

Trevithick Barton – St Ewe



Throughout the centuries, Trevithick Barton has been owned by a number of notable men, including an Admiral of the Fleet who sailed with Captain Cook in the Pacific, a Lord Chancellor, as well as MP's and landed gentry of Cornwall. Trevithick Barton dates back to the 16th century, but with documents recording the name 'Trevithick' associated with the area as far back as the 1300s. However, this historic house is not all that it seems, with mysterious architectural features that reveal it could have been a much larger manor house or even a monastery.

Architectural mystery

The history of Trevithick Barton illustrates the many facets of our houses throughout the centuries. It has changed many times since it was first built in the 16th century, and perhaps earlier, with doors moved, fireplaces added, rooms added and even mysterious anomalies like an old cellar under the stone floor and hidden plasterwork from old rooms on the upper floor. The documentary history of Trevithick leads back to the 1530s, but includes a number of conflicting details making Trevithick Barton one of the trickiest houses to research.

Manor house of monastery?

Not only is the house puzzling, but the area of Trevithick is also believed to have been occupied before this house was constructed, with details of a large 26 roomed house and the belief that it was in fact an old monastery. The name 'Barton' is sometimes applied to a monastic farm, but it is also applied to the 'home farm of the lord of the manor'. Sadly, no documentary evidence points to Trevithick having been a religious site, and it is likely that a visit from Time Team may be the only way to answer the questions about its early history.

Tudor Trevithick

First mention of the name 'Trevethik' [sic] was in 1303 and through the years it appeared with variations of that name until it was recorded in a document about land in 1449. It is uncertain when the house was first constructed, but documentary evidence and key architectural details point to a house built during the 1530s when Henry VII was king of England. At this time the property was owned by Thomas Trevythick. A lease in 1558 then shows John Trevithick of St Ewe, gentleman leasing Trevithick for 99 years to Thomas Selicke with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Jane.

Trevithick family and Anthony Mapowder

More detailed information about Trevithick comes to light after 1602, the last year of the reign of Elizabeth I. Deeds show that the property was owned by John Trevithick senior, with his wife Elizabeth and son Hugh and at this time, the property 'Trevithick Barton' was clearly described. Later documents of the early 1600s show the property passed to Hugh Trevithick and then to his son John. However, by August 1612 John Trevithick sold the property and buildings to Anthony Mapowder.



John Hickes

By 1620, Anthony Mapowder assigned the property to John Hickes [also spelt Hicks] of Lanteglos-by-Fowey. Later leases show that John Hickes then leased the property and in 1624 it was home to a clerk, Stephen Medhopp, of St Martyns, and in 1633 a merchant John Mayow. John Hickes passed away in 1648 and the property passed to his wife Elizabeth, who later assigned it to her son, Thomas, in 1656.

'uncommon advantages of profit and pleasure'

Trevithick continued in the hands of the Hickes family through to the 1700s. A document retained in the Cornwall Record Office from around 1720 gives a description of the property at this time, describing 'Trevithick Barton or farm...offer[s] uncommon advantages of profit and pleasure the mansion house built of stone'. The survey then describes it as 'three parts in four of a quadrangle' and consisting of above 12 rooms. This description is one key document describing a larger earlier building that may have been a larger manor house or even monastery, but the evidence is unclear, especially as the rooms surveyed include all rooms in the house not just bedrooms. However, it continues by listing 'the kitchen, dairy, cellars, brew house, stable, coach house & all offices completely furnished and several gardens.' The description of the property continues for two pages and includes details of crops such as asparagus, a full dove house, warren of over two acres, and river full of trout.

Lord Chancellor and Dowager Baroness of Ockham

A descendant of the first John Hickes, also named John, passed away in 1734 and left his estates and lands at Trevithick to Peter Lord King, who was Lord Chancellor in Robert Walpole's cabinet between 1725 and 1733. However, Lord King died in 1734 and so the inheritance passed to his wife, Ann Lady King Dowager Baroness of Ockham. It is unclear of the transfer of property after Lady King inherited Trevithick, but by 1766 records show it was in the hands of Richard Hussey, who was related to the prominent Gregor family in Cornwall. Records then show that by the early 1800s, Trevithick had passed into the hands of William Newcombe, Esq., but he too did not remain long, as shortly afterwards, the property and land was owned by Arthur Kempe, Admiral of the Fleet.

Admiral of the Fleet – Arthur Kempe

Arthur Kempe had a distinguished naval career, first entering the Royal Navy as a captain's servant aboard HMS America. He rose through the ranks and by 1764 was on HMS Dolphin as midshipman. By 1772 Kempe was promoted to Lieutenant while sailing to Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands with Captain Cook on the HMS Adventure. Kempe continued to progress through the ranks of the Royal Navy, becoming Captain in 1780 and Rear-Admiral in 1799. He fought during the French Revolutionary War and the Napoleonic Wars and by 1821 had gained the rank of Admiral of the Red, or Admiral of the Fleet, the highest position within the Royal Navy.

Reverend Charles Kempe

Arthur Kempe passed away in 1822 and Trevithick passed to his son, Charles Kempe. By 1841, the Tithe map and apportionment clearly show Trevithick, at this time almost 150 acres, owned by Reverend Charles Trevanion Kempe and occupied by William Vincent. The 1841 census gives further information about William Vincent, recorded as a 36 year old farmer in the house with his wife Elizabeth and their three sons, Nicholas, Oliver and Robert. The Vincent's also had a female servant and two male servants at this time.

Farmer William Vincent

By the time of the 1851 census, William and Elizabeth Vincent were still living at Trevithick, along with Nicholas, now aged 20 and Robert, aged 15. William was recorded as 'farmer 100 acres 5 labourers' and the family had two live-in servants. The family were still at Trevithick at the time of the 1861 census, but only the eldest son, Nicholas was still at home. It was sometime during the mid 19th century that ownership of the house passed to Richard Davey, MP for West Cornwall in 1857-1868 and also Deputy Lieutenant of the County of Cornwall.

The Vincent's of Trevithick

After 30 years, William and Elizabeth Vincent were still living at Trevithick Farm with their eldest son Nicholas and three domestic servants. The 1871 census shows William, 65 years old and 'farmer of 144 acres employing own labourers and boys'. However, William died in April 1875 and the farm passed to his son Nicholas Gill Vincent. The 1881 census shows Nicholas at Trevithick with his mother and three domestic servants. At the same time, youngest son Robert Vincent was living at nearby Trelissick Farm with his wife and children.



Henry Vellanoweth

Nicholas Vincent continued to live and farm at Trevithick until the 1890s when it became the home of Henry Vellanoweth. The 1901 census reveals 37 year old Henry was in the house with his wife, 30 year old Nora, and their two young children, Kathleen and Thomas, along with one house servant. At the time of the 1910 valuation survey, records Henry Vellanoweth was farming at Trevithick, around 144 acres, and the owner was recorded as 'A. Pengilly'. The 1911 census reveals Henry and Nora Vellanoweth with their two children, 18 year old Kathleen, described as 'farmers daughter dairy work' and 16 year old Thomas, described as 'farmers son working on farm', as well as 27 year old 'farm student', Frank Lyde.

Thomas Vellanoweth and Pengilly of Australia

The Vellanoweth family continued at Trevithick during the early 1900s and by the 1930s tax records show it had passed to Thomas Vellanoweth. The 1931 land value record also reveals that 'A.J. Pengilly' was still the owner of the farmhouse, land and buildings, but he was recorded as 'of South Australia'. Records throughout the 20th century show that Thomas Vellanoweth and his wife Margaret, and their children Philip and Cathryn, remained at Trevithick until the 1990s, 100 years after his father first moved to the farm in the 1890s.

Architectural and historic gem

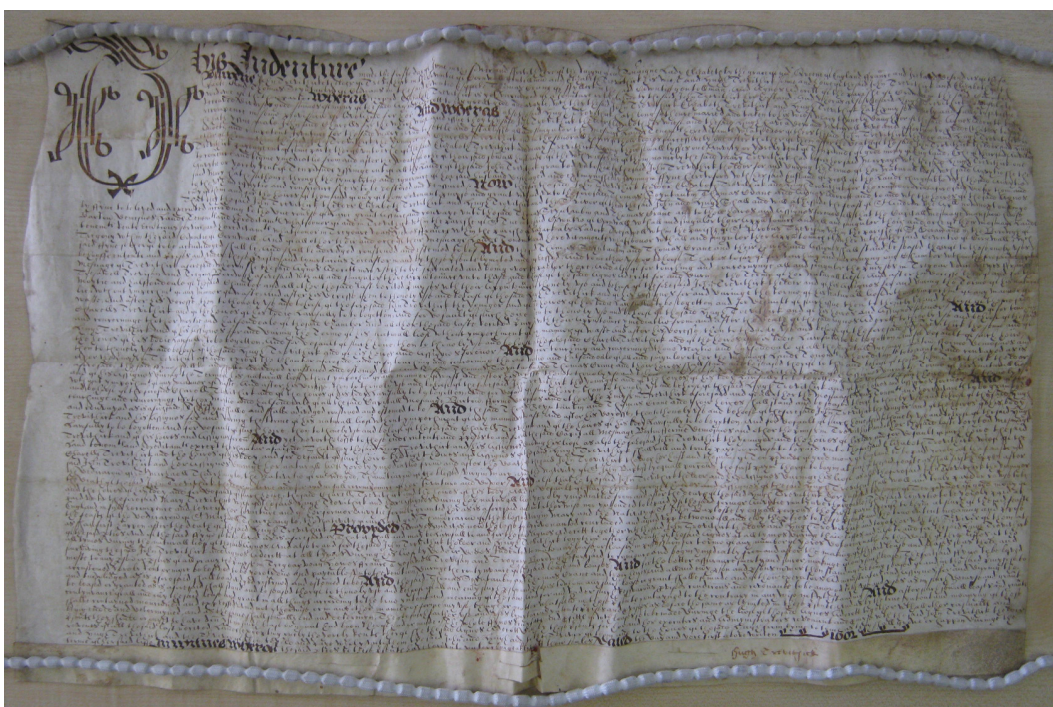
Trevithick Barton has stood within the hills of Cornwall for around 500 years, but the mystery of its early life is still to be uncovered. Was it a monastery, a large manor house, or a yeoman's farm? Today, the oldest part of the house dates back to the 16th century, with stone floors featuring reused stone with mouldings, timber beams, granite moulded doorway, former back-to-back fireplace, and the main bedroom even includes a granite fireplace with ball stops that match the front door. It also features a Victorian castellated chimney – one of only two such chimneys in all of Cornwall. Over the years it has seen a number of alterations and extensions, but at its heart, Trevithick Barton is an historic gem with many period features dating back to the times of the Tudor kings.

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By historian – Melanie Backe-Hansen

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Trevithick Barton - <http://www.chestertonhumberts.com/details.dtx?propertyid=FBEA45F2-AB64-4AEC-999C-58DF53205EAA>



Title deeds for Trevithick – 1602