

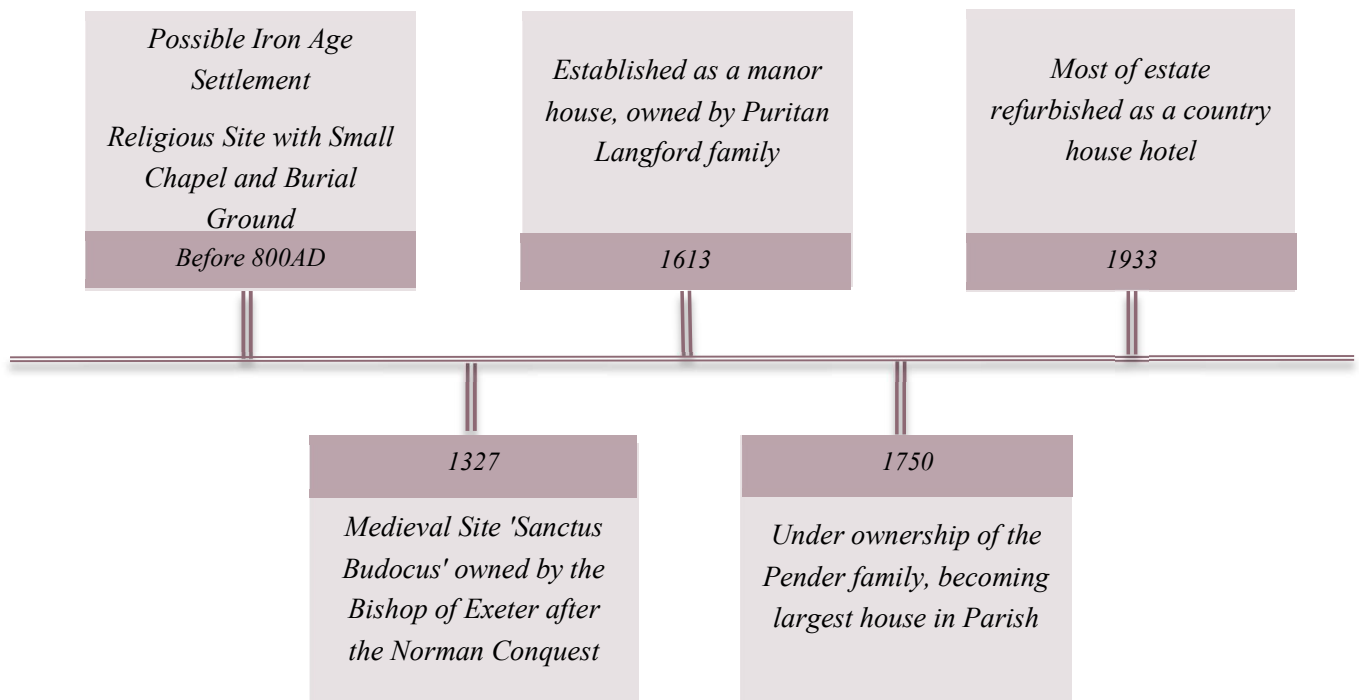


## CONNECTING WITH THE PAST

Budock Vean has operated as a successful country house hotel since 1933 when it was first opened by Eddie Pilgrim and Harry B. Parkinson after an extensive renovation. With its sprawling grass and woodland views, its unique position beside the Helford river, and its peaceful seclusion from urban life, Budock Vean has long been an admired beauty spot. But, it is also home to a rich and varied history which spans the worship of

medieval saints to the popular holiday retreat of many 20<sup>th</sup> century film makers.

After the Norman conquest in 1066 much of Cornwall was divided up between the aristocracy. By 1085 Budock Vean, lying in Constantine parish, would have formed part of the Manor of Penryn-Foreign, owned by the Bishop of Exeter. In Britain's earliest surviving



public record, the Domesday Book, Constantine made up one of 34 places listed in the hundred of Winnianton. The first mention of Budock Vean dates to a document of 1327 where it is recorded as 'Sanctus Budocus'. The addition of 'Vean', meaning small, may have been used to separate it from the larger parish of Budock in the North. Budock Vean is also referred to in a mid-13th century list of Free Tenants of the Bishop of Exeter under a Richard de Sancto Buthock, and in a 14th century document under a Benedict de Sancto Budoco. A record from 1538 lists the existence of an Eglos Bothyck-Vyan, meaning Little Budock Church, in the manor of Penryn Foreign.

To the north of the current hotel is the former site of a small monastic chapel which contained its own holy well and burial ground. It is believed to have been dedicated to Saint Budoc, a 6th century priest, abbot, and archbishop with links to both Cornwall and Ireland. According to a late medieval chronicle he was the son of a Breton princess falsely accused of infidelity and cast adrift upon the sea in a barrel. The existence of a holy well at the site supports the evidence for early roots of Christianity in Cornwall as such springs are often associated with cults of Celtic saints. The memory of St Budoc, whether the religious chapel was truly dedicated to him or not, has undeniably shaped the landscape,

"Budock Vean, a place latterly given over to leisure but once one of worship and theology."

Boulton, C. (2019), *Five Million Tides*, Gloucestershire: The History Press.

giving it the name of Budock. During the 19th century, some years prior to 1838, human remains were discovered at the former chapel. The skeletons, presumably monks, deteriorated after exposure to air, and their true identity will sadly remain a mystery.

Relics such as ceramic pottery and earthworks indicate that sites around the Helford river were occupied during the iron age. In a document from 1649, Budock Vean is recorded as containing a 'Little Park an Geor', meaning 'field with the fort'. This 'fort' is a strong indicator that the site contained a 'Round', prehistoric defended settlements which are especially concentrated around sites at the Helford. Today, the exact location of this site remains undiscovered as it was not chartered on early ordnance survey maps.



Ordnance Survey First Series, Sheet 31 (1856). This work is based on data provided through <https://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/> and uses historical material which is copyright of the Great Britain Historical GIS Project and the University of Portsmouth".





Map within the 'Lanhydrock Atlas' showing land at Budock Vean owned by the 'Langford' family and the 'Penwornes' at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

It is unclear when the first manor house at Budock Vean was built, but by 1538, the property was held jointly by John Penworne, Richard Retyn and John Carne, each of whom rendered to the Lord of the Manor at Penryn, 9 pence for a sheep, 2 pence for aid, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  pence in lieu of ploughing and  $\frac{3}{4}$  pence for reaping. In 1613 the estate came into the possession of the Langford family who were Puritan Protestants. When the Royalist rector of nearby Gwennap parish was evicted in 1653, after the ascension of Oliver Cromwell to Lord Protector of the British Isles, John Langford assumed the position of Benefice of Gwennap. After the restoration he was removed from this office. His son Thomas was also a staunch Puritan, and supported the Monmouth rebellion in 1685, leading to orders being issued for his arrest.

In 1715 the land passed into the possession of Henry Penrose and his wife Margery, before being taken on by Benjamin Pender in 1750 under a 99 year lease. The land passed on to Benjamin Pender junior after the death of his father in 1769. His son, Francis Pender, later inherited, before being succeeded by William Rous Tresilian Pender. At the head of the creek lie the remains of the Wheal Anna Maria, named after Anna Maria Pender in 1833. The mine, made up of two shafts and spanning an area of 3.2 hectares, sold 119 tons of 7.5% copper ore before falling into disuse by the end of the century.

After nearly 200 years, Budock Vean left the ownership of the Pender family, and was sold to their tenant, Mr Dunstan, in 1921. Mr Dunstan sold most of the estate to a Mr Taylor who intended to convert the manor into a country club, and the rest he sold off for residential housing. In 1930, after a visit to the deserted manor house, Harry Parkinson and Eddie Pilgrim took over the site and began acquiring capital from parts of the estate in order to procure funds for the refurbishment of the manor house itself. The process was sped along with the arrival of Walter Bartholomew, a friend of Parkinson, who put forward £10,000 for the manor's development. At this point the manor house became what we now know it as today: Budock

Vean Hotel, first appearing in The Sphere's register of British Hotels in October 1933. The new hotel was eagerly anticipated, with hopes that its golf and tennis facilities would attract tourists to Falmouth, and that its development would make the district more accessible.

After opening, Budock Vean hotel was awarded A.A., R.A.C., Hotel and Restaurant Association, Wine and Food Society recommendations, and received praise in the press. In 1935 Harry Parkinson moved back to London leaving Eddie Pilgrim to further develop the hotel, adding extra bedrooms and private suites. It was during this time, in May 1936, that esteemed writer Virginia Woolf stayed at the hotel whilst on holiday to Cornwall. In one published letter to her nephew, Julian, she compliments the unspoilt bays around the



The Pender family at Budock Vean

Helford river, and her desire to purchase a cottage in the area (Banks, 1984; 186). In 1937 Walter Bartholomew's interest in the hotel was bought by Canadian Mr. H. Whiteside, a confectionary manufacturer who introduced Sun-Pat peanut butter into the UK. At this point Parkinson returned to

Budock Vean as managing director. Just as Parkinson and Pilgrim designed the hotel to be a first-class experience, Whiteside aimed to create an atmosphere of more than just a conventional hotel, but of a family country house. A



Budock Vean, pictured in *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 1938.

regular clientele was established, including several figures from show business, such as George Black, managing director of the London Palladium, and film distributor C.M. Woolf along with his sons John and James, who were involved in the production of feature films such as *The African Queen* (1951).

Throughout the 1940s Budock Vean continued to run as a successful hotel, providing a temporary escape for some from the second world war with its isolated country setting. The hotel featured in several articles of *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, receiving praise for its facilities, location, food, and staffing. In his memoirs, former owner Harry B. Parkinson recalls how sometimes sailors from the Royal Navy would turn up in large groups whilst they were docked in Falmouth. At this time, the ceiling of the cocktail lounge was decorated with a stuffed monkey – a Christmas gift given to Parkinson – which the sailors took with them as their lucky mascot. When the US Air Force came to West Cornwall in 1944 the hotel was no longer open for civilians and effectively became a restaurant catering to uniformed men and women. After the war ended, Budock Vean returned to its function as a hotel. It was eventually purchased by the Barlow family in 1987.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, there was a great influx of tropical plants and seeds introduced to Cornwall through the busy port of Falmouth. The Fox family in particular were a major shipping agent with a keen interest for horticulture who imported many new species for cultivation. Their legacy can be seen in the

cluster of sub-tropical gardens they created around Falmouth, including nearby Trebah garden which was bought by Charles Fox in 1838. As another wealthy Cornish family, it is likely that the Pender's of Budock Vean also collected imported plants and seeds, for instance,

*Dicksonia Antarctica* tree ferns native to Eastern Australia, in order to establish the valley garden on the estate. In 1993 Kerrier District Council established a Tree Preservation Order at Budock Vean on trees situated on the drive entrance and around the hotel, as well as any trees in existence since 1993. Sadly, in 1997 two Holm Oaks, estimated to have been up to 250 years old were chopped down due to fungal growth. But, today the gardens remain vibrant and demonstrate the Pender family's interest in gardening and specimen collection.

### *Did You Know?*

*Former owner of Budock Vean, Harry Parkinson, produced a silent film documentary about the life of Charlie Chaplin in 1928. The documentary was suppressed by Chaplin and only resurfaced in the 1990s when a member of the Parkinson family discovered the film tucked away in a garage. It was sold at Christie's Auction in 1997 for £17,250!*

# Budock Vean in the Papers

## An Accidental Shooting

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1850

In January, a member of the Pender family was involved in a firearm's incident. Whilst on a sporting excursion with a 13-year-old boy, Constantine Pender was accidentally shot in the left leg when the boy, walking behind, accidentally set off the gun. Luckily for Constantine, the injuries were not serious.

## Deserters

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1860

In September, the second mate of the American barque Hannah sought shelter at Budock Vean after being stabbed nearby by a fellow sailor. The second mate, William John Scantlebury had been attempting to stop the sailor (and his two other companions) as they tried to desert the ship.

## Benefits of Beer

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1862

In 1862 John Rodgers of Budock Vean wrote an impassioned response, published in the West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser, to a claim made in a previous newspaper denouncing the consumption of beer. Rodgers presents several arguments in favour of beer, including its comforting and nutritional value to the working man.

## Theft

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1935

In 1935, E. H. Winn, a builder from Helston, was constructing a building on the Budock Vean Estate when his store was broken into by two men. They stole a number of tools and were later caught after trying to steal a boat at Maenporth Beach. They were sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

## Aneurin Bevan

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1947

In 1947, Welsh Labour Party politician and Minister of Health Aneurin Bevan spent 10 days at Budock Vean whilst recovering from illness. Bevan played a significant role in creating the National Health Service which launched in 1948.

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## Appendix

- (1) Royal Cornwall Gazette, Friday, January 25, 1850 (BNA)

**INCAUTIOUS USE OF FIRE ARMS.**—On Thursday, an accident which, providentially, proved not of a very serious character, happened in this neighbourhood. Mr. Constantine Pender, of Budock-vean, accompanied by a young gentleman aged about 13 years, were on a sporting excursion. The latter was allowed to carry the gun, and was walking at a distance of about 20 feet behind Mr. Pender, when the gun went off and a considerable part of its contents was lodged in Mr. Pender's left leg. Surgical assistance was immediately obtained, and we are happy to hear that the consequences are not likely to be serious.

- (2) The Western Morning News, Friday, September 7, 1860 (BNA)

In the *Western Morning News* of yesterday, we announced the particulars of a case where some sailors had absconded from the American barque *Hannah*, at Falmouth, and having been pursued by a young man called Scantlebury, who had lately joined the ship at Falmouth, they stabbed him. On Wednesday afternoon, Richard Miller, who appeared to be about 22 years of age, was brought up in custody, before Hender John Molesworth, and St. Aubyn, Esqs., country magistrates, charged with stabbing the prosecutor, with intent to do him some grievous bodily injury. Mr. Pollard, from the office of Alfred Fox, Esq., the American Consul, at Falmouth, attended to watch the case.

William John Scantlebury, the prosecutor, said, yesterday, the 4th September, I entered as second mate of the American barque *Hannah*, of New York, to which the prisoner belonged. In the afternoon about half-past two, William Richards, a police-constable of the borough of Falmouth, and myself, went in search of the prisoner, and two other men who had deserted from the ship, when we reached the brow of the hill leading down to Helford-passage, we saw the three men; I then ran on before Richards, and overtook the men about the middle of the beach. I threatened to shoot them if they did not stop—they turned round, and seeing that I had no arms, a general fight ensued, they striking at me, and I at them. After a little time, prisoner said, “You d—d son of a bitch, I'll do for you now,” and struck me with a knife just below he left shoulder joint. Immediately afterwards I was again stabbed by the prisoner near the first wound, and a third time in the left side; the blood leaked out under my shirt. I saw the knife in the prisoner's hands. Prisoner and the other men ran away. I followed them as well as I could, but becoming weak from loss of blood, and the road being slippery, I fell several times; and when last I saw the men they were going in the direction of a wood near Mr. Pender's, at Budockvean. I walked towards Mr. Pender's house, and when near it, Richards, the police-constable, and others came up, and we all went into Mr. Pender's. My wounds were dressed, and I was sent into Dr. Vigurs's, at Falmouth, who attended to me.

- (3) The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser, Friday, August 29, 1862 (BNA)

## Correspondence.

### Qualities of Beer.

To the EDITOR of the WEST BRITON.

SIR,—Mr. Mudge, the enemy of the hard-working man, has come forward in your valuable paper of the 1st inst., with his cry, “Beer is poison, and no good in it.” No one believes it but the red-hot teetotaler. His table showing the qualities of beer is all fudge. Man cannot work hard on bread alone, but on bread and beer together there is no saying how long he can work. It is the best beverage for the working man, the nurse's comfort, and thousands upon thousands, come from their bed of sickness, have been restored to strength by beer after all medicines have failed. I know a man who was afflicted so much that he went to the Infirmary, at Truro, and came out pronounced incurable, his appetite entirely gone from all food, and now he is quite well, having lived for three months on beer. I could say a great deal more in favour of beer, but the drunkard must recollect there is a woe pronounced against him, and also the glutton, for they are classed together in Scripture; the mischief is not in the beer, it is in the drunkard. If the names of all who commend beer because it is nutritious were written down, they would fill every paper that is printed in Great Britain: for I believe beer and all drinks are designed by God for the use of men; and I challenge Mr. Mudge or any red-hot teetotaler to prove otherwise.

I am, Sir, your humble servant,  
Budockvean, August 23, 1862. JOHN ROGERS.



- (5) The Cornishman and Cornish Telegraph,  
Thursday, October 3, 1935 (BNA)

**THREE YEARS' PENAL SERVITUDE**

At Cornwall Quarter Sessions at Bodmin, on Tuesday, before Lieut.-Col. R. T. G. Tangye (in the chair), James Hall, 25, french polisher, and Ernest Gatheridge Lister Parsons, 36, seaman, were charged with breaking and entering the store of E. H. Winn, and stealing a canvas tool bag, a rip saw and other tools, the property of Peter Treloar Kitchen, between 5 p.m. July 25, and 8 p.m. the following day, and, also on the same night, stealing a motor boat, the property of Mrs. Alice Hext. They pleaded "Guilty."

Mr. R. L. Frank, of Truro, who prosecuted, said with regard to the first count, Mr. Winn, a builder, residing at Helston, was at the time erecting a building on the Budock Vean Estate. A workmen's store, securely fastened on July 25, was found to have been entered the next morning, the lock having been forced and broken.

Mr. Kitchen, an employee, missed his tool bag and tools.

With regard to the second count, Mr. Frank said the boatman employed by Mrs. Hext, of Constantine, moored the boat in the Helford River on July 25, and missed it the following morning, and found that a small rope had been cut. On the following day at Maenporth Beach he saw the boat with the accused men sitting in it.

When charged by P.C. Pooley with stealing the boat, Hall said they saw it drifting in the river and he swam out and brought it to the shore. They started to row towards Falmouth but became tired and pulled in and sat in the boat.

Supt. Hoskings said Hall was a native of Sheffield and Parsons was born at Plymouth. There were five other joint charges outstanding against Hall and Parsons which the accused wished to have taken into consideration.

The chairman described them as perils to society.

Each was sentenced to three years' penal servitude.

- (6) The Cornishman, Thursday, April 3, 1947 (BNA)

**Mr. Aneurin Bevan's Visit**

Mr. Aneurin Bevan has just returned to London, after spending ten days' convalescence in Cornwall. He stayed at Budock Vean, Mawnan Smith, near Falmouth, and visited the new Helston housing site to see the houses being built by Helston Borough Council.