first instance, Lanreath deputised for a Yorkshire village in a 1948 'film noire' called the 'Daughter of Darkness'. A high budget film for its day, it starred Siobhan McKenna and Maxwell Reed (the first husband of Joan Collins) with Joan Crawford in a supporting role. The cast also included a young Honor Blackman in her first film role (of later fame in the Avengers and as Pussy Galore in the James Bond film 'Goldfinger'). Despite the high budget and the star cast it was not a commercial success. A review of the film today would indicate that it was not, perhaps, at the pinnacle of British cinematic achievement! The filming took place at Court Barton and elsewhere in the village over a two-day period.

A local resident, Gerald Facey, then aged 12, recalls skipping church one Sunday to watch them filming the sheep shearing scene in the grounds of Court Barton.



The Punch Bowl Inn (1951) showing the Idris Jenkins (landlord) and family, and their friends from Liverpool, the Williams (Brian Williams supplied the photograph). The notice on the left reads, 'This is Lanreath. Historically interesting and famous for its church, inn, maypole, and the setting of a well-known film'

More recently, in 2007, the BBC filmed a one-hour documentary about Lanreath as part of an 'entertaining' mini-series 'Power to the People'.

In the BBC's own blurb for this programme:

"Tim Samuels joins an entire Cornish village which is on the brink of extinction as they pack up sheep, cows and morris dancers to travel en masse to London and seize the frappuccino-swalling New Labour heartland of Islington.

Lanreath has lost its post office, shop, pub, bus service - and now their beloved primary school is under threat. Pushed to breaking point, the countryside comes to town to get its voice heard."

While the documentary did provide a platform for various members of the community to express their frustration and sadness at the accelerating erosion of communal village life, its overall impact on the course of history was, unfortunately, negligible and the school closed. One light at the end of this sorry tunnel is that the village once again has a thriving Shop and Post Office and, with Punch Bowl Inn now under new ownership, we look forward to the day when the village pub once again becomes an integral part of parish life.

Community Spirit

Although the 2007 BBC documentary focused on the powerlessness of rural communities to halt the 'inevitable slide into oblivion', it did not, perhaps, adequately highlight what has always been a strength in the Parish; its community spirit.

In addition to more recent community efforts to re-establish the Shop and Post-office, early in the last century the community worked together to establish the 'Village Institute'. This endeavour started life in 1920 as 'The Lanreath Post of Comrades of the Great War'; a group of ex-servicemen from the Parish working in collaboration with the Rector. Over the next two years' funds were raised through whist drives, concerts and dances held in the village schoolroom and supported by loans from the farming community. A hut some 50 feet by 20 feet was then purchased and established on what is now the Millennium Green in 1922. This building served as the 'Working Men's Institute' as well as providing a social venue for the village, a meeting room for groups such as the 'Women's Institute' and, in the 1950's, for a bi-weekly doctor's surgery.



The original wooden Village Institute



The Lanreath Village Hall today

Time eventually took its toll on wooden structure and during the 1970/80's a massive fund-raising effort was undertaken supported by many community activities, including a renowned annual Vintage Rally held in the village, to build a replacement. The fundraising, augmented by generous grant-aid, enabled a brand new and spacious Village Hall to be built in 1989 at a new location opposite the school at the top of the village.

The new Village Hall provides a large area suitable for sports such as bowls and badminton and, with its stage, is an excellent venue for a broad range of community activities. The building also includes a large kitchen, a bar and lounge, a snooker room and a separate committee room. The community is not resting on its laurels and fund raising is currently being undertaken for an extension that will provide dedicated changing rooms for the village and visiting football teams.

The land on which the old 'Village Institute' stood was transformed into the Millennium Green to celebrate the birth of the 21st century. It provides a green space for relaxation and the focus for festive events including the village Maypole dance.



The village decorated for the 'Peace Games'

The village would also come together for the annual village fairs and events such as the 'Peace Sports' which were initiated in 1919 and held every year in July until 1939. The village was decorated with bunting and houses freshly white-washed for the occasion. The sports day saw various races for the village children for which prizes were awarded. There were a number of equestrian events, athletics displays, cycle races and even pillow fights.



The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

In more recent times a village street party was held in 2012 to Celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Carrying on a tradition that goes back more than a century, the Parish celebrates 'Mayday' each year with a broad range of activities, including the parade of the 'May Queen' culminating in the traditional dance around the village Maypole on the Millennium Green. (see 'Past and Present' on the Lanreath Parish Council website)

The Lanreath Amenities Group is the engine house of today's community spirit, raising funds and organising events around the village including a spectacular annual firework display, live music, the Lanreath Senior Citizens Christmas Meal and regular bingo nights. Its founder, Marion Facey, also ensures that the parish stays in touch with local news and activities by producing the monthly Parish newsletter the 'Lanreath Lifestyle'.

The activities of the Amenities Group were recognised by Her Majesty the Queen in 2011 when the group was presented with the 'Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community'.

Summary

It is always interesting to look back in time and, hopefully, this brief summary of the history of Lanreath allows a glimpse into the past life of Parish and surrounding area. It is not intended as an academic historical exercise although any facts have been cross-checked where possible. Any remaining errors are those of the collator!

P.D.Seaman – April 2019

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