

TORPOINT ARCHIVES

&

HERITAGE CENTRE



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Registered Charity 1043650

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2022

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A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members and Friends,

Following two years disruption because of Covid, this full year in the Community Hub has been very busy.

At the AGM in June, Tom presented a revised CONSTITUTION which was accepted by members present. It followed current Charity Commission Guidelines and was needed to replace the 28 year old original.

Three more volunteers Julie, Paula and Malcolm have recently joined the Team and soon we should be able to open again for all 10 sessions.

Thanks to a very generous anonymous donation a new Desktop and laptop computer have been purchased and a portable banner to take to outside events is being designed.

All Torpoint's Condolence Books, compiled following the death of Queen Elizabeth 2nd are now gathered in a Special Memorial Book

By the end of the year the team will have worked over 2,000 voluntary hours and greeted over 500 visitors! All visitors to the Library enjoy the 4th MP3 display prepared by Paul Roper. This runs a continuous collection of photographs old and new on the large Library screen.

You would be very welcome to join the team and be part of the exciting project about the old terrace names which we hope to publish for TAHC 30th Anniversary in 2024. If you have any memories of living in an older terrace Torpoint before 1962 please get in touch.

I would like to thank all our Members and Volunteers for their support.

Best wishes for

A Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Chairman



My Wartime Childhood Memories by Harold (Bill) BREWER 1930 - 2022



I was 9 years old when the Second World War broke out. My Dad was away for most of the war in the Royal Navy making numerous Atlantic crossings on HMS Forth.

As a schoolboy, life for me carried on as usual in the early days, but I remember when HMS Ajax, HMS Achilles and HMS Exeter returned after the Battle of the River Plate, we trooped outside to the playground to cheer them up the Hamoaze. I remember the pleasure all of us children had when it was announced that the school had to close. Unfortunately for me, Mum wasn't going to let that get in the way of my education and I was duly sent to Mr Short for maths lessons! Early on in the war, looking north from Victoria Street I saw a plane flying east and dropping the first bombs on Torpoint. The story soon spread that it had been a French plane but manned by Germans and because it was French no one opened fire on it. On another occasion, I'd been sent out by Mum during a raid to find my sister, and I saw a German plane flying up the Hamoaze and the first guns to open fire on it were

from a Polish manned ship moored near Yonderberry. I became a messenger "runner" for the ARP and was very proud of the steel helmet I was given to wear. The ARP post at the junction of Mount Edgumbe Terrace and Gordon Terrace was my station and I would pass written messages between there and the post at the junction of Chapel Row and Rowe Street. In the field next to the ARP post (in front of Pembroke Terrace) there was a searchlight and ack-ack gun as well as another above Defiance Field opposite Thanckes.

One event spoken of around the town was that just as a raid was starting, a policeman advised a man to get himself into a shelter which he duly did. Having gratefully survived the raid, the man decided to go and thank the policeman – and found the poor chap dead on his feet, outside Harvey's abattoir, having been killed by the blast of the bomb that landed in Harvey Street. During air raids my family would take to the shelters. There were shelters at the bottom of the Albion Road School playground (that still survive today) as well as large shelters in Cambridge Field (also known as Downing's Field as Mr Downing kept his horses there) and in the hillside opposite the cinema in Antony Road. In 1941 when leaving this shelter the people could clearly see the tanks at Thanckes Oil Fuel Depot ablaze – a sight that made a huge impression on me. Normally, our family used the Anderson shelter in the back garden of Victoria Street. But one time, when Dad was home on leave he told us we'd be just as safe in the house and I remember us all sitting it out in the back room – with my knees knocking! Our Anderson shelter – built of corrugated iron and reinforced with sand bags - had a doorway with a plank of wood supported on sand bags. During one raid this doorway collapsed (probably due to the weight of the sand bags) and we had to escape out the emergency exit at the opposite end. In our small back court, as well as the shelter we had a chicken run as well. I had a broody hen that raised the chicks, which in turn produced eggs. We had our rations cut so we could have bran to feed the hens but it was worth it to have fresh eggs. The first time rats got in the run I was given a trap and was shown how to drown the rats – a job I had to do fairly often! Before the war my Dad had a motor boat (moored at Gravesend) and a 2 gallon can of petrol in the shed at home. While he was away, Mum decided this was too risky and had me bury the petrol can in the back garden! Inevitably word got around that we had some petrol and the butcher at the top of Victoria Street came and bought the petrol. Sometime later he was back asking if there was any more – he must have thought oil had been struck in Torpoint! At the top of Victoria Street there was a barrage balloon site, along with another opposite Carew Terrace, manned by RAF personnel whose HQ was in the vicarage.

There was a cook-house for all the men next to the vicarage garden and I remember that over the door there was a sign that read "They also serve who only stand and wait". The barrage balloons were left up as much as possible but if bad weather was forecast they would be winched down. The engines would labour to pull them in and we'd all know by the sound of the engines, there was going to be bad weather, and there probably wouldn't be an air raid. One time while crossing the ferry I saw a mine being swept down the river by the tide and pursued by men frantically rowing a whaler to recover it. My instinct was to get to the opposite end of the ferry, so I never knew if they caught up with it.

When the bombing got really bad Mum marched me and my sisters out to Freathy cliffs for the night. Sometimes they might get a lift but I remember walking between Antony and Lower Tregantle, where there was an unexploded bomb in the field, and creeping by with my hands over my ears – just in case. We would spend the night anywhere we could shelter - in barns and once in an empty gypsy caravan!

The authorities had obviously anticipated the war and plans were made accordingly. There were static water tanks at the junctions of Clarence & Well Park Road, North & York Roads and Tamar Street & Harvey Street. These were to be used by the Fire Brigade to put out fires caused by bombings. These tanks were about 15 yards in diameter and made of corrugated iron and covered with chicken wire - to prevent us kids swimming in them! There was a pump on the beach in front of Arthur Terrace that was used to top up the tanks. I joined the Sea Scouts run by Brian Vincent (Deputy Head at Carbeile School) and Deep Sea Scouts from Fisgard. We boys enjoyed escaping out of the town, camping at Wacker in the woods. After a weekend camp I would wearily cycle home and once could only get as far as the Mill Lanes before sleep overtook me as I lay in the hedge – sometime later I was woken by the noise of a Sunderland Flying boat coming in to land in Plymouth Sound.

In the summers with friends we'd swim off the beach near the wreck of The Cruden Bay (an old wooden tug that had been there since the 1920s) over to the 'timbers' where the MoD stored timber being seasoned in the sea-water.

When VE day came everyone joined in the celebrations in "The Lower Square" as they called the area between Arthur Terrace and Belle Vue. By now I was 15 and in a few months joined the Royal Navy at HMS Fisgard – my childhood over.

Attack By Cow Leads To Death of Ferry Passenger

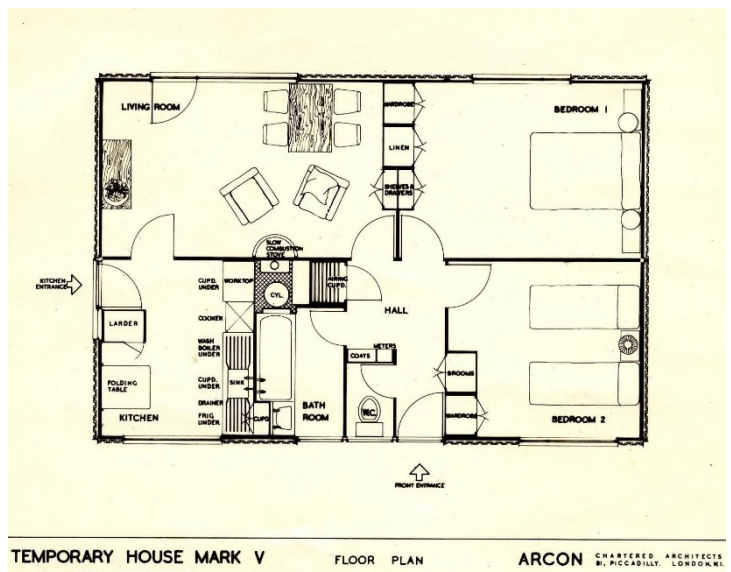
On the afternoon of 11 March 1878, a cow and heifer had been driven from Crafhole on route to Quance's butchery in Devonport. The cow was placid on arrival at the ferry beach but when some young boys antagonised her, she went for them but knocked over an old lady and proceeded to roll her over with her horns. The drover managed to calm the cow down and PC Walter Couch from nearby Torpoint Police Station warned ferry passengers not to go onto the beach. However, John Atwill King (54) ignored the warning and was attacked by the cow who gored him and threw him into the air with her horns. He suffered multiple injuries and was initially taken to the waiting room by Nicholas Broad (a one-armed Naval Pensioner of 6 Fore Street) and William Ryder the ferry's chief engineer (of 2 Fore Street) before being taken to his home in Haddington Road, Devonport where he died. The inquest ruled it was an accidental death and the coroner said it would be advisable to have a shed on the beach to contain animals while foot passengers boarded the ferry.

The Torpoint Prefabs – Mount Edgumbe Estate



Prefabricated houses were a major part of the delivery plan to address the Second World War housing shortage. They were envisaged by the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill in March 1944 and legally outlined in the Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act 1944. Whereas the cost of the prefabs would be met directly by the Ministry of Works, the sites and utility infrastructure costs were to be met by the relevant local authority.

Prefabs were one storey bungalows with two bedrooms, an inside toilet, bathroom, lounge and kitchen as shown in the plan on the right. The lounge had a fireplace with a backboiler that heated the rooms and the water. The kitchen included a refrigerator and a folding table. The prefabs each had a sizeable garden to encourage the growing of fruit and vegetables. A prefabricated coal shed was provided for each dwelling. Following the Blitz in April 1941 700 houses were damaged in Torpoint. Some houses could be repaired but demolition was the only safe way to deal with many including all the dwellings in Ferry Street between the Ferry Gates and the Kings Arms. From the mid 1940s fifty prefabs were erected on the east side of North Road. Like the Edwardian Terrace on the other side of North Road, the prefabs took their name from Mount Edgumbe which was visible across the water. It was considered a privilege to be allocated a prefab. They were warm and cosy and had better amenities than most of the houses that were demolished in lower Torpoint and better than some of the houses that survived!





The building of permanent Council Houses began in Torpoint as soon as the war ended. As far as we know the last tenants from the prefabs were rehoused by Torpoint Urban District Council in 1962. The prefabs were demolished but two survived and were relocated to Thanckes Park where they still form the main structure as the Clubhouse of Torpoint Bowling Club.

Research by Jan Moon 2022

The Royal Cornwall Gazette, 30 April 1852

Coroner's Inquest Wm. Richards James

A coroner's inquest was held on Friday, at Wheeler's "New Inn," Torpoint, before E.G. Hamley, Esq., deputy coroner, on the body of Wm. Richards James (of 55 Fore Street aged 44), who died from the effect of a cut received whilst in the act of skinning a lamb on the previous day.

Wm. Rowe (of 18 Harvey Street aged 23), butcher, deposed that he was in the shop at the time of the accident, and that the deceased was employed in skinning a lamb, and when taking the skin off the knuckle, the knife slipped and entered his leg. He sent for Mr. Down and Mr. Chubb, who came shortly after; the boot of the deceased was full of blood.

Mr. Langdon Down deposed - I was sent for by Rowe, and on my arrival saw a crowd near the house; the boot of the deceased had been removed. I stopped the flow of blood by means of a strong cord. Mr. Chubb came about 7 minutes after; there was no loss of blood in the interval. I remained till his death. Dr. Row and Mr. Folds were soon in attendance. They made an incision in the wound, and endeavoured to take up the artery, in which they failed; they then held a consultation, and I was requested to procure chloroform, which I did; the chloroform was Morson's. While the deceased was under its influence, a cut was made across the calf of the leg, and the artery was discovered; there was an incision in it. The deceased complained of pain in the stomach after the operation. He lived about half an hour after he spoke of the pain; he asked for something to put him to sleep, before chloroform was administered.

Mr. Charles Wm. Chubb, surgeon, after being sworn, deposed - I was called to attend the deceased; I took with me a tourniquet and bandages; I found the deceased lying in a pool of blood on his back; having lost a great quantity of blood. I placed the tourniquet on the artery which commanded the bleeding, I then sent for Dr. Row and Mr. Folds. On their arrival the wound was enlarged for the purpose of ascertaining where the flow of blood was, but without success. We then had a consultation and agreed to administer chloroform. (Mr. Chubb stated that the artery which the deceased had cut was the most difficult to be got at.) An incision was then made across the calf of the leg, and it was found that the artery was punctured, which was tied above and below. The deceased was under the influence of the chloroform about ten minutes; a re-action then took place and the deceased spoke, complaining of pain.

Mr. Folds wished to impress on the minds of the jury that the death was not caused by chloroform. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased died from loss of blood, occasioned by his having accidentally cut through the popliteal artery in the right leg, and that his death was not accelerated in any way by his having taken chloroform. Verdict, "accidental death." **Research by Karen and Geoff TRUSCOTT**

Some events over the last six months



On June 18th six volunteers attended the South East Cornwall Museum Forum “Family History Day” in Liskeard Town Hall. The theme was “Famous Torpointers”. A powerpoint presentation with 172 Torpoint views , events and people ran throughout the day and proved popular. Several Family History Research queries were dealt with.

In September **Juliet and Dominic LANGDON DOWN** returned to present a family plaque commemorating their Great Grandfather Dr John LANGDON DOWN. It has been mounted inside TAHC premises alongside the LANGDON DOWN plaque presented by Torpoint Town Council in 2013.TAHC address is 27 Fore Street, TORPOINT which is the very site where Dr John LANGDON DOWN was born.

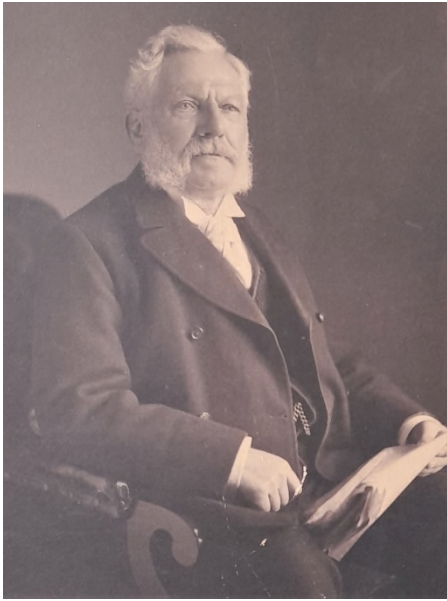


On November 4th we were delighted to welcome back Maddie Creek, one of our long serving and hardest working volunteers. In the presence of her fellow volunteers, members of the Royal Naval Association of which Maddie is a member, some of her personal friends and her son John , the Mayor Councillor Rachel Evans BEM presented Maddie with the “ Person Of Courage “ award.



This portrait is in the Torpoint Archives collection. It was probably given to the Archives when the Wesleyan Chapel in Fore Street, Torpoint closed for renovations.

Joseph Shephard 1824 – 1909



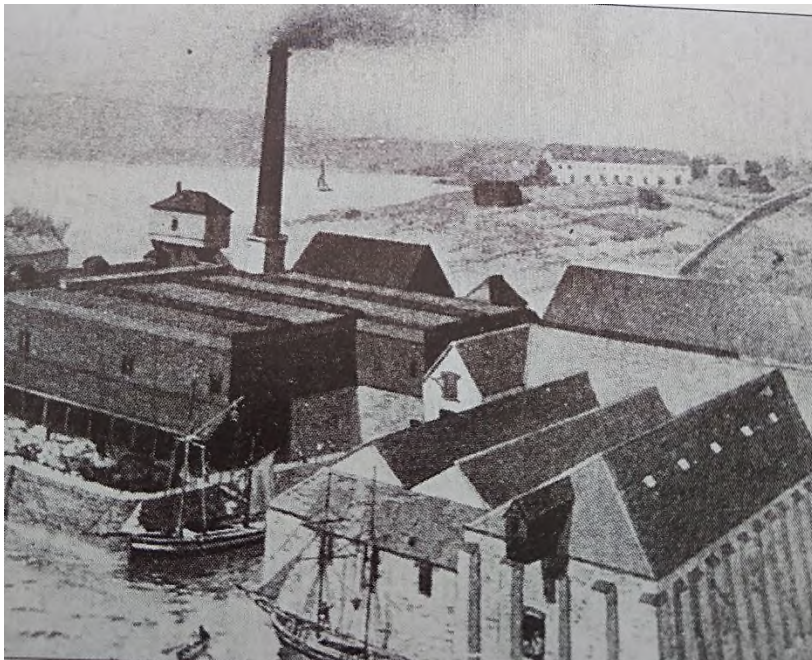
Joseph was born on January 8th 1824 and baptised at the St Andrew Ebenezer Wesleyan Chapel on February 1st 1824. He was the son of Joseph Coles and Sarah Shephard. His father was a pawn broker in 45 Exeter Street, Plymouth and in the 1851 Census, Joseph Junior is following the same profession at the same address.

Joseph married Sarah Garland in 1846. By the time of the 1861 Census Joseph, Sarah and their 3 children had moved to 1 Carlton Villas, Nelson Street, Torpoint (now 7 St. James Road).

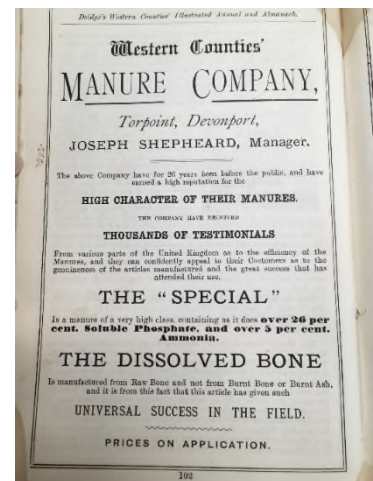
In Torpoint Joseph was the Manager of the Manure factory, Carew Wharf and a benefactor of the Mechanical Institute and the Wesleyan Chapel in Fore Street. He bought the house adjacent to the Chapel. This house was demolished and the area used to expand the Chapel and the Wesleyan School on the same site.

In 1897 Joseph was appointed Justice of the Peace. Sarah and Joseph died in Torpoint in 1892 and 1909 respectively but were buried in Plymouth

A sketch of the Western Counties Manure Factory 1850s



An advert from Doidge Directory 1883



Research by

Margery PAYNE & Rosemary PELLEW

Some definitions from Radio 4s show "Sorry I haven't a clue"

ALLOCATE	how to greet the Princess of Wales
ANNEX	Capt Mark Phillips
AUTOCUE	Traffic jam
AWOL	A dyslexic owl

Francis Watty 1845-1936

Francis was the first of two children to John and Thomasine, born 27 January 1845 in Fowey. His mother died in 1848 while giving birth to still-born twin girls, and by 1851 little Francis was an inmate in St Austell Union Workhouse. There is no further trace of John Watty and like so many at that time Francis had a hard start to life. But he must have had some education as he learned to write, and aged just 12 Francis joined the Royal Navy on 12 October 1857 and was able to sign his own name. He started training on HMS Impregnable moored in the Hamoaze; Torpoint was already in view.



Francis and Mary WATTY

Like most serving men Francis saw service in home and foreign waters and while on HMS Phoebe was promoted from Ordinary Seaman through to Second Mate by 1868. His records show that his character was "Very Good" throughout his service.

In August 1872 Francis married Mary Paul, a tailoress living at 8 King Street, Torpoint. Francis had been serving on HMS Defence under Captain Salmon VC (a), who actually attended their wedding and gave the bride away – even though her father was still alive!

(a) Later Admiral of the Fleet Sir Nowell Salmon VC. As a junior officer he served in the Naval Brigade at the Siege of Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny. He was defending the Residency and volunteered to climb a tree to observe the fall of shot despite being under fire himself and wounded in the thigh.

Francis then transferred to the Coastguard Service mostly serving in Scotland and was a Chief Officer. He and his men were no doubt involved in many rescues but one was reported in the Stonehaven Journal on 9 April 1891.

In the early morning darkness of 6 April 1891 a German smack sailing out of Blyth with a cargo of coal was forced on to the rocky coast at Johnshaven, Aberdeenshire by a strong south-easterly wind. Chief Officer Watty and his men from the Coastguard Station turned out to assist. All the smack's crew had managed to scramble ashore over the rocks and Francis managed to salvage the crew's belongings and the ship's papers before the boat was completely wrecked.

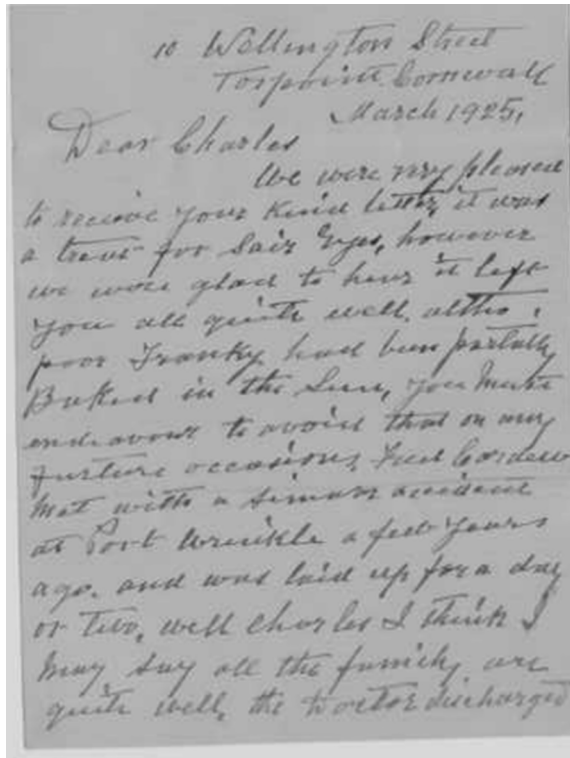
Despite having spent many years in Scotland, Francis and Mary retired to Torpoint living in 10 Wellington Street. They had 8 children, most of whom settled in Torpoint, but (William) Charles emigrated to Australia. They exchanged letters, one of which from 1925 still survives. The usual chitchat on weather, family, plus aches and pains was relayed, but also mentioned getting new ferries and building of bungalows around the town. Francis signed it off affectionately as "Your Loving Father and Mother F&M Watty".

Mary died in 1929 and her funeral was reported in the Cornish Guardian. Francis remained living in 10 Wellington Street, no doubt with support of family, until he died aged 91 years.

Overleaf is an image of the first page and a full transcription of a 6 page letter Francis wrote to his son Charles

It is interesting in giving an approximate date for the bungalows being built in Carbeile Road. Charles CARDEW (mentioned in the letter) taught at Four Lanes End School for many years. It is unknown why but the boys nicknamed him "Shovel Cardew" Charles Cardew lived to be over 100.

10 Wellington Street
Torpoint Cornwall
March 1925



10 Wellington Street
Torpoint Cornwall
March 1925,
Dear Charles
We were very pleased
to receive your kind letter it was
a treat for Sair Enys, however
we were glad to hear it kept
you all quite well, altho
poor Franky had been partially
baked in the sun, you make
endeavour to avoid that on any
future occasions. Fred Cardew
met with a serious accident
at Port Wrinkle a few years
ago, and was laid up for a day
or two, well Charles I think I
may say all the family are
quite well, the doctor discharged

Dear Charles

We were very pleased to receive your kind letter it was a treat for sore eyes, however we were glad to know it left you all quite well altho poor Franky had been partially baked in the sun. You must endeavour to avoid that on any future occasions. Fred Cardew met with a serious accident at Port Wrinkle a few years ago and was laid up for a day or two. Well Charles I think I may say all the family are quite well, the doctor discharged

mother from the sick list last week. We had to call him for her, she had a bad attack of arthralgia(?) in the back, it has been prevalent in the town. Lately east winds have been prevailing, all the rest of us escaped it. Any how I suppose for two old folk we are keeping wonderfully well. I suppose we must put up with minor ailments with the best grace we can. We have much to be thankful for, the girls almost daily give us a call. Beat and Kate are just going out, sometimes we are full up when all turn up of an evening. Ern generally turns up on a Sunday evening, T hey live about 2 hundred yards up above us in Waterloo Street. About the chap from Crafhole Ern was the only one who knew him he drove

him to Millbay when he left, said he was going to Melbourne. Ern told him he had a brother there and gave him your address, that's all we know about him but I've heard he was a decent sort of fellow. We have not seen Frank for a long time or his wife. Their boy is in a drapers shop over in Catherine Street Devonport he is growing to a fine chap, but not over strong. Charley Cardew is a pupil teacher up in the Council School for 12 months prior to going to college. They have to do that. Marion is up in the school in that street. They both go to evening schools in Plymouth. Charley will go to Exeter College & Marion to Truro if she goes to any. Should you ever visit Torpoint again you will see much difference from what it was when you left. We are getting a new Ferry Bridge larger than the old ones and differently constructed to cross quicker and carry more cars etc & run up to 11pm. Many bungalows are going up in different parts of the town but no stone built houses have been erected since 1914, one or two built with cement blocks. What a job it is so many out of employ its deplorable to see them yet picture palaces, music halls and football matches all seem to get large audiences it's a mystery where they get the cash of course. Many get the dole and that's the ruin of many young folk. Art (Arthur Reynolds) firm now have 6 boats mostly employed just now. They are the only tug owners in the port of Plymouth, so that with one thing and the other they must be doing well. Nobs still works with them and handy man. Well now Charles I'm afraid if I write much more you'll get tired of reading it. Give our kind love to dear Frances trusting this will find her and the children quite well.

Have you got a larger boat yet? I take it the one you are in was not mixed up with the late strikes being run by the government was that so?*

All the family send love to one and all and trusting you may find time to drop a line again belove us to remain your loving father and mother F&M Watty

*1925 International Seamen's strike throughout the Empire following a 10% pay cut and other issues.

Transcribed from Family documents by Karen and Geoff TRUSCOTT

BOOKS FOR SALE

Fore Street Torpoint (reprint 2021)	£10
Torpoint in Pictures	£10
Tacky's Tugs	£10
Rendel's Floating Bridges	£10
News and Views	£10
William Ellis Journal	£7.50
Torpoint Timescale	£7
Rame Coastguard Book	£3.50
Undertaker's Account Book	£5

BOOKLETS

History of the Royal Mail in Torpoint	£5
Wacker Mill	£5
Carbeile Mill	£5
Inns of Torpoint	£5

By post add £3.50

Payments by cash, cheques made payable to "The Torpoint Archives" or by

BACs transfer to Sort code 30-12-74 Account number 00203561

Torpoint Archives & Heritage Centre.

Torpoint Library Community Hub.

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Monday to Friday 10am - 12 noon, 2pm - 4pm