

## PLACES AND PEOPLE OF PERRANWELL TREDREA & GOONVREA.

Members of the Fox family settled in Falmouth in the 1750's and soon established themselves as shipping agents. At that time copper mining around St Day was taking off, impelled by the drive of the Williams family, but its progress was being hampered by the absence of nearby safe harbours. The Fox's realized that the Kennal estuary only a few miles from the mines would provide a safe, year round port. With this in mind in 1769 George Fox II secured a lease to develop warehouses, wharves and docks on the Perran side of the Kennal and his uncle George Croker Fox II secured a lease on the opposite southern shore. [ Research into the Fox and Williams families can be mightily confusing as the eldest sons are named after their fathers and the same Christian names are used by cousins ].

George Fox II was appointed manager of the port operations and the community of Perranwharf was borne. Around 1770 he built a substantial, elegant and commodious mansion called **Tredrea** on the site of an old farm cottage and installed his wife and young family there. He created a fine wooded garden with attractive serpentine walks.

The Fox family invested heavily in the local mines and soon realized that there was demand for locally made mining equipment, so in 1791 George Croker Fox II and his brother Robert Were Fox along with partners from South Wales providing the technical expertise built **Perran Foundry** and George Fox of **Tredrea** became the first manager.

Slightly later around 1810 George Croker Fox II built **Goonvrea** as a family retreat with wooded walks, a bowling alley and a large walled garden. The Fox family had their town houses in Falmouth, but enjoyed the wonderful gardens that they created at their country retreats like Penjerrick, Trebah, Glendurgan, Tregedna and Penmere.

George Fox II died in 1816 having seen the family shipping interests at Perranwharf prosper with coal, limestone, iron ore and timber imported and copper ore exported to the family smelters in South Wales. His son George Fox III took over as manager of the foundry. He had been living with his family and that of his father at Tredrea, so it must have been a very full house. George Fox III had lost his wife 4 years previously giving birth to his fifth daughter. Like his father he was a deeply religious Quaker and he took his family over to the meeting house at Come to Good every Sunday and built a small meeting house in the grounds of Tredrea. He was a profoundly unhappy man after the death of his wife and around 1822 he left Cornwall to live near his sister in Cumbria, also a Quaker stronghold.

The next resident of Tredrea was Charles Fox, a remarkable man from a gifted family. He had lived at Goonvrea for a short time. He was the son of Robert Were Fox I one of the original partners in the Foundry. He became manager at the young age of 26 and retired from the job in 1842, but lived on at Tredrea until around 1848, when he moved to Trebah and was responsible for creating the gardens that we enjoy today.

He enlarged and modernised the Foundry and increased its range of products. Along with his cousin George Croker Fox II and his scientist brother Robert Were Fox II he expanded the Fox industrial empire to include iron and coal mines in Wales, copper smelters at Swansea, tramroads and ports in Cornwall and a fleet of coasters. Besides these diverse business interests he contributed to the study of biblical history, to geology and natural history, to innovations in mining equipment and strongly supported Falmouth Polytechnic. He was a kindly and gentle man and followed the Quaker tradition of taking a deep interest in the welfare and education of his workforce. Remember that these were the days when the bell rang at Perranwharf at 5.30am and working hours were from 6am to 6pm for 5 days a week and half an hour less on Saturday. Some relief was allowed on festive occasions such as the celebration of Waterloo or a Fox family marriage, but it was probably constrained by the teatotal Quaker regime.

In 1842 Charles Fox relinquished the position of Manager of the Foundry to his nephew Barclay Fox, who does not seem to have lived at Tredrea or Goonvrea, but built and lived in a much smaller house nearby called Cliff Cottage. Barclay was called after his mother Lucy Barclay a member of another great Quaker family.. Barclay was another enlightened Quaker,

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### TULLIMAAR HOUSE.

Every house has a history, but Tullimaar has far more than its fair share. The house was built in 1828 on 8 acres of land between Perranwharf and the Bissoe valley. It was leased from the Basset estate by Benjamin Sampson, a wealthy local entrepreneur. He was born in 1769 at Gwennap Churchtown, a member of a well known and respected family, who had settled in the parish at the time of Henry VIII.

He started his working life as a lowly apprentice carpenter at the Tresavean copper mine at Lanner before moving to Perranwharf as a clerk at the Perran Foundry. In 1803 he married Mary Hearle, the daughter of one of the principal shareholders in the Foundry, who sadly died two years later. He made shrewd investments in the shares of the Foundry, Carnon Streamworks and Tresavean mine, reaping handsome returns. He became the driving force behind the manufacture of explosives as the principal shareholder and manager of the gunpowder mills at Kennal vale and Cosawes at a time when the mining industry in Cornwall was flourishing and expanding. Previously gunpowder had been imported into Cornwall, but by undercutting upcountry suppliers, he created great wealth with a virtual monopoly. With the proceeds he built Tullimaar described as an elegant and tasteful residence with terraced gardens dropping down to the tidal waters of the then less silted Kennal estuary.

He had married Ann Stewart in 1810 and they lived in grand style with a pack of hounds, a fine coach and four and despite his humble background Benjamin as the manager and a senior partner in Perran foundry was received into the polite society of the day. He died in 1840 and a tablet in Perranarworthal church has the inscription "He died universally esteemed and lamented"

His wife lived in Tullimaar until her death in 1852 and she was succeeded by a nephew Benjamin Cloak, who, on condition that he changed his name to Sampson, received a very considerable inheritance at the young age of 24. He apparently preferred to live at Greatwood House at Mylor and led an extravagant lifestyle there, meanwhile Richard Lanyon, Sampsons business partner lived at Tullimaar. In 1858 Sampson junior bought Tremough house for his lawyer and friend William Shilson. He died childless in 1864 and the house passed to a great nephew of Sampson, William Hockin, who lived briefly at Tullimaar from 1869 to 1871. It was during this period that the Reverend Francis Kilvert a celebrated Victorian diarist and a friend and admirer of Hockin's wife Emma, stayed in the house and made a whirlwind tour of the County. Kilvert waxed ecstatic about the beauty of the location of Tullimaar with its terraced lawns and shrubberies leading down to the creek with the luxuriant woods of the Carclew deer park beyond. The house and terraced gardens are now obscured from view by the growth of the many trees, some of rare species, planted earlier in that century.

The lease of Tullimaar was then bought by Francis Hearle-Cock, a solicitor, town clerk of Truro and an under sheriff of Cornwall. His wife Caroline had high ranking religious connections and in 1882 she reopened the parish church after a very extensive renovation and laid the foundation stone of the church hall in 1888. After her husbands death she lived in the house until 1918.

During World War II the house was occupied by American troops and it was reliably reported that General Eisenhower stayed there in June 1944 in the run up to D-day, spending time co-organising the landings in Normandy. During this period he was known to have visited American troops and senior officers stationed at Smugglers Cottage, Tolverne.

After the war the house was bought by Mrs Daisy Lock a director of a renowned, long established firm of London hatters of that name. She removed her Italianate villa, stone by stone, from the Isle of Wight and stored it at Tullimaar. She planned to rebuild the villa on Rosemullion Head, a prominent beauty spot on the Helford river, but thankfully was refused planning permission

In 1957 the house was sold to Princess Martha Bibesco, a Roumanian intellectual, who prior to the war was regarded as one of the richest and most beautiful women in European

society, who had lived in glittering style in Paris. Her numerous admirers included the Crown Prince William of Germany, the British Prime Minister Ramsey Macdonald and a normally testy General de Gaulle was entranced by her as were both Churchill and Asquith. She lost the bulk of her wealth when Hitler's forces invaded Roumania, but is said to have escaped to South Africa with her emeralds. She was familiar with Cornwall having stayed with her friends the Abdy's of Newton Ferrers near Callington. Somewhat impoverished in her seventies she moved to Cornwall for a quieter life and settled down at Tullimaar with her daughter and family and continued writing and dabbled in market gardening. She explored Cornwall with as her guide the famously crusty historian A.L.Rowse, who remarked that "all in all she was the most remarkable woman that I have ever known". As a reminder of past riches and grandeur she kept a flat in Paris until her death in 1973.

Soon after, in 1975 the house was bought by Timothy Guy the founder of a successful international design and communications company based in Cornwall, who lived there with his family for ten years, when in 1985 the house was sold to William Golding, who moved in shortly after receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Sir William Golding, who received a knighthood in 1988 was born in Cornwall, but spent most of his life in and around Salisbury as a teacher and a writer. His war service in the navy influenced his future writing in so far as he pondered over this highly civilised race of people doing unimaginable things. His first literary success was "The Lord of the Flies" published in 1954 about so-called innocent British schoolboys marooned on a desert island. This was followed by the "The Inheritors" about a peaceable race of Neanderthals destroyed by a tribe of Homo sapiens. Then came "The Spire" and "The Rites of Passage", the latter a Trilogy, which won him the Booker Prize in 1980. Several novels followed, which failed to achieve the resounding success of his earlier works. He died at Tullimaar in 1993 and the house is now occupied by his son and family

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