

A Snapshot of Trebetherick part 3

Brian and Jenny Oaten have compiled a wealth of local history and are kindly sharing some of their knowledge and memories with Link readers. Brian was born in Trebetherick and brought up at his parent's home, The Haven. The photos come from the collection of the late Ralph Tellam Hocking and have been shared by kind permission of his son, Nigel.



Duck pond &
Trebetherick Post
Office - 1925

At the top of Polzeath Hill was a purpose built shop, double fronted with door in the middle, run by Ralph Tellem-Hocking's father, Richard. In the summer they made ice-cream and his wife sold it on the beach. When she needed more she waved a flag as a signal to her husband to bring down some more. At a later date this little building was used as the Polzeath doctors surgery. On The Haven front lawn a grass tennis court was built at some time in those early years, chickens were kept, a cow for milk and a vegetable garden was tended in the field, on the southern side of the house.

Water was drawn from a well in the garden, which still exists, though it is falling into disrepair at this time. A man was employed for two hours twice a day, pumping to fill the roof tank for WC flushing and washing, a wonderful 'modern' luxury and convenience at that time. A secondary hand pump was located in the scullery for drinking/cooking water.

Trebetherick Duck Ponds - 1925

Brian remembers, as a boy in the late 1940s, sliding on the several frozen Trebetherick duck ponds. They were on the road side of Higher Farm, close to the hedge, another was next to Elm Cottage. The

one above Worthy House in the photo below was drained in the 1940s for road improvements.

The Haven - 1950s

The Haven was bought by Mr Harrison but remained unoccupied for 3 or 4 years. In the mid 1950s it was bought by Brian's parents, Mabyn and Lewis Oaten. Lewis was a qualified carpenter and builder employing several local people, using the stables as a storeroom and garage. Mabyn did bed and breakfast, taking overflow sleepers from St Moritz. One group of those guests was the Gill family. William T Gill was a financial director at Rolls

Royce in Derby. The following year they brought down their friends and Mabyn was delighted to recount how she looked down from The Haven balcony at four Rolls Royces parked in the garden. (photo below).

In 1951 Brian went to Bodmin Grammar school. Transport was a taxi to Rock, bus to Wadebridge then the train to Bodmin. As a teenager, he took the summer holiday job of assistant postman at Trebetherick post office, Worthy House. The postmaster and manual telephone switchboard operator was George Harris. Brian used George's 1934 black Austen 7 van to deliver mail and papers. George was full of fun and when operating the phone lines he used to say to the callers "rubber knees" for 'number please' and "trying to forget you" for 'trying to connect you'. During the next 20 years Mabyn and Lewis continued to improve to *The Haven*, including adding a sun lounge and installing central heating.

The Haven - 1970s

In the mid 1970s Mabyn and Lewis retired and built a bungalow on their south field next to The Haven, calling it Trelawney. They sold The Haven to their son Brian Oaten and his wife Jenny, teachers at St Minver Primary School and Port Isaac Primary School. We remember the old



wooden tennis net posts with brass winders still lying up in the garage loft.

Mabyn And Lewis Oaten 1911-1990

Mabyn was born in St Mabyn and Lewis Oaten was born in St Kew, both in 1911. Lewis Oaten had trained as a carpenter with the Wadebridge builder, Lewis Brown. They built some of the early Greenaway estate houses before the Second World War. Lewis Oaten bought a small piece of land in Trebetherick from Harry Mail, and built his own bungalow which they named Trelawney. Basil's father, Harry had bought Higher Farm of 180 acres and built a new farmhouse in 1930. The old farmhouse with sitting tenant was renamed Old Farm.

Lewis and Mabyn Oaten married in 1938 and lived at Trelawney till the mid 1950s when they sold that bungalow and moved to **The Haven**, the bungalow was renamed Pen-y-Bryn.

1941 WW2

Brian Oaten remembers as a child of two and a half being woken by his mother to be held up to the window to see the glow in the eastern sky which was Plymouth on fire during the WW2 blitz. It must have been particularly distressing for Mabyn as her husband Lewis, like many carpenters and shipwrights were working in Plymouth. In 1938 Lewis Oaten sensed that Hitler's actions were becoming increasingly menacing and that things were changing in the building trade. He looked for alternative work and took a job in Looe as a shipwright making wooden launches for the Admiralty. Soon those with shipwright skills like Lewis and his colleagues were all required to go to Devonport and work in the Admiralty Dockyard which he did for the rest of the war.