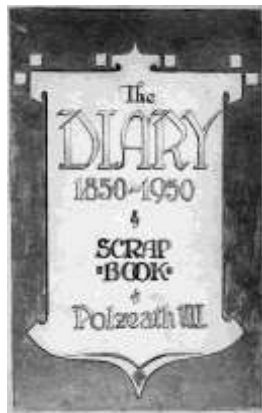


# Mably Diary 1850 - 1950

## Part 1

*Polzeath WI and Trebetherick WI merged in 2008 to form Trebetherick and Polzeath WI. In the archives of Polzeath WI was a handwritten scrapbook based on a Mably family diary covering the period 1850 to 1950. We believe that the scrapbook was prepared for a WI competition but we are not really sure. It makes fascinating reading and we have decided to serialise it in Link. The photographs are scanned copies of those in the scrapbook. We have not changed the spelling, punctuation or grammar - what you read here is exactly as per the handwritten version. This material is copyright and must not be reproduced elsewhere without the prior permission of the Link Committee and Trebetherick and Polzeath WI.*



Diary 1850 – 1950 of

Elizabeth, wife of William  
Anthony

Joanna wife of John

Druscilla wife of William

Mary Hannah wife of  
Richard

Mably

Trewisson Farm St Minver  
**Generations of Mably's have** made Trewiston their home. On the day of my marriage to John Mably, his Mother handed me the box containing diaries and notes made by her Mother-in-Law. She explained to me that this had been the custom in the Mably family for four generations. I was told to continue the tradition of noting down events in the Parish. I am afraid that I have not always been

conscientious about it, but to make up for it, I now intend in this winter of 1950-51 to sort these notes and write them down in one book. So now I can have it **down to my Son's wife on** his wedding day, next Autumn.

Trewisson farm, where I live lies almost in the centre of the Parish of St Minver. Our Parish has Port Quin Bay, Padstow Bay, the River Camel as its boundaries, the 4<sup>th</sup> being the Parish of St Endellion and St Kew. It is divided between the Highlands and the Lowlands each with their own Parish Council and includes St Minver Church Town, and the hamlets Trevanger, Tredrizzick, Penmayne, Stop Tide, Rock, Trebetherick and Polzeath.

Of the Manors, Penmayne, Trewornan and Pentire only

the second has an ancient Manor house. We have some very old farms, some already mentioned in 1300, like Trevelver, Roserrowe and Cant farm and many not so old ones like Trenant, Pentire Glaze, Keiro, Moyles and Trelawder. I am putting a map of the Parish (see page 38) and a list of some fieldnames in the pocket in the cover at the back of this diary (overleaf). A few such as Lower Trebetherick farm **have disappeared. Mably's**



*Trewisson Farm.*

have owned and or worked in most of them, even down to the present time.

**In the time of my husband's** great-grandmother, Elizabeth, wife of William Anthony Mably, who makes the notes in this diary from 1850-1875, every farm kept a flock of Sheep and the Parish was famous for its beef cattle, mostly dark red north Devon crossed with Hereford, which was sold on the first Tuesday in the month at the Wadebridge Market, famous throughout the County. Up to the first World war this Market was held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday and afterwards changed to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>

**Monday's and is now alternate Monday's.** Up to 1904-5 Cheag Hawkey of Treglines was the Auctioneer when he sold the business to Mr S.T Button. Oxen were once used for ploughing and other farm work. Mr Bestwitherick of Trelvelver used the last of these Oxen in 1882. When these Oxen were used on the road they had always a horse in front to lead them. The fields produced Wheat, Oats and Barley. In 1861 there were 626 people in the Highlands and 485 in the Lowlands, all in all 1111. After 1855 Miners came to work in the Lowlands, but after Polzeath mine closed in

1856 and Pentire Glaze in 1857 and Trewissom Mine in 1861, these Miners went away again and there were left only 568 people in the Highlands and 421 in the Lowlands, making 989 altogether. Trewissom Mine opened again for a short time towards the turn of the Century and some of its outbuildings are still to be seen in Polzeath.

**In the time of my husband's** Grand-mother, Joanna, wife of Richard Mably, who kept the notes from 1875-1900, beef cattle replaced the flocks of Sheep and more and more, especially after the Spring of 1879 when many of the Sheep got Flu. This change went on faster because of labour difficulties and neglect of hedges and the low price of wool, which only fetched 7½d <sup>1</sup> a bag in 1879. Joanna also noted the **stopping in the 90's of the** fresh water Mill at Dinham, which used to grind Corn



*Trewornan Manor.*

twice a week. The Salt tidal water mill at Dinham, which used to grind bone had stopped working shortly before. One or two old parishioners remember even now, when there were small boys going around the farms collection rags and bones for this Mill. This bone meal was used for manuring root crops. Shilla Mill at Polzeath, with all its cogs and machinery made of wood, was another Mill in the Parish which used to grind **the farmers and labourer's** Corn. This Mill stopped

List of field names

Undertown Field	Cost or Loss Field	Jackets Field
Yonder Treglyn Moor	The Lightning Purse	Gentle Jane Meadow
Mowhay Meadow	Field	Little Bee Park
Yonder Well Park	The Box Lister	Lower Daisy Park
Lower Snail House	Beacon Park	Weavers Bottom
Meadow	Oaten Earish	Parnells Stitch
Great and Little Bee Park	Folly Meadow	Laundress Close
The Fore Dore	The Peas Hill	Bowling Field
Middle Hobby House	Grandfathers Meadow	Goose Meadow
Cornish Pool	Three Cornered Moor	The Worthy
Sloggett Meadow	Madams Orchard	Dollard Field
Corner Cupboard Field	Trevan and Gilson Cliff	Horny Wink
Skippers Close	Run	Paqueese Run
Tristram Field	Steer-right	Perlegga Field
The Greenways	Screechers Field	
The Little Good Field	Frying Pan	

working towards the end of the Century. Joanna also noted that it was Frank Coleman from Trevanger farm who was the first farmer to use artificial manure and feeding cakes which he had fetched from Bodmin Road, in 1887.

Joanna notes these prices: Wheat fell from 19/-<sup>2</sup> a Cornish bushel (3 Imp bushels) in 1879, to 15/- a Cornish bushel in 1880. In 1881 Barley only fetched 10/- a Cornish bushel. She was told by her husband John, that these prices had dropped as a result of free import and American competition.

After these bad years many farmers went Bankrupt and went either to bigger farms westward, or sailed away to do seasonal work in the U.S.A or emigrated for good to Canada, Australia or America. Passages to New York were advertised in the papers, such as: West Britain.

This paper was read jointly by several farmers, one would take it and the neighbouring farmers would send someone next day to fetch it, so was handed round and read by about six neighbouring farmers.

Steerage was 3 gns<sup>3</sup> a head single or 6 gns return from any Station in Great Britain, or inclusive use of



*Pentireglaze Farn.*



*Trevelver Farn.*

mattresses and with all bedding, crockery and cutlery provided for £6.13.6.<sup>4</sup>

Great Grand-Mother

Elizabeth notes wages in 1875 being, for agricultural labourers 12/- per week and perquisites, which were wood for fuel and a patch for potatoes, ploughed and

manured by his farmer and equivalent to 1/- per week. The pay for those not having these advantages is 2/6<sup>5</sup> a day.

These wages did not rise much until the turn of the Century when they rose to 12/- - 14/- per week and rising further to 15/- in 1908 and 28/- in 1912. The same perquisites of one hundred faggots of wood and the trunks of the trees were given and the twenty yards of potato ground on which the labourer could plant 1 bushel of potatoes and which was ploughed and manured by the farmer.

This is in 1950 still the custom with some farmers.

During the 1914 -18 War wages rose sharply to 46/-. Before 1900 steady labourers used **to be paid on "reckon day" which was once a month and apprenticeship to a farmer was very common.**

**The farm hands did "journey work". Four cartloads of Sand from Rock beach to St Minver area or five to Trevelver was a "journeys work" or two hundred barrows a day of manure wheeling.**

When ploughing lay ground <sup>6</sup>, say on a twenty acre field, the earth furrows would form the basis of five to six heaps on the field. On it would be put six to seven loads from a ditch, three loads of Beach sand, then three loads of farmyard manure. This heap would be turned after fourteen days and then after fourteen days it would be turned again and after yet another fortnight farmhands would wheel this manure on the field.

The crop rotation in the Parish has always been, three years lay, one crop of Wheat, one crop of lent Corn <sup>7</sup> (Oats or Barley) if more than 2 Strawcrops <sup>8</sup> were had then an extra crop of roots was planted and the 3<sup>rd</sup> lent crop would be seeded out, after which the lay years would come again.

**All leases in "them days" laid down that one should not have more than 2 Strawcrops in succession.**

Mother in law Drusilla has not noted down any startling changes in her time of keeping the diary, which is from 1900-1925.

Only after the first World War the Parish changes with the building of some houses in Trebetherick and Polzeath for people who come down for the holidays. The coming of the Motor car has made this difference.

In my own time, much more building has been down since 1930 and the beaches, once even in August empty, are now crowded during the holiday months and especially on Sundays when 30 – 40 busloads come down to Polzeath, besides many cars.

Some of us in the farms take in holiday guests as well. Our Parish in July and August is nowadays crowded with foreigners from up country.

After the dreadful slump of 1932 farming changed once again and now we see more **and more churn's at the farm gates. In the morning**, along the Roman Road comes the green lorry, stopping at every farm gate, collecting the milk churns and taking them to Lostwithiel. Our Parish has now 3 of the Counties few T.T. <sup>9</sup> Farms.

All farms have now turned over as much as possible from hand labour to Machinery, the horse has gone the way of the Oxen, the Tractor has come to stay. No farm is self sufficient in food any more. We all go to the shops.

Nowadays, the guaranteed prices, given to us during the last War have made our incomes more stable and our labours more rewarding even though wages are now set at £5:4:0 per week, for a 44 hour week. The rent for tied cottages is limited to 5/- per week and there is the same demand for the

perquisites as before.

The egg packing Station with its collecting vans, saves that long journey to Market and they give a very much better price, which I, like most of us farmers wives, pocket for myself!!

In the kitchen life has changed too, no more clome oven <sup>10</sup> **for me, the Baker's Van calls regularly. I don't have to cook and serve the meals for the crowds of farm hind's of former days and Richard does not have to feed the Tractor on Sundays!!**

With my new stove and the hot water it would be much easier now than in **Great Grand-Mother's time. This gives me time to visit my friends and go to the Women's Institute.**

We can now go to Wadebridge by Bus several times a day. John has his fortnightly Market in Wadebridge and the young ones have the Picture Bus on Tuesday and Saturday evenings. We all go in the Summer on the long Bus Tours to other parts of Cornwall and even to London. I have also **my Women's Institute outings.**

The farm hands instead of in the olden days only having a free time to go to Padstow on Whitsun Tuesday and Polzeath on St **James's Wednesday and for the young men**

**in the 80's and 90's before the time of** Cricket their game of rounders on Porthilly beach on Good Friday morning, have now their week-ends free.

I hope the extracts of the Diaries of Elizabeth, Joanna, Drusilla Mably and, myself will show these changes taking place.

*To be continued.*

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<sup>1</sup> 7½d. Seven and a half old pennies. There were 12 pennies in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound. So 7½d would be just over three new pence today.

<sup>2</sup> 19/-, 19 shillings. Equivalent to 95 pence today.

<sup>3</sup> 3 gns. Three guineas or three pounds three shillings. Equivalent to three pounds fifteen pence today.

<sup>4</sup> £6.13.6. Six pounds, thirteen shillings and six pence. Equivalent to six pounds and sixty seven and a half pence today.

<sup>5</sup> 2/6. Two shillings and sixpence, normally known as **'half a crown'. Equivalent to 12 and a half new pence.**

<sup>6</sup> Lay Ground. Grass.

<sup>7</sup> Lent corn. and <sup>8</sup> Strawcrops. We have consulted with three local farmers and searched the internet but have not been able to find explanations of these terms. The general view is that these terms refer to cereal crops. If you know different we would like to hear from you.

<sup>9</sup> T.T. Tuberculin Tested.

<sup>10</sup> Clome Oven. a type of masonry oven with a door made of clay or cast iron door. The oven would be built into the side of the chimney breast.

## Beware The Phantom Surfer

She creeps in when you're out bowling,  
She sees the waves down there rolling.  
She steals your shoes and steals your suit,  
Then down to the beach by the scenic route.

The surf is great – she's in an hour,  
Then back home and has a shower,  
Hungry now – she needs some lunch,  
**What's in the fridge that she can munch?**

She finds some cheese and makes some toast,  
But a coffee is what she needs most.  
She tidies up and clears away,  
**you'd hardly know she'd been today.**

Just one thing though – there outdoors -  
some surfing kit, which may be yours!  
Can you bring it in please !