

The History of the Ship Inn

Portloe has been a settlement for many hundreds of years. Certainly documented in Tudor times, its origins are probably much earlier. In Queen Elizabeth's reign (the mid to late sixteenth century) every cove in Cornwall had its "palace" or curing cellar. Even between the cliffs where but a small patch of sand was available, and this covered at high tide, rocks were hewn away and levelled to establish a "palace" or "place". The fishing villages along the South coast became mere collections of fish cellars, with the fishers' dwellings on top. In the cellars were stored nets, salt and fish in the process of cure. It is interesting to note that old parchments describe fishing village houses as "palaces". Portloe would have exactly fitted this description.

In a survey of fishermen of 1626 Veryan Parish had eight, without doubt living in and working from Portloe. It was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the Cornish fishing industry really began to develop. Just as Cornish mining was primarily identified with tin, so Cornish fishing was primarily identified with the pilchard. Portloe owes its existence to fish and fishing, and it is to the humble pilchard (*Sardina pilchardus*) that we should look for the beginnings and subsequent development of this remarkably self-reliant fishing village.

The Ship Inn was originally a small inn known locally as "The Drinking Kitchen". The adjoining fisherman's cottage was later incorporated into the inn.

The Ship Inn has links with the famous smugglers of brandy for which a landlord was imprisoned in the 1800s.



*The Ship Inn in the 1930's. The man is Edward Francis 'Muggy' Dunstone.
Muggy was a fish jouser - a hawker of fresh fish*

Retaining some of its original features and offering a spacious beer garden adjacent to the building nestled deep in the valley below fields and woods protected by

Cornish stone walls. The Ship Inn is a short walk from the small harbour of Portloe and is in the heart of the village. Portloe is known as the Gem of Roseland and is well known for its beautiful scenery set in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a landmark for walkers on the Cornish coastal path and for visitors by kayak and boat.

The Ship Inn was certainly in existence in 1814 and probably well before that. In 1821 John Gay was landlord, and in 1851 Nicholas Dyer ran the pub. His widow Catherine was still there as landlady some thirty years later.

The West Briton of 7th September 1893 reported that landlord Edmund Dungey was fined for selling adulterated brandy - a crime repeated in June 1900 by landlord Mr. Cocks, possibly the James Cocks who according to the Census of 1891 was a farmer in Portloe. The Gazette of 3rd October 1907 reports that James Cocks was assaulted by a customer 'who he stopped singing!'. By then the Ship had been enlarged, following a fire, and improved from the former two-roomed, cob-walled predecessor which was known in the village as the drinking kitchen'. With the growing holiday trade in mind Mrs. Winifred Cook, in 1939, advertised 'bed and breakfast, board residence and every convenience.'

The Ship enjoyed good trade in the 1960's and 70's where the hosts, Dudley and Eileen Johns, welcomed locals and holidaymakers alike. This was the era of the great British seaside holiday when cheap packages to Spain had hardly started and the Government of the day had imposed a maximum £50 that could be taken on holidays abroad. The area around Portloe had two caravan and camping sites, Cecil Blamey's field at Carne catered for visitors as well as the many families from the Truro and St. Austell areas. Situated just one field away from the wonderful Carne and Pendower beaches on many occasions it would overflow into adjoining meadows. With another smaller campsite at Tregenna, the two provided an excellent source of customers wishing to eat and drink at The Ship Inn.

