

Quethiock in the 1960s



Welcome to Quethiock

Quethiock is pronounced 'Quethick'. The origin of the name is unknown but in one ancient manuscript it could have been 'Graedik'. There is no Q in the Celtic alphabet. The village is the centre of the very rural Parish of the same name. There are two outlying villages, Trehunist and Blunts. Other older settlements are based around old farms with barn conversions such as Trehunsey, Treweese, Trecorme, Holwood and Tilland. The population in 2011 was 493 in the whole Parish, living in 214 properties. In 1851 the population was 752 when local mines were operating, but, by 1891 it had dropped to 435.

Almost every lane is bordered by traditional Cornish hedgerows some hundreds of years old which enclose land used mainly for beef, dairy and sheep. The arable land is mainly used to grow crops for animal feed. The field pattern has remained largely unchanged for at least 200 years. Other than the Church, the Glebe Land, the Chapel and Old School, the Village and Parish were owned from the early 17th Century until 1919 by the Pentillie Estate, which lies 6 miles to the east.

Colonel Augustus Coryton (1809-1891) and his nephew, William (1847-1919) were both reckoned, by the standard of the day, to be good landlords. They kept meticulous records and the rental contracts show great attention to detail down to each aspect of farming methods thus ensuring no over-grazing, the fertility of the soil and excellent woodland management. The buildings were well maintained and the rentals not excessive, which led to a very stable tenant population.

In the period of the 1850s & 1860s, there was a large influx of miners especially, from West Cornwall. These were the boom years for the mining of silver and lead in the wider area. There were two local mines. Wheal Ludcott was situated just over the northwest border of the Parish and Wheal North Trelawney just within the Parish.

The population expanded, especially with miners in their 20s and many miners lodged in the village. Most miners moved on, but some intermarried as the Parish reverted to being dependant on agriculture. The village population was 256 in 1851, but down to 100 in 1891. Today, it has approximately 130 residents. Likewise, the population of Trehunist was 118 in 1851 and down to 51 in 1891, almost the same number as today.

THE SALE OF QUETHIOCK PARISH

On 14th August 1919, life changed drastically when the whole Parish of 4200 acres was put under the hammer at The Royal Hotel in Plymouth. High taxes demanded after the war and the impending death of William Coryton added to the need to sell this valuable asset which fetched £123,872.

The Sale Catalogue, maps and photographs are wonderful records listing every tenancy, field, wood, quarry, allotment, building and contents. It is reported that the saleroom was packed. The Cornish Times reported that there were 'pale faced dark suited unfamiliar faces in the room' and soon a near riot ensued.

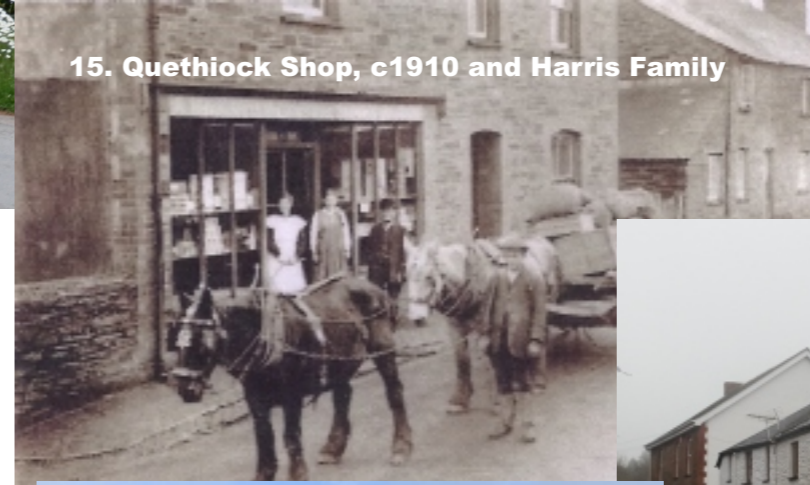
In all 28 Parish farms were up for sale but only 9 were bought by existing tenants. Cornwall County Council outbid sitting tenants, especially for the larger and best holdings, many leases having been held for generations. The cry went up, 'You'm biddin with tax-payers money, we'm biddin' with our own'. The money came from government grants to help returning soldiers. The idea was to make smaller tenancies, but many were too small and the new tenants too unused to the hard grind to be viable. Trenance, Luccombe, Tilland, Trebrown, East Quethiock, Hepwell, Venn, East Trehunist & West Trehunist were all sold to the County Council and most of that land is still owned by it today. The other ten farms were bought by farmers outside the Parish. For the villagers some fared quite well. For example, the blacksmiths, the publican and shop keeper bought their properties. Some of the villagers and descendants were still living in the Parish in 1939. Some were re-employed by the new owners, but increasing mechanisation led to a decline in jobs and many moved away.

5. Maids House (Former Almshouses)



8. St Hugh's Church

15. Quethiock Shop, c1910 and Harris Family



15&16 Fore Street



16. Nicholas Roseveare



19. The former Masons Arms



The Whispering Oak



20. The Old School

Acknowledgements: Many of the notes were obtained from Mary French's excellent book 'A Victorian Village' (1977). She lived in the Parish at Goodmerry Farm and was the wife of James Wenmoth. The Church notes came from Vennings Directory (1901) and other records. The Auction Catalogue for the Sale of Quethiock Parish in 1919, the Parish for Sale book by Robert Leishman (2009), Censuses, other items in The Cornwall Record Office together with subsequent notes from the Cornish Times give us a great insight into life in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Finally, thanks must go to so many people in Quethiock for sharing their remembrances.

Quethiock Village Trail

The trail map is from the Parish Hall by the School and back again.
Go past the School and turn right.
The first property is at the crossroads.

1. Yew Tree Villa

The Hawken family had their business here from at least 1841. They were the main blacksmiths, carpenters and wheelwrights for the village. They were also associated with smithies at Treweese Cross & Pounda. Benjamin Hawken bought the property in the 1919 Coryton Sale for £160. The site of the old forge is in the corner by Pleasant Ridge. The first Wesleyan Hall stood on the present kitchen garden and opened in 1825.

2. Yellands Cottage & Mutton Row

These 2 cottages were once 4 and tied to Trehunsey Farm before 1919. Joseph Mutton, a farmer and shop keeper from St Ive, owned all the properties in the 1930s and they stayed in the family until 1962. One of the tenants was Mrs Jane Yelland, the very strict head teacher from 1932 until 1954. She had 2 cottages, with the kitchen in one and living room in the other with no communicating door!

3. Little West Farmhouse

This property with 28 acres of land was sold in 1919 for £1,900 and has since been split up. The new School, the Parish Hall and the newer properties northwest of the crossroads are on some of its fields. Next door to the farmhouse is Potters Croft converted from its old barns.

4. The Site of Quethiock's West End Garage

This was run by Raymond Kestle of Little West. He repaired farm machinery and motor vehicles and there was also a hardware shop. They had closed by 1972. Three Gables next to it was the first modern bungalow in Quethiock.

5. Maids House

This cottage was the old Almshouses. It had two separate dwellings downstairs and two upstairs, under the eaves, reached by outside steps. The Almshouses were built in 1633 and endowed by Wm Coryton and ended when the last spinster was moved to the Hillside Flats in 1972.

6. Great West Farmhouse

This property had one was of the smaller farms, 66 acres in size and it was sold in 1919 for £2,108 to its tenant, Wilfred Wenmoth. Other members of the Wenmoth family were able to buy their tenancies at Dannett and Goodmerry, However, one lost his tenancy, at Hepwell to Cornwall County Council. For most of the 19th century the Snell family was farming here. The barns to the west of the property were converted in the mid-1970s. Avondale and Brookside were built on the land.

7. The Cottage, Old Pound Cottage & Well Cottage

These are some of the oldest properties. The homes were mainly for the retired and active farm labourers who also had allotments in other parts of the village. Even as late as the 1970s the tenants still had no inside toilets, very poor electricity and were still cooking on open fires. The properties were sold together in 1919 for £120. Near Well Cottage is the spring which was probably used by many villagers before mains water.

8. St Hugh's Church

Quethiock Church is possibly on the site where the Welsh saint Cadoc preached in the 6th century. In 1259 the Church was recorded as being rebuilt and in 1288 it was re-dedicated to St Hugh of Lincoln. His symbol is the swan and this is still used by Quethiock CofE School. It seems the Church thrived until the late 18th century when it was affected by the rise of Methodism, which was very strong in Cornwall at that time. One of the vicars actually lived at Lydford 25 miles away! The Church fell into such disrepair that the roof leaked so much, that when in 1877 the Bishop of Truro held a service inside, he had to use an umbrella! The building, of porous sandstone, is unusual for Cornwall in that the tower is built from the roof. The Vicarage (now Quethiock House) was built in the early 19th century. It is situated over half a mile from the Church near Parson's Pool.

9. The Cross

The Cross in the SW corner of the churchyard is believed to be 6th or 7th century. It is said to be the second tallest in Cornwall. Made of granite it is 14 feet high. The base is 4ft 6inches and the cross 2ft in diameter. It is made up of 4 pieces. The shaft, in excellent condition, with its fine cable pattern was lost for centuries. It was rediscovered by Rev Willimott, one part buried and another part making up the church gate posts. It was re-erected in 1882.

More information about St Hugh's and the Cross can be found inside the Church.

10. Pentillie Cottage

This old cottage was owned in the 1960s by Mr Joblin, a coach driver, who also had a scrap yard on the site of the present Larkrise.

11. Crab Apple Cottage

Originally named Rose Cottage, this was the one-time home of Mr John Heddon, the retired long time village headmaster who was 85 in 1919. Mr Heddon was a great gardener and grew varieties of apples with names like Lord Suffields, English Stubbards, Early Jeannetons & Quaratines.

12. Ferndale

This was the original shop in Quethiock. In the 1890s, the shopkeeper, Alfred Harris, was running out of space, with his growing family and a thriving business. William Coryton decided to build a new shop premises in Fore Street.(No 15) . The new tenant at Ferndale was Alfred's brother, Thomas, who ran a photography business. Thomas' pictures of Quethiock, Liskeard and many other villages give us amazing views of life at the end of the 19th century and into the early 20th century in SE Cornwall.

13. Thorn Cottage

Originally these were two agricultural cottages and later became the home of the school headmaster, Mr David Champion (1896-1914). Mr Champion was very strict, as was his wife Emily with her use of the thimble, but the children did excellent handwriting and needlework!

14. East Quethiock Farm

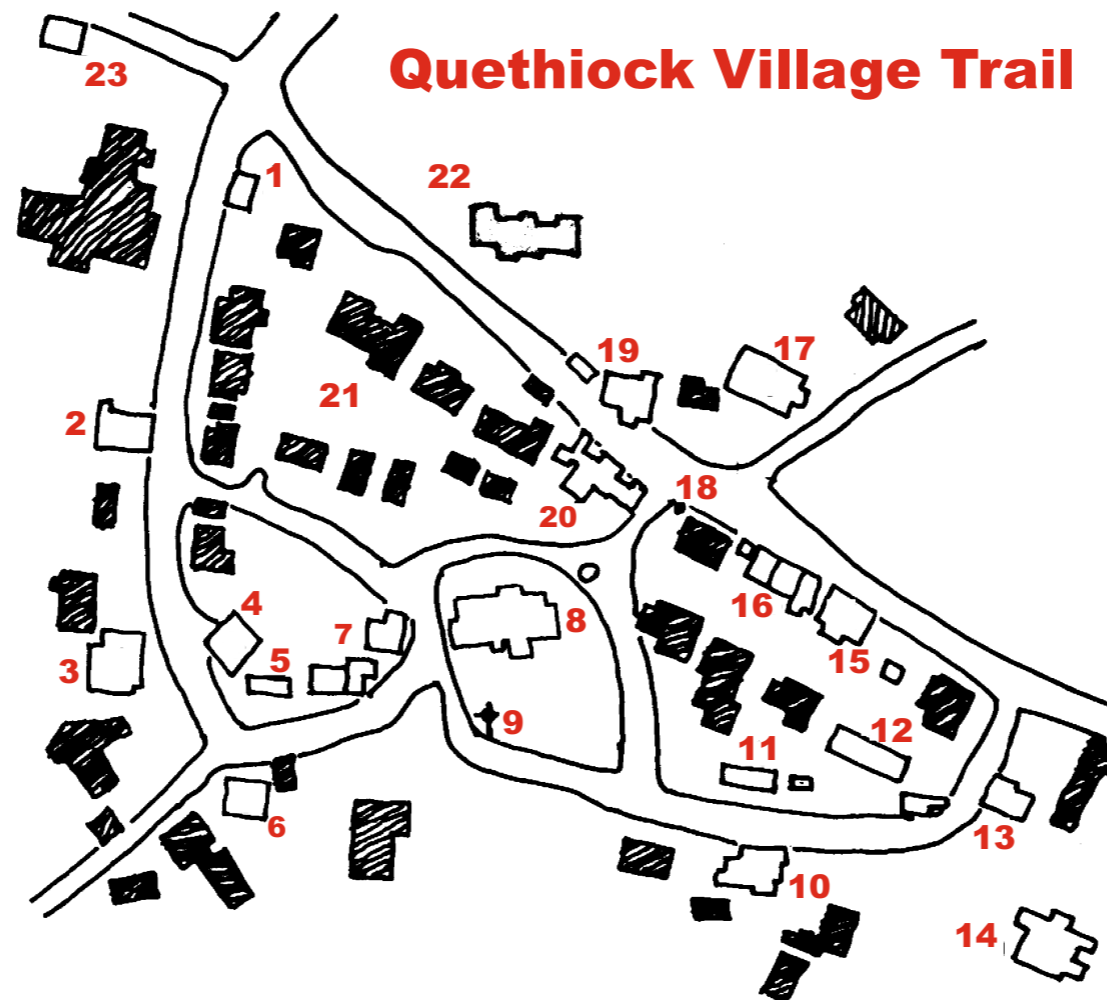
This farm had also been the home of another of the Snell family since at least 1841. George Snell was 97 in 1861 and he was succeeded by his son Joseph and grandson Frederick until the Sale of 1919, when the Council bought the 143 acres for £4,500. The building is typical of several 19th century 'Coryton' farmhouses. In the 1939 register the tenant was Harry Riddle. In 1911 Harry had been living at Pentillie Cottage and his job was as a regrator. This was a person who bought commodities from the producer and then brought them to market i.e. a middle man.

15. The Old Shop

Squire William Coryton had the Stores built here in 1897. Alfred Harris, the new tenant couldn't believe its size! He became the proprietor after 1919 when he bought the shop and land including the present site of Bankside for £450. From a humble mining background Alfred built up a thriving business. It was still run in 1939 by the Harris family. The outline of the shop windows can still be seen in the brickwork. Bankside was built on part of an orchard, kitchen garden and a piggery. The older inhabitants remember their children swimming in the pool and the huge basement held activities including the Play Group and social events in the 1970s. The shop closed in 1984 after several changes of owners who couldn't make it pay.

16. The Post House

These 3 cottages, dating from the 1700s, were built to house the many farm labourers who worked on the tenanted farms. The cottages still have their old, now thankfully, defunct earth privies in their gardens. In the 1870s the middle cottage became the post office and from 1891 the post master was Nicholas Roseveare. He had such a large beard he had to tuck it into his overcoat in the wind and it was said it frightened the horses. He played the accordion at village social events. His daughter Amy was still the sub-postmistress in 1939.



17. The Chapel House

The Methodist Chapel was built in 1839. Several local families already mentioned in this booklet such as the Hawkens, the Wenmoths at Great West, the Snells at Venn Farm and the Harris family at the shop were strong supporters in the last century. There were circuit preachers, but the locals also held services and taught the children. It had a very well attended Sunday School, which reached its peak between 1941 and 1956. 38 local children regularly attended in 1956 the peak year. The Register also records that over 40 evacuees attended at different times during 1941 and 1942. By 1965 the number attending was down to 6. Planning permission was sought in 2012 to convert the chapel to a home soon after it closed. There is still a Methodist Hall at Blunts.

18. The War Memorial

Information about the 5 men named on the Memorial can be found in the old telephone box nearby.

19. The Masons Arms, Churchtown

The only Inn in Quethiock, it was run by another branch of the Snell family. Edmund Snell (1801-1889) was the Victualler for much of the century and the Inn was renowned for excellent food as well as drink. The licence was ended in 1922. There was a peak time in the 1850s & 60s with the influx of miners in lodgings within the village. Then in 1894 the annual Quethiock Cattle Fair ended. After 1919 the twice yearly rent payments, made at the Inn, to the Pentillie Estate and the annual Audit Dinner ended and these also lead to loss of income. It is believed that the wall in front of the building was built to its height to help the tenants when dismounting their horses and that the little building across the road from the Masons Arms and in front of Foxland was where the tenants paid their rent.

20. The Old School

The first mention of a school serving the Parish was in 1811. The school building was started in 1860 and was only 30x14ft wide. It soon had to be extended and the premises were really cramped. By 1873 it was unlawful for children under 10 years not to attend school for less than 250 days a year. The following year The Headmaster, Mr John Heddon, had to keep a detailed log book including attendance records. He recorded continuing absences peaking at hay-making, harvest and potato planting times. Some days only 40 out of the 70 registered children were in attendance. The Headmaster David Day was very highly rated, and the School so popular during the 1970s to 1990s, that the new School was opened in 1995. In the late 1970s Mr Day started the Quethiock Cross Country Run and by 2003, 300 students from 30 Cornish schools took part. The School numbers then plummeted as the Parish population aged and more retired people bought up properties. Today, the School is thriving as it now part of the St Barnabas Multi Academy Trust which draws its numbers from a much wider area.

21 & 22. Up to the Crossroads

On the south side of the road are the 13 properties which were built mainly in the 1970s in what was known until recently as Bunkers field. Before all the houses were built, Mr Gene Wenmoth of Great West Farm rented it for his dairy cows. The present owner of Yew Tree Villa came home one day to find they had eaten her washing! One of the finest trees still in Quethiock today is The Whispering Oak which is just below The Old School House. A high proportion of trees in the village is covered by Tree Preservation Orders. On the north side of the road, next to Orchard Rise, were the main allotments for the village up until 1919. Cottagers were virtually self-sufficient and some kept pigs. There were apple orchards and cider presses around the village. There was a thriving Annual Flower Show which still exists to this day as the Horticultural Show. The large tenant farmers and their workers competed on equal terms at the Show. In the 1895 Show, the Riddle family brothers, George, Thomas & Harry swept the board. Their late father came to Quethiock as a lead miner in the 1860s and the brothers were all farm labourers in their 30s.

23. Quethiock Parish Hall

Finally, straight on at the crossroads,, past the New School and up to the Parish Hall. The fund for a village hall was set up in 1968, but it wasn't until 1989 that it was finally opened. The temporary wooden structure was bought for £1,450 and was transported in 1982 from a Plymouth Parkway construction site. It was threatened with demolition when the new School was built in 1995. It was saved by the community and upgraded and improved by various management committees. Formerly, called Quethiock Pavilion it is now the centre of village life.

**WE HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED YOUR
WALK AROUND OUR VILLAGE**