

Clay Country



Hendra Pit

St. Dennis

Trethewey in the 18th Century

Compiled by Clifford Trethewey

Where do we come from?

There was a time when I didn't feel Cornish and I didn't like Cornwall, yet it harbours a strange fascination that is difficult to shed. No one would deny that in parts it is beautiful, but there is also a sense of isolation in its windswept landscape punctuated by misshapen trees cowering beneath the incessant blast. The east of the county closest to the Tamar is somewhat benign, but as one delves deeper into the heartland, it strikes me that it is a strange and unusual place. Cornwall is not the only place in England that does this to me, but unlike the others, it is not a place to which I am instinctively drawn. I often feel uncomfortable and intimidated and it is possible to believe that in some places time has passed it by.

Cornwall's natural beauty lies locked within its wild and indestructible coastline. It was only during the 20th century that we have been taught to see it romantically. Some say that it is an illusion created for us by the artists and writers who profited from it. For the people of bygone centuries who had to live and work within the boundaries of this rugged harshness, life was hard and uncertain and poverty was never far away. For them its beauty and its romanticism was meaningless.

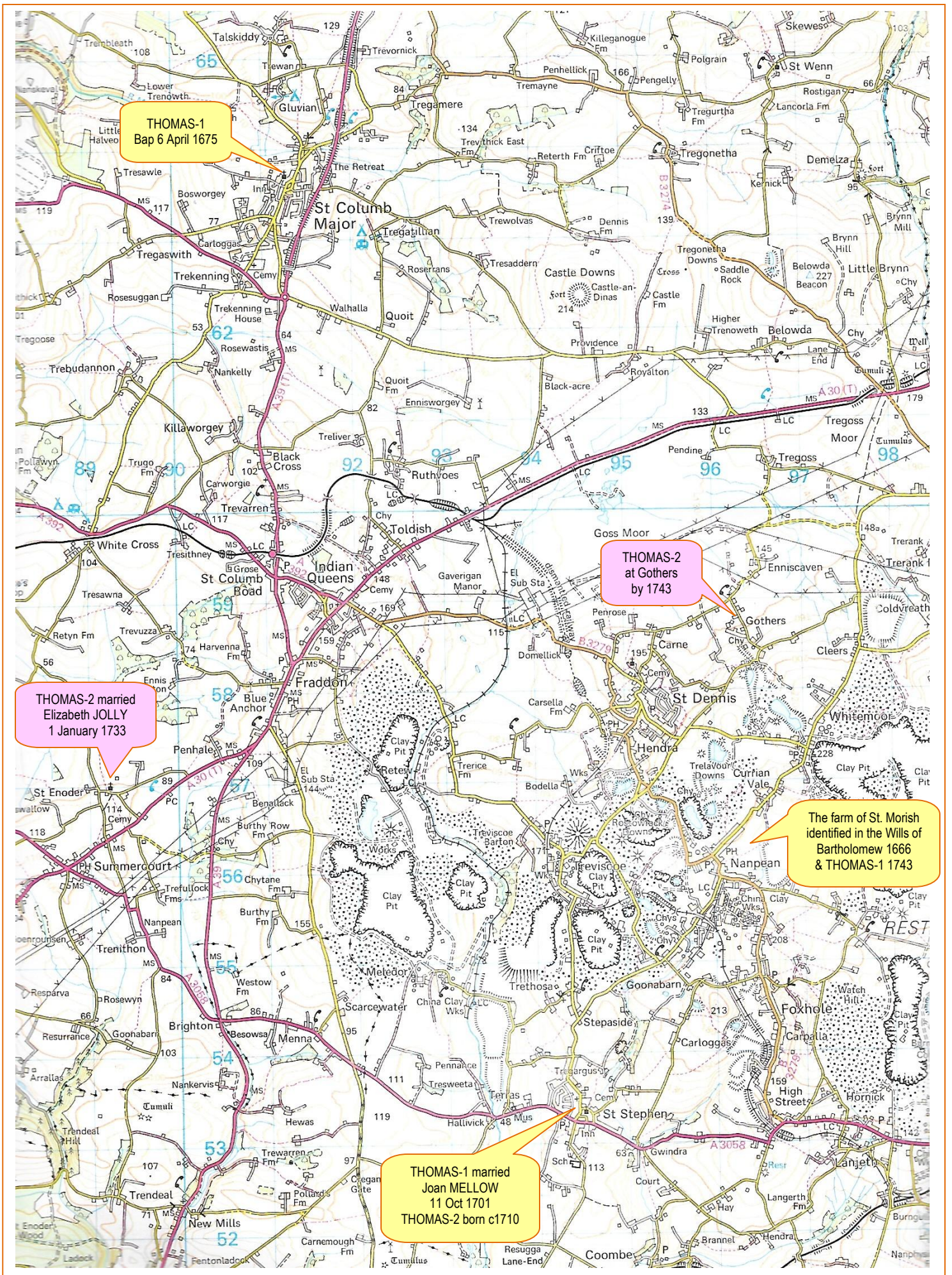
The character of any place is distilled from the appearance of its villages and the dwellings that compose them. The distinctive character of Cornwall is that many of its 'villages' are totally unlike any other village in England. They are not built to a 'plan'. The cottages are not cosily grouped around the parish church and village green. Instead their hard, grey stone walls squat with their backs to the winds and the rain that come sweeping mercilessly across the shelter-less tracts of heath and moorland. Economic necessity placed the cottages where they stand. Lonely farms and scattered homes appear to be dumped haphazardly amid a working landscape. They stand defiant as if sharing with their inhabitants a resentment of the position in which they find themselves. They owe their allegiance to no one, not even the parish church, which is found so often on the fringe or even outside the 'village'.¹ William Hals, an early Cornish historian, described the church at St. Dennis, our ultimate destination, as one *erected on a bleak elevation surrounded by a direful scrag of rocks with little shelter for anything more than sheep and rabbits.*²

Looking at the present day map of Cornwall centered on St. Austell, it is impossible to visualise what the area might have looked like in the 18th century before the frenzied search for china clay turned the landscape into a moonscape. We have to remember that this was the time before Turnpike Roads and Enclosed Fields. It was the time before steam brought a revolution to the mining industry. Yet the two main roads that feed into the county, especially the southerly route, are traditional ones. For us they form a natural, elliptical boundary that encloses an area approximately 15 miles from east to west and 10 miles from north to south. Within these confines lie all the village communities that have had or still maintain a significant TRETHERWEY presence.

The main village and acknowledged starting point is St. Stephen in Brannell, six miles eastward from St. Austell Parish Church along the A3058. Our village is St. Dennis, five miles due north of St. Stephen. Other centres that are associated with our family name include Roche, St. Mewan, Luxulyan and St. Blazey. Of course the boundary line I have alluded to is not a physical boundary and youthful courtship often took a Trethewey beyond the line, particularly to the north of the main A30. St. Enoder, St. Wenn and even St. Columb occasionally crop up in the evolution of the family tree.

¹ Paragraph based upon 'Cornwall and its People' by A K Hamilton Jenkins p318/9

² Trethewey Society Newsletter No.10 Page 2



Steps on the way to Gothers and Enniscaven in St. Dennis

Tref-Dewy – Cornish Language and Folklore

I have been asked – *how do you spell that?* on so many occasions that I now offer a spelling before I am asked and I add, for good measure, that it is Cornish, to reinforce my place as an Englishman rather than a ‘furriner’ as the Cornish would say. Yet it has also been my experience that people are often fascinated by accents especially when I have been away from home in the west-country. It is also true that the accents of my youth in the 1950s and 1960s have diminished significantly in the 21st century, but people rarely give a thought to the origin of their name, so that must become my first question, “*what is the origin of my name?*”

The assumption is often made that anyone sharing the same name, especially an unusual name, must be related. In most cases this is NOT the case, but I have a name - TRETHERWEY - that is basically a Cornish place name and the first people to whom it applied evidently lived in such a place. It was their identity – who they were. As there are several similarly named places in Cornwall, it is likely that several families adopted the name independently. There are at least six places on a modern Ordnance Survey map probably dating back to the 13th century with the name becoming a person’s written surname by 1325.³

The name itself is composed of two Cornish elements *tref* and *Dewy*. *Tref* denotes a small habitation – *Dewy* was a personal name corresponding to Davy or David. Incorporating the two components sees the *f* disappear and the *d* change to *th* and I am immediately reminded of its similarities with the Welsh language where a ‘dd’ supplants a ‘th’ and we arrive at a composition that is fundamentally Celtic in the name – **TRE-THEWY**.

Then we have to overcome the obstacle of literacy or should I say illiteracy. With a name like ours, there was little point during the 17th or 18th century asking the question in my opening sentence *and how do you spell that?*” It was left to the writer to create a name that he heard being spoken – in a thick Cornish accent. Gradually, however, the spelling crystallised into two main variations. The version ‘TRETHERWEY’ was popular in the late Middle Ages whilst the version ‘TRETHERWEY’ is the most commonly seen in modern times.⁴ Occasionally there is a third spelling TRETHERWAY which is often dismissed as pretentious or ill-informed.

Most modern Tretheweys almost certainly originate from the descendents of **THOMAS TRETHERWEY** alias ‘*Thomas the Coroner*’. Born in 1425 Thomas probably grew up with his brother Robert at Nether Keverall⁵ in the Seaton Valley and in the parish of St. Martin’s by Looe. He was a colourful character who became the MP for Cornwall in 1467. Four years later he married a widow, Elizabeth Reskymer, a lady with impeccable connections. The Reskymers were a distinguished family who had occupied Reskymer for centuries. When Thomas married its heiress, Elizabeth was just 34 years old and she was also the daughter of Sir Thomas Arundell of Tolverne. Today the house is called ‘*Roskymer Barton*’ and it sits in the parish of Mawgan along the B3293 and just a mile from the southerly end of the runway at Culdrose Naval Air Station. Thomas was not the sort of person to enjoy a ‘quiet life’ for he spent much of his later years in some form of litigation about property. However his infamy grew out of a dispute with the influential Vyvyan family of Trelowarren, a dispute which turned nasty whilst he was still a Coroner for Cornwall.

³ Article by R Trethewey published in the CFHS Journal (undated)

⁴ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.1 Introductory Issue page 2

⁵ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.18 July 97 page 5

In 1472 he was at loggerheads with his neighbour Vyvyan over land rites. Trelowarren is in the same parish as Reskymer and situated on the Helford River, but on this occasion things were taken a little too far. Thomas Trethewey's supporters ambushed the Vyvyan family whilst they were on a pilgrimage to a local holy place. Instead of succeeding in their attempted murder of Vyvyan, one of Trethewey's assassins was himself killed in the ensuing pitched battle, but this didn't stop them returning to Trelowarren to ransack the house. As a direct result of this appalling crime Thomas Trethewey was stripped of his possessions and had to 'flee' from Reskymer.⁶

It would seem that he had arrived in Treneague in the Parish of St. Stephen in Brannell by 1476 for his wife was petitioning for his pardon, but in spite of everything Thomas never gave up his continual litigation with anyone who crossed his path until his death in 1485.⁷

This early history makes a fascinating yet frustrating study. It is gradually becoming possible to sketch an ever clearer picture of Thomas's own family but it is also a genealogical minefield into which I am not going to stray. I would like, however, to set up one or two signposts for my reader to follow along the road to discovering my family.

By the time that we reach the 17th century, there is no doubt that there was still a large and well-established concentration of TRETHERWEYS in St. Stephen in Brannell. The Protestation Return of 1641/2 lists all those men over 18 years of age who "*protested their loyalty to the King and the Established Church*". There were 10 TRETHERWEYS listed. Robert: Thomas: Bernard: Bartholomew: two named Nicholas: two named Hugh, one being spelt Hewe and two Johns. Only the first two signed their names.⁸

The Poll Tax Return for 1660 is an even more comprehensive and useful listing, but the hesitancy in drafting a definitive family tree stems entirely from the fact that all the Parish Registers for St. Stephen in Brannell prior to 1694 have been lost. The consequence of this loss is that any attempt at constructing an accurate and reliable tree must use other source material like Wills. This type of document, however, can be confusing as well as informative, but it is one such Will that allows us a hazy and indistinct glimpse into the 17th Century.

In the first surviving register of St. Stephen in Brannell a marriage is recorded on the 11th October 1701 between Thomas TRETHERWEY and Joan MELLOW.⁹ When he died in 1743 the inventory in his Will shows that he had not one, but TWO estates. The larger of the two was at St. Morish, presumably in St. Stephen's and valued at £20, whilst the other was Gothers at St. Dennis valued at £5. Furthermore, the person who had helped to draw up this inventory of Thomas's effects, was a 'Bartholemew Tretheiuy'.¹⁰

At this point in my story names are beginning to crystallise into people. Family trees can be hesitantly assembled and from these differing groups Alan Kent began to build the knowledge of the TRETHERWEY Family that has benefitted those of us who claim to be their descendents.

⁶ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.1 Introduction – a much fuller account appears in 'Tudor Cornwall' by A L Rouse

⁷ Article by R Trethewey published in the CFHS Journal (undated)

⁸ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.7 Oct 94 page 3

⁹ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.11 Oct 95 page 4 and the Cornwall on line Parish Clerks

¹⁰ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.3 Oct 93 page 1

Thomas Trethewey emerges from the mists of history

Thomas, who was introduced on the previous page when he married Joan Mellow, is designated as the head of 'the St. Dennis Group' on the basis of the Will described earlier, but from whom was he descended? I can think of no better way to explain this next section than to lift Alan Kent's description straight from his Newsletter. This will serve the dual function of informing my reader and also demonstrating the depth to which the researcher has to delve and the difficulty he has in interpreting his findings.

A schedule of the archeological sites in the St. Austell area shows that St. Morish was the site of a holy well near Nanpean, the map grid reference locating it to an accuracy of 10 metres. Nanpean means 'small valley'.

The Wills of Thomas's possible ancestors were examined to see if they showed these estates descending in his direction. His possible father, Bartholomew, appears not to have left a Will, but his father, also Bartholomew, left one in 1666. His bequests to his son, Bartholomew junior, included a tenement called *Venternan Cor*..... the second word being squeezed out at the edge of the paper and my copy of the Will was not very clear. The first word, however, showed promise for it could represent the two Cornish words *Venton Nan*, meaning 'fountain or spring in the valley'. That looked promising when the objective was a well near a valley.

Another copy of this 1666 Will was much clearer. The second word was identifiable as 'Corrian'. The Ordnance Survey map shows a place called 'Coryan' about 800 metres north east of Nanpean. The archeological schedule noted several sites in Currian Vale, one at Currian Farm and one at **Fenton Farm**. One of the Currian Vale sites virtually coincided with St. Morish and no two sites were more than 250 metres apart. It is inferred that the tenements called *Venternan Currian* and *St. Morish* were virtually identical if not completely so and that Thomas heading GROUP 11 was the son of Bartholomew in GROUP 1.

James at the effective head of GROUP 1 had a son Thomas who left a Will in 1616 naming his daughters as Beatrix, Bea...(illegible) and An, and a son Bartholomew. The Bartholomew who left a Will in 1666 named his sister as Rebecca and Ann, suggesting that the two Bartholomews were not the same person. Probably they were a father and son. The 1666 Will also names a daughter Tamson who is known to have been born in 1622 so that her father was probably born in 1600 or a little before. Calculations directed at the Thomas who left a Will in 1616 suggests that he was probably born within a few years of 1550 and was therefore of an age to be a Grandfather to the Bartholomew who left his Will in 1666.¹¹

So we can now glimpse hazily into the 17th century and beyond. In his last paragraph Alan Kent mentions James Trethewey as the Head of Group 1. James had four sons – Richard, John, Thomas and Stephen. Thomas bc1550 is the son who appears at the top of the next page and leads us down to Thomas b1675 and the beginning of our story at St. Dennis.

As I trace each successive generation the reader will notice that these four male names repeatedly appear as if to link the generations together in one continuous chain.



Fenton Farm today in the Currian Road near Whitemoor

¹¹ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.3 Oct 93 page 2

Thomas
Born c1550
Died 1616

Yeoman left a Will.
He names daughters
Beatrix - Bea.... - An

Bartholomew

Nothing known

Named in Protestation
Return of 1641/2.
Poll Tax Return 1660
shows income p.a. £10.
Hearth Tax Return 1664
shows 2 chimneys.
Left a Will.
Sisters Rebecca – Ann
Daughter Tamson 1622.

Bartholomew
Born c1600
Died 1666

Bartholomew
Born c1630
Married 1665

Married Jane BRYANT.
He was a brother to Thomas of
Nanpean. He died in 1692.

Thomas born 1675

First Mention of St. Dennis

Thomas (*I will call him No.1*), had been baptised on the 6th April 1675 at St. Columb Major to Bartholomew and Jane. I have no idea how he came to be baptised in a parish detached from the main centre at St. Stephen in Brannell. There were almost one thousand baptisms in that parish in the 20 years from 1665 to 1685, but Thomas was the only birth in the name of Trethewy.

Joan MELLOW and her father Philip MELLOW were both residents of St. Stephen and consequently their 17th century records are lost, but on the 11th October 1701 Joan's marriage to Thomas TRETHEWY is recorded in the first surviving Register.

It is now that the Family Historian would expect to uncover a neat succession of births leading to baptisms that would begin to form the branches of Thomas and Joan's family tree. NOT SO. During the first decade of the 18th Century eleven babies were baptised to FIVE fathers named Trethewey in St. Stephen's and one of them was called Thomas. The others (in order of appearance) were Richard (first) then Bartholomew, John and James, but the register does not record the names of the mothers, a phenomenon that was not unusual in these early parish registers. In the period of Joan's child bearing years 1700 to 1725 (*an estimate as her age is not known*) there were between 50 and 60 babies baptised with the name Trethewey, but only FOUR were matched with a Thomas Trethewey and the last of these is very doubtful.

He was Thomas baptised 6th January 1716 to Thomas Trethewey deceased and that eliminates him and casts doubt on the other three baptisms. For the record, these were John on the 31st October 1701, William on the 7th October 1710 and Elizabeth on the 13th February 1713. As a precaution I checked St. Dennis for the same 25 years and there was NOTHING recorded in my surname.

Extending the search to the whole county listed 154 entries and some of these are duplicated, yet they were spread across 15 parishes which revealed a partial answer to my lack of success in St. Stephen in Brannell. There were two baptisms in Roche to Thomas and Jane Trethewey (*Jane and Joan were often interchanged*) who were said to 'reside in St. Stephens.' It was a boy and a girl. William was baptised on the 20th April 1714 and Joan was brought to the font on the 30th August 1718.

This demonstrates and vindicates my decision to restrict my family history research to a median line of 1790 as earlier records are ambiguous and unreliable. As well as being difficult to read at times, there is a sense of uncertainty about the name on the register page. At this point in the research I have been unable to trace the person who purports to be my next descendant named Thomas allegedly born in 1710. The registers reveal no-one that fits his description.

When Thomas-1 died in 1743 he was described as a 'yeoman' in the Will that he left for subsequent generations to see and to ponder. A Bartholemew Tretheiuy became involved in drawing up an inventory to the estate, but this general practice ceased soon afterwards. Bartholomew was thought to be Thomas's cousin, but it is not known why he became involved in drawing up this inventory to the Last Will and Testament of Thomas Trethewey. There was no legal requirement to do so. It can only be surmised that, as cousins often are, they were particularly close.

The mention of a farm called GOTHERS in St. Dennis provides the first evidence of a link with that village, but it was a farm on which Thomas-1 never lived. The Will requests that

his widow, Joan (Mellow), should receive an income from the rental of the farm paid to her quarterly, but he omitted to assign the farm to any named individual. To his son THOMAS (No.2) he left 'one shilling' but this seemingly miserly act has a legal explanation. This sum of money is a 'courtesy settlement' given in cases of prior agreements. From this it might be deduced that the lease of the farm had been transferred from father to son at a much earlier date.¹²

At this point it is worth mentioning that many Cornish leases were unusual. The origin of the practise began in Anglo Saxon times when tenancies were taken out to extend over the lives of two or three male occupants, the tenant and his sons. This meant that the occupier and his family were secure for life, while the owner knew that the tenant had a personal stake in the upkeep of the property. A substantial fee was paid when the tenancy was established, but thereafter it was only a token rent. Tenancies could be renewed to cover further lives, even before the expiry of the original lives, on payment of a further fee.¹³

In keeping with all systems, time gradually introduces abuses. By the 17th century the lives in question were often not the lives of the occupants, as it had been extended to include relatives and others with no direct interest in the property.¹⁴ This was not the case at GOTHERS. I cannot be certain that this system applied to the farm at Gothers as there is no suggestion of 'lives' in the Will. Alan Kent is of the opinion that the farm was 'freehold' property, but that does not explain the payment of 'rent' to his mother.

Another son, William (No.1) was named in the Will as the recipient of the residue of the estate. The entire estate, which included Thomas's own farm at *St. Morish*, Nanpean (in the parish of St. Stephen in Brannel) together with that at *Gothers*, was valued at £59 with the 'chattels' being £20 and £5 respectively. Included on the inventory are fowls, a young hog, a harrow and a plough, a smith's anvil and a collection of hammers. It does not differentiate, however, between the farms, so it is not clear where these items were to be found.¹⁵ William (1714) was thought to be younger than his brother Thomas and he married Grace Rickard in St. Stephen in Brannell in 1736 and raised a family in the parish where, like his father and older brother, he is also described as a 'yeoman'.

So let us now return to THOMAS (No.2) son of Thomas. He married Elizabeth JOLLY in the parish church of St. Enoder on New Year's Day 1733 and it is clear that they remained in that village for at least 16 months. Their first child, Joan, was baptised in the village church on the 13th April 1734 but their second child was not. Thomas (yes, ANOTHER Thomas – No.3) was baptised in the parish church of St. Dennis on the 12th October 1735. Elizabeth went on to add another seven children to her family and ALL seven were baptised in the little church that stands on that 'scrag of rocks' overlooking the village of St. Dennis.¹⁶

These entries in the Parish Registers indicate a period of 18 months between April 1734 and October 1735 when the move to the parish would have taken place. This move to their new home farm at *Gothers* represented a considerable achievement. Farmers through the centuries have always wished to see their sons either farming the family farm or acquiring neighbouring acreage and I doubt if it was any different for Thomas-1. Perhaps the *St. Morish* farm was not large enough to accommodate and employ another family. Perhaps he was unhappy about his son's circumstances in St. Enoder after his marriage. Whatever the reason, the decision to acquire a farm on a lease for his son is entirely predictable.

¹² Based on an article by Alan Kent published in the Cornwall FHS Journal No.26

¹³ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.20 Jan 98 page 3

¹⁴ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.20 Jan 98 page 3

¹⁵ E-mail from Alan Kent dated 2 August 1999 summarising the Will.

¹⁶ See CHART 001

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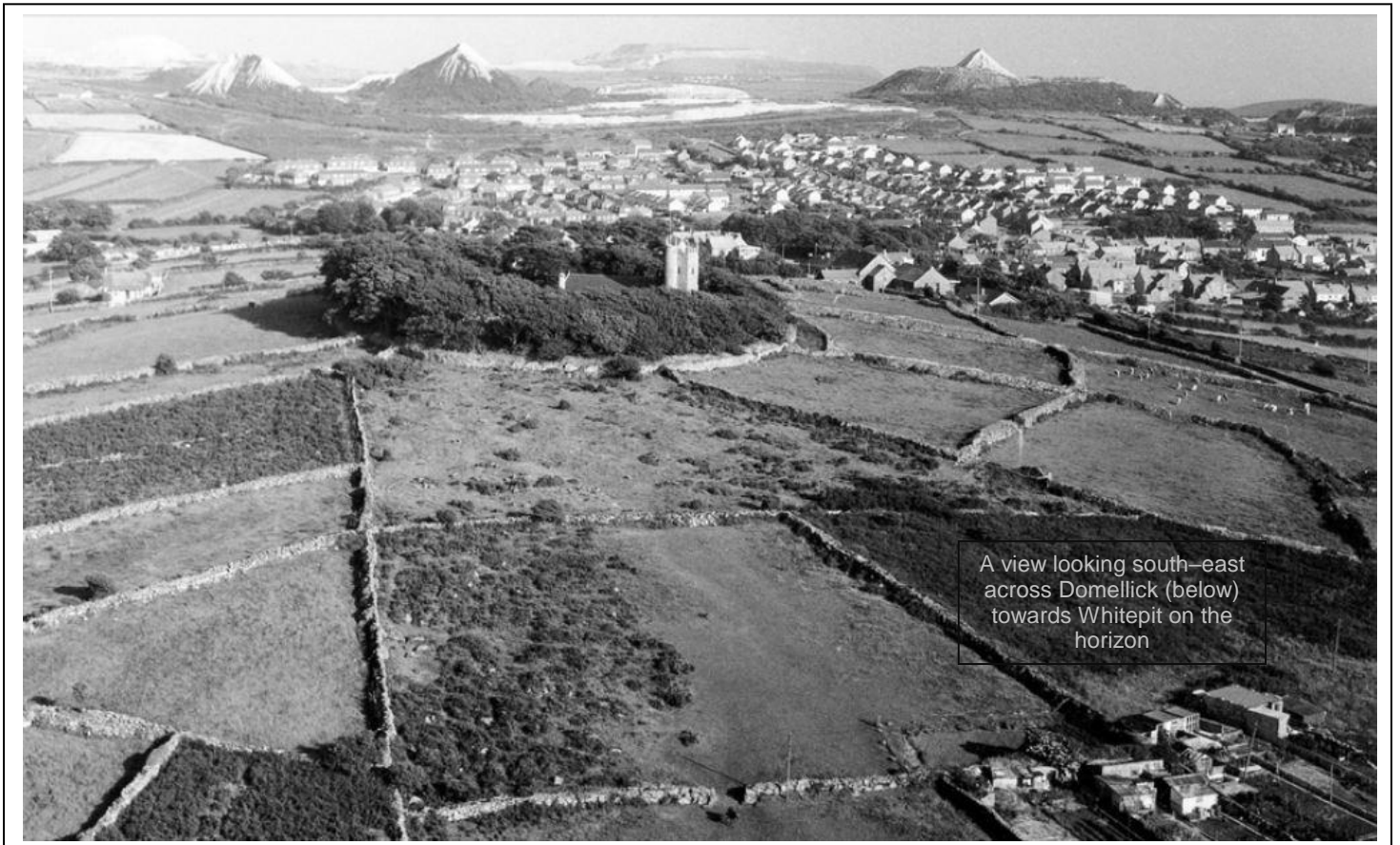
THOMAS-2 & ELIZABETH JOLLY

A Look at the Parish of St. Dennis

The following text was extracted from the opening paragraphs of a major report written in 2004 by Bridget Gillard of the Historic Environment Services of Restormel Council and the Cahill Partnership. It was entitled

The Cornwall Industrial Settlements Initiative (St. Dennis)

The village is located on the south-western slopes of Carn Hill, on whose summit stands the parish church in a probable Iron Age hill-fort, commanding the flat open land of Goss Moor to the north, the upper valley of the River Fal to the west, and rolling hills of agricultural land to the east. Similar land lies to the south and further west, but this has been distorted and re-shaped over the years into geometrical hills and vast open pools by the excavation, processing and waste dumps of the china clay and china stone industries.



Whereas much of the china clay area was always largely a relatively sparsely populated upland, in contrast St Dennis is set in an anciently settled landscape. The small parish is part of the ancient lands of Brannel – the church did not become fully independent from the mother church of St. Stephen's until 1852. More densely settled throughout antiquity than most of Hensbarrow (the only known Iron Age Hillfort on Hensbarrow is at St Dennis), here was a landscape and settlement pattern already well established by the early medieval period. Domesday Book (1086) recorded an unusual concentration of small manors in the parish, and there is a dense cluster of early medieval settlement names (Domellick, Carnegga, Hendra, Trelavour) and fossilised medieval field systems. This was an ancient farming system based on the home farm or hamlet (the meaning of the name Hendra), with outlying wastes and moors (Goss Moor, Carn Hill and Hendra Downs). By the time the clay industry came to St Dennis in the late 18th century, this was a relatively stable and well-established countryside of ancient hamlets, enclosed arable field systems and attached upland grazing, with some tin

steaming in the valleys. Although it is elevated, at about 500 feet, the church overlooks the broad, gently sloping and fertile lands of the upper Fal valley, and these remained some of the best agricultural lands in an area largely of upland grazing, with the flat waterlogged expanse of Goss Moor beyond it to the north. The parish scarcely intrudes into the high uplands of the Hensbarrow massif, shielded from it and the great china clay pits around Littlejohns and Goonvean by Hendra/Trelavour Downs. Until the mid-late 19th century, the focus of the parish was towards St Columb Major to the north, not St Austell and the clay lands to the south.

Probably in response to the wealth created by the tin industry, Roche, St Dennis and St Stephen churches were all largely rebuilt in the late 14th/early 15th centuries, while the landscape saw increasing agricultural production with intakes from the waste, increasing sizes of farms and enclosure of the ancient strip-fields; little seems to have changed as the area receded into an industrial and agricultural backwater in the 16th-17th centuries.

The 19th century expansion of the clay industry actually intensified the exploitation of this ancient landscape. As great a change was taking place in the surrounding agricultural countryside as in the clay pits and the villages. Much of the open common land in the parish was enclosed, as at *Gothers*,¹⁷ or the lands east of Hendra, but especially around the church on Carn Hill. This was almost certainly taken-in around 1826, the same time as the churchyard was enclosed with a wall identical to the dry-stone walls of the new grid of fields. Former squatter cottages around the commons became small farms. Farmers and agricultural labourers together outnumbered the purely industrial workers in the parish until the late 19th century and there were very many more farms and farmers in the parish in 1893 than there had been in 1856. There was also a large class of cow keepers (dairying and leather for the numerous shoemakers and for industrial uses), and new farms were still being created even on the outskirts of St Dennis/Trelavour in the early 20th century. The increasing services and trades in the villages were servicing this expanding agricultural population as much as the industrial. Until well into the 20th century, both expanding settlement and expanding clay industry (the latter fortunately centred on the extensive moors and wastes) were fitted into the existing landscape; the competition for land and resources with agriculture is a later 20th century phenomenon.

This is a particularly good, if pseudo academic description of the 18th Century land that Thomas Trethewy enjoyed as his inheritance and it puts its population sparsity and its industrial potential into perspective. In 1750 it was known, but it was not being exploited.

Two years after the Trethewys arrived at *Gothers*, a Plymouth apothecary called William Cookworthy, who had spent several years searching for a material that resembled the kaolin that had been used for so long in the manufacture of porcelain in China, eventually found it at *Tregonning Hill*, near Germoe, in Cornwall, in 1745. It was a rare type of decomposed granite, finer than most talcum powders, and it arose naturally. Cookworthy found a way to separate the material, using water to remove impurities, and then spent another twenty years developing his own recipe for making porcelain, which he successfully patented in 1768. Cookworthy immediately established the *Plymouth Porcelain Factory*, and began making fine china to sell to the gentry. He also began to sell the raw material to other English potteries. This inevitably came to the attention of Josiah Wedgwood who came to Cornwall in 1775. He had commissioned a Mr. Yelland to find some stable land in the area of St. Stephen in Brannel and on the 10th June Yelland introduced Wedgwood to a farmer named 'Trethawy'

¹⁷ For this to be highlighted it must have occurred some years before the field system around the church and may have been the work of Thomas Trethewy. It would have been intrinsic to the creation of a farm.

Initially, Trethawy's wife rejected the idea of selling their land on the basis that her husband would waste the money on drink, but she soon came around to its business sense and offered the clay to Wedgwood at 10 shillings per ton. Wedgwood was not interested in buying clay and said that he would soon find land elsewhere, but he added that if the Tretheways wanted to settle they had to do it that morning. Trethawy then offered a lease at £21 per annum, but Wedgwood countered with half that sum which Trethawy accepted.¹⁸

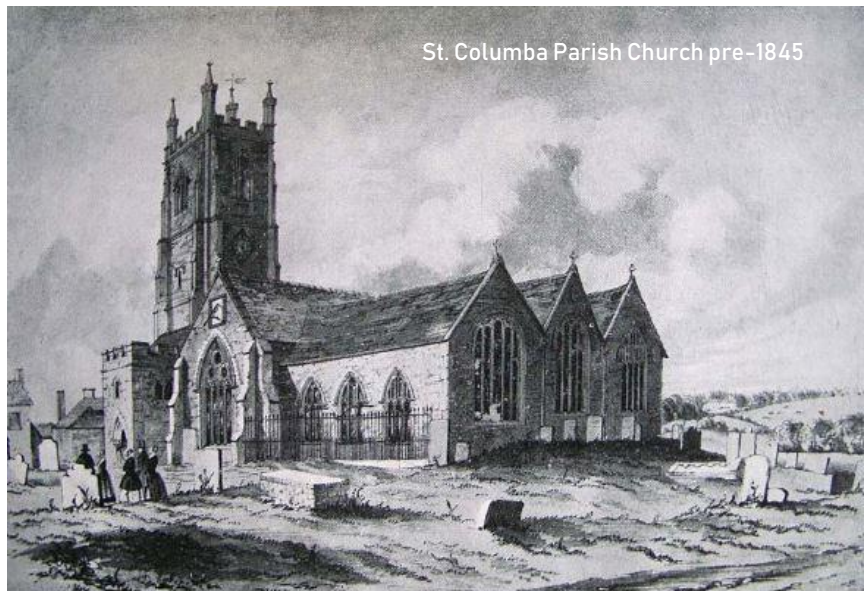
This incident is most likely to have occurred on land known to belong to a Trethewy called Moor Tenement adjacent to the Pitt's Manor at Carloggas and this is supported by R.M.Barton in his *History of the Cornish Clay Industry* where he records that the Carloggas Pit was held by a William Trethewy in the 1820s.

60 Years at Gothers 1735 to 1795 and a Question of Succession

As the founding father of the St. Dennis Trethewy community, Thomas's family did not cease expanding until their ninth child, Robert, was born in 1759. As has already been said, all of them, except William (for whom no baptism has been found) were taken up the hill to the church for their baptism which placed them on the record for future generations. By that time the eldest children were looking around for spouses of their own and their eldest child, Joan, had already made her choice. She married Nicholas Kent in St. Dennis in 1756 on the 8th February, before the farming year had got under way.

Of course, with such a large family that was now beginning to expand into even larger numbers, there was little or no hope of employment for all of them at *Gothers*, even though it was possible to erect one or two cottages. Ultimately, the girls would be dependent on the enterprise of their chosen husbands, but the boys would be watching each other with a competitive eye in spite of their widespread ages. If it was thought that the eldest son automatically inherited the family property, then think again. It was not a foregone conclusion and Thomas-3 was going to demonstrate how to mess it up.

Five years were to pass before Thomas-3 put the family to the test and the first clue was that his wedding took place outside of St. Dennis, at St. Columb Major in 1761. On three consecutive Sundays in November (the 15th, 22nd & 29th) the minister asked the congregation whether they knew of *any just cause or impediment why Thomas Trethewy should not marry Wilmot Hicks*. No one made any response, so the wedding took place on Friday 18th December 1761 and it was witnessed by Wilmot's father William and her cousin Richard.¹⁹



St. Columba Parish Church pre-1845

¹⁸ An extract from Wedgwood's Diary published in the Proceedings of the Wedgwood Society Vols 1 & 2 (1856/57) also Trethewey Society Newsletter No.2 July 1993 and again discussed in No.12 Jan 1996

¹⁹ Probable baptism at St. Columb Minor on 7 Nov 1743 to Richard and Sarah – Cornwall OPC

Wilmot Hicks was not a young girl. She was older than Thomas by almost 2 years. She had been baptised to William and Florence Hicks on the 23rd February 1733, so she was almost 29 years old, but she was also expecting Thomas's baby and she was six months pregnant.

At their age, they could not be described as a naïve or foolish young couple and the innocent little baby girl, Florence,²⁰ who was the result of their illicit liaison, could not have heard the wagging tongues voicing their opinions. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that 1762 was the year in which Thomas-3 invalidated his birthright to *Gothers* Farm even if it was not said to his face at the time, but tucked away privately in the back of the mind.

They remained in St. Columb Major for a short while, but the couple returned to St. Dennis during 1763 witnessed by the baptism of their second child, Thomas, on the 21st February 1764.²¹ Over the next eleven years, five more children were born to them in the parish. By now it was 1774 and Wilmot was already 43 years old. She must have thought that she was at the end of her childbearing life when early in 1779, at the age of 48, she fell pregnant again for the seventh time. Their last child, a son John, was baptised in St. Stephen in Brannell on New Year's Day 1780.²² During the ten years that Thomas and Wilmot had been visiting the church at St. Dennis with their newborn, there has never been a hint of their location in the parish, but if this entry in the Baptism Register of St. Stephen is accurate, then it is possible that Thomas and Wilmot had moved their family back to the 'ancestral home' at St. Morish near Nanpean and that is a significant move to which I will return a little later.

Another Son and Another Mistake

As I have scant information concerning the next of Thomas's sons in line, John, we must move on to the third son, William (No.2). At this point it is worth mentioning that all the brothers, except the youngest, did not marry until they were well into their late 20's, but William left his marriage until he was 33. It was almost twelve years after his brother Thomas that William married Jane Brokenshire in the summer of 1773, but his was not the next marriage in line which was James in 1770 and he was 28 years old.

Unfortunately, James had fallen for the same temptation as the one that had dealt a blow to the aspirations of his brother Thomas. James's attraction to his kinswoman Elizabeth Trethewey got the better of him and their wedding on the 23rd September 1770 was a complete re-run of his brother and sister-in-law's wedding eight years before. Elizabeth was six months pregnant.

James and Elizabeth had both grown up in St. Dennis as cousins. It was their home village, but unlike some couples in their predicament, they stood their ground and either ignored or confronted the inevitable gossip. Brave as that might have been, James's hopes for his future ownership of *Gothers* Farm were dealt a severe blow. The baby proved to be a girl and was named Elizabeth after her mother. She survived to marry in St. Dennis in the year after her Grandfather, Thomas (No.2) died, but she was not so easily blessed with brothers and sisters. James and Elizabeth really struggled to increase their family and they must have suffered an enormous amount of physical and mental pain over the next four years. Children were conceived, born and buried in quick succession. Five were born – only ONE survived. By the time that they had buried their fourth child, it was August 1777 and they must have had enough of life in St. Dennis. There was also a deep, superstitious streak in

²⁰ Florence baptised at St. Columb Major on the 16th March 1762 – Cornwall OPC

²¹ Baptism courtesy of Cornwall OPC

²² Cornwall OPC – parents entered as Thos and Wilmot

the Cornish that would have impelled them to move away from a place so obviously controlled by the 'spriggans.' It was time to move on. It was not far to St. Stephen in Brannell where their next daughter was baptised on the 7th June 1778, but I think there might have been more to the move than just a change of scene.

Enniscaven is added to the Trethewy Portfolio

As one brother after another married and established their own families during the 1770s, it must have been a worrying time for everyone as homes and land were constantly in demand. It was now 1773 and it was William's turn. As I have already pointed out, William was 33 years old and the oldest of the brothers to marry, but why was that?

The situation might have been caused by a resistance to change as a wife would have expected a home of her own, whilst a bachelor William could continue to live with his parents. He might have had a fear of women perhaps brought on by shyness, or it might have been simply that he was so hard at work helping his father with the running of the farm that it left him with little time to spare for 'courting girl friends'. When he did fall for a local girl, however, it seems that he precipitated a course of action akin to history repeating itself. It would appear that his father Thomas (No.2) acquired another farm for them, in exactly the same circumstances as *Gothers* had been acquired for him. *Enniscaven*²³ was a neighbour to Thomas's farm at *Gothers* and it must have been assigned to William's ownership from the beginning for there is no hint of it in Thomas's Will of 1796 and I will return to *Enniscaven* in more detail later.

The Next Generation in Waiting

When William (No.2) married on Monday 26th July 1773 his bride was Jane Brokenshire and the marriage took place on the 21st anniversary of his brother Richard's baptism (1752), but I am probably the only one that has ever realised that passing coincidence. However, the die was cast. William and his new bride Jane were able to return to *Enniscaven* as their home and their neighbours at *Gothers* were his father Thomas and his unmarried brothers Richard and Robert.

Jane, together with her younger sister Grace had been a common sight around *Gothers* to the point where Grace began to catch the eye of young Richard and both began to consider the advantages of a more permanent relationship. So, it would seem that the Tretheweys were as astute as European Royalty when it came to matchmaking within a tight circle of kith and kin. *Better the person you know, than the one that you don't! Sisters? Cousins? Who cares?* But the answer to the question of the succession to *Gothers* had been a very gradual process possibly spread over ten years. Sometime around 1776/77 Richard and Grace Brokenshire probably stated the obvious when they announced their betrothal and the question of a home for them surfaced once again. This must have been a difficult question for the family as Thomas could not be expected to provide yet another farm for yet another son when Robert, his youngest son, was still only 18 years old in 1777.

In 1777 three of the brothers were married and two were not. The two bachelors Richard and Robert are presumed to be at *Gothers* with their parents, helping their father Thomas (No.2) around the farm. Their older brother, William, had moved along the lane to *Enniscaven* and James is still somewhere in St. Dennis coping with the births and deaths of his children as I have already highlighted. There was no future here in St. Dennis for them and it was during 1777 that the family farm near Nanpean changed hands with the death of

²³ Trethewy Society Newsletter No.18 July 1997 page 3.

William (No.1), the son and heir to our original Thomas (No.1). Perhaps James was offered a place on that farm as way out of his trouble. It is difficult to know. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that Thomas-3 (and Wilmot) together with James (and Elizabeth) both had children baptised in St. Stephen on New Year's Day 1780 suggesting a close brotherly bond possibly consolidated in the face of their rejection from the family lands in St. Dennis.

However, Richard was now the next in line to his father and he had been given to believe that he would inherit *Gothers*, provided that he kept his 'slate clean.' When he shouldered the mantle of the 'senior' son at *Gothers Farm* he was not to know that he was destined to bear that responsibility for almost 20 years before he finally became his own master.

As William settled into *Enniscaven* with his new wife, Jane, her younger sister Grace was already relishing the prospect of sharing *Gothers* with Richard, as his wife.

They married on the 27th May 1778 and although the union probably damaged his relationship with two of his brothers (Thomas & James) it strengthened immeasurably the links between *Gothers* and *Enniscaven*. The occupants of these two adjacent farms were not just neighbours. They were family – in every sense of the word, and as I contemplate the names and dates from a period, which now exceeds 200 years, I feel close to their circumstances. Richard and Grace were not a young, fanciful couple. She was just a few months older than her husband and both were nudging 27 years of age, but a family would soon begin to arrive.

A New Family at Gothers

If Richard thought he would soon have a son and heir then he was to be disappointed. Each time that Grace conceived a new baby it was born a girl – Jane (1779); Elizabeth (1780); Mary (1782/3) and Grace (1784/5) – and it is interesting to note that the last three births and baptisms broached the Christmas period.

Although Grace waited until her fourth daughter before she was baptised with her name, the other daughters were given her sisters' names – Elizabeth (1745); Mary (1750) – but Jane was different. Yes, Grace had a sister Jane at *Enniscaven* and she had probably been on hand to assist at all the births, but Grace's mother was also Jane (née Kent) and she had died in the year that Grace was married, 1778 (although no burial has been found in St. Dennis). So, it looks very much as if her first daughter was baptised in memory of her mother whose name had already been perpetuated in the naming of Grace's sister.

At last in 1786, Richard finally got the son for which he was waiting as Thomas was born in yet another Yuletide culminating in a baptism on the last day of the year 1786. For the ceremony Grace relaxed her Brokenshire theme in deference to her husband's family and Richard chose to continue the century old practise of naming the first born male, Thomas. This new baby boy shared the mantle worn by his uncle, grandfather, great grandfather and 2xgreat grandfather back to 1675. It was a well worn path, but it also meant that Richard and Grace's eldest girl and boy were each named after a grandparent from each side of the family such are the traditions of Cornish folk.

Ten years has now passed since their marriage. It is 1788 and Grace was pregnant with their sixth child and once again the clock is ticking the time away towards Yuletide. The baby was another boy. He was baptised in the parish church on the 18th January 1789 and his name was JOHN, but he donned a different mantle. His was the mantle of DIRECT DESCENT to the writer of this story. Without him there would have been no story to write.

Insert CHART 01
RICHARD 1752

John wasn't a name steeped in the tradition of the Trethewey family, but we need only look to Grace's family to find her brother John (1754), but does this continue the Brokenshire theme or raise the spectre of Richard's brother John (1737) of whom nothing is known?

During this period, January 1781 to January 1788, Richard's brother, Robert had married Grace GRIGG in the parish church on the 11th February 1781 and the most important question that must remain unanswered is – *where did they live after their marriage?* It was three years before their first child was baptised and significantly he was baptised William in the parish church at St. Stephen in Brannel in 1784 confirming that they had left *Gothers*. However, tragedy was never far from many families in Georgian England and the Tretheweys were not spared. On the 2nd January 1786 they returned to the church at St. Dennis not to baptise a new baby, who was due at any moment, but to bury Robert.

This is not completely certain as no age is given for him, but he was barely 27. It would also explain the fact that their family ceases abruptly with the baptism of Grace on the 5th February, just one month later and within days of the birthday that Robert was denied. What a dreadful experience that must have been to see your husband buried within days of giving birth to his daughter. The return to St. Dennis brought Grace back to her family as the Griggs had a considerable presence in the parish including *Gothers* and *Enniscaven* where help would also have been forthcoming from the Trethewey brothers.

Sometime in 1790, William was born to Richard and Grace and at this point I must differentiate between Richard's son and his brother so I will designate the former to be William (No.3). Strangely Richard and Grace seemed to forget the baptism of William, yet they didn't forget their next child and fourth son Richard, who was baptised on the 5th June 1791. As one who was trained in diagnostics I inherently search for patterns in many kinds of situation and I cannot help but notice a pattern within the family group of Richard and Grace. First they had four daughters and it was left to the fourth daughter to receive her mother's name. Then came four sons and again it was left until the fourth son before his father's name was assigned. But there is also another pattern within the sons' names. Thomas, John, William was exactly the same order of precedence as his father's brothers a generation before.

Grace had now been delivered of eight children in twelve years and fortunately all had survived. The even number of four girls and four boys was upset in 1794 when another child was expected. Joanna was baptised on the 13th October 1794 and she was the last to join the family before life began to turn its attention towards death.

In tracing the development of the various families and the manoeuvring for acceptance, we have completely forgotten that whilst all this was going on, Thomas (No.2) and his wife Elizabeth were not getting any younger. Just four months after the family was celebrating new life for the ninth time, in the birth of Joanna, they found themselves drawn together in mourning to see Thomas of *Gothers* buried in the churchyard at St. Dennis.

It was Sunday 22nd February 1795. Richard was just 42 years old as he stood at the graveside alone with his thoughts as master in his own right. Richard was the Executor and Residuary Legatee of his father's Will and although the farm is not specifically mentioned in it, there seems to have been no dispute about its ownership. *Gothers* now belonged to Richard and Grace.²⁴

To the Cornish, this occasion was a 'buryin' and like many a rural community it was an occasion that usually brought together a host of people to pay their respects to the family.

²⁴ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.18 July 1997 page 3

Whenever possible, funerals were arranged to take place on a Sunday afternoon so that the greatest number of people could be present. Preceding the coffin went a double row of singers usually led by a chapel elder who read a favorite hymn two lines at a time (*this may have applied only to staunch Methodists*). 'Buryin toones' were usually sung in a minor key and in very slow time so that the dolorous tones of the singers, mingling with the weeping of the mourners, created a most melancholy atmosphere.

Behind the coffin came the invited mourners, often fifty or more, walking in couples, each man 'leading a female' at his side. The strictest of etiquette accompanied the order of precedence in the procession. It was an unpardonable slight if anyone was placed further back in the line than he considered he had a right to be. Unseemly public wrangling often attended these occasions and hurt or damage could be dealt to a relationship that could last for years.²⁵

The loss of someone with whom life and work has been shared is difficult enough, but the extra tension created by the 'sense of occasion' must have been almost unbearable at times. Questions spring to my mind like; who was present at Thomas's funeral and what was their order of precedence? Did Richard come first as his father's heir? Was Thomas (No.3) invited from St. Stephen in Brannell as the eldest son? Was his wife, Wilmot there? If so, where in the procession did they walk?

Richard and Grace's four girls were old enough to understand this important family ritual, the eldest being nearly 16 and the youngest 10 years of age. The four boys ranged from 3 to 8 years old and baby Joanna was still a babe in arms, but I wonder if Richard placed a hand on young Thomas's shoulder on that bleak February day as they contemplated life together at *Gothers Farm*. There was not going to be much time to attend the schoolroom on a Sunday. They were going to be busy.

Later in that week the *Bath Chronicle*²⁶ reported that a huge fleet of 1000 sail had been seen off Falmouth heading up Channel escorted by the Royal Navy, whilst in Plymouth Sound another large fleet of transports was assembling to embark the soldiers of six regiments with all their equipment, but their destination was not stated. Of more interest to the Tretheweys was a report of a 'double harvest' in Cornwall and two other counties in 1794. It was said that two crops of both wheat and potatoes had been successfully gathered on the same piece of land in the same year – which was the important issue – and it then went on to discuss how it had been achieved and what had been learnt from the experiment.

This may have been prompted by the escalating hostilities between France and England and an effort to mitigate the effect of any blockade that might be put in place by the French, but 1795 was a bad year for farmers generally, Famine was making its presence felt throughout England and a remarkably well-informed note in Helston's Parish Register for that year reads,²⁷

"a very great scarcity of corn prevailed this year over England and indeed all Europe."

Parishioners in St. Stephen in Brannell took the very unusual step of calling a Vestry Meeting for the 31st May 1795. At that meeting nineteen from those present signed a declaration that they would find,

"5 guineas each for the buying of corn and flour for the support of the poor inhabitants of the parish."

²⁵ Based upon 'Cornwall and its People' by A K Hamilton Jenkins p190/91

²⁶ *Bath Chronicle* Thursday 26th February 1795

²⁷ 'Cornwall and its People' by A K Hamilton Jenkins p370

Two of those signatories were Tretheweys – George (died 1808) and Charles (died 1813) – but neither were related to our family. One hundred pounds was a colossal sum of money when the village schoolmaster's annual salary was a mere £3. It must represent the extent of the problem and the number of people affected by it.²⁸

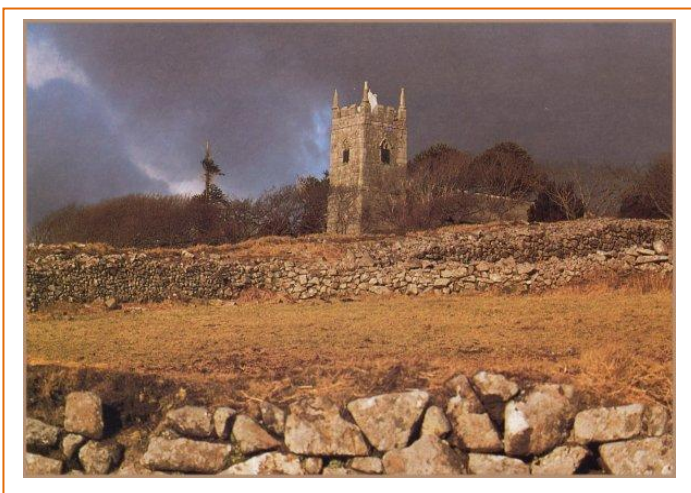
It was a magnanimous gesture replicated throughout the county. Relieving the distress of the poor was the duty of the parish, but this was no ordinary crisis and it was not to be restricted to a single bad year. As each year followed the last, the turn of the century brought little improvement and the silent suffering became vociferous anger. More and more frequently, rioting was seen in the town streets and village squares, but the chanting crowds needed a focus for their anger. It was not hard to find. As in every situation of this nature there are those who can profit from it and in this case they were threefold. The farmer was perceived as the one who was holding back grain for his own family and friends. The miller was inflating the profit from his trade and was pushing up the price of flour to levels that no one could afford, whilst the baker stood accused of raising prices still further and at the same time ensuring that his own family and friends did not go short.

Two hundred women gathered in Launceston and marched on a farm in the parish of Lezant to plunder a farmer of all the bushels of wheat they could lay their hands upon. Large numbers of tin miners in the St. Austell neighbourhood marched around a number of farms carrying a written paper in one hand and a noose in the other. Any farmer, who hesitated to sign the pledge guaranteeing corn at a reduced price, found the rope around his neck urging him to reconsider his position.²⁹

What days these must have been? *Gothers* lay not far from St. Austell. Was any farmer immune or isolated from these incidents? What did Richard think of it all? Of course at this stage in the story the size of the farm occupied by Richard is unknown. So the time is right to explore *Gothers* and the place where my ancestry began.

A Farm Called Gothers

In my introductory preamble I admitted to being somewhat confused by my perceptions of Cornwall and St. Dennis is an example of its contradictions. Two images of its parish church encapsulate this contradiction and any casual reader might wonder if it was the same place. Likewise, exploring the lanes from St. Dennis towards Roche that take the traveller past *Gothers* and through *Enniscaven* is a peasant and some might say 'beautiful' experience offering distant views across Goss Moor with not a clay working in sight.



²⁸ Trethewey Society Newsletter No.19 p7

²⁹ Cornwall Gazette 4 April 1801



Now owned by IMERYS – The purpose of the seven large sheds known as Gothers is unknown, but its position embraces the position of an original farmhouse shown on an OS map circa 1868 and circled. The present working farm is shown at 1 (top left). Position 2 (top right) is across the lane. At position 3 (bottom left) is a pair of cottages and further away in the distance is a short terrace of two pairs of double fronted cottages. They are barely 50 yards from Enniscaven’s Bible Christian Chapel, now converted to a house. These NINE households were probably those listed in the 1841 census and all the cottages have the same simple layout and construction. However, the question remains, were they there in the 1780s?

The censuses are the only documents that provide an 'overview' of the locality, but they can only be a guide as they occur some fifty years after the events being studied. The 1841 census leaves a lot to the imagination, not least of which is the acreage of farms and the names of specific locations and cottages, but that does not mean it should be ignored.

There were nine houses annotated simply *Gothers* and the Enumerator has walked from Hendra (which was the village of St. Dennis), through Menna and Carnega to reach them. The first house he encountered was that of Robert KEY, farmer, aged 55, whilst the next house visited was that of James VARCOE who was also a farmer and much younger at 30 years old. His household amounted to 10 people, but 3 of them were 'parish apprentices' and he had a female indoor servant. There then follows three cottages occupied by two clay labourers and a miner, before the Enumerator reached John VARCOE a 40 year-old farmer with a household of 13 people (9 children with a male and female servant). Two more cottages are visited occupied by clay labourers and the final cottage was that of William ROSEVEAR, a farmer aged 45. Although all of these cottages were designated *Gothers*, there then followed two cottages annotated *Higher Gothers*, but occupied by clay labourers.³⁰

This simple paragraph gives a word picture which suggests that John Varcoe was farming the main *Gothers* farm for two circumstantial reasons. First, he was the elder of two brothers and secondly it was the larger household, whilst James had a significant, but smaller holding. Robert Key was much older and had only his wife to help him, but their kin may have lived along the lane at *Enniscaven* as there is a large Key Family with a young Robert among them. But how does this compare with 1851 and my modern montage on the previous page?

Conveniently the Enumerator for 1851 began his walk at *Gothers* and the first cottage he visited was occupied by a 'clay agent' and named *Eastern Gothers*, The next cottage was *Great Gothers* and here John Varcoe was found farming 98 acres. This supports my hypothesis that this was more than likely the original Trethewey Family property which has unfortunately been superceded by a modern building within the Imerys site at the centre of the main picture. The next four cottages were named *Middle Gothers* (2) and *Gothers* (2). The first two were occupied by clay workers, as was one of the cottages named *Gothers*, but the second cottage of that name was the residence of James Varcoe who farmed an acreage that was illegible - (It was a round number possibly 80). *Gothers Down* and *Gothers Lot* brought the total to eight cottages, but the ninth and last cottage was separated by more than 60 households suggesting that it may have been separated or isolated from the rest of the group. It might also mean that the Enumerator had missed it and had to back track to complete his task, for it was entered at the very end of the district leading me to believe that this was the real reason. It was just as well that he rectified his mistake as that cottage was *Little Gothers* occupied by Robert Key and his wife and it extended to 12 acres - no more than a smallholding. The montage on the previous page shows a cottage at '4' bottom right, which today carries a nameplate. It is *Little Gothers*.

Gothers becomes Richard's Farm

If TRETHEWEY is Celtic for David's Farm (Tre-hewi) then *Gothers* was now Cornish for Richard's Farm, as the word soon got around the parish that old Thomas Trethewey had finally passed on. The farm had now been in the Trethewey line of descent for over 60 years and it is interesting to note that in 1743 when it was first handed down (to Thomas dcd) it was called *Goathas* and was valued at £5. I have no idea how such a valuation was produced, but it is noteworthy that one of the witnesses to the Will was a John Varcoe.

³⁰ 1841 Census HO 107 Piece 146/7 Folio 18 Pages 11 & 12

It is now a cold February day in 1795 as the Trethewey family gathered in the parlour of the farmhouse to hear the reading of the Last Will & Testament of Thomas Trethewey

Alan Kent summarised that Will by saying that *he left money to all of his children and his grandchildren by the deceased Robert, except for Richard who inherited Gothers, but no property was named. He left only 5 shillings to his eldest son Thomas, whilst William of Enniscaven received £5.*³¹ There is no doubt that surprised looks would have been exchanged around the room on the reading of that item.

However, our knowledge of the farm has not changed. It is too easy to generate an image or a word picture that is not accurate. I am also drawn to the name, John Varcoe, as it seems to infiltrate every situation over those 100 years *1743-1851. Is it possible that it was this family that dominated *Gothers*, leaving the Tretheweys as the supporting act? It is also curious that there were more cottages occupied by clay labourers than there were for the families working the land, but were those cottages there in 1795 when clay working was still in its infancy? The fact that so many of the *Gothers* Tretheweys moved out must suggest a lack of accommodation and their rejection due to youthful indiscretions may be misleading. Nevertheless it is curious that conception out of wedlock was a common factor

Land ownership remains a complicated business and the 18th century would not have seen land readily placed into the hands of commoners. The census suggests that *Gothers* might have extended beyond 200 acres and it is true that Thomas Trethewey, now deceased, was known as a 'yeoman' and that definition implies land ownership, but St. Dennis, like all parishes in mediaeval times, was divided into Manors. These often changed hands through marriage or hard times and the *Hendra* and *Menna* Manors, that included the land at *Gothers*, had been owned by the Boscawens before passing to Lord Falmouth before 1824.³² Who owned it in 1795 is unclear and would take up time in primary research, but the picture we have for 1795 is no more than a vague suggestion which has become the oral tradition for our family. By the time that the Parish Registers had become informative and the censuses named names, the family had moved on.

A New Century and New Horizons for the Daughters of Gothers

In Georgian and Victorian England, marriage was a social necessity. The inevitable arrival of the children of a relationship had to occur within the boundaries of a socially acceptable marriage. Children born outside of this arrangement were not considered to be legitimate, hence the word illegitimate, but neither were they uncommon in spite of the stigma and shame attached to the event. So, marriage was important, even essential for every couple and their wider families. It is curious, however, that if a couple did not share the same parish, the accepted convention found the bachelor marrying in the parish church of his bride. In the Trethewey household at *Gothers* there were four surviving daughters in 1800, but only two of them would marry in their own parish church – Mary and Joanna – two others flouted that convention and they were Elizabeth and Grace.

As the **eldest daughter, Elizabeth's story** must come first, but it is a rather strange, even untidy story. She married in June 1803 in Mevagissey! Her groom was **Charles OLVER**. This infers that Charles was at best a fisherman and at least a seagoing mariner and proof of the latter was eventually uncovered. Four children were born to our couple, but only three survived – Prudence (1804), John Trethewey (1809) and Charles (1813). A previous Charles had been born in 1812 but died as an infant in that same year.

³¹ E-mail from Alan Kent dated 2 August 1999 summarising the Will

³² *Magna Britannica* Volume 3 Page 77 Cornwall, St, Dennis also *The History of Cornwall* by Fortescue Hitchins 1824

How she came to meet her husband was most unusual. The most likely scenario is that they met at one of the many fairs and the most likely fair would have been those held at St. Austell, mid-way between St. Dennis and Mevagissey, but how did they manage to continue the relationship if Elizabeth was not living in or near Mevagissey? Perhaps she had a position as a domestic servant in one of the large houses dotted around the harbour, but again that was quite unusual in Elizabeth's immediate circumstances.

Her marriage in that fishing village suggests that the union did not meet with the family's approval, but she knew what she wanted and was brave enough to go it alone in a new community, that was not exactly very friendly towards incomers. However, she became a part of that community for more than ten years until tragedy struck. When and how she became a widow is unknown, but she was living alone with two sons in 1841 in Parkwoon, a district of Roche.

One of those two sons is an enigma. Thomas was born in about 1825 in St. Austell, 12 years after Charles. Elizabeth would have been 46 years old, so whose son was he? Both boys were saddlers and in 1851 they were still together, unmarried and supporting their mother. It was this census that revealed that Elizabeth was a 'sailor's widow' and confirmed the word 'sailor' that appeared in Mevagissey's Baptism Register against Charles's name in 1813. Elizabeth died at her home in Parkwoon and she was buried at the Roche Parish Church on the 27th March 1859 at the ripe old age of 79.

Charles and Thomas Olver never married and neither did they leave Parkwoon in Roche. Their distinctive trade of saddler ensures that they are easily found in the censuses. In 1861 their widowed sister Grace had joined them with her daughter Ellen. Her married name was Lucas, but no trace of a marriage or a baptism for Ellen has been found.³³

If Elizabeth's marriage had caused waves to ripple across the tranquil *Gothers* pond in June 1803, then the pond had returned to serenity by March 1805, when **Mary** announced that she was to marry **Francis BRENTON** in her own parish church. Brenton was a shoemaker, a fact that is discovered in the newly expanded Baptism Registers for 1815. The earlier Registers had already listed four children baptised before Grace was brought to the church on the 21st January 1815. It also revealed that they were living in *Enniscaven*, but only until 1817 when their next baptism records only St. Dennis. Of course that does not mean that they had moved, as it may have been the Minister who simply recorded the parish that the baptism had taken place. However, that was repeated again on the 2nd January 1820, when David, their last child, was baptised.

When I embarked on my detailed examination of *Gothers* in the censuses, it had not occurred to me that I might encounter someone from the family, but in 1841³⁴ there they were – Francis and Mary Brenton with David, but they were not among the main group. For some reason two cottages named *Gothers*, had been placed within the *Enniscaven* group and they were adjacent to 'Frog's Hole.' The second cottage was that of farmer William Hawkey and the Brentons were sharing their cottage with a 20 year-old Grace James and her 1-year-old son Daniel. As expected, Francis was a shoemaker, but David was a 'tinner' or tin streamer of whom there were a large number in the parish.

As little was known about Francis Brenton's origins, beyond learning that he was 55 or thereabouts in 1841, it was too much to hope that their names would recur in 1851, but they did.³⁵ Strangely their entry had a page to itself at the end of the section devoted to

³³ 1861 Census RG09/1549 Folio 62 Page 2 – This situation is not what it seems and is beyond the scope of this story.

³⁴ 1841 Census HO107 Piece 146/7 Folio 29 Page 8

³⁵ 1851 Census HO107 Piece 1907 Folio 187 Page 22

Enniscaven. It was the same two cottages, but now known as *Gothrose*. Bill Hawkey had moved on and a clay labourer had moved in. David Brenton was still at home with his parents and now employed as a stonemason, but the real surprise was his father's age - 80. As was often the case, older men tried to conceal their real age from outsiders, sometimes even their family, as he had done in 1841, but now the truth was out and I knew where to look for him - St. Wenn.

The search did not end where I began. Yes, St. Wenn was home to a number of Brentons, even a Francis or two and several were shoemakers, but our Francis was not baptised in that parish. He was in the registers of the neighbouring parish of Withiel, a parish, I must admit, of which I had never heard. Withiel and St. Wenn are in a line due west of Bodmin by 5 and 7 miles respectively lying in a part of the county rarely visited by anyone except those who live there. Courtesy of Google Earth I made my first visit. It was breathtaking. This was farming country at its best. Rolling hills watered generous streams feeding into the River Camel, whilst lanes,

barely wider than a farm cart, wound their way around the contours between high banked hedges that would have been claustrophobic to those not used to such terrain. St. Wenn was the poor relation to Withiel with its magnificent church perched on a high ridge and prominent for miles around. It was to this church that Francis Brenton was brought by his parents, Samuel and Mary, for his baptism on the 16th January 1774. It was



true that Francis was older than his admission, but it is beginning to look as if no one really knew how old he was - even Francis himself. Therefore, when he was buried in the St. Dennis Churchyard on the 15th October 1855 the family could be forgiven for telling the minister that he was 85 years old (born 1770).

Mary lasted only 9 months without her devoted husband of 50 years. Yes, a Golden Wedding was an event that had not yet been created, but it was exceedingly rare to be married for that length of time. They had married in the year that Nelson had celebrated his victory at Trafalgar and they had brought Grace into the world at *Enniscaven* in time to celebrate Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. Forty years had passed since those days and on the 5th August 1856 Mary was laid to rest aged 74. They were now at peace together in the churchyard at St. Dennis and there is a very real chance that their youngest son David had put his stonemason's skills to good use in creating a headstone to mark their last resting place.

Ten weeks after his mother's burial, 36 year-old David presented himself at the parish church of St. Ervan where he married Nancy, the daughter of local farmer James Key, on Tuesday 14th October 1856. St. Ervan is 1½ miles north east of St. Eval and a fair distance from St. Dennis and James farmed at *Trewinnick* in 1851 where Nancy could be seen with an illegitimate daughter called Sarah. David had reverted to the life of a clay labourer and he

took his new wife, who preferred to be known as Ann, to St. Stephen-in-Brannel together with her daughter, where they were found in 1861 living at Little Quarry Close.³⁶

The third daughter of Richard & Grace to marry was her mother's namesake, Grace, but I will defer her story for reasons that will become clear as I turn to the youngest daughter in the family – Joanna and Joanna's marriage brings the story forward to 1812.

It was Monday 12th October 1812 when **Joanna** married **William** TRETHERY, the son of her Uncle Robert and Aunt Grace Trethewey. In other words she married her cousin. *Not a good idea*, many would say and it was not permitted in the Roman Catholic Church. In St. Dennis it was OK and just to prove it Joanna embarked upon a child bearing spree that lasted for 23 years and 13 children. However, nature had a way of reminding her of its risks, because Joanna give birth to not one set of twins, but two sets – in 1821 and 1829 – and that was very rare. The Baptism Register that was being frequently opened on their behalf recorded their visits with three variations of her name. On four visits (including both sets of twins) she was 'Joanna.' On six visits she was 'Johanna' and on one visit she was 'Johana' and this emphasises the difficulties faced by family historians.

It was the same for their address. It was clear that William was farming at *Penrose*, a small community close by the north facing slope of 'Church Hill' and to the west of *Gothers*, but sometimes the minister recorded simply – St. Dennis. The fact that this occurs continuously from 1818 to 1826 means that a change of address cannot be ignored, but it was more likely to have been a *laissez faire* attitude of the Minister of the day as it can be seen in the baptisms of other children during this period. *Penrose* resumed in 1829 and continued to be their address when the first census enumerator arrived in 1841.³⁷

On that visit he found both parents in the house with seven children ranging from 25 years old (John) to a 4-year-old Richard and the eldest three boys were all clay labourers. In 1851 it was a different story. Joanna was alone with Richard. Joanna, who was now 59, said that she was a '*labourer, widow and pauper*' whilst Richard was a '*china clay miner*' – and he was just 14 years old.³⁸ This is the first significant connection that has been found linking our family with this traditional Cornish industry and now means that we can add it to that of granite working and tin mining.

The census entry, when compared with that of a decade earlier, made the house look a sad and lonely place with only two people left in it. Richard's father William had cheated the census enumerator by six months. He was buried in the St. Dennis Churchyard from *Penrose* on the 8th January 1851 and Joanna followed him to the churchyard on the 12th October 1859.

And so I come to Grace. Like Joanna, **Grace** married her cousin. He was **William** TRETHERY the son of Uncle William and Aunt Jane and baptised in 1779 making him five years older than Grace. In itself that was not a significant difference and should have raised few eyebrows, but it was not uncommon for age differences to be hidden or to cause some unexpected or unconventional action. Curiously, that is exactly what happened. There is not a sign of their marriage anywhere in the county or beyond, yet I find it difficult to believe that a mere 5 years in age would cause that to happen.

The marriage must have taken place before 1809, as their first child, John, was baptised on the 22nd October 1809. Christmas Day 1811 was the day chosen for Elizabeth's baptism, their

³⁶ 1861 Census RG09/1551 Folio 116 Page 7 – Trewinnick is a mile east of St. Ervan beside the B3274

³⁷ 1841 Census Ho107 Piece 148/7 Folio 27 Page 4

³⁸ 1851 Census HO107 Piece 1907 Folio 480 Page 8

second child and it happened to fall on a Wednesday. Soon afterwards the new format Baptism Register was introduced and gave me the opportunity to know where the couple lived and the employment of the father. In this case their third child was baptised Maria on the 11th May 1814, when William said that he was a farmer and that he lived at *Enniscaven*. Yet, there was more to this occasion than a simple baptism. It was a shared family occasion, shared with Grace's brother John and we will revisit this occasion again, later.

Enniscaven featured again in 1816, when William and Grace brought a third daughter to be baptised Christiana on the 26th March and the choice of names immediately attracts attention for their apparent pretentiousness and deviation from the conventions of the Trethewey Family. Whose idea was this and what was the source of their inspiration? Christiana did not survive long after her first birthday. She was buried on the 27th April 1817 from 'Guthers.' The fifth baptism in 1819 brought our couple back to earth. It was a son baptised William, after his father, on the 15th May 1819, but the Register harboured another change that cannot be ignored. William was now a 'labourer of St. Dennis.'

During my perusals of the pages of the censuses it had not passed unnoticed that farmers were very common, but agricultural labourers were not. This was very peculiar as the ubiquitous 'ag lab' is infamous in modern family histories. How was it that there could be so many 'farmers' and so few labourers? The land all around St. Dennis, particularly on the northern side, was prime farming land and this could not be managed without help. Even *outdoor male servants* on farms were rare, when boys as young as 11 were expected to do the work of a man for a shilling or two each week. On James Varcoe's farm (1841) he had 'parish apprentices' which may suggest that there was an enlightened philosophy at large in the district that enhanced everyone's opinion of their work and consequently lifted them above their station in their own minds. Was there some form of snobbery abroad here? Who can tell? Two years later, in 1821, William had resumed his title of 'farmer' when he and Grace brought another son to be baptised James on the 13th May 1821.

1824 was to be a landmark year for Grace and William as the genetic genie played its hand and Grace gave birth to twins just as Joanna had done three years before. I can imagine the phrase 'I told you so' being repeated over and over again as the gossips exchanged news and views about other people's affairs and the circumstances of the Trethewey Family were most unusual and probably the focus of a lot of comment. After all two sisters had married two cousins who were themselves cousins, but they were all still legal. Sadly, and many would say inevitably, the two children died as infants, following their baptism on the 9th May 1824. Samuel went first and he was buried on the 13th April 1825 aged 11 months, whilst his sister Keziah followed him on the 22nd May aged 14 months. Their ages do not correlate as twins, but that is only to be expected in this time and place.

It is 1841 when we meet the family again and the first thing to notice is that William has lost his wife Grace. She was buried from *Enniscaven* on the 17th October 1836 aged 52. It was in *Enniscaven* that the census enumerator found William with his three sons and daughter Maria who had obviously taken the place of her mother as housekeeper to her men. John was the exception. He had found his own housekeeper in a wife named Ann and they already had a family of three aged from 4 years to 1 month. However, there was no more talk of being a farmer. The entire family had become tin streamers and almost half the cottages recorded on adjacent pages contained even more tin streamers.

I must admit to being surprised by the numbers employed as this was not an area known for this practise, unlike the Luxulyan Valley and the Withybrook Moor beyond St. Cleer. It is true that the only significant streams that ran off Goss Moor passed to the east of *Enniscaven*, but the parish could not even support a mill such was the dearth of running

water. Tin streaming demanded a specific knowledge and the returns were meagre, so this has the appearance of a 'tin rush' when the prices were high on the metal markets and the enthusiasm of a few 'chancers' had infected the local labouring classes with the thought that they might be 'lucky.'

A New Century and a New Master at Gothers

At this point I would be surprised if my reader was not feeling a little lost as I have tried to unravel the life stories of the four daughters of Richard and Grace of *Gothers*. Each of their stories began at *Gothers*, but the farm of their birth and childhood was not destined to play a part in their adult lives. It was different for the boys. One of them would become the Master of *Gothers*, but was it inevitable that Thomas would inherit that mantle?

Much of this story so far has attempted to focus on a farm thought to be synonymous with *Gothers*, seeking answers to the questions - where was it and how big was it? Nothing has been said about the output of the farm. In that respect it was probably no different from any other Cornish farm. It was not tasked with feeding the nation. It was feeding a family, albeit an extended family, so its principal activities focused upon its occupants.

Previous research in other areas of Cornwall has shown that the patchwork of fields did not change very much over the last two centuries once the effects of the Enclosures Act had been absorbed, but that patchwork in St. Dennis shows little sign of crop cultivation. Yes, wheat, barley and oats were generally important as they had different, essential functions and the prices at the market were important too, especially during the first decade of the 19th century when England was at war with France.

The *Royal Cornwall Gazette* for the week ending the 17th December 1803 showed that wheat and barley at the Camelford Market (the nearest one to St. Dennis that operated during that week) fetched 22 shillings and 10 shillings respectively, (it doesn't state the weight), but it was double that price on the London Market. However, the newspaper summary also included the price of meat and beef was 5d, mutton 4½d and pork 4d. This compares with geese being sold at Hayle market for 7d/lb, but then, Christmas was looming when a goose on the table was eagerly anticipated by everyone.

Gothers had been a home to *honest and industrious*³⁹ Richard and Grace and their seven surviving children for 25 years when in 1803, the first of them (Elizabeth) decided to leave. It was the year I chose to look at the markets. Richard was now 51 years old and had begun his married life helping his father. Richard now he had three sons of his own still at home helping him (*excluding Richard 1791*), but how long could that last? It is almost certain that the farm was an animal farm with dairy cows and pigs at the very least. Sheep were not a feature of Cornish farms in general as their rewards were a long time in the fields. Pigs on the other hand were very efficient and with large litters there was a very quick return on their labour intensive rearing, but how many sons could Richard employ when they started to seek wives and think of families? The answer almost certainly was ONE – the one who expected to inherit the farm from his father – but who would that be? Was it Thomas?

Thomas was born towards the end of 1786. St. Dennis did not benefit from a Sunday School for the children, and it was the lot of all farm boys to begin working out of doors at a very early age. It was said that he attended the parish church regularly, yet as he grew in age so he grew in 'sin.' He was said to greatly enjoy the Cornish wrestling, dancing, music and all other 'sinful amusements.' When he was about 22 years old it was said that he heard an Independent Minister called Mr Angear, preach, but this did not initially dissuade him from his enjoyment of the pleasures of this world for another year.

³⁹ Description taken from Thomas's obituary in the *Bible Christian Magazine* 1842

These words were extracted from an obituary to Thomas written by William Bailey and published in the *Bible Christian Magazine* in 1842 and provide a glimpse into his life and character not afforded for any of the other children and I will return to it again later. For the moment, this opening paragraph will illustrate very clearly how Thomas lost his inheritance.

Thomas reached his 22nd birthday sometime during November/December 1808 and by this time he must have been a familiar face in the parish of Roche where **Joanna** NANCE lived with her parents, Richard and Mary, as the eldest of seven siblings. She married Thomas on Saturday 2nd June 1810 and the Marriage Register at Roche states that Thomas was a 'Husbandman' and provides evidence that the principal activity at *Gothers* involved the care of animals and cows in particular are associated with this job description. However, all was not quite what it seemed as they stood in front of the altar.

It was not until Sunday 7th October 1810 that the truth was revealed when Thomas and Joanna brought their son to be baptised – Richard. The Minister wrote in the Baptism Register that '*this child is one year old.*' He had married them in good faith and by Banns, whilst the couple were hiding a secret and I can almost hear the indignation in his mind as it drove the quill across the page.

Thomas and Joanna must have indulged their mutual passion sometime around Christmas 1808 and that would sit well with the words of the obituary writer. The preaching of James Angear undoubtedly influenced this situation. As an Independent Dissenting Minister he became very well known around the country after making his mark in both East and West Looe. His name features prominently in the *Evangelical Magazine* from 1807 to 1825 and Thomas's obituary writer says that following his marriage Thomas became more thoughtful. Later pages of the Roche Baptism Register reveal that he had also become a miner sometime before Christmas 1812. This, together with his increasing religious conviction impelled him to walk large distances, not only to work, but to hear the great preachers of the day. As a result, Thomas's life took a completely new direction and it is well worth repeating at a later date. Nevertheless, it is complex and inappropriate to my heading which concerns the succession of *Gothers* and in 1812 it was **NOT going to be Thomas**.

What Happened Next?

Joanna Trethewey's departure from *Gothers*, following her marriage to Cousin William in October 1812, left only two boys on the farm – John and William – and Christmas 1812 was a much quieter occasion than was usual. I would not be at all surprised to find a little tension in the atmosphere as Richard and Grace shared their happy memories of Christmases past and contemplated what might have been. Grace had passed her 61st birthday just before the yuletide (*if that was something that was celebrated in those days*) and Richard was 60, but I have a suspicion that they were far from being in good health.

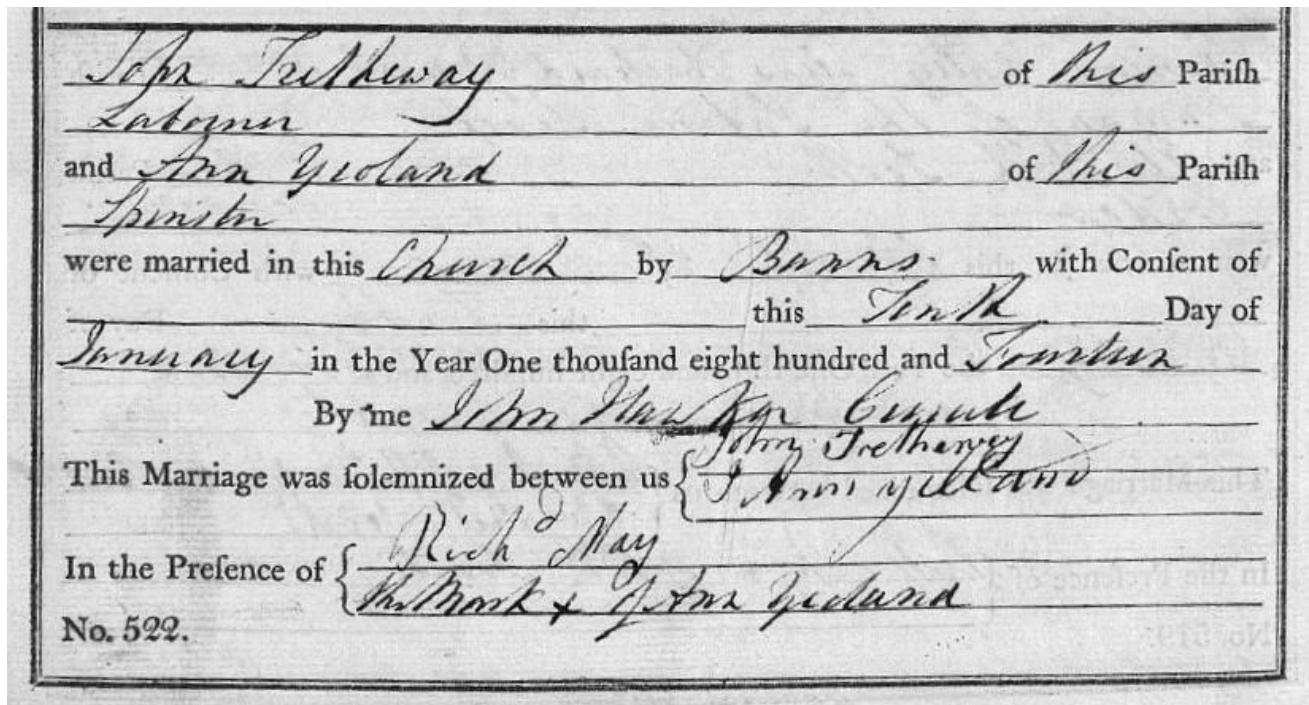
John and William were doing most of the work around the farm, but they were both courting girls from the village named Ann YELLAND and Christian STUTRIDGE. As the New Year 1813 dawned it looked as if John's marriage would benefit from the inheritance of *Gothers* at some point in the future. However, the Trethewey's were past masters of their own destruction and John would be the next to award himself one of life's diplomas.

A Brief Visit Across the Tamar

It took a warm night in late July 1813 to put an end to all thoughts of farming the windswept fields of St. Dennis. It was harvest when his sweetheart, Ann YELLAND, whispered to him that she thought she was pregnant and it made them both apprehensive for the future. The 'old folk' had seen it happen so many times before and Cornish folk were not sympathetic. Most couples who found themselves in this predicament could expect to be 'cut off' by their family. They would no longer be welcome.

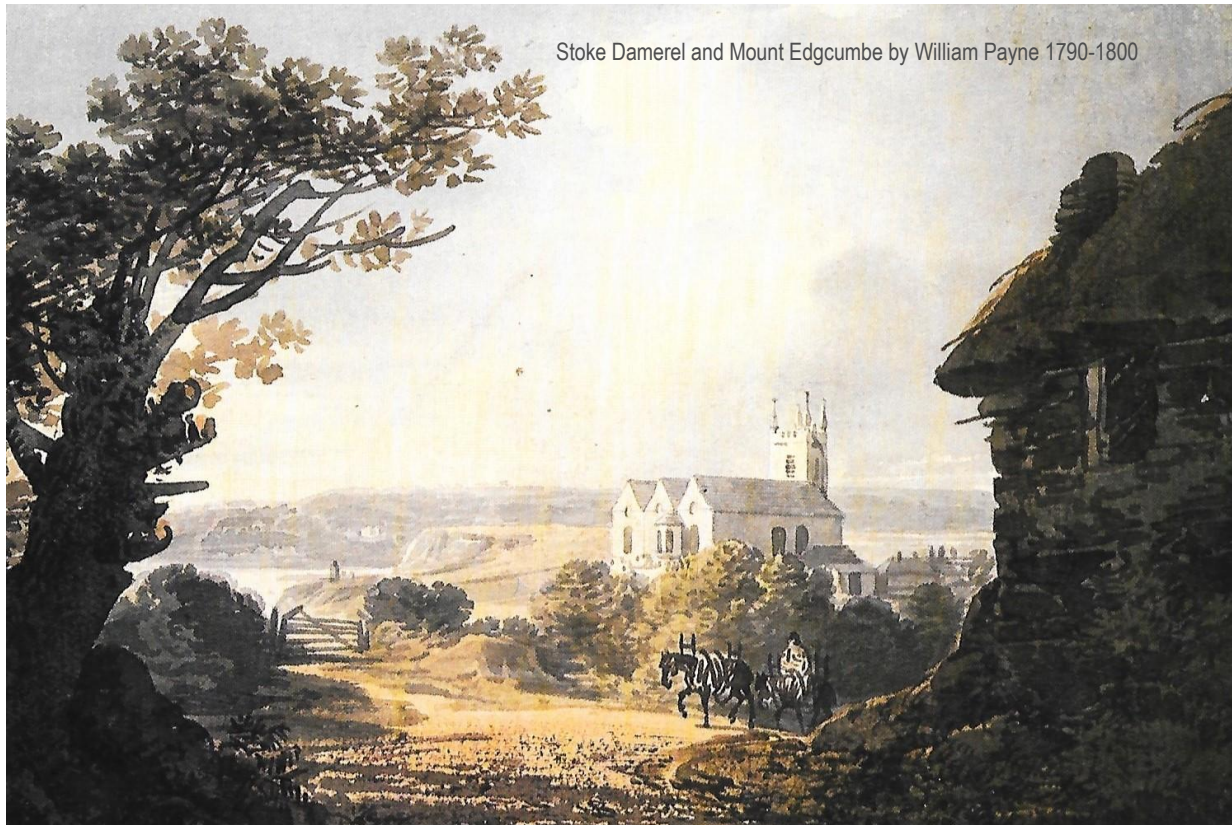
John's father Richard had inherited *Gothers* in exactly the same circumstances, when his elder brother had 'blotted his copy book' in a similar way. There could be no thought of inheritance now, but what could they do? They could not openly ask anyone as their secret would be revealed, but Ann's mother would soon know. Mothers always did. Gradually it became clear that the place they would have to go was across the Tamar and to be more specific it was Stoke Damerel Church in Plymouth Dock.

Normally there was a requirement to live in the parish for six months before a Minister would agree to call their Banns each week for three weeks, but Stoke Damerel was different. No questions were asked. Of course, living in the Town was a vastly different life from the life with which they were both familiar. The townspeople were hard and suspicious and nothing was done or given without payment. Lodgings had to be secured, but there would be no rooms without the payment of rent, yet the couple had barely seen any money, let alone handled it.



And so it was that John TRETHEWEY married Ann YELLAND in Stoke Damerel Church on Monday 10th January 1814. The curate, John Hawker, was having a busy day after his Sunday services. Six weddings were booked for that day and this one was his fourth, so he didn't pay any particular attention to the spellings of their names and he got them both wrong. *Trethewey* and *Yeoland* are recorded in the Register for posterity. Although John hid behind his occupation as a common labourer, he signed his name very clearly and confidently as did his new wife, Ann and this was a skill in short supply in those days. This fact was demonstrated by the two seamen from HM Brig BASILISK who took their turn before John and Ann and both of them scratched an anonymous 'X'.

Witnesses should never be ignored in any Marriage Register and there is one on this page that attracts attention with her mark. She was another who could not write and the curate had to do it for her and repeated his earlier mistake with the spelling – Ann Yeoland. Surely this could only have been Ann’s mother. Ann was her only child, but could it be said that she did not trust them to travel unchaperoned? Was she so traumatised by her daughter’s behaviour that she literally could not take her eyes from them?



Young Ann had been baptised to John and Anne Yelland at Paul near Newlyn in Cornwall on 30th March 1788. The name YELLAND was NOT local to Paul, but Anne’s parents (John and Ann FRETHY⁴⁰) had married in the church on the 1st November 1787. At their marriage John Yelland was a ‘*sojourner from Madron*’ and Ann Frethy was also a ‘*sojourner in Paul,*’ but I have no idea what the reason for their temporary presence might have been. No other children were baptised to this couple anywhere in Cornwall.

The day following John Trethewey’s marriage to Ann was intended to be the day that they set off on their journey back to St. Dennis, but the wind driven clouds were full of snow and there was only a promise that it would get worse before it got better. Indeed the storm was so bad that two lighters engaged on building the new breakwater in Plymouth Sound were driven upon it in blinding snow, fortunately without loss of life and the crew of the 74-gun first rate ship of the line WARSPITE, that had only arrived on the previous Sunday, had to fight to maintain her moorings to prevent her from joining the luckless lighters.⁴¹

When our couple was finally able to return to St. Dennis, they were a MARRIED couple and Ann’s condition was no longer of any consequence. John had shown to the community that he would stand by his new wife and that should have put an end to the worst of the gossip.

⁴⁰ FRETHY has 223 baptism entries in Cornwall from 1650 to 1850 but only two named Ann – 1774 Boconnoc

⁴¹ *Exeter Flying Post & Plymouth Advertiser* – Saturday 13 January 1814

Their baby was a son. He was probably born towards the end of April and when they took him to the parish church on Wednesday 11th May for his baptism they were not alone. It was to be a DOUBLE baptism from *Enniscaven* as Cousin William and his wife Grace had a baby daughter to christen. At this period I am very reliant upon transcriptions of parish registers which give brief and halting glimpses into their family circumstances, but on this occasion I have an extract from the Register page where both names followed each other as Entries 34 and 35. Both fathers were farmers at *Enniscavin* (as spelt), as the two families gathered around the font whilst the minister was told that the names of the babies would be Maria and John.

11 th May	Maria Daughter of	William Grace	Trotterway	Enniscavin	Farmers	Thos. Furlong
No. 34.						
11 th May	John Son of	John Ann	Trotterway	Enniscavin	Farmers	Thos. Furlong
No. 35.						

This occasion provides a glimpse of John and Ann's circumstances after they were obliged to forego their interest in *Gothers*, but interpretations are fraught with difficulties and may be wrong. Notwithstanding that risk, I would suggest that this joint occasion is an indication of the stance taken by different family members to John and Ann's plight and now is the time to explore what seems to have been happening.

John's Future is Uncertain.

When John left *Gothers*, the year 1813 must have been drawing to its close. He met his sweetheart Ann and together with her mother they journeyed to Cremyl Passage where they could cross the River Tamar to East Stonehouse. Perhaps they found temporary lodgings there before moving into the parish of Stoke Damerel.

At *Gothers* only William remained with his parents Richard and Grace. No one was in any mood to accept John back into the house with his new wife and imminent baby. To be blunt, there was no room for them. But families in those days did not live isolated lives and there always existed a wider circle of relatives who knew - or thought they knew - what was going on. Barely half a mile away lived John's Uncle William (his father's brother) in the hamlet of *Enniscaven* and his wife, Aunt Janet, was his mother's sister. This story has suggested that *Enniscaven* was a farm bought for William by his father Thomas, but in reality it was a small hamlet, possibly extending to 10 - 15 cottages. Circumstantially, it might be said that Uncle William was sympathetic to his nephew's predicament, but William was an old man and at 74 years old he was not fit for this life for very much longer.

However, there was another source of support available and that was John's Cousin William who had married John's sister Grace. They were also living in *Enniscaven* and wanted to help. This friendly involvement manifests itself in the joint baptism seen above and its sympathetic understanding may have its roots in their own enigmatic marriage as yet undiscovered. However, the fact remained that John and Ann's future was uncertain.

A View of Enniscaven

There is no realistic possibility that we will ever know exactly where these three families lived. Did they live together in a farmhouse with adjacent accommodation, or were they spread around the hamlet? To get a better idea, let me explain a little more.

Enys is Cornish for an island, but this was not an island in the hilltop sense of the parish church. This was an island of cottages in the middle of prime farming land. By the 18th century there were three significant hamlets named, Hendra, Trelavour and Whitepit to which were added another gathering at **Enniscaven** together with its neighbour **Gothers** to the south and **Penrose** to the west. The population of the parish of St. Dennis was not large in the early 19th Century compared with other Cornish parishes. In 1811 it was 478 and 160 more than 1801. In 1811 there were 90 cottages, one was empty, but only 7 of the 96 families of the parish had to share their living space. The view below is the view north from Hendra with the Bible Christian Chapel the middle building of the three below the skyline.



In 1813 the parish registers were obliged to record more detail on a new and enhanced format (seen with Maria and John's baptism above) and this allows a search for *Enniscaven*. Among the 19 baptisms, 2 came from that hamlet and 3 from *Penrose* and all of them shared names that were associated with my family including that of William and Johanna TRETHEWY who baptised baby Grace on the 29th March 1813.

The following year, 1814, followed a similar pattern with 5 baptisms from *Enniscaven* among the 18 conducted at the parish church through the year. In addition to the baptisms to our own John and his cousin William on the 11th May, John's sister, Johanna, returned from *Penrose* with her husband William on the 27th July and christened a new baby boy John Grigg – a nod towards William's mother's line as Grace Grigg.

The name Grigg features twice among the 19 burials that took place during the two years 1813 and 1814. Both were infants and one came from *Penrose*, but the name TRETHEWY also features twice, from *Enniscaven*. They were brothers, Thomas (b1736) and William (b1740) and they were brothers to our Richard (b1752) who had established his family just along the lane at *Gothers* and I will return to these events in a moment.

However, when I was first presented with the name of *Enniscaven* linked with my family name, I erroneously assumed that it was a single farm. Not so, at least not when analysing the pages of the 1841 Census.

It has always been reasonable to assume that the 1841 Census Enumerator walked from one property to another in a rational and logical itinerary, but the one that is laid out across the pages of the St. Dennis parish is quite curious. There are a number of entries for *Penrose* including farmer William and Joanna Trethewey with their 7 children still at home,⁴² before he encounters three cottages named *Enniscaven*. Two of these are occupied by clay workers and the third by an elderly farmer named William Gill. These are followed by three cottages named *Carnega*, which may have been the place that grew to be known as Carne, after which he arrives at three dwellings that comprise *Gothers*.

The farm was in the hands of William Hawkey, a farmer aged 44, but the two cottages on the farm were occupied by a father and son, the elder of whom was a shoemaker named Francis Brenton and his only son, David, was in the other cottage working as a tinner. It has already been recorded that Mary Brenton was the daughter of Richard Trethewey of *Gothers*, but it has not been said previously that William Hawkey witnessed the Will of Richard's son William who inherited *Gothers* following his father's death in 1816. So, this is probably a very important glimpse into the relationships that were to be found in that small area.

After stopping briefly at *Frog's Hole*, the Enumerator reaches the main gathering of cottages named *Enniscaven*. There were twelve of them, two of which are obviously significant dwellings. Each of them is occupied by a farmer and 9 other people. John Crap was 44 and John Osborn was 55 and they are separated by three other cottages. However, Osborn has the only agricultural labourer in the listing living right next door. There were 72 people living in that close knit hamlet, yet half of the cottages were home to tin streamers and two of them were William Trethewey and his son John. Two more were occupied by tin miners, so what of farming? It is impossible to draw any conclusion from these circumstances, but would the more informative 1851 Census provide a missing clue?

The answer has to be NO! There were now eighteen cottages providing homes for 93 people. There were still two farmers - now Thomas Bunt and Robert Kent and the latter states that he farms 23 acres. There was one agricultural labourer and one husbandman, but the vast majority of the workforce was split between tin streaming and clay mining and labouring of which John Trethewey was one such labourer.

Although 1851 is separated from 1814 by nearly forty years, it is unusual not to be able to get closer to a location than I have been able to do in this case. It has proved impossible to identify the land they farmed when in May 1814 John Trethewey and his Cousin William brought their new born infants to the church on the hill at St. Dennis. What can be said is that there did seem to be two farms (1841 & 51) which employed only one labourer and one husbandman (proving the presence of animals) and one of which was a mere 23 acres.

However, it would be a pity to leave the location without one last look at those places that might have been familiar to my ancestors, in spite of the probability that John and Ann only lived there between 1814 and 1818 at most. *Gothers* and *Enniscaven* were neighbours. They are separated by only a short walk and location identity was unimportant to the residents of the Georgian era. Everyone knew everyone else and although people did move from house to house, as can be seen in the censuses, there was continuity in families not often found today.

The aerial view of the central group on the next page has subtle differences from the map. There is only one contemporary house which survives and that is right at the heart of it.

⁴² HO107/146/7 Folio 27 Page 4

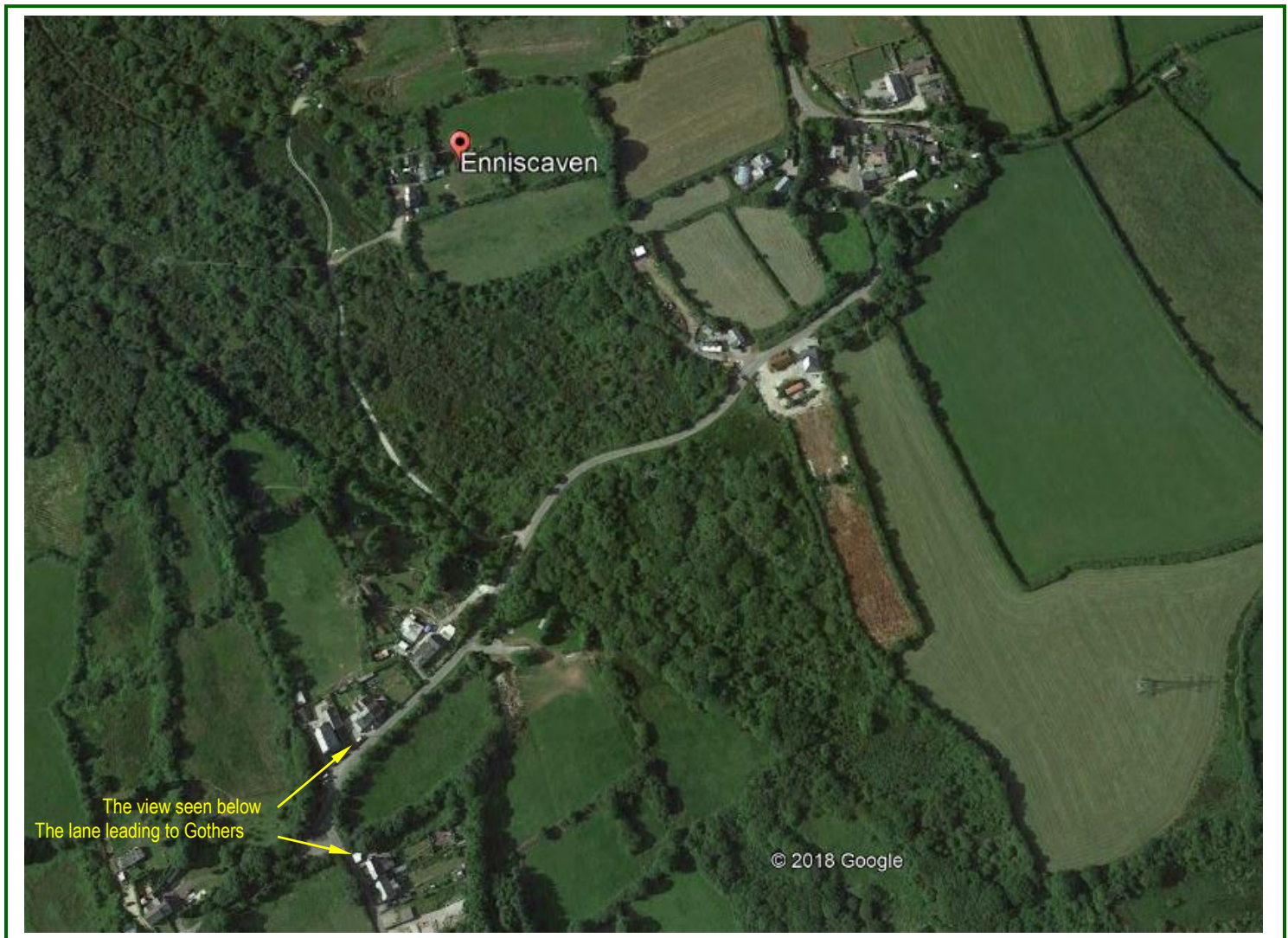


It can be seen from the map circa 1868, that there is no lane connection to the west of the Bible Christian Chapel. This would explain the circuitous route taken by the 1841 Census Enumerator set previously, but there is something amiss between the old map and the modern Google interpretations and I will begin with the aerial view above. This shows all the buildings to the lower left have been recently modernised, but the view from ground level tells a different story. This is, or was the Bible Christian Chapel, confirmed by the shape of the four fields in which it sits whilst the two dwellings opposite have been transformed.



Above and right these two dwellings have seen better days and stand on the eastern edge of the common land that stretches north to Goss Moor. Opposite them is the ruin of the original Bible Christian Chapel dating from 1840 and there is something very poignant about buildings that have been abandoned by those who loved them. But the aerial view on the next page suggests that help has arrived and once again they will feel the warmth and laughter of human company.

It seems likely that the derelict building was the original BC Chapel, but what is the origin of the building further along the lane towards *Gothers* that also claims to be the chapel? Google's aerial view and its ground level view are separated by at least 4 years based on these views and even the woodland that lies between the two locations is not what it seems. It is a mixture of heath and scrub dotted with small trees with a cattle grid at either end indicating the presence of free-roaming animals able to access Goss Moor. However, the one place that it is impossible to access is the place named *Enniscaven*. A close up aerial view suggests an old, small dwelling that could easily have been William Trethewey's 'farm' leaving John Trethewey to find accommodation somewhere along the lane. Overall it is possible to identify at least seven residential properties that might date back to the early 1800s, but there are as many again that are easily seen to be very recent constructions.



Is this the chapel? The Bible Christians were the working class Methodists and their first chapel dated from about 1840. The movement became active among the cottages of Enniscaven during the late 1820s and grew so quickly that a piece of land 35 feet by 20 feet was leased for one shilling per year and a chapel was built,

This is not the original building. When it last sold in August 2014 its 7 bedrooms, 4 receptions and 4 bathrooms fetched £375,000.

In 1841 there were 15 cottages, but in 2014 it became post code PL26 8DE which allocated 21 cottages to that identity.

Our Cornish Line Draws to its Conclusion

Whilst I have been concentrating my efforts at unravelling the living arrangements at *Enniscaven*, not very successfully I might add, there were events occurring in the family that would impinge upon John and his new family and lead to a decision that would drastically change their lives - and ultimately set the pattern for our lives.

When the news reached *Gothers* that Richard's eldest brother Thomas had died, there was a transient moment of confusion as Thomas had been the one destined to inherit *Gothers* until his transgression had forced him to seek another place he could call home. He found that place at Currian near Nanpean and he had lived there for nearly 50 years. It is not known whether it was a family decision or Thomas's request, but his funeral would take place at St. Dennis Church and he would be buried in the churchyard.

The Curate, the Rev Thomas Furly was on hand on Tuesday 20th September 1814 to conduct the burial, as he had been on so many previous family occasions, but Tuesday was not the usual day for a large family occasion. He knew the family personally, but he was not acquainted with Thomas, who had left the parish in the late 1770s.

A little over three weeks later the Churchwarden at St. Dennis pushed open the cottage door belonging to the parish sexton and shouted into the gloom,

Jacob! Fetch your spade. I've another buryin fur 'ee.

Is that so! Who be 'it this time? The voice floated out from the kitchen.

'Tis Thomas T's bruther William, came the reply

What 'im from Enniscaven? Jacob appeared tugging on his outdoor coat. *Where do 'ee wanna put 'im?*

Longside t'other one. Where else?

What? With 'em not speakin' for 30 years. What's Richard up at Gothers goin' to say?

'Ee won't care. 'Ee's gonna need a plot of 'is own drectly.

And so Thomas Furly had to don his black cloak once again and join the sombre and joyless gathering around the graveside as he committed the second brother to the earth on Sunday 16th October 1814. They had not been close in life, but they would now spend an eternity side by side in the parish of their birth.

Page 3.

BURIALS in the Parish of <i>St. Dennis</i> in the County of <i>Cornwall</i> in the Year 1814				
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Thom^s Trethewey</i>	<i>San Currian</i>	<i>Sept^r 20</i>	<i>yeas</i>	<i>Tho^s S. Furly</i>
No. 17.				
<i>Will^m Trethewey</i>	<i>Enniscaven</i>	<i>Oct^r 16</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>Tho^s S. Furly</i>
No. 18.				
		<i>1815</i>		<i>1815</i>

Although *Gothers* was not directly affected by these two events, a death is always accompanied by its consequences and that was never more true than with the death of Thomas. He did not leave a Will for me to see, but it looks very possible that with his death Wilmot lost her house. In normal circumstances that would have been rectified by her children, but that does not seem to have happened and their circumstances have not been researched. What does seem to have happened is that she came to *Gothers* to live and I wonder how and particularly when that came about.

It is now 1815 and the war with France was inexorably heading towards its conclusion at Waterloo on the 18th June, but before that happened, William Trethewey of *Gothers* decided to marry Christian Stethridge (or Stuthridge). Their marriage was the ninth entry in the new style Marriage Register which was opened in 1813, by the Curate the Rev. Thomas Furly. He had only reached Page 3 in our case, as weddings did not seem to be more than occasional and often carried the note that the bride was marrying with the 'consent of parents' as it did here. The witness Thomas Trethewey attracts attention as this is probably William's elder brother who has come over from Roche for the occasion.

William Trethewey of this Parish
and Christian Stethridge of this Parish
were married in this Church by banns with Consent of
parents this Eleventh Day of
March in the Year One thousand eight hundred and fifteen
By me Thos. J. Furly Curate
This Marriage was solemnized between us { William Trethewey
Christian Stethridge
In the Prefence of { Miss Julian
Thos. Trethewey
No. 9.

However, I think that the absence of any signature from William's father Richard must indicate that he was already very ill, as we shall learn in a moment.

Christian STUTRIDGE was baptised in Roche on the 1 April 1794 to Benjamin and Ann, so she must have been within days of her 21st birthday and not in need of parental consent. However, the practise of the day is not known as it is evident in this period that so many people were not accurately aware of their birthdays. There was only a need to make a record of their baptism and that baptism is missing in the case of William.

William was 25 years old and he was settling down to be the 'Master of *Gothers*.' It could not be far off now, but it didn't come in the way that he was expecting. In April 1816 his wife was confined to her bed expecting their first child at any moment. The house was full of women to attend to the birth as William's mother, Grace, was fading fast. She must have died soon after being shown her new grandson, before all the panoply of a family funeral had to be arranged for the 26th April. This was not a Sunday, but a Friday and that may have been, in part, due to the chaotic situation in the house at *Gothers*.

Grace Trethewey Guthers April 26 65 Tho' S. Furly					
No. 29.					

But *Guthers* was not the only house to be in a 'tizzy.' There were two cottages in *Enniscaven* expecting new arrivals and one of them was my ancestor John Trethewey. Six days after burying his mother, William joined with John Trethewey AND John Osborne to share a baptism in triplicate. The date was Thursday 2nd May 1816 and it could suggest that there was no animosity between the brothers about the succession to *Guthers*.

All three men declared that they were 'farmers' and it is also interesting to note that William of *Enniscaven* had brought a new child for baptism less than six weeks earlier, stating that he too was a farmer. Their choice of name for their daughter - *Christiana* - must reflect a close bond between the two Williams as cousins and it is conveniently coincidental that all the players in this little family saga are grouped around two pages in the St. Dennis Baptism Register. However, 1816 would not close until the Rev. Thomas Furly had made one more entry for a Trethewey.

Mar 26 <i>Christiana</i> William Trethewey Enniscaven Farmer Tho' S. Furly					
From <i>Grace</i>					
No. 78.					
May 2 William John Osborne Enniscaven Farmer Tho' S. Furly					
From <i>Joseph</i>					
No. 79.					
May 2 Ann John Trethewey Enniscaven Farmer Tho' S. Furly					
From <i>Yolland Ann</i>					
No. 80.					

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of <i>St. Dennis</i>						
in the County of <i>Cornwall</i> in the Year 1816						
When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
1816. May 2	<i>William</i> <i>Sturbridge</i> son	<i>William</i>	<i>Trethewey</i>	<i>Guthers</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Tho' S. Furly</i>
No. 81.						

Fortunately for my story, Thomas Furdy was so moved by Richard Trethewey's condition whilst visiting him on his pastoral rounds, that he was impelled to record that condition in the Burial Register. He seemed to be almost shocked, even perplexed by something he had not previously seen. Yet peoples' experience of seeing death so frequently gave rise to various descriptions of the symptoms rather than the cause and it is noticeable here that he avoids attributing any cause of death. Illnesses were better understood, but no doctor would have been on hand to treat Richard, at 64 years old after a life on the land, it was just the inevitable conclusion.

Page 5.

BURIALS in the Parish of <i>S^t Dennis</i>				
in the County of <i>Cornwall</i>			in the Year 1816	
Name.	Abode.	When buried.	Age.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
<i>Richard Trethewey</i>	<i>Gothers</i>	<i>Novm^r 15 64</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>Tho Furdy</i>
<i>No. 33.</i>	<i>in Dennis</i>	<i>of a decline reduced nigh to a skeleton</i>		
<i>1817</i>				<i>1817</i>

Reading those words - albeit written 200 years ago - is quite chilling and as his wife Grace had died only six months previously, I cannot help but wonder what the atmosphere was like in *Gothers* during that time. As husband and wife they would have shared the same room, even the same bed and Richard had survived for those six months alone. So this begs the question - was he ill during all of that time, or was his decline following his wife's death so rapid that it even bemused the parish clergyman?

Richard's burial took place on Friday 15th November 1816 and as is often the case with large family gatherings there are those present who are quietly wondering how this is going to affect their own future. Richard's burial was the last of nine in 1816, but the Register had no sooner been put away than it was needed again for a death at *Gothers*.

<i>Wilmot Trethewey</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>March 31 85</i>		<i>Tho J. Furdy</i>
<i>No. 38.</i>				

It is not known whether Wilmot had been living in the house since the funeral of her husband Thomas in September 1814. If she had been then that was a remarkable gesture by Richard who had taken Thomas's birthright in the stewardship of the farm. Perhaps it was his way of repaying the debt. However, Richard had now passed on and William was the 'Master' and Wilmot's death lifted a responsibility that was not his. *Gothers* was now empty of all but his own immediate family, a family that would have its own story which will be found in the postscript to this book.

Decision Time in Enniscaven

Economic migration is a terminology all too common in the 21st century, but it is a phenomenon that has been with us since the Industrial Revolution enticed agricultural labourers from the fields in their thousands to the bleak, overcrowded tenements of the factory towns in the Midlands and the North. Cornwall wouldn't be Cornwall without the waves of migrant miners escaping from the collapse of their tin and copper mines due to some discovery on the far side of the world causing prices to collapse. Yet, this was 1817, just two years after the end of the wars with France, that had lasted for twenty years. Agriculture in Cornwall was in a bad way, not only due to the industrial revolution, but also to the neglect caused by the effects of the war. It could not withstand the flood of labour being dumped on the market place by the disbanding armies. Cornwall's lanes filled with ragged soldiers, many of them disabled, seeking work, but their presence did not invoke sympathy. It did the opposite. It generated suspicion and even fear among the parishes and their officers were quick to seek the help of the local magistrate, who in his turn sought the aid of the Militia and none of this helped to restore the fortunes of anyone.

Against this backdrop John Trethewey's mind was consumed by one ambition of his own. It was the ambition of every economic migrant past and present. It was to feed himself and his family and to restore his self respect. John had a family and he could see that his future did not lie in the fields of St. Dennis. There was nothing there for him. In tune with all migrants, he had to look to the towns and the nearest town with the most to offer was across the Tamar. He had seen it once before and he had never forgotten it - Plymouth.

When he revealed his thoughts to his wife, Ann, she didn't know how to answer him. She immediately thought of her friendship with Joanna Trethewey and Jenefer Osborne. They had been reliable helpmeets to each other's pregnancies as well as sharing their daily lives with its chores and problems with the children.

What will you do there? she asked her husband inquisitively.

What can I do? John replied. *All I know is how to dig the earth, plant and harvest crops and push a few animals around. I know nothing else.*

Then how can you do that in Plymouth? Ann persisted. *There are no fields in that great town.*

There's bound to be fields on the edges of the town. Where else would they build? I'll have to make sure I find them and I'll do that BEFORE we leave our cottage here. John pushed the back door open and a swirl of draught snatched smoke from the kitchen fire.

For the moment the subject was closed.

Left to her own thoughts, Ann began to regret the other family she had never had.

Ann Yelland's parents are a mystery. A detailed search of the Internet⁴³ for siblings produced nothing in the period 1787 (her mother's marriage to John Yelland) and 1810 (her probable child bearing years). There were 27 baptisms to 6 couples, of whom the father was named John. ALL but one of them was in St. Stephen-in-Brannel and NONE of them had a wife named Ann/e. The exception was Ann's own baptism in Paul.

A search of burials in the entire County of Cornwall for Ann Yelland (Ann's mother) from 1814 (when she accompanied her daughter to Plymouth Dock) and 1845 (using a DOB circa 1770) produced 2 burials. BOTH were in St. Stephen and BOTH pre-dated 1814. A similar search for her father, John (DOB circa 1760) from 1800 to 1840 produced 12 burials only 9 of

⁴³ Cornwall On-line Parish Clerks

which carried an age. ALL were in St. Stephen and only three had a suitable, but improbable age.

An objective conclusion, therefore, is not possible in this situation, but all the indications suggest that Ann Trethewey (née Yelland) had no parents to whom she owed an allegiance.

THE STORY OF JOHN & ANN TRETHERWEY CONCLUDES IN

CROSSING THE TAMAR

EPILOGUE

This story entitled 'Clay Country' has embraced three members of **John Trethewey's** immediate family of whom I have said that I would return. Those three people were,

THOMAS baptised 1786 - the son of Richard and Grace (née BROKENSHERE)

WILLIAM born 1790 - the son of Richard and Grace (née BROKENSHERE)

WILLIAM born 1779 – a cousin to John and the second 'Master of Enniscaven.'

1 - Thomas (born 1786 St. Dennis) has already been introduced to my reader as the elder brother of John who married Joanna NANCE in Roche in 1810. It has already been said that he features in an obituary published in the *Bible Christian Magazine* in 1842 which now follows here as it was published.

In spite of the fact that this is a rare and valuable insight into the life of one of my ancestors, it is also sobering to realise that this is 55 years compressed into a little over a thousand words (1032). Most of my ancestors do not possess 50 words to their credit and sometimes it is difficult to prove even their existence. However, my reader might notice that dates are missing from the text until the very end of his life and this makes its unravelling a series of estimates.

MEMOIR OF THOMAS TRETHEWAY.

BY WILLIAM BAILEY.

THOMAS TRETHEWAY was born in the parish of St. Dennis, County of Cornwall, in the year 1786. His parents were honest and industrious, but having a large family, and there being no Sunday School at that time in the neighbourhood, the education of their children was neglected. Thomas being the eldest, was obliged at an early age to work out of doors, but after some time, he was sent for a short time to an evening school, where he made some little proficiency in learning. As he grew in years he grew in sin; and though he constantly attended the parish church, yet after the service was concluded, he was one of the foremost to spend the remainder of the Sabbath in open rebellion against God. He greatly delighted in wrestling, dancing, music, and all other sinful amusements. When he was about twenty-two years of age, he heard Mr. Angear, an Independent minister, preach, and became deeply affected; but he suffered the pleasures of the world to stifle those good impressions, and again pursued his former practices during

I have already commented on his early years as it mentions his age of 'about 22' and that makes the year 'about 1808' which then adds a 'further year of sinful pleasure' - 1809 - before marrying in 1810. It is then reasonable to suggest that his fascination with the 'search for the truth' prior to his conversion occupied anything up to two years, bringing the story to 1812. At this point it is necessary to understand what was happening in Cornwall at this time in connection with 'Mr. O'Bryan' and the reason that Thomas had trekked so far to hear him preach. Yet, notice that in contemporary eyes 'it was no great distance.'

another year. He then married her who now laments his loss, and became much more thoughtful; and as he was in the habit of playing music in the different churches around him, he was brought under the sound of the word, and at times felt very acutely, yet still he remained a stranger to converting grace. At length he heard that Mr. O'Bryan was going to preach in a large pit at Cracca, near St. Austell, at no great distance from the place where he then resided in the parish of Roche, and, among some hundreds more, out of curiosity he attended to hear; and under that sermon our late brother was deeply convinced of his state as a sinner before God, and was led to implore mercy. He continued seeking the Lord for some time, and was set at liberty whilst down in a mine between Innes and Ebenezer chapels, Luxillian.

The following year he was employed in the Pilchard Fishery at Mevagissey, and while there he was enabled to believe that the blood of Jesus had cleansed him from all unrighteousness; or in other words, he received the blessing of sanctification, and his future life was in accordance with his profession. He afterwards returned to Roche, and although he found it difficult at times to provide for his increasing family, yet, "His heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord." He had to go to the higher part of St. Stephen's parish to work, and consequently had to cross the Downs, and there was one place in particular, where he used to worship God as he passed, whether at midnight or mid-day. He would there fall prostrate before the Lord, and pour out his complaint: and the Lord frequently manifested himself in a very gracious manner to him there. His way was at length opened, and the Lord prospered him, so that he had the pleasure of seeing the greater part of his children arrive to manhood, and comfortably circumstanced. His affection as a Husband and Father was rarely equalled. His natural disposition was very affectionate, and after he was converted more especially so. As he advanced in years, Thomas Tretheway became a general favourite. His attendance at the means of grace was worthy of imitation. As a visitor of the sick he excelled. He was especially punctual in attending his appointments for twenty years as a Local Preacher in our connexion. As a class-leader he was much esteemed, and is now greatly lamented. He was in the constant habit of visiting two blind persons who were unable to attend the means of grace, and when he was taken away by death they lamented him as a parent. He was in the St. Austell circuit for years, and our good friends the Wesleyans in the neighbourhood where he lived, remember his acts of kindness towards them in assisting as far as it was in his power to forward their cause in that place; and many of them paid their last tribute of respect to his memory by following his remains to the grave. He frequently told the members of his two classes, that if the rocks were to close about him while in the bowels of the earth, all would be well.

William Bryant was born on the 6th February 1778 at Gunwen Farm, to the north of Luxillian. At a very early age (17) he began preaching for the Wesleyan Methodist cause, but in 1810 he was expelled from the Weslyans. In 1815 he changed his name to O'Bryan and in October of that year he formed a dissident 'society' of 22 members at Shebbear in Devon that was originally called the Arminian Bible Christian Society. He separated from the Wesleyans because he believed in a strict Presbyterian style of leadership, but he also encouraged women to preach, something unheard of in his day.

I have not been able to identify Gracca Pit, but there is a suggestion of it being half a mile west of St. Blazey. In 1822 a young lady named Margaret Adams died aged 23 and she is reputed to have been a powerful and persuasive preacher who on occasion had joined with William O'Bryan at Gracca Pit – I wonder!

Thomas's conversion 'down a mine' between the chapels at Innis and Ebenezer Luxulyan (modern spelling) also poses a problem of location. Tin mining is such an ancient and traditional industry that there are few accurate records of it until the 1850s. The two chapels named, however, were among the first Bryanite Chapels and are known to date from 1820 and both still exist. A straight line drawn on an OS map linking the two chapels represents a separation of 4½ miles and a similar line drawn from Roche to meet that line is almost a similar distance. Innis Chapel is incredibly remote south of the A30 below Lanivet and was built within a Quaker Cemetery, but it was also the place O'Bryan chose to bury his mother Thomasine when she died in 1821.



The reference in the obituary to Thomas's devotion to the St. Austell Circuit led me to investigate the size of the circuit which was 12 chapels in 1901. Surprisingly their names often do not indicate their locations which for some reason are not known, but the ones that were known were at Tywardreath and Highway, Fowey, Par, Tregorrick (south of St. Austell) and Carclaze (to the north of it) as well as St. Austell itself. However, this list is dated 60 years after Thomas's death and probably bears only a passing resemblance to the circuit of his experience.

It came as something of shock to realise that our own Wallis Family (Jakeh and brother Richard) had children baptised in the Luxillian Circuit of the Bible Christians in a Register opened by William O'Bryan in 1820. In it the most frequently visited chapels were the Ebenezer Chapel in Luxulyan, the Bethel Chapel at St. Austle (as spelt) and a Preaching Room in Mevagissey. This leads me to wonder why Thomas had a brief diversion into work at the Mevagissey Pilchard Fishery. One reason might have been his sister Elizabeth who had married and lived in the town, when she lost her seaman husband. The date of his loss is unknown, but Thomas's presence suggests a date of the early to mid-1820s and he might have been there working to assist Elizabeth in her destitution as well as his own family, but he was a long way from home in Roche.

The Sunday morning before his decease, he entered the chapel in a very happy state of mind, and began to sing at the door,

“I love Jesus; yes I do.”

On the following Tuesday morning, April 13th, when about to leave his house to go to the mine where he worked, he appeared unusually

reluctant to leave his wife and children, repeatedly bidding them farewell. On his way to the mine, he met some old people and earnestly entreated them to go on the next Sabbath to class-meeting; and also told them it was his earnest desire that every soul should go to heaven. While descending the shaft into the mine, not being aware that one of the staves of the ladder was gone, he slipped his foot, and was immediately precipitated down a depth of seven fathoms, where he laid about a quarter of an hour apparently lifeless. When he was taken up it was ascertained that his case was hopeless; for his bones were dreadfully shattered. He survived until the Saturday, April 17th; during which time his sufferings were extreme, which prevented him from conversing much; but he was happy in the midst of all his pains, and expressed his great concern for the members of the two classes committed to his care. On the Friday he prayed very earnestly for his distressed wife and children, and sung very sweetly,

“I love Jesus; yes I do.”

He was delirious at times, but when sensible his mind was stayed on God; and on Saturday the 17th of April, 1841, at Holmbush, near St. Austell, his sufferings ceased, and he was removed to join the church triumphant. His funeral was attended by upwards of a thousand persons of various denominations; and Funeral Sermons on the occasion of his death, were preached in every place through the circuit.

“Our friend is gone before,
To that celestial shore;
He hath left his mates behind,
He hath all the storms outrode:
Found the rest we toil to find,
Landed in the arms of God.”

Thomas's death would have caused a visit to his home by the local Coroner who would have heard the facts from one or two witnesses and concluded (as they invariably did) that his death was a most unfortunate accident. His visit should have been reported in the local newspapers, but I can find no reference to it. Instead I find that 208 tons of copper from the Holmbush mine were sold at Redruth on the 22nd April in two lots. The first lot of 114 tons was bought by Grenfell & Sons and the second lot of 94 tons was bought by Sims, Willyams & Co.⁴⁴ The average price of all the copper sold on that day was £122-10s-0d per ton. How much of that copper was won with the sweat of Thomas's brow?

I would have loved to have been present at that funeral.

Thomas Trethewy	Holmbush	April 20 th	54	C. Woodcock
No. 934			Year	Curate

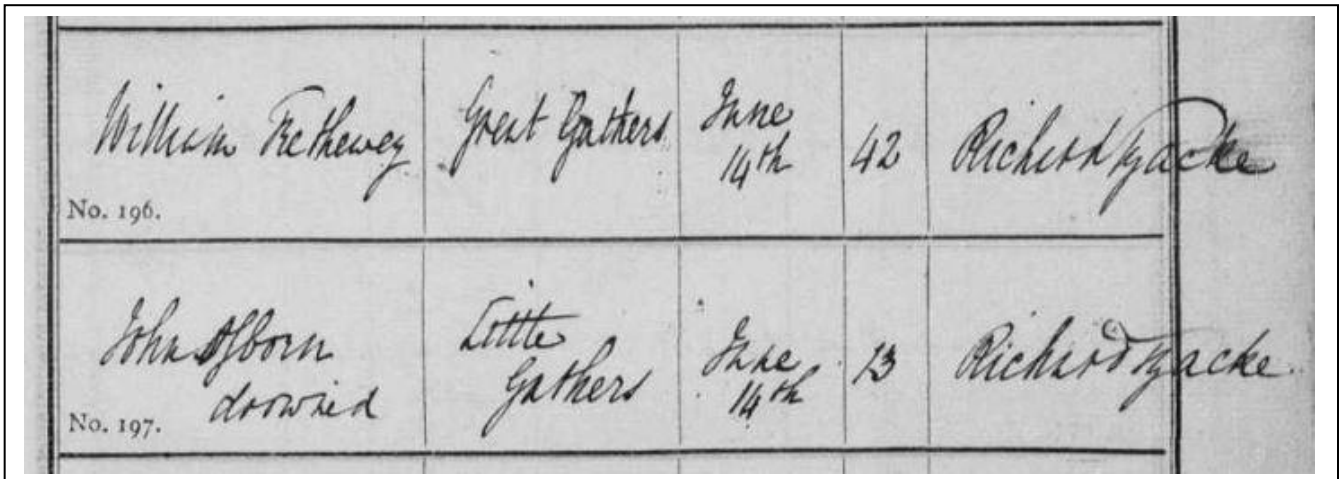
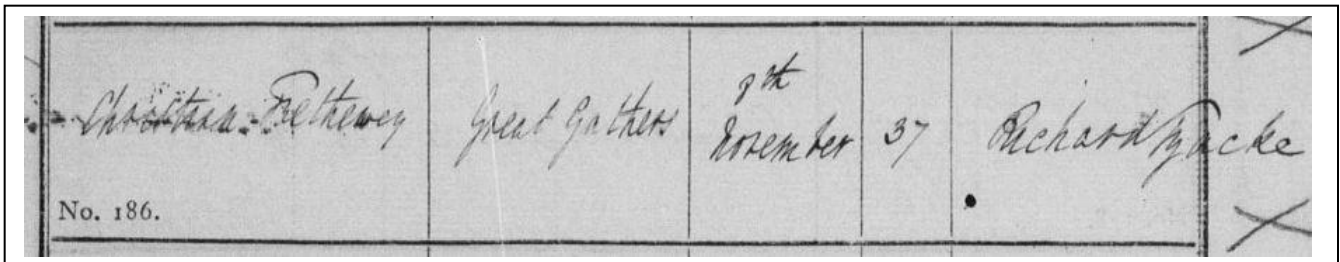
⁴⁴ Royal Cornwall Gazette Friday 23rd April 1841

2 - William (born 1790 St. Dennis) has already featured in this story as the younger brother of John and the ultimate *Master of Gothers*. He is featured here because of the circumstances that enveloped the family and caused their demise.

In 1830 there was no hint that a great tragedy was about to unfold at *Great Gothers* that would bring to a close our connection with the farm whose name is engraved into this history. William and Christiana had four children, the eldest was 14 and the youngest was 3 and all seemed to be well with our family – or was it?

At the beginning of November 1831 Christiana died. She was just 37 years old. Oh! How important a death certificate would be now! If only we knew why! But it didn't end there. Seven months later – at the beginning of June 1832 William died and joined his wife to lie in the St. Dennis Churchyard. He was 42.

Their four children were now orphans and the youngest was about to celebrate her fifth birthday – poor Christiana who carried her mother's name.



I could not resist including William's burial entry with that of John Osborn for three reasons. Not only was he buried on the same day as William, but also his address was next door to William at *Little Gothers*. However, the minister added the comment that Osborn had drowned. As it was June, it is tempting to say that he was fooling around in a river on a hot day, but that would seem unlikely in a parish without much running water. Therefore this may be a very early reference to the China Clay settlement ponds that evolved with the mining of china clay. Even today their instability is known to make them an extreme hazard to those who work with them, but when they were a new phenomenon lessons were learnt the hard way at great cost. Unfortunately neither a newspaper report of the incident nor that of an inquest has been found to furnish the details of this tragic accident.

Unlike Thomas, William's early death did not entice anyone to write his obituary, but also unlike Thomas, William did leave a Will.⁴⁵ Although this does not give a clear picture of

⁴⁵ See a Summary of the Will on Chart 01

life at *Great Gothers*, it does give some very subtle indications of family relationships. The one that surprises me most is that of John Trethewey (my ancestor and William's elder brother) being given the role of an Executor. After all, John was the one who 'lost' the farm to William and as the farm was now in limbo with orphaned, underage children unable to inherit it, why was the farm not left to John's care? Perhaps it was because John had been away from St. Dennis for too long - it must have 14 years - and John had another life and other ideas. The inclusion of John's cousin William of *Enniscaven* as an Executor also indicates that their mutual friendship was continuing into the 1830's and evidence of that will re-emerge later.

So, what did happen to William's orphaned children? There was a clue in the Will, but on its own it had nothing to commend it, so it was passed over. It was not until I accidentally found not one, but two tragic entries in the St. Dennis Burial Register that the full impact of the events hit home.

On the 4th February 1835 Ann Trethewey was buried FROM ROACH aged 16 years (1819). This was followed on the 29th April 1837 by Christiana FROM ROCHE aged 9 years (1828).

There was no disputing the evidence. These were both of William and Christiana's daughters and they were now both dead. So, the Will had been a signpost to their new home when it said that £50 had to be paid to James Stick of Roach in Trust for Ann until she reached 21 and £60 had to be paid to Thomas White of Roach in Trust until she reached full age. How poignant that neither sister reached her adulthood to enjoy the delight of a valuable gift from their adoring father.

So, if the girls were found, then it crossed my mind that the boys would be there too and I wondered if each Trustee acted as a Guardian in taking a boy and a girl. Proving the presence of the boys should be easy with the 1841 Census, but they were older than the girls. I decided to look for their marriages first and despite their age difference, they were both married in Roche in 1845, but before I elucidate those marriages, what did the Census reveal?

The two boys were easily found and coincidentally they were both on the same page,⁴⁶ but in keeping with all family history research there was an unexpected twist to the tale. Richard's situation was quite conventional. His age had been rounded down to 15 instead of 19, but he was at home with James Stick (50) and his wife Mary Ann on their farm at *Tregonbays*, a little to the east of the main village. This probably confirms the supposition that Richard and his sister Ann were the two children in the care of James Stick.

William, however, was six years older than Richard and his situation was bizarre. Supposedly only 20 years old, he was a miller. Yes, I did a doubletake here as there were miners on either side of him, but it was correct. Additionally he had two boys as 'servants.' Ruben Searle was 15, but Charles Retallick was only 10 years old. Yet they were not the only ones sharing the cottage (I hesitate to say mill). Philip Martyn was a miner and had his wife Honour with him and then came two elderly tanners named John Payne (60) and Thomas Pinch (50). But the cottage was also named *Tregonbays*, although it had another cottage called *Rosemellin* between it and the farm where his brother Richard lived.

On the 1st May 1845 William married Frances Kent on that occasion he was only a common 'labourer' and all pretense at being a miller was cast off. He said that his father, William, was a farmer without reference to him being deceased and his bride's father was Robert Kent, also a farmer. Almost six months later his brother Richard married Ann Stick and Richard claimed to be a farmer in his own right. Ann's father was not James, but Thomas Stick who was also a farmer and the couple each gave their residence as *Belowda* on the southern slope of the beacon to the north of the present day A30.

⁴⁶ 1841 Census HO107 Piece 145/9 Folio 50 Page 12

I cannot leave this section without making one last attempt at fulfilling my objective – to identify the Trethewey farm at *Gothers* which had been occupied by our family for almost 100 years. Who was it that grasped the unexpected and quite fortuitous opportunity to step over the thresh-hold? The Burial Register was unequivocal in stating that both Christiana and William lived at *Great Gothers* and that specific name does not appear in the 1841 Census.

It does appear, however, in 1851, when all the *Gothers* names are delineated into individual identities. As a consequence there is only one *Great Gothers* and it was occupied by John Varcoe.⁴⁷ That surname has appeared time and time again on the fringes of the Trethewey story. John Varcoe witnessed William's Will alongside William Hawkey, another name that has featured in this text as a near neighbour. Young William's marriage in Roche in 1845 was witnessed by James Varcoe, who can also be found among the *Gothers* community in the censuses.

2	Great Gothers	John Varcoe	Head	Mar	44	Farmer 98 acres 1111111	H. Barnes Cornhill
		Mary Varcoe	Wife	Mar	46		H. Barnes Cornhill
		John Varcoe	Son	U	17	Work on farm	H. Barnes Cornhill
		James Varcoe	Son	U	14		H. Barnes Cornhill
		Joshua Varcoe	Son	U	11	Carpenter	H. Barnes Cornhill
		Caleb Varcoe	Son	U	11	Work on farm	H. Barnes Cornhill
		Cornelius Varcoe	Son	-	15		H. Barnes Cornhill
		Walter Varcoe	Son	-	12	Scholar	H. Barnes Cornhill
		Elizabeth Varcoe	Serv	-	9		H. Barnes Cornhill
		Ann Goodge	Servant	U	17		H. Barnes Cornhill

So, having established that it was John Varcoe who occupied the farm it is now possible to locate him among all the residences annotated *Gothers* in the 1841 Census⁴⁸ and brings this facet of the story to its conclusion.

Gothers	John Varcoe	40	Farmer	9	
	Mary do	35		9	
	Robert do	15		9	
	William do	15		9	
	Mary do	13		9	
	John do	12		9	
	James do	10		9	
	Joshua do	9		9	
	Caleb do	9		9	
	Cornelius do	7		9	
	Walter do	4		9	
	Joseph Tubilcock	20	Do. L.	9	
	Elizabeth Lill	20	F. L.	9	

⁴⁷ 1851 Census HO107 Piece 1907 Folio 460 Page 1

⁴⁸ 1841 Census HO107 Piece 146/7 Folio 19 Page 12

Chart 02

WILLIAM 1740 & 1779

3 - **William (born 1779 St. Dennis)** – William was ten years older than his cousin John. He had inherited *Enniscaven* from his father, William, who was Richard Trethewey’s elder brother. The timing of this inheritance in the year that John married and lost his claim to *Gothers* – 1814 – was very unfortunate for John, but they appear to have stayed close friends as the Will of William of *Gothers* suggests and that is not the only clue to this relationship, as will be seen later in the story.

However, William’s claim to work the farm at *Enniscaven* seemed to unravel by the time of the first census in 1841⁴⁹ and that is very odd, as William became a ‘tin streamer.’

PLACE	HOUSES		NAMES of such Persons who abode therein the preceding Night	AGE and SEX		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	When Born	
	Unoccupied or Building	Inhabited		Males	Females		Whether Born in same County	Whether Born in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts.
Enniscaven		1	John Trethewey	30		Tin Miner	y	
			Ann do		25		y	
			William do	2			y	
			Grace do		4		y	
			Peter do		1m		y	
do			William Trethewey	55		Tin Streamer	y	
			William do	30		Tin Miner	y	
			James do	15		Tin Streamer	y	
			Maria do		20		y	
do			William Grigg	7			y	e
			Benjamin Kent	35		Tin Streamer	y	

I have already given space to describing William’s family, but I will pick it up again at William’s wife’s death in 1836 when Grace was aged only 52. This complete change in direction must have been triggered by his loss and probably encouraged by his son, John, who had married Ann Bennett in Roche on the 14 May 1836, whilst stating that he was a labourer. I wanted to draw attention to these circumstances that appeared to have completely changed from the farm that was inherited from his father (William). That farm had been a gift from William’s father (Thomas) over 60 years before, but farming was the last thing on the minds of the men of *Enniscaven* as they turned to tin streaming – a precarious occupation.

The 1851 Census proved to be crucial in the story of *Gothers*, but what did it say about *Enniscaven*? The unique weakness in that census is its failure to record dwelling houses. Instead it simply records ‘households’ and it is consequently impossible to know whether a house was shared or not. There were 18 households given the identity *Enniscaven*, but it is not known how many cottages that represented. One thing that can be said is that William was no longer there, whilst his son John is still adjacent to Benjamin Kent.

William was found in the hamlet of Menna, but his circumstances had been dictated by those of his daughter Maria, who was obviously ‘looking after him.’ His eldest son John has possibly ‘inherited’ the property that was gifted to his father, by his father, but it is very unclear, especially as John has abandoned the work of a tin miner in favour of that of a ‘china clay labourer.’

⁴⁹ 1841 HO107 Piece 146/7 Folio 486 Page 19

Parish or Township of <i>Saint Dennis</i>		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of <i>Menna</i>		
No. of House, Suburb, or Hamlet	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of such Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born		Whether Blind, or Deaf and Dumb
					Male	Female				
34	<i>Menna</i>	<i>John Trethewey</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>China Stone Worker</i>	<i>Cornwall</i>	<i>St Dennis</i>	
		<i>Maria Trethewey</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>do Wife</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
		<i>William Trethewey</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>5</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>do Son</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
		<i>John Trethewey</i>	<i>do</i>		<i>3</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
		<i>Almond Trethewey</i>	<i>do</i>		<i>1</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
		<i>William Trethewey</i>	<i>Uncle</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>Tin Streamer</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
		<i>William Trethewey</i>	<i>Cousin</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>Stone Mason</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>do</i>	
<i>End of the Village and Hamlets of Menna</i>										

This book that has focused upon the St. Dennis Parish concludes with this entry in the 1851 Census⁵⁰ with its complex relationships that were beloved of the Tretheweys.

Maria was married in the St. Dennis Parish Church on Saturday 2nd November 1844 to another John Trethewey. Both of them had parents that were called William Trethewey and both of them were alleged to be farmers. Why did Maria say that, when both censuses on either side of her marriage shows him to be a ‘tin streamer?’ It also suggests that William was John’s uncle, so who was John’s father? Critically, it would not be possible for BOTH fathers to be called William and one of them to be an uncle to John. An uncle is a father’s brother, so there could not be TWO Williams. And who was the third William in the census, born in 1820 and a cousin to who? John? I highlight his entry because that is where the story leads to men called Trethewey who became stone masons.

1844. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of <i>St. Dennis</i> in the County of <i>Cornwall</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
44	<i>Nov. 2</i>	<i>John Trethewey</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Bachelor</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>St. Dennis</i>	<i>William Trethewey</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
		<i>Maria Trethewey</i>	<i>full</i>	<i>Spinster</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>St. Dennis</i>	<i>William Trethewey</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
Married in the <i>Parish Church</i> according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <i>Established Church</i> by me, <i>John A. B. King</i>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<i>John Trethewey</i>		in the Presence of us,		<i>Robert G. Grigg</i>		
		<i>Maria Trethewey</i>				<i>Robert G. Grigg</i>		

Maria’s was the second marriage on this page for the 2nd November. The first was Ann Trethewey and her father was William Trethewey, farmer. Ann and John were very probably brother and sister, but their father is a mystery.

William, the subject of this section was buried in St. Dennis Churchyard on the 21st May 1860. In 1861⁵¹ Maria lived in Menna Carn. Her brother John was dead and the link with Enniscaven was broken. His widow Fanny (Frances Kent) had moved to be next door and they were surrounded by the Kents, the Varcoes and the Griggs, families that are inseparable from this story and they were all embroiled in the china clay industry. The Clay Country was their home AND their livelihood.

⁵⁰ 1851 Census HO107 Piece 1907 Folio 482 Page 12

⁵¹ 1861 Census RG 09 Piece 1549 Folio 12 Page 14

A BACKWARD GLANCE

This has been an amateur journey deep into the history of Cornwall, which can only be properly conducted by true scholars steeped in its folklore and traditions. My inseparable guide to those traditions has been A.K. Hamilton Jenkins whose extensive knowledge was published in the volume *Cornwall and its People*.

I began my story at the beginning of the 18th century and soon found how difficult it was to identify individual ancestors with any certainty. What was certain was that they were rural people – not fishermen or miners, but people of the land – in an area largely unknown or ignored by those from outside it. They often referred to themselves as ‘farmers.’ Others referred to them as ‘yeomen.’ Yet they were not shy to use the term ‘labourer,’ in spite of it never being an ‘agricultural labourer.’

As the century moved forward and individuals emerged with more clarity, they were found inhabiting two of the many hamlets that constituted the parish of St. Dennis. There were excursions into neighbouring parishes often to marry, but they invariably returned, even if it was to be buried in the churchyard. St. Dennis was home and never far from their hearts.

They had a surprising propensity to marry their cousins, a phenomenon on a scale that I have never encountered before and together with their repetitive use of four male forenames, Thomas, William, John and Richard, it has not made the research any easier and has increased the likelihood of a mistaken identity. For any that are found, I stand corrected.

As the 18th Century moved into the 19th Century, changes to the pattern of lives were inevitable. The tentacles of the Industrial Revolution would reach Cornwall and entangle St. Dennis in its grasp. In 1807 St. Dennis had seven, small working clay pits and several granite quarries, most of which were privately owned. Even tin streaming became a significant temptation and our men could be found in all three. Their claim to the title ‘farmer’ was weakening and their horizons were lifting.

One of those men is the focus of my attention. He has already made his appearance on the stage. John Trethewey, born in 1789 and married Ann Yelland in 1814, gave up his claim to the family lands at *Gothers* and in 1817 decided that his life and that of his family would be better served in Plymouth. He had no trade, no skill, no knowledge beyond that of a farm labourer. Plymouth was industrial in every sense of the word, but he had to take the risk.

CROSSING THE TAMAR will follow the family on their journey
STONE UPON STONE will tell of John’s modest success.

