

REPRINT

REFLECTIONS OF OLD CORNWALL

Reg Watkiss

This book follows on the success of *Lost Cornwall*, the first book of photographs to come from the Reg Watkiss Archive. This further selection of superb images is chosen by the author from a veritable treasure trove of photographic prints, glass plates and negatives contained in the archive, plus others that have come to light since the publication of *Lost Cornwall*. A number of the photographs included have not been seen since they were first taken, sometimes over a century past.

The title of this second book was chosen, in part, to reflect the sense of 'looking back' to the days which many long for; recalling scenes in some cases of well over a century ago. But the title also refers to the inevitable sense of nostalgia felt when looking at so much that the passing years have taken away, particularly the essential Cornish character of so many of our towns and villages.

These photographs remind us that not all that is in the past was good, nor that all change is for the best. Poverty, danger to life and limb from mining and at sea, and hard toil for the majority are variously illustrated in these pages. But who could, on looking through this book, not also feel a yearning for the uncomplicated daily life the images reveal, and a sense of gratitude in seeing what might have passed beyond our knowing, but for the presence of a camera.

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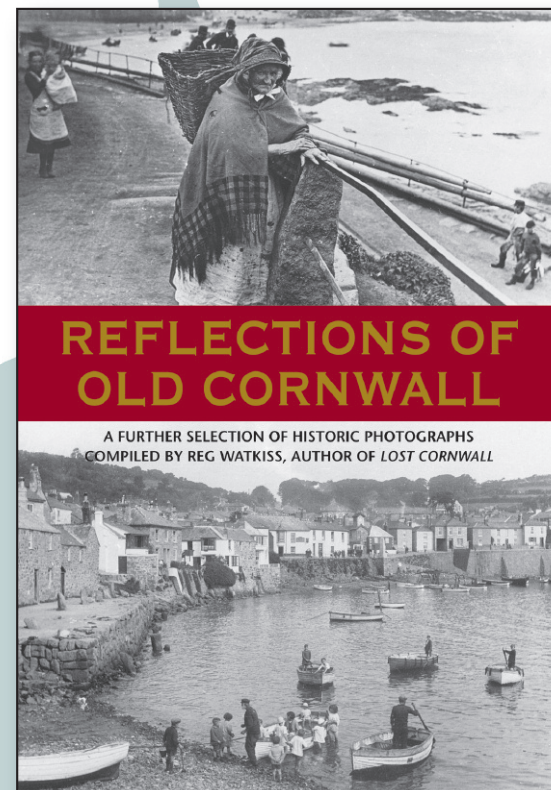


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reg Watkiss was born in London in 1933. He first studied painting and photography at Walthamstow School of Art for a National Diploma in Design. Following this he was accepted as a scholarship student into the painting school of The Royal Academy of Arts, London. In 1958, after completing four years there, he moved to the West Penwith area of Cornwall where he married his wife Gill, also a painter; and they have lived and worked there ever since. Around the early 1960s his interest in photography increased and this was developed, along with the need to provide for a growing family, by painting, part-time teaching and carrying out commercial photographic commissions for other artists. In the 1970s film-making was added to his interests and only recently the Tate Gallery took into its archives one of the short films he made at that time. Collecting archive photographs and old movie film remains very much an ongoing enthusiasm.

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Fax: 01823 216796
www.halsgrove.com
e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com

HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: Hardback, 160 pages, 210x297mm, profusely illustrated in black & white
Price: RRP £19.99 **promotional reprint price £9.99**
ISBN: 978 1 84114 441 2
Imprint: Halsgrove
Published: Originally published 2005, first reprint March 2009

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Newlyn Fish Jowster

Example of a double page spread



Top: Flower Pickers – Early Twentieth Century
Above: Sennen Cove Lifeboat, Crew of the Susan Ashley



Penzance Old Harbour, 1860s



Landing into the Old Newlyn Harbour, 1890s

Small craft are being used to convey fish from the larger boats a little further out in the bay just out of sight beyond the old harbour wall. The fish merchants take their pick for selling on into the major markets, while jowsters are washing and preparing the fish, loading them directly into the waiting carts before they set off into the surrounding villages and hamlets where they will be offered sale.



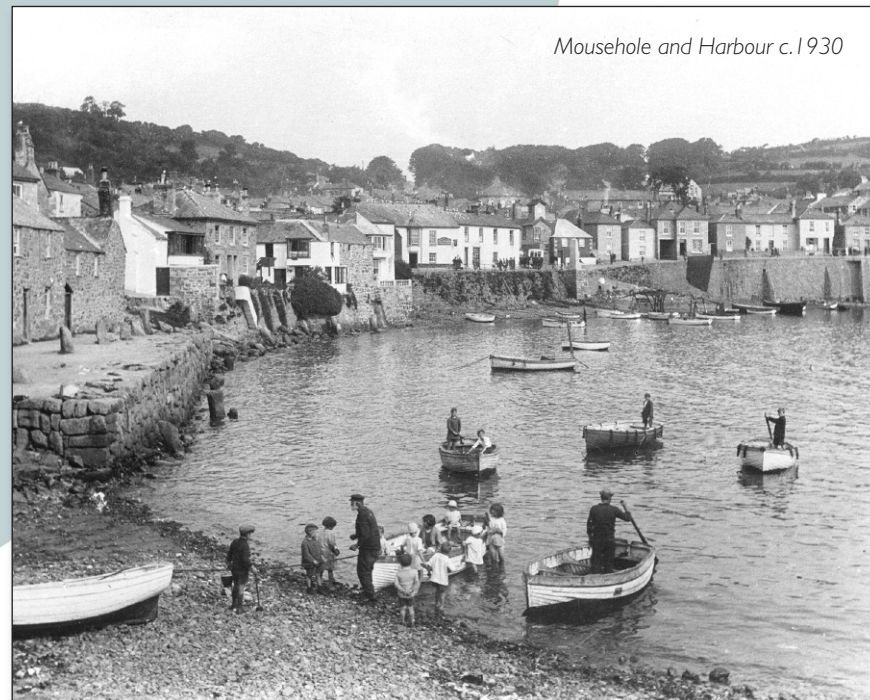
Sorting the Fish c.1900

The fisher girl soon extreme right was Mary Weame. She often modelled for several of the Newlyn School painters, Stanhope Forbes in particular. She is featured in two well known canvases, 'The Hopless Dawn' and 'Last Light'. Looking at this beautifully captured composition of fisherwomen sorting fish that they are about to carry into the town for sale, it is quite easy to see how the painters of the day were influenced from time to time by the photographers.



A Basket of Plichards

Of unknown date, this photograph shows one of the typical backstreet yards with its fish cellar. Here a basket of plichards has been brought in for processing and salting down.



Mousehole and Harbour c.1930