

SPIRIT OF PADSTOW

Robin Jones

Those 'in the know' will for decades have been familiar with the unique charm of Padstow, a traditional Cornish slate-country fishing port that provides a dramatic contrast with bustling brash Newquay 12 miles down the coast.

However, it was the installation in 1990 of harbour gates which for the first time allowed round-the-clock deep water mooring for visiting yachts and other large pleasure craft that really began its transformation into today's fashionable and upmarket resort.

While many changes have taken place over the two decades, Padstow remains remarkably unspoiled, and thanks to the great care taken by residents old and new, has been able to tastefully graft the old with the new.

Therefore it has designer boutiques, surf shops, art galleries and the restaurant empire of the town's celebrity TV chef Rick Stein rubbing shoulders with a tradition that dates back to pagan times: Padstow's famous 'Obby'Oss' festival on May 1, not so long ago a decidedly local affair but one which now attracts visitors from all over the globe.

Robin Jones has been visiting the town for a third of a century, and yet still manages to discover something new and magical each time, as he reveals in this selection of more than 60 images which sum up the true spirit of Padstow.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A graduate of the University of Central England, Robin Jones, founding editor of *Heritage Railway* magazine, was a news editor and chief investigative reporter at the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, and over the years has produced several books and special publications, along with historical features for numerous other newspapers and periodicals.

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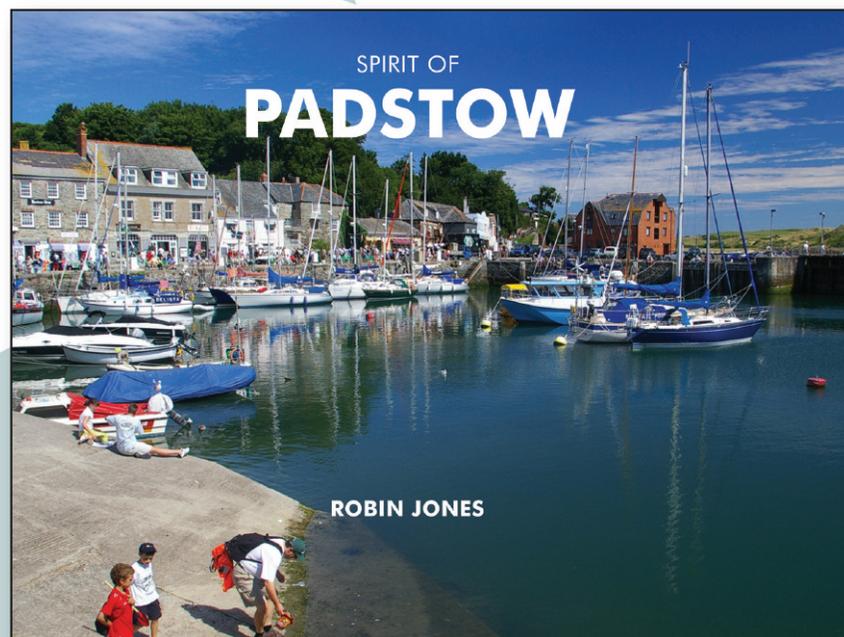
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SPiRiT OF PADSTOW



The Celtic-style memorial to the men of Padstow who lost their lives in two world wars.



Medieval Abbey House on North Quay is Padstow's oldest building and is said to have a secret tunnel leading beneath the hill to Prideaux Place.



Padstow May Day song



The Padstow 'Obby Oses' emerge from their stables on the morning of May 1 and return by midnight. An ancient fertility rite, some believe that the festivities date back to Iron Age times and may be linked to a forgotten religion which venerated horses. One legend says it began with Trevelyan, the only person who escaped the drowning of the legendary kingdom of Lyonesse in an earthquake by fleeing the intruding sea on a black horse.

6



With its teaser in front, the Red Ribbon Ose gyrates towards the quayside.



The Red Ribbon Ose party leaving Prideaux Place, the manor house of Padstow.

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Early morning sunshine catches the harbour at its finest. Padstow is renowned for its deep azure skies, often referred to as the 'Padstow Blue' effect.

Example of a double-page spread.