

PENRYN

(From the Cornish: Penrynn, from Pen-ryn meaning 'promontory'- *a narrow area of high land that sticks out into the sea*).

The population in the 2001 census was 7,166. Penryn is twinned with Audierne in Brittany, France. Standing at the head of the Penryn River, Penryn occupies a sheltered position and was a port of some significance in the 15th century. Penryn is one of Cornwall's most ancient towns, with a wealth of charm, character and history. These lands appear in Domesday Book under the name of Trelivel.

Penryn was founded in 1216 by the Bishop of Exeter. The borough was enfranchised and its Charter of Incorporation was made in 1236. The A39 once passed through Penryn towards the end of its route in nearby Falmouth, but in 1994 was diverted around the town when the Penryn Bypass was opened, incorporating a stretch of new road along with upgrading to an existing road. It has managed to retain an enormous amount of its heritage. With a large proportion of its buildings dating back to Tudor, Jacobean and Georgian times, the town has been designated as an important Conservation area, and has more listed buildings than any other town in Cornwall. The local museum is housed in the Town Hall and brings the history to life. Penryn had a market day/ parade on 30 August, 2009. Penryn railway station was opened by the Cornwall Railway on 24 August 1863. It is towards the north west end of the town and is served by regular trains from Truro to Falmouth on the Maritime Line. The parish of St. Gluvias covers most of the Borough of Penryn and extends into the countryside to include the present day village of Ponsanooth, and the hamlets of Burnthouse and Treluswell.

In unrecorded times there was a settlement at "Round Ring" in "the fields of Behethlen" (Bohellan fields) with, very probably, its pre-Christian place of worship on the site now occupied by St. Gluvias Church. This, before its dedication in the 14th Century, was probably the ancient "capella de Behethlen". (Chapel of Bohellan) To the creek below the church, probably came the first foreign traders.

In 1259: On January 8th, Penryn was granted a Charter Fair, to be held yearly on the Feast of St. Thomas the Martyr (referred to as the 'Blood Fair'. Henry III granted to the Bishop of Exeter a weekly market at Penryn. In 1265: The great Collegiate Church of Glasney was founded, where the Antron River enters the Penryn Creek. By 1327, such was the intercourse of foreign trade through the harbour, it is recorded that half the population of Penryn consisted of foreigners and 22 substantial merchants paid the subsidy, as compared with 33 at Helston and 42 at Truro. 1547 saw the suppression of the great Glasney Collegiate Church. In 1553, Penryn commenced regularly to return two members to Parliament. In 1599, the Mayor of Penryn was selected to hire a frigate - a fast sailing vessel - to sail off the coast of Spain in order to see "that the coast be clear." (The Spaniards had attempted a raid on the town in 1759.). At this time the harbour at Falmouth was considered too wild to haven the ships of the day

so there was little development with the main centre being Penryn, so in 1617, the Mayor of Penryn in a letter described contemptuously the infant Falmouth as "those cottages of Penny - come - quick."

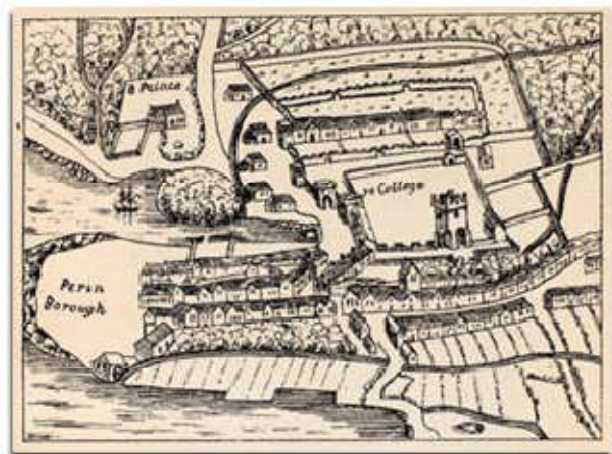
By the mid 17th century the port was thriving with the trade in Cornish fish, tin and copper. However Penryn lost its Customs House and market rights to the new town of Falmouth as a direct result of supporting the wrong side in the English Civil War (1642-48). The Killigrews of Arwenack were more skilful turncoats, and as their new town grew so the older port of Penryn declined from the 17th century right up to today.

From 1554, Penryn held a parliamentary constituency, which became Penryn and Falmouth in 1832. The constituency was abolished in 1950, with Penryn becoming part of the Falmouth and Camborne constituency. It received a royal charter as a borough in 1621, mainly in a bid by the crown to cure the town of piracy. At least three mayors of Penryn were convicted of piracy between 1550 and 1650.

Glasney:

In 1265, a religious college, called Glasney College was built in Penryn for the Bishop of Exeter to develop the church's influence in the far west of the diocese. In 1374, the chapel of St Thomas (sometimes called St Mary's) was opened. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII and the disestablishing of the Roman Catholic church, Glasney was dissolved and demolished in 1548 during the brief reign of Edward VI, the first Protestant Duke of Cornwall afterwards King of England.

The dissolution of Glasney College helped trigger the Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549. The loss of Glasney and the defeat of the 1549 rebellion proved to be a turning point in the history of the town from which Penryn has, arguably, never recovered. The site of the College lies largely vacant among houses, with just a few stones and old signage to mark a very historic site for Cornwall, barely showing where it was.



Glasney College

(Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, vol. 1, 1864)

Tremough:

Education had come back to Penryn, as in 2004, the Tremough Campus just above the town was completed, creating the hub of the Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC) project. It provides a new home for the Institute of Cornish Studies and the University of Exeter's world renowned Camborne School of Mines, which has moved from Camborne, where it has been for over a century.