

## The Diary of a Cornish Maid by Edna Thomas. Nee Carter

This little book is to remember with great respect, the wonderful people of the villages of Kingsand and Cawsand that I have named in this book and I wish to give no offence to anyone, just the wonderful memories of the past.

I was born on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1916, the second daughter of six children, five girls and one boy and my name is Edna Elizabeth Thomas (Nee Carter). Of the square, the same house as my grandfather William Westlake was born, also my mother and her two brothers and three sisters. The little house in the square had no electricity or running water. The closet was at the top of the garden, where there use to be a candle so at night we had to take matches to light up the chamber of horrors.

I was born and lived in the cottage on the left of this picture, the one nearest to the man and dog



Bath night was our regular on a Saturday for all of us. I remember our Dad, James Carter having to fetch buckets of water and fill up the old boiling copper for us to have our weekly scrub quite a ritual. When we were all pink and shiny and dressed in our night attire, Dad would mix up some liquorice powder in milk and we were all given our weekly medication as every one then had to pay doctors bills so there for we had to keep fit and healthy and well.

Mum, Katherine Carter would put our hair up in onions, as we called them, but it was strips of rag rolled up like onions to make ringlets to attend chapel the next day. Every time we came home from chapel or Sunday school we had to change out of our Sunday best in case we soiled it and changed back again when returning to chapel.

Being in the Square and quite near to the beach we spent all our time swimming and paddling, needless to say we hardly ever wore shoes on our feet during our summer holidays. The bound was very different in those days from what it is now. There was Mr Knapman the Blacksmith who use to make his own iron shoes for the horses and make and put new steel tyres on the farm cart wheels for the horses and carts of the neighbouring farmers. Once the horses had been shod the farmers would ride them down the beach and into the sea. It's still a mystery to me now, why they use to do this?

The bound with the Savoy Café with old Bark house seine boats on the beach



Opposite the blacksmith shop was the old bark house, were the old fishermen used to bark their nets and on a fine day take them onto the beach to dry and repair. Next door was Mr Carnes store, the village mason who use to keep all his equipment, cement, ladders, lime etc there. I remember my father sending me down to him to collect a bucket of lump lime so he could wash the walls of our house and keep it sparkling white.

Where the Boatel is now Granny Dawe used to keep a little shop and make very fine toffee apples, and home made sweets. Being children we were artful and would ask if we could go to the square and fetch any water for her especially to enjoy some of her goodies as she was a wonderful natured person. Next door lived granny Vallance and then the boat house and then granny lees house, with Mr Doney's oil store next. I remember getting my head caught in a trap hatch that was in the door whilst trying to retrieve a ball. A few years later Gracie Fields had a house built in its place and it was called "Ocean Waves".

Next to our house in the square there were two more cottages that is before Skinners demolished them and built their garage there. One lady who lived in one of the cottages was a Mrs Pilland she had to go up several steps to the front door, then the other house, I really forgot who lived there. Down in the girt lived Granny Oliver who we were a little frightened of, there were some nieces who lived there for some time with her namely Marjorie and Lily Howe, their father was a master gunner over at Red House Battery at Bovesand.

I remember one Sunday night Granddad Marks taking Margery and I from Cawsand Beach to Bovisand in his mackerel seine boat and landing us on the beach there. There were quite a few children that lived in the square and a very kind man a Mr Wilcox who lived in Vine cottage he used to come down and sit on the luggers with the fishermen and he would have a pocket full of pennies and would throw them for use to collect. Needles to say Granny Dawe did some good business on those days.

There was a paddle steamer that use to come over from Plymouth bringing visitors. It was too big to come right into the beach so the local fishermen use to go out with their small rowing boats and bring them ashore for two pence per passenger. My Mum and Dad use to do teas and hot water for people on the beach they use to come and collect a tray for their picnics. We always had the same customers who got very friendly with us.



There were quite a few fishermen in those days and it used to fascinate me how they used to cut off a lump of tobacco and chew it. Two brothers I well remember, although I cannot remember their surnames was Bob the fat one and Peter the thin one, they had a store in under their house where we would sit for hours and watch them making their crab pots with withies collected from Forder.

Now for the alterations of the bound, the little houses were demolished and Mr Glasspool had Cawsand Bay Hotel, which was then called the Savoy. It was originally built for a Mr Hancock, who Mr Glasspool bought it off.

We had a very happy childhood but not a lot of money to spare as Dad worked in the Royal William Victualling Yard and I believe his pay packet amounted to £2-3-0d per week, but in those days was considered not too bad. He used to rise at 5.30 am each morning and walk to Cremyll there was no horse transport in those days so he would walk through Kingsands up Andy Ditch to Maker where there used to be troops stationed, past the Wind Mill that used to pump water, past Maker Church and down into Cremyll.

One very windy morning he was walking along when one of the big blades/fins blew off the windmill and buried itself about five feet into the ground immediately in front of where dad was going to place his right foot. What a lucky escape?

Dad was called up for the war by the RASC and my elder sister and I loved him coming home from the army on leave, as he used to get a sheet from the bed place us in it one at a time, gather the four corners of the sheet and carry us off to bed in it. We used to love his favourite story he used to tell us (fiction of course). Well he used to say he was walking to Cremyll one dark and wet morning and got nearly down to the little drinking trough about half way up the road, when he heard pita pata, pita pata coming down the road behind him. We used to say yes Daddy what was it and he would say what do you think. We don't know Daddy what was it. He would say it was a great big Lion he came right at me with his mouth open showing those great big white teeth. What did you do Daddy? Dad would say I did not know what to do at the spur of the moment so I thrust my hand in his mouth, caught hold of his tail and pulled very hard, this turned him inside out and he ran the other way and saved my life. We were so excited the same story was told time and time again we never tired of it.

Granddad Westlake lived with us and I was only 3 1/2 years old when he died, but he was a good dear man and took my elder sister (Eileen Carter) and me for regular walks to Penlee Point, when we were nearly there, there was a wonderful granite trough where crystal clear water used to run. Granddad always produced from his pocket a little aluminium cup with two little handles that folded back, I know since it was the top of a thermos flask, the water tasted absolutely perfect. We then would gather water crest to take back to mum for delicious crest sandwiches for tea.

My grandfather had been in the navy and served his apprenticeship before entering the Rope Works at Anderton under Mr Chub. There he became qualified as a rope maker and sailed in the old sailing boats, he was very clever with his hands and did a lot of fret work. I believe my brother (Harry Carter) who was born four years after me still has his indentures which were written in copper plate on parchment, poor granddad had a stroke and died just before my brother was born and oh we do miss him so much.

It was in the 1920's now, the first world war was truly over and finished and people were lucky to have jobs and although I said we didn't have much money Dad had a regular job and wage. Our Mum was an excellent manager, she made every thing we wore and although she never complained, it must have been very hard for her as she never went to work or earned sixpence in her life, Granddad gave her every thing she wanted.

I know the chapel anniversary used always to be on the last Sunday in May and Mum would sit up to the early hours of the morning making our outfits. In particular I remember a white outfit with frills up to the waistline and the front of the bodice worked in flowers matching the little flowers around my panama hat.

We had a dear old school teacher when we were in the infants her name was Miss Goble, I know one day going to school and feeling very proud of myself as Mum cut up her beautiful blue dressing gown, I went straight up to the front of the classroom and said please Miss Goble do you like my pretty dress that Mum made out of her lovely dressing gown and the lovely blue braid. It was well admired and I was six feet tall, but in stature I was very tiny. It was very many years after that Miss Goble married and became Mrs Mather and lived at the bottom of the hill where we live now and one day she told me my story but I honestly remember it quite well.

It was Xmas day and Mum had put the goodies, chocolate etc, out on the sideboard and we were told not to touch until after dinner, but Dad happened to look in and caught my sister helping herself to the chocolates, when she piped up, its alright Dad the silver paper came off and I am only putting it back on, needles to say she got away with it.

My Mums sister lived next door to us, called Aunty Jess and Uncle Jack and Gladys their daughter. They were very good to our family, aunty did all she could to help therefore Gladys was just like another sister to us and when my brother came along aunty simply worshiped him. They eventually went to live in South Africa.

When I was four years old my eldest sister Eileen used to take me to school. It was the building that is now turned into luxury flats, but that was the top of the building. We were all taught in the rooms down under. The boys went there until they were eleven and then up to Furlanesend school there was no transport so all the children had to walk. The girls were lucky as when we were eleven we just moved up to rooms further along the building and it was called Cawsand Girls School. When we got that far we had to wear gymslips and little square hats and a yellow badge with C.G.S. on it.

It was still a Church of England School and assembly for prayers use to be in the big hall from 9 to ¼ to ten but if you were a roman catholic or chapel then one could please ones self and not attend till ¼ to ten.

Once a year we had a lovely old priest by the name of Mr Taylor who always came to see the school and his visits were around September time, most of us use to go up Andy Ditch to meet him, he use to get the ferry from Plymouth and walk from Cremyll across Maker as that was a short cut. We all took bunches of flowers to him mostly micamos daisies as they were plentiful in the autumn and I believe he use to take them to hospitals when he arrived back in Plymouth.

He was a quiet tiny man, but seemed to radiate with happiness and he always gave us an afternoon of school. I remember when our only brother Harry was born, a neighbour took Eileen and me down to her house for a few hours and we sat in her window on our little stools looking out into the square. When someone came in and said we had a little baby brother and we were so pleased that we wanted to go home and see him right away. Three years after our little sister Syble arrived she was such a bright curly headed girl always full of fun and made friends quite easily but oh she was so full of mischief. Mum had to pay for a full churn of Milk once because Syble and her best friend Pamala Luly had turned on the tap. The farmer who was delivering milk to a customer thought his horse was paying a long penny and when he went out all the milk was flowing down the street.

Another time there was a lady in Duck Street that used to encourage them to her house and she loved make up, so one day Pam and Syble thought they were in their rights to go up stairs and make their faces up. I can tell you there was quite a blow up about that with powder; lipstick and face cream every where.

Another three years and my sister Betty was born, she was beautiful just like a little doll and everyone loved her. I felt proud to take her out and she would always come with me, but would not go on any account with Eileen, Ever body called her Betty Blue. After Betty came Greta she was born one Easter Sunday in 1933.

I know I was only fourteen then and had to leave school to help Mum run the house and look after the family. We were eight altogether with Mum and Dad and quite a lot to do, especially on Mondays which was washing day. We had big rainwater butts which filed up with beautiful rainwater from the shoots off the roof and we had to fill a big copper which was lit and burnt wood and sticks that we gathered in Penlee woods.

Mum was particular with her washing she sorted it all out starting with the linen or whites has she called it, then came the colours, then woollens, every thing had to be rinsed or blued by putting a knob of blue(The Blue Bag) in the rinsing water, the idea was to keep the whites white. Mum had a routine for each day of the week, she use to say it was easier that way. I knew the end of the week she always made yeast and saffron cake, she use to call it a quarter as it had seven pounds of flour as well as other ingredients and usually put to plumb

Friday evenings ready for baking on Saturday mornings. It was good wholesome food Mum cooked. We always had a few hens penned up in the garden, so we always had fresh eggs. Dad kept the garden going so there were also fresh vegetables and fruit.

We were all brownies and guides in our turn, there were two very clever sisters who taught us who were teachers at Plymouth Technical College, Miss Sheila and Miss Oweda Pearce. Their needlework was exquisite; they use to work on some beautiful tapestries as banners for the churches.

We use to have quite a number of crabbers who used to come into the bay from France, they would pull their rough wooden boats up onto the beach and fill great big wooden caskets with water from the fountain on the square, then they would go to the village shops and buy up all the loaves of bread, even if it was stale bread they use to buy it, I expect the shops were glad to get rid of it.

All trades people seem to call to sell their goods, I remember a Mr Cotton coming with a horse and covered in wagon in which he use to carry bread and whilst he was delivering bread in his basket he would put a nose bag on the horse which contained corn for the poor things lunch. I expect that the poor thing must have been very hungry because he had been all the way to Plymouth first as Mr Cotton delivered bread for the Coop Bakery.

Then there was the big liners that used to come into the bay for people to disembark at Plymouth a few were "The Isle of France", "The Normandy", "The Queen Elizabeth", the "Queen Mary" and many, many more. A pilot boat use to go out and pilot them in, Mr Frank White was the pilot at that time. We as children use to go out in boats around these ships and the people in the liners would throw things over the side to us, items like sweets, fruit and even perfume so we use to love the liners coming in.

After being at home helping Mum for some time I felt that I needed a change, and has my cousin who worked at the Post Office was getting married I took her place with the postmaster and postmistress being a Mr and Mrs Humphrey Senior. I was there quite a few years with them. The post office in those days was the double fronted central house, the building which is now the chemist and an off licence. But we had the post office one side and a drapery the other side. Postage was one penny for a postcard 1½ pence for a letter in 1933.

We had quite a trade, as people who drew their pensions would then come into the drapery shop and buy what they wanted or pay off a small debt. We also ran a Christmas club for people to pay in for Xmas; every body seemed to trust each other in those days, with little crime you did not even need to lock your front door, even if you did it the key was hanging on a string behind the letter box. There was quite a few gentle honest folk that used to employ people.

Whilst at the post office my boy friend Elliott Thomas use to come to Cawsand with a pony and trap delivering milk from his fathers farm and always made a few minutes to pop in and talk and Jessie the old horse always obliged by leaving behind her calling card in the form of some manure for Mr Humphreys who grew delicious tomatoes. He would go to the window and look out and say the old horse has been good to me again and that's worth 6 pence to you

So I would watch to see no one was looking and I would nip out with a bucket and shovel, scoop it up to claim my extra bonus. My wages was fifteen shillings per week, which people thought was good earnings, but one could always do with an extra sixpence. Then there was the telegrams that came in, it was 1½ pence to deliver anywhere in the village or 9 pence to Picklecombe or Penlee Point. I always managed to arrange to deliver after work, as my boy friend would then walk out with me, so it was pleasure combined with courtship as well. No leaving work at 5 o'clock in those days, we went home to tea at 5 o'clock till half past and then back again until seven.

It was a bit of a rush Saturday Evenings as we always went to Plymouth either to the old Hippodrome in Devonport or the Palace Theatre Plymouth. Elliott had a little grey Morris two seater car with a little dickey seat at the back; we had to keep filling the engine up with water as the darn thing would boil. It was nearly always seven thirty before we could catch the Torpoint Ferry.

In January 1938 we were married at Rame Church, where Elliott's mum and Dad and my Mum and Dad were married many years before by the same Canon Ekins. When we got to the vestry to sign the register Elliott asked what he had to pay and Cannon Ekins said, Elliott the price is 7/6d but buy Edna a new hat, and guess what happened, I am still waiting for my new hat to this day.  
What a Bargain?

At the time we were first married we lived in the Farm Cottage, it was such a pretty little place, but when Elliott's father died suddenly in April 1941 we had to take over Trehill farm. Prior to his death and only the matter of a few weeks before the farm got blitzed all of one roof was blown off and parts of the other, the old kitchen range was blown out into the middle of the kitchen. I think the Germans were practicing for the terrible blitz on Plymouth. It seemed they used the Eddystone Lighthouse as the land mark and came in by the light of the fires.

One particular night we had 500 incendiaries dropped on the farm and it took Elliott seven hours to beat the fires out.

I also remember all the farmers in the area entering the Farmers Race in Turke Town Regetta, They were each given a small pulling boat and had to race from Cawsand Beach out to a buoy and back a distance of about a mile, well all farmers are stronger in one arm than they are the other depending if you are right and left hands because of throwing shieves of corn up on a rick. They started off from the beach with some boats turning right and others left, no one went in a straight line to the buoy and back and no one finished the course so they were given a penalty and had to run five times around the square for their prize money.

Going back to my childhood I remember the Monkey Woman she kept a monkey in the Criterion Hotel and on the way to school we used to feed the monkey with nuts. She used to wear a little red jacket and was such a little sweetie. The lady use to make some very fine fancy cakes and always had a nice plate full in the window ready for afternoon teas, I think they were about 2pence each, and as a treat I remember Mum buying some on our birthdays The Criterion is the one with the Lamp up over the Sign Board



There was also a dear old lady who use to keep a little shop in her own house in the square, she sold all sorts of things, everything had to be weighed, no pre-packed items in those days. If you needed flour she use to keep it in a big clone stein and scoop it out with a scoop eventually she gave my mother the stein and I still have it and I keep my bread bin in it. It has a wooden cover with brass knob and I can never grumble about the bread going stale. If we bought something in her shop she would give us a few Winter Mixtures in a little brown funnel shaped paper bag as a treat.

There was quite a choice of sweets mostly 4 for a penny and liquorice boot laces, grandfather's beard or sherbet fountains, ½ penny lucky dips, chocolate and numerous others, all in glass bottles.

On Fridays when Dad got his pay packet, he used to give us a penny each seeing we were six children and 2 pence for a bar of Fry's chocolate cream for Mum as that was her favourite. Dad never kept very much for himself and was very generous with the little he had. We use to have some wonderful village fetes and carnivals in those days and me having such long hair, Mum sent to Edwards Harlene for some adverts to put me in the carnival as one of their models and was very pleased that I won first prize, so Mum wrote again to Edwards Harlene and we were kept in hair care and shampoos for a whole year. These carnivals seemed to go on all day and on Saturday evening rounded up in Cawsand square where the old fountain used to be, to have a singing or recitation competition, my cousin talked me into going up and singing Romana and wasn't I thrilled when I won first prize 7/6p I hardly knew what to do with it all. Many Church Fetes were held at the Vicarage at Maker and Rame or at the Doctors House at Kingsand and of course we had the Turke Town Regatta.

I mentioned earlier about my very nice school teacher but the head mistress was a real terror and not only did she frighten the children but the teachers as well. My eldest sister Eileen use to bubble over with fun and one day she found and took some very hairy caterpillars to school for nature study, one girl was terrified of them so when the head mistress left the room Eileen couldn't resist the temptation of putting the caterpillar down this poor girls back. She really went hysterical and screamed so load that the head teacher came back and my sister was threatened to be expelled if she ever done such a thing again, this was as well as having a good caning first.

We all loved school holidays in the summer as nearly every one made their way to Polhawn beach with their families, we seemed to get better weather in those days and well able to plan our days out. We use to set off from home, walk to Forder, going up over Fisherman's path to the beach. When we got to the beach we would gather sticks and drift wood to light a fire and boil the kettle which we took with us after collecting water from the stream on the beach. Mum nearly always baked lovely hot pasties, wrapped them up in a covered tin, they really were delicious, eaten with a nice cup of hot tea. Where the water had been boiled for the tea on the wood fire, we would catch prawns with our nets and gather winkles and limpets and boil them on the beach in salt water, Yum, Yum. Little did I think I would marry the farmer and have a little tea hut on this very beach, and be able to come to the beach daily to picnic?

I also remember the pub in the square then called the Cross Keys; it is now called the Smugglers. There was a lady and her husband called Mr and Mrs Butler they were Australians and use to have a very fine parrot called Polly, it was a big bird white and yellow, sometimes they would let it out of its cage to fly around, and at times it came out with a few choice words. Being a small court yard down there, there wasn't much room to hang out the clothes, so when it was fine Mrs Butler use to hang them out on the beach, but if it was rough Mum would let her hang the clothes out up in our garden



Where the Cawsand car park is now, was named the meadow, we use to spend a lot of time up there making daisy chains and playing in the water that used to run down St Andrews Street (Duck Street). There was a large shed in the meadow were Mr Buckingham had his workshop being the local undertaker he use to make his coffins in the shed, a dear old donkey also use to graze in the meadow, it use to pull a little cart for Mr Vanstone who also collected ashes and refuge in the village.

We had a very nice neighbour a lady called Mrs Sayers and she had the first cats whisker wireless in the village, we would go to her house and put the earphones on and take turns in listening the music and programs, we thought that was marvellous and could not understand why it did not have a battery to power it.

Within a short period of time another wonderful thing happened in the village when a gentleman named Mr Walton who use to live in Brick House opposite the lawn in Garret Street, he did live broadcasts to the village, he had a special radio and would stand it on the wall of the lawn, and as many people as could, use to go and sit on the lawn and the wall, I think nearly all Cawsand and Kingsand use to go along to listen to it.

Opposite Mr Walton lived Admiral Goldsmith and his family in Pemberknose House, he had a beautiful sailing boat called "Rame" and one summer evening we all went down to Cawsand beach to see Admiral Goldsmith take his sailing boat Rame on a lone trip to Malta. Hundreds of people assembled on the beaches and in small boats in the bay to wave him off and it was several weeks before we had a message that he had arrived there safely.

Going back to my childhood again, I remember my Mum reading to us all around the kitchen fire; we all had our own little stools which we sat on. Mum would read us some lovely books like Queechy, Peep behind the Scenes, Jessica's First Prayer, Little Woman and many more classics. It usually happened on a Sunday evening when we arrived home from chapel, it really was wonderful to have such a family life.

Sometimes for a change we would sit around the Piano and our cousin Gladys would play and we would sing along. They really were good old days, I also remember a Mr Brickwood who was a chimney sweep, quite a business as every body had to have the kitchen stove chimney swept regularly because they needed them to do their daily cooking and keep the house warm. The funniest thing was he would walk in and out quite a lot to see if the brush was out of the top of the chimney pot and took the soot on his boots all over the place. Mum use to get mad with him, but it did not matter because he served every one alike and we only had one sweep in the village at that time.

With very little four wheeled transport, people use to have to walk to Rame church for funerals, six bearers had to carry the coffin from one telephone pole to another. A very funny episode happened one day a fellow who was chosen as a bearer, had to borrow a bowler hat and black shoes, because that was the usual apparel, however the hat seemed to big and came down over his ears and the shoes he was wearing were several sizes to big, somehow or other the bearer who was walking behind him accidentally stepped on the back of his shoe which immediately slipped off exposing all his toes which were peeping out of his worn out socks. They could hardly stop the funeral so the man behind kicked the shoe along to the next telegraph pole, were the bearers had to change over.

A very amusing thing was Cawsand people was always known as Turk Towner's and Kingsand people known as Nor Rockers and they ever hardly mixed, it was quite a crime to go over the boarder line, which is just a stone in the wall by the half way house





Although it was sometimes essential as Mrs Kent and Miss Smith use to keep the surgeries for different doctors and the doctors had to dispense all the medicines themselves which was left at respective houses to collect.

I do not know who the benefactor was but all the widows living around the village had a free loaf of bread delivered to them once a month, which all the shops took in turns to deliver, this went on for many a year until all the monies ran out.

Our father although we loved him dearly was quite a disciplinarian and would have us all in by 9-30pm each evening with no excuses. I think it was the way he was brought up as his father was a Master of Arms in the navy and Dad being one of four brothers was born in Valletta Malta. My grandfather Carter died out there and was buried at sea off Valletta. The Carters were a Hampshire family really originating from Gosport Portsmouth, but our granny was a Millbrook woman called Helen Priest before her marriage. As far as I can remember the Westlake were always Cawsand people.

Cawsand Bay use to be full of boats and quite a number of coal barges use to come in and off load on the beach. A Mr Hill used to take the coal to the old lime kiln over Weddycove just under the coastguard cottages for storing. Quite a lot of Lime Stone came in the same way when the forts were being built and my husband's grandfather had a contract with his horses and carts to deliver it where it was wanted.

One of the old characters that use to come into the village was an old rag and bone man by the name of Tommy Stanton; I think he originated from Plymouth. He had a hooked hand on which he use to hang his sack and had a very squeaky voice and would call out "Rags, Bones and Rabbits skins". We use to worry Mum for something to sell him as 1/2d or 1d was gold dust.

There was also a dear old lady called Mrs Drissol that came over from Plymouth and walked all the way from Cremyll with a basket of haberdashery, elastic, bundles of tape, linen, lace, buttons on a card etc, funny enough I still have some to this day. She measured her lace across the top of her basket and charged only a few coppers, poor dear it was hard for her to raise a family and there were no pensions in those days.

I mentioned the paddle steamers arriving from Plymouth previously, there were two funny men, regular visitors that used to arrive on them who the children soon nick named spider and fly, they used to put a couple of spoons on the ground and dance around them collecting money. At times a large crowd would gather around them to watch their antics. More often or not they would then go to the square and patronise the Cross Keys. I often wondered if they had enough money to travel back to Plymouth because some times they were seen walking out of the village swaying from one side of the road to the other but still singing and dancing.

Although I don't personally remember ducks swimming down Duck Street which is now Armada Road, I do remember children floating their little toy boats in the stream that used to run down in the gutter along side the road. They would put their toy boats in at the top of the street by the meadow and collect them at the square. My dear old Mum who has passed on, at the age of 92 remembers ducks swimming down the street; she told me water use to run from the meadow straight down the street, down the girt into a sewerage pipe that was on the bound and discharged well out to sea.

I had a very good friend as a girl and we are still friends to this day, her name was Moriet Langton, her father taught at Furlanesend School. She married a local lad Arthur Grieves, for many years they ran the Rising Sun at Kingsand where Cliff Richards used to come and stay as a boy. They had one son, John who was the same age as my youngest son Adrian.

Another girl that lived in the village who was another friend of mine was called Rosa Priest; the poor little girl had lost both her Mum and Dad in the terrible flu epidemic of 1918. She used to collect snails in jam jars for an old man called Gussie Ward who lived in the cabin Garret Street. He was very fond of birds and had a wonderful aviary and he took compassion on a thrush which had a broken wing. Well Rosa use to visit him each day with her snails but one day she went and no one was in so Rosa put each snail through his letter

box one at a time thinking she was helping Mr Ward. When Mr Ward came home they had crawled all over his antique guns and the swords that he had decorating his walls so Mr Ward was not to pleased.

Another old character was Shoner Uings; he was a beach comer and lived in a little court opposite the men's institute on the Cleave. One would often see him on the beach with his trolley collecting bit and pieces of wood and what have you flotsam and jet some that had washed in. As I have said the bay was always full of boats and jutting out into the sea from Cawsand Beach was a very fine pier for passengers to land off the ferries from Plymouth, and the duty boats from Pier Cellars. I'm sorry to say there was a very strong gale one night and the pier got washed away. There was also a duty boat from the Vitualling Yard that used to deliver army and navy stores to the men stationed at Pier Cellars and Penlee Battery. It also called into Bovisand on its way collecting and delivering to the forts there. Funny enough I managed to get a lift by kindness of the Captain, who landed me at Penlee on the way back from Bovisand, after staying with a friend over there; I walked back through the woods to the square.

At the landing stage at Pier Cellars was a lovely old Lodge called Bay Field Cottage and three old sisters used to live there, Mary, Edith and Ada Smale. They rented all the lower fields which is now so sadly grown over and kept cows there. Mary I believe was the diary maid and milked the cows and she use to tell us they were nearer to God than an angel or any people. Ada use to walk around all night in her dressing gown especially around the woods and would give one quite a fright if you did not know who she was. She had beautiful long black hair that flowed down her back. I think Edith was the house keeper because it was always her that you would see shopping in the village not the others.

I will always remember the fine treat given to us by the Sunday school. We all use to meet at the chapel and walk along Minadu to the Hooe Lake Lodge where Mr and Mrs Porter lived, there was a lovely veranda outside the house which has since been taken down, there were two long trestle tables laid with a pure white damask cloths and full of all the best food things you could imagine. All home made.

A Mr Jenner who lived in Cawsand specialised in making and selling ice cream and when we ever had a party he would push his cart with the ice cream all packed around with ice in a wooden bucket to the party venue and sell you 1/2d or 1d cornets, delicious I must say.

On our holidays we use to go through the woods to Daisy Cove it was just around the corner from Pier Cellars, or if you wished you could go by pulling boat. When the tide was low you could catch some very fine prawns there and often see a few otters. They were such lovely playful little animals; we used to take a crab hook with us and often caught a good sized crab or sometimes a lobster to boil for our tea.

In my school days there seemed to be a lot more little shops in the village, it was truly a thriving community full of local people and local business's but sadly over the years many of the houses have been bought up by second home owners, shops sold to none local people, farm land sold to build yet more houses and the trend is continuing through out much of Devon and Cornwall. There is no more than about six shops left now and many farms in the area are no longer farmed by the tenant farmer but by a farm manager. There are less and less fishermen repairing their nets on the beaches or stacking their crab pots on the bound or down Slip. Mr Southern was a very good butcher and served the village well for years but sadly there is no butchers shop in the village or bakers either come to that once Mr Arthur Hill sells up which I understand is on the cards. The Coop use to call and deliver meat but now all it remains is for Mr Mathews at Millbrook to call and deliver meat for all who wants it. It is sad to see the decline of true village life as I knew it.

A day on the beach  
at Kingsands in 1922



There was an old fort at Penlee woods called Folly Fort and quite a few children lived there with their parents and had to walk every day to school through the woods. It was very pleasant in the spring and summer as Penlee had quite a number of brown squirrels in the trees and if you were very quiet in the autumn we used to go out and sit very still and watch three trees in particular to see these busy little creatures collecting their nuts for their winter storage. It seems that brown squirrels have been taken over by the grey ones or tree rats which can be very destructive.

Oh I must tell you this funny story about my third sister Betty who fancied her chances about making pasties and Mum always encouraged us to help, so while Mum was getting on with her work she left Betty to it. There weren't tiled kitchens in those days or electric cookers either but a black kitchen range and coconut matting on the floor. However Betty was getting on very well and had made the pasties and put them in the oven and when she thought it was time to move to the bottom shelf to soak. She went to move them and Colamity struck they fell off the pasty tin onto the coconut matting. So in her words she had to remodel them and put them back in the oven quickly. No one knew a word about this for several weeks when she couldn't keep her secret any longer, too late for all of us then, as we had eaten and enjoyed the remodelled pasties.

We had a wonderful doctor called Dr Curry and he used to go to St Andrews Church every Sunday morning and never once did he miss calling in to see us all on his way to or after church. It was about midday on this particular Sunday and our roast dinner was just being served and he liked nothing better than to perch on the corner of the table and help himself to a roast potato or two. At that time he used to drive an old Bull Nose Morris Car.

Along the Cleave at Kingsand there was a sort of convent where the sisters of mercy used to reside and at Xmas time they used to have a very nice crib and we all used to go and see it, I think it was some connection with the school, being a church of England School but they have long since left and the property sold.

The parish of Maker with Rame didn't exist then as there were two Parishes and the Reverent Herbert lived at Maker Vicarage and also took services at St Paul's which is now the public Hall. Canon Ekins lived at the rectory at Rame and as well as Rame Church conducted services at St Andrews Church in Cawsand. A few years ago St Andrews Church had a cockerel as a weather vane on top of the steeple but the roof developed a leak and the cockerel and steeple was removed more to the pity because it was such a landmark.

There was always a game keeper that used to live in Penlee Lodge He was a Very kind man, a Mr Hawke by name and every Christmas he used to cut us a splendid tree from the woods for us all to enjoy. I remember Mum sending us all up to thank him and take him up a large packet of Players Cigarettes, they cost 11 ½ in those days. He also used to be the keeper of the gate and opened and shut the gate going through the woods (Earls Drive) when Lady

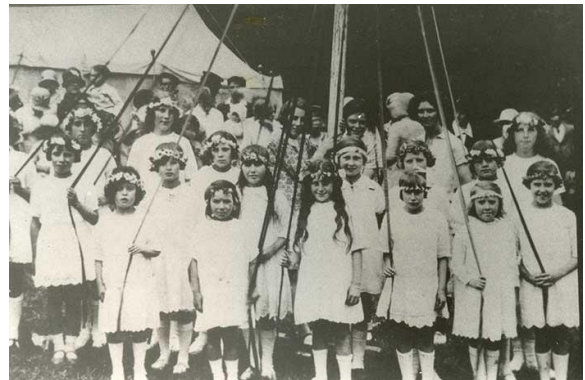
Caroline Mt Edgcombe with her lovely carriage and grey horse drove out through the woods to Penlee.

There was quite a service to and from Cremyll Ferry one of the horse drawn waggonetts was owned and driven by a Mr Locker who really was a cripple and wore a large built up boot. It was really amazing how he use to climb up and down the wagon to see to all his passengers and drop them off at their respective homes.

Another old village character was Dick Jope who lived a recluse sort of life in a little cottage in the courtyard at the back of the square. Mum often sent one of us down with a hot jug of soup for him that is when we had some ourselves for dinner.

I remember a Mr Penny who was the village lamplighter, he use to go around all the lamps in the morning with a tin of oil and fill the oil reservoirs ready for the evening when he took his ladder to go around and light them, some times the village boys feeling mischievous would follow behind him and blow them out just after the poor old man had taken the trouble to light them.

Each May Day the boys and girls use to have a May Pole to dance around, we all wore white plimsoles and a sash around our waist and the same colour ribbons to catch hold off. We were also taught Maurice and country dancing by doctor Curry's wife and a lady that came from Plymouth and each year we all went to the guild hall in Plymouth to compete with other teams from all different places, we ended up winning the shield nearly every year which was hung on the wall of the men's institute where we practiced



Another old village person was Miss Clare Stitson who lived at Harbour Cottage and was a good customer at all the jumble sales in the villages. After she died Mrs Forsyth called affectionally as Sally by nearly every one took over this cottage and had a tea shop and sold fish and crabs, she was quite a worker even use to carry her fish in a basket and walk to Millbrook to sell to people down there. I wonder how many people would do it these days. Times were hard but there was more contentment, every one seemed to help each other. There was Law and Order and Discipline in both the home and at schools which did not hurt anyone. I think we have gone much too far the other way now.

I do not know if it is like it now but all diseases use to have to be reported even chicken pox and when we all had whooping cough we were taken for the day to Polhawn where it was said the sea would take it out. Other than that we were taken to a field of sheep which was suppose to stop the cough, I really wonder if there was any real meaning to this or was it just superstition.

Another thing I remember was our youngest sister Greta having scarlet fever and Mum had to put a sheet which was disinfected up over the bedroom door, we had to sleep away from home and Dad had to stop away from work for six weeks until the infection had gone.

My brother Harry when he was only three drank out of the spout of a teapot of boiling tea that Mum had just made and scald his throat very badly the doctor sat with him all night and then he had to have a trepanotomy. I also remember the roads being tarred and stoned for the first time; the stones were cracked at Watergate Quarry by Mr Farley of Millbrook who was also a cripple and a very fine stone cracker, no money given to you to help you in those days.

Over at Wedecove just under the coast guard station there was a high knoll where we used to go to get fire clay to reline the kitchen range and fireplaces because all homes were all coal or wood fired in those days and smog was sometimes a problem in the village

depending which way the wind was blowing. In the daily papers there was always a children page and some even had children's clubs where they wrote away and received a certificate and a badge. My sister Eileen belonged to the sketch club or uncle Ohla's club she had her badge and certificate which was worded "Be merry and bright and stick to the right and do all the good deeds you can, never say die till you have a good try and where ever you are play the man".

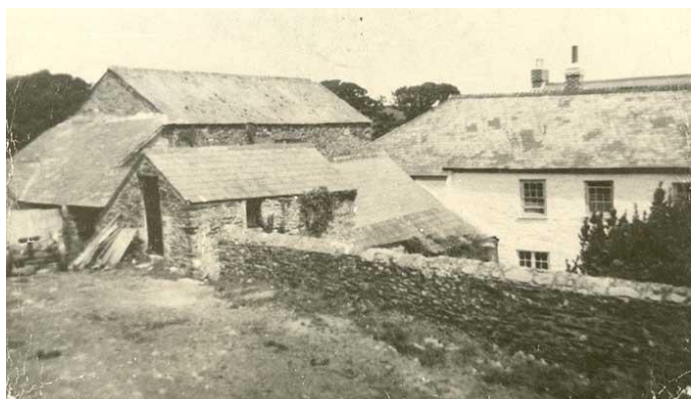
We always had great fun during our summer holidays; one of the great events was the greasy pole. One was erected on the square and another on the green at Kingsand and a challenge went out for someone to climb they were covered in thick grease with a bunch of flowers tied to the top of the pole. It was a difficult job to shun up the pole and retrieve the flowers. But it was often achieved with the first to do it being the winner and quite a cheer went up by the onlookers.

Perhaps the most wonderful woman in the village was Granny Strivens as every one called her (There was a lot of respect in those days) She was the village mid wife and delivered every baby that was born here, she never lost a baby. As well as looking after and rearing her own children and husband who was a fisherman, she kept the Charlsten Tea Rooms and her own little shop. She was on call at any time, night or day, seven days per week for the birth of the babys. She would generally take over the different homes as well as the nursing and was such a methodical person and a dear. She started in the job in 1899 when she was 33 and did it most of the time until she died in 1951 when she was 85.

She was buried at Maker and the vicar said she was the most universal mother of our times, great praise indeed for such a wonderful person. In addition to all this she also kept an allotment and sold fish her husband caught carrying it in a basket, walking all the way to Millbrook. I remember going into her shop and seeing all the toilet jugs and basins and chambers raced along the shelves as no one had a bathroom in the village and these utensils were kept on a marble topped wash stand in the bedroom. What a long way we have come since those days.

Well I have said quite a lot about my childhood so I will continue thus, I married my dear husband on January the 29<sup>th</sup> 1938 and we lived in the little farm cottage at Rame, our first home. Elliott my husband went every day to work for his father at Trehill Farm and we carried on in this way until March 1941, when the farm got blitzed and Elliott's Mum and Dad had to come to us each night to sleep. Later that month Elliott's Dad died suddenly, so the late Earl of Mt Edgcumbe came to see Elliott to offer his condolences and said he must carry on with the farm the same as his father. Stating he would give us six months free rent as a start, which was really good of him as the Thomas's was the forth generation at Trehill Farm. So after the farm was repaired we moved from the cottage to the farm with Elliott's Mum, who was one of the dearest persons one could ever come upon.

Trehill Farm Rame  
note the patches of repaired  
areas to the roof



Our first son Colyn Elliott Thomas was born on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 1941 of course it was the middle of the war and labour was very scarce so we employed a land girl to help on the farm. She was very well bred and very patriotic and I believe wealthy but had the most peculiar of habits. She would go off on her bicycle and wash her hair in the stream on her day off; no way would she wear shoes or stockings when in doors. Even during the air raids she would take her cycle lamp and go to bed upstairs and not stay with us down stairs on mattresses under the big strong farmhouse table for protection.

It used to frighten me somewhat especially when the sirens use to go off and yet another air raid was on the way as every window had to be blacked out. She use to drive our old horse a big shire called Warrior to collect swill for the pigs from the various forts and different barrage balloon camps as Elliott had a contract with them. We fed quite a number of pigs from this source and owing to the shortage of fodder it came in very handy.

Marriott as she was called kept a daily diary and used to call us the Old Lady and the Youngsters. She was also a great adventuress and once went around the UK coast in a canoe, at night she would just pull it up on the beach and sleep underneath it. We managed like this for quite a while, Granny Thomas looked after baby Colyn and for most of his childhood time, nursing him when he was sick etc and I use to take Jessie the old milk cart horse to the villages and deliver milk while Elliott and Marriot would work in the fields, ploughing, harvesting etc, I would help in the fields once I had finished the milk round or during the summer months ran my little tea house down on Polhawn beach.

Elliott did manage to get some casual labour and we managed like this until Marriott was sent to Lundy Isle in charge of potatoes pickers. She always carried a gun, a small pistol with her and sometimes slept on the top of a hay stack. While she was with us she found a gold ring and reported it to the police but it was never claimed so a while after the war ceased I had a card from her saying that she and her bike was on a ship on her way to Aden and that she wished to donate the ring to Colyn to bring him good luck.

Sweeping in the hay,  
Elliott is the  
one behind the horse;  
Charlie Weymouth is  
the one on the hay wagon.



By this time Adrian Harding Carter Thomas our second son was born, it was 11<sup>th</sup> July 1944 so although Granny Thomas was looking after Colyn I really had my hands full with Adrian and use to take him down to Polawn with me. But as usual we managed. Sonny Glanville was with us working by then as his family got blitzed out of their house in Devonport and we let them have our little farm cottage to live in.

Elliott's sister Queenie used to help with the milk round, as she was married and her husband was out in Ceylon working so that was really classified as her war work and we were very glad of her to come along and help us out. During this period the old Earl had died and the estates and farms were taken over by estate agents who ran it for a cousin of the Earl from New Zealand, it wasn't that satisfactory to us as they kept putting the rent up and up and every thing seemed to be our responsibility. We seemed to be working hard just to pay the rent.

So soon in 1955 Elliott made up his mind he wasn't going to stay at Trehill any longer and pay such steep rents, Many of the farmers in the area was going to support Elliott in his protest with the estate but when crunch day came many did not have the courage of their conviction so Elliott stood his ground on his own, terminated his contract with Mt Edgcumbe Estate while still maintaining some war department land at Knatterberry. He looked out for his own little stake in England while living in temporary accommodation in Cawsand Fort and Florrick Down came on the market with ten acres of land so he bought it.

Elliott never knowing anything else but farming also got a job under the Admiralty as a lorry driver having first having a driving licence since 1926. And used of driving tractors, cattle trucks, motor cycles and all types of heavy goods vehicles He graduated up the scale and eventually became the chauffer to the Vitualling Yards General Manager with whom he became friends. At this time Colyn was going to a private school in Plymouth and was extremely keen on engineering so he took the Dockyard examination and became an engineering apprentice. Mean while our other son Adrian was attending Saltash Grammar School. Colyn was a very keen motorcyclist and still is to this day, Adrian was a keen singer and joined the Carmenians in Plymouth and often took a solo part in Gilbert and Sullivan.

Ever Easter Saturday we all used to go to Blue Hills Mine at St Agnes to watch the competitors compete in the London to Lands End Motor Trial which included Cars and Motorcycles. When Granny Thomas was still with us, she would pack up quite a picnic for us and we would all go off together to watch the contestants coming through on their way to Lands End.

Whilst Elliot was working for the Admiralty he often had to go away with his work some times a week at a time and I would look after the farm animals. One particular time Sara the house cow was due to calf down. It happened at about 5.30am in the morning and I could see the poor thing was having a bad time and the calf was coming breach, so I had to keep my wits about me and put a rope around the calf and pull to bring him into the world. It was a beautiful Hereford bull calf. I gave it the kiss of life and had it standing within half an hour. It grew into a wonderful beast and I was more than sorry when it went to market.

Well by now I felt that I had to take up a hobby so I picked on Oil Painting, it was just an amateur group at the Men's Institute Kingsand and we went Monday afternoons and each July we had a sale and exhibition which lasted three days and I really enjoyed it. Elliott is now retired and still keeps his animals as I am sure we would be lost without them, He is such a busy person what with his large vegetable garden and lawns to keep him going. I thank God for a wonderful varied and interesting life, for having two fine sons, daughter in laws, grandsons and a wonderful husband, god bless them.

**Edna Thomas**  
**22 February 1983**