

THE BOOK OF HELSTON

Diamond Jubilee Edition

Reg Jenkin & Derek Carter

Helston stands on the River Cober; which was once rich in alluvial tin and provided real wealth to the town, which has existed for over 1000 years. It became a borough in 1201, but was a Royal Manor in the time of Edward the Confessor; at about AD 930. The list of Mayors dates from 1284 and includes many famous names of the area. During the past 50 years a great deal of open space has been taken up by new housing, the population has increased, the nature of work and pleasure has changed, but the 8th of May, by tradition, remains Flora Day. The character of the Furry Dance has been carefully preserved through the centuries and it remains a dignified, yet delightful and happy occasion, which should not to be missed if the opportunity arises.

The book gives a brief introduction to the history of Helston, but essentially celebrates the last one hundred years of the town. Through the inclusion of over 250 photographs, supplemented by detailed captions and a lively text based on Reggie Jenkin's stories of life within the town, this superb book will be an heirloom for anyone living in the borough, or for those with family associations with it.

First published in 2000 and quickly sold out, this new edition of *The Book of Helston*, published to coincide with the Diamond Jubilee, brings the story of the community fully up to date. A new section highlights what has happened since the book was first issued, and new images capture how the Jubilee was celebrated. Much extra housing, for example, has increased the population considerably. A fine multi-purpose building has been built on the site of the old cattle market. This provides a venue for a large Farmers' Market, office accommodation and several rooms for community use. This building, along with the Lakeside Café, Skateboard Park, Children's Playground and 'events square' gives a whole new dimension to the area and is enjoyed by young and old alike.

All this and more features in this unique publication which is a vital record of the history and inhabitants of the ancient parish of Helston, presented in a single volume for all to treasure.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Reg Jenkin is a proud 'Helstonian', born during the Great War. Apart from a short period in London and five years of war service, when he returned with Inger his Norwegian wife, he has lived within the town itself and has meticulously recorded the changes that have taken place over those long years.

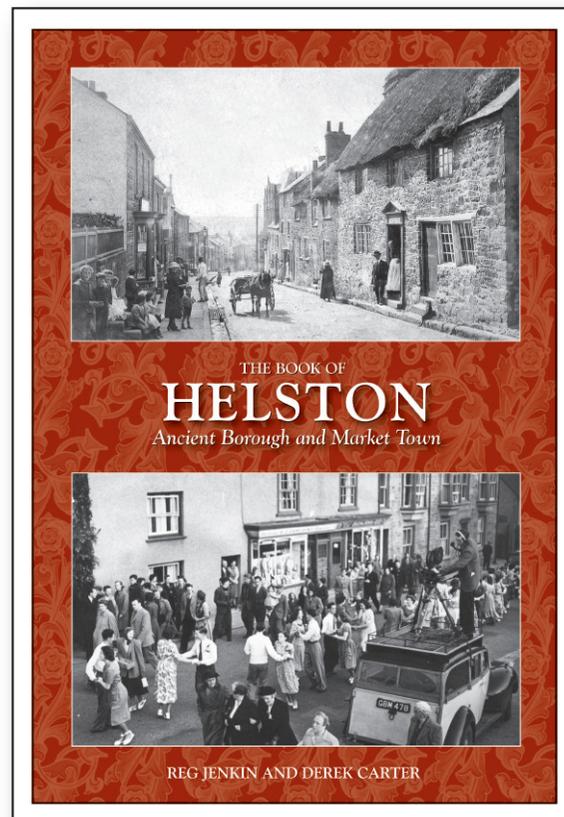
Derek Carter, although a physicist by training, has always been interested in local history. He met his wife, a relation of Reg, whilst at University, which originally brought him to Cornwall. He worked closely with Reg on *The Book of Helston* and has also published a detailed history of Helston Cottage Hospital.

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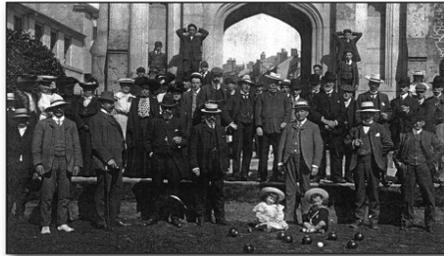


Format: Hardback, 160 pages, 297x210mm,
containing over 300 black & white photographs.
Price: £24.99
ISBN: 978 0 85704 184 5
Imprint: Halsgrove
Published: October 2012



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THE BOOK OF HELSTON



Above: Beating the bounds, 1934.

Top left: Mad Hatter's Tea Party in Meneage Street.

Left: Bowling club members with the Grylls Monument behind, c.1905.



Filming Flora Day at the early-morning dance in Meneage Street, early 1950s.

THE BOOK OF HELSTON

Members of Helston Wesley Chapel photographed mid 1920s at Darville, Cross Street, the home of Mr and Mrs E.C. Oliver. Left to right, back (standing): J. J. Mrs Kneebone, J. J. Mrs Alfred Oates, J. J. J. Miss Cavan James, Mr Dawson's son, J. J. J. Third row (seated): Mr Fred Thomas, E.C. Oliver, Miss Jellon, Miss Downing, J. J. J. Mrs Taskie. Second row (seated): Mr Fred Thomas, E.C. Oliver, Miss Jellon, Miss Downing, J. J. J. Mrs Taskie. (Front: J. J. J. Miss Lewis, Mr Dawson, J. J. J.)

HELSTON, THE TOWN OF MY YOUTH

CHURCH STREET

Church Street is a quaint old street which retains many of its original features. Wakeham's Chemist on the corner was the original Stamp Office and faced the Guildhall under which was the fire station. The fire bell was at the top end of the Market House and the horses for drawing the engine were either kept up in the Angel Stables and in a field behind the church. It was a very steep hill leading out of the station and the horses must have been under some strain. When the brigade began to use a motorised engine, they had to get up steam to work the water pumps.

The Red Lion in Church Street was kept by a good-natured couple called Mr and Mrs Sweeney. Next door to them was the shop of John Kemp Bray who started up in Meneage Road with a smallholding and a shop selling boots and shoes, later moving to Church Street. He used to travel around the markets selling his 'Holland boots' and shoes from a motorised van. Later his shop became a furnishing store. Immediately adjacent is Wheeharrow Lane, a winding cobbled path with shallow steps leading to Five Wells. The lane was so called because each step was shaped to allow easier passage for the wheels of the barnows

which were pushed up and down the hill. The next house was home to the Hoadleys, one of whom married Colonel Head, the vicar.

At the back of the electrical shop is Five Well Lane - a strange name as there appears to be only one well here. Old maps reveal that there was, at one time, a dispensary there, where people who could not afford to pay a doctor received free medicines. Could this have been at No. 27? If so, it could be that with so many references to visiting '5 Well Lane' the thoughtless (they eventually took on the name.

The big granite building on the left (which has been converted into flats) was a National Children's Home. When this closed in the early 1920s, all the children were transferred to the Union, where they became part of the Workhouse. The British Legion then used the vacated building as a club, of which, in 1925, my father was caretaker.

At the other end of the street, up Church Hill, is the Old National School, now 'Andrew Hall', one of a fine group of Georgian buildings.

Mr Andrew was church organist and his wife was very much involved in all church activities. They lived on Falmouth Road and where the school came up for sale, Mr Andrew lent the money interest free, for the church's purchase of the building.

Looking towards the church up Church Street, early 1900s. Lander's shop is on the right hand side with the bay window.



Farmers driving their sheep to market, c.1930s.