JAMAICA INN

Bodmin Moor

A BRIEF HISTORY

BY WILL SWALES

WELCOME

Kevin Charity, founder of The Coaching Inn Group.

Adam Charity, chief operations officer.

Welcome to a brief history of Jamaica Inn, Bodmin Moor. This booklet is one among a series of published histories, which The Coaching Inn Group has been producing since 2016. At that time the company had become established on its specialist mission to acquire and revitalise hotels of heritage, many of them old coaching inns and some with histories dating to the 1500s or earlier.

My father, Kevin Charity, the company founder, and its chief executive until his retirement in 2024, wrote: “While contemplating the small changes and additions we wanted to make, it dawned on me that we will only be the custodians for a generation or two at most. I can’t foretell who will follow but we can take the trouble to discover more about who were the hotel owners and keepers in the past.”

Will Swales, a writer and historian with a background in the hospitality industry, was invited to research and write the series of booklets. His brief was to separate fact from fable, to discover what was true and what had been elaborated or invented during the story-telling process over the years. Will has engaged with other historians, local-history groups, and people with long personal memories of the hotels. He has also searched historic newspapers and local archives to garner new information from sometimes previously undiscovered records. We will always welcome contributions of new information that might be considered for inclusion in future revised editions.

It is hoped that these history booklets will be recognised as memorials to those who were involved in running the hotels in the past, and as heart-felt contributions to the heritage of the communities in which the hotels have played such pivotal roles throughout their existence, and in which they continue to serve today.

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"... ONE OF THE MOST-FAMOUS OLD INNS IN ENGLAND."

FICTION AND FACT

Located on a high and remote spot in the middle of Cornwall's Bodmin Moor, Jamaica Inn is acclaimed as one of the most-famous old inns in England.

It's fame stems mainly from a work of historical fiction, Daphne du Maurier's best-selling novel, 'Jamaica Inn,' which was first published in 1936. Set just over 100 years earlier, the novel is based around an imagined criminal innkeeper's murderous role in ship-wrecking and smuggling. This booklet explains the impact of du Maurier's work and describes the true story of Jamaica Inn and its fascinating real contribution to the nation's economic, social, and cultural history over 300 years.

The brig 'Sheldrake', a Royal Mail packet ship, entering Falmouth Harbour, by Nicholas Matthews Condy. Collection of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

FALMOUTH MAIL PACKETS

Jamaica Inn wasn't built until the late 1700s but owes its existence in part to a Cornish claim to fame that predated it by about 100 years.

In 1689, Falmouth became the nation's designated port for the shipment of Royal Mail communications to and from Portugal and Spain. By the mid-1700s the service had expanded to include the Americas, from Argentina to the Caribbean islands, especially the colony of Jamaica, and as far north as Nova Scotia. The mail was despatched in packets, after which the ships carrying them became known as packet ships.

Most of this international mail came from or went to London, via Exeter, and was carried by despatch riders, known as post boys. Speed was a priority so they were tasked to gallop between 'posts' - usually inns - where they could transfer to fresh horses. In fact, post boys were often old men who took too much drink at the post houses and took too long to carry the mail.

GREAT POST ROAD

The most direct route for the international mail on the section between Exeter and Falmouth would have been across Bodmin Moor and through Bodmin town.

However, the moor had only an ancient overgrown pack-horse track, marked intermittently by a few surviving medieval stone crosses. In harsh weather or in darkness, it was difficult or impossible to follow. So, the post boys went around the north of the moor, through Camelford and Wadebridge, a route that became known as Cornwall's Great Post Road.

Four Hole Cross, medieval way-marker, just over a mile from Jamaica Inn, towards Bodmin on the A30, near Lord's Waste Farm. © Ann Preston-Jones and Andrew Langdon.

PATHLESS MOOR

The intriguingly named Indian Queens is a community that developed around the originally remote inn and post house called The Indian Queen.

Missionary, John Wesley, travelling on horseback, almost lost his way on Bodmin Moor when in September 1743 he was riding to preach to tin miners in west Cornwall. He wrote in his diary; "About sunset [about 7pm] we were in the middle of the great pathless moor beyond Launceston. About eight, we were not quite out of the way; but we had not gone far before we heard Bodmin [church] bell. Directed by this, we turned to the left and came to the town before nine."

TURNPIKES AND PUBLIC COACHES

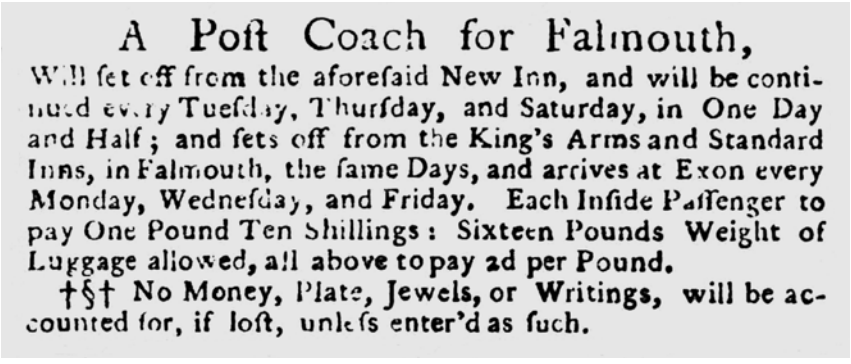
A Royal Mail post boy at a turnpike toll gate.
Image: The Postal Museum.

Bodmin had been one of the most important towns in Cornwall but increasing volumes of traffic on the most-practical routes between Falmouth and Exeter, one to the north, and the other between Falmouth and Plymouth to the south, were in danger of diminishing its economic power.

Fears were exacerbated from 1754 when Parliament began approving the formation in Cornwall of special trusts, empowered to upgrade selected roads to a new standard, known as turnpikes. Groups of local landowners and investors were forming turnpike trusts all over the country, revolutionising the speed and accessibility of road transport. Turnpikes were named after the gates, where tolls were collected from road users. Tolls were used to pay-off construction debts and fund continuing maintenance.

The Great Post Road to the north of Bodmin Moor was the first to be fully upgraded to a turnpike, quickly followed by the southern route via Liskeard and St Austell. A new benefit to communities located on these turnpike roads was the introduction to Cornwall of long-distance public coach services.

The first began at least as early as 1767 when it was advertised to run between Exeter and Falmouth and must have run along the Great Post Road north of Bodmin Moor. Coach services quickly gained reputations for speed and reliability, such that many private individuals took to sending their mail by coach instead of by the Royal Mail, whose post-boy despatch riders were often considered too slow and unreliable.



A Poſt Coach for Falmouth,
Will ſet off from the aforeſaid New Inn, and will be continued every Tueſday, Thurſday, and Saturday, in One Day and Half; and ſets off from the King's Arms and Standard Inns, in Falmouth, the ſame Days, and arrives at Exon every Monday, Wedneſday, and Friday. Each Inſide Paſſenger to pay One Pound Ten Shillings: Sixteen Pounds Weight of Luggage allowed, all above to pay 2d per Pound.
†§† No Money, Plate, Jewels, or Writings, will be accounted for, if loſt, unleſs enter'd as ſuch.

Advertisement for a coach service from the New Inn, Exeter, running from post to post, or stage to stage, to Falmouth and return. Sherborne Mercury, 27 April 1767.

BODMIN MOOR TURNPIKE

The grandees of Bodmin were slow to respond but after about four years of work, an Act of Parliament for the formation of the Bodmin Turnpike Trust was passed in early 1769.

It gave authority to build new turnpike roads in and out of Bodmin in four directions, although the most significant and the most challenging was the 20-mile stretch from Launceston, crossing Bodmin Moor. By June 1769, the trustees were already advertising for contractors for the road and its considerable related engineering works. Near to the site that would later become Jamaica Inn, the road required the buillding of two bridges, over Penpoint Water and the River Fowey, and the draining of two marshes.

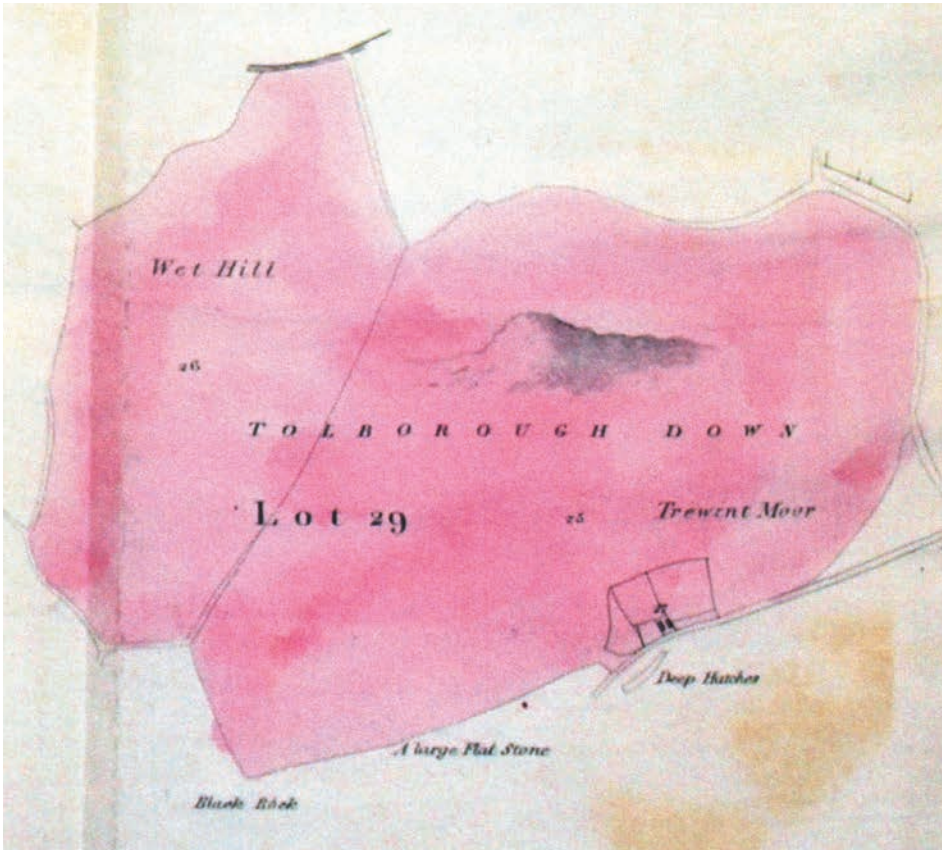
Turnpike roads through East Cornwall, showing the dates of the Acts of Parliament that gave permission for their construction. Data from www.turnpikes.org.uk.

"... the road required the buillding of two bridges, over Penpoint Water and the River Fowey, and the draining of two marshes."

NEED FOR ANOTHER INN

There is no known formal completion date for the moor road but there are clues that it did not become the most-attractive route between Exeter and Falmouth until the late 1770s.

Coaches and freight-waggons needed to change horses at intervals of no more than 10-miles, and more frequently over hilly terrain. From Launceston, it was about eight miles to an ancient inn at Five Lanes, and another nine miles to an inn at Pounds Conce, but the up-hill and down-dale road between those two inns would have been challenging for the horses, especially in bad weather, so a new inn between the two must have been deemed a necessary improvement.



Plan of the 1,565-acre estate of Tolborough Down (see opposite page), showing, above Deep Hatches and next to the turnpike road, the hedge-lines of the 20 acres of fields enclosed from the moor and within which John Broad built Jamaica Inn. This image is a section from a larger plan, datable to 1818, and illustrating the multiple freehold estates of Lady Morshead, widow, and her son Sir Frederick Morshead, baronet (1783-1828), of Trenant Park, Cornwall. The location of the original plan is currently unknown.

CAPTAIN BROAD'S NEW INN

The site chosen for the new inn was in the middle of Bodmin Moor, and at one of its highest parts, near the 1,100-feet high peak of Tolborough Tor.

It was on an estate of 1,565 acres known as Tolborough Down, which was jointly and equally owned by two men, James Scawen, who lived at Carshalton, in Surrey, and Thomas Wills, of Cardinham, a village on the south-west edge of Bodmin Moor. Both were members of old Cornish landowning families and had probably inherited their joint ownership through some past family connection.

By late 1776, a Cornish sea captain called John Broad had purchased from Thomas Wills two quarter-share leases on the whole estate, one to last for the longest life of himself and his two sons, James and John, and the other, which was obtained on assignment from a head lease, was to be determined on the lives of those named in the head lease. The benefits of the leases are unclear but must have been restricted principally to peat-cutting for fuel and rough-grazing for cattle and sheep, any of which, in such a vast area, could be sub-let at a profit. The landowner reserved for himself all rights to tin-mining, quarrying, timber-cutting, and hunting.

At the same time, John Broad struck an informal deal with the other joint owner, James Scawen, who granted the use of 20 acres of the estate where it bordered the new turnpike road, on condition that Broad, at his own expense, must enclose and cultivate the 20 acres and within it, he must build a large house and stables 'on a spot marked out for the purpose.' We only know of this and of John Broad's two leases because of brief references to them in near-contemporary records. The original documents have not survived.

During the ensuing decades of the Broad family's tenure of Tolborough Down and their occupancy of Jamaica Inn, the joint ownerships of the freehold of the estate would change hands several times. The plan on Page 8 (opposite) shows Tolborough Down and the location of Jamaica Inn in 1818 when a half share of the freehold was owned by the Morshead family, of Trenant Park, Cornwall.

DR LESLEY TROTTER

Information on the origin of Jamaica Inn has been clarified only recently thanks to research by Cornish local historian Dr Lesley Trotter. Her scholarly unpublished history of the early years of the inn was produced in November 2021 for its then-owners. It has firmly scotched a previously long-standing and widely reported supposition that the inn was built in 1750 and has formed the foundation of much of the research for this booklet.

FROM A LIFE ON THE WAVES ...

A merchant brig off Cape Horn, by Joseph Heard (1799-1859). © Bonhams 1793 Ltd.

We don't know when or where John Broad was born or much about his early adult life, other than he was a seafarer of some standing.

In November 1762, he married Mary Bowers in Gosport, Hampshire, where they were both recorded as parishioners. Their first child, James, was baptised in November 1763 in the north-Cornwall coastal parish of St Agnes, about 12 miles south of Newquay. Their second child, John, was baptised in Kenwyn, just outside Truro, in January 1769. This was followed in May that year by the death of Mary, whose burial record described her as the wife of Captain John Broad. He was still recorded as a mariner on one of the Bodmin Moor leases he signed in 1776.

Historian Lesley Trotter has researched connections that he may have had with the several seafaring families called Broad in Devon and Cornwall and speculated that he might have been the ship's master of a Falmouth brig called Fly, which regularly sailed the Mediterranean, as far as Egypt and Turkey, seemingly ending its last trip in Cork, Ireland, in June 1775.

An early view of Falmouth harbour by G Townsend, Exeter, published in Besley's Views of Cornwall (1853).

... TO AN INN ON THE MOOR

While it's not known if John Broad's house on Bodmin Moor was to be built for a stipulated function, it becomes clear that it was intended to serve as a roadside inn, with fields from which it could also be self-sufficient in hay and oats to feed horses and other livestock.

By the spring of 1777, Broad must have begun the process of enclosing and cultivating the 20 acres and building the house which, as it turned out, was accompanied by a very substantial stable block and a shed for wintering cattle. The property stood in the parish of Altarnun, which was where, in October 1781, John Broad married his second wife, Frances Granville, and where both were recorded in the register as 'of this parish.' It suggests that by that time the house was finished, and John had already moved into it.

Along with John's two sons, James and John, the couple set about building a business that would attract increasing volumes of traffic to the new turnpike road and make it the new most-favoured route between Exeter and Falmouth.

The slate-hung walls of Jamaica Inn, which, at the time that John Broad built his new house, was a distinctively Cornish style of building.

A modern impression of how Jamaica Inn looked during the 1800s, by Kerris, www.kerrisart.co.uk.

FIRST COACHES CALL INN

A coach attended by grooms at an inn yard.

John Broad's house was definetly open for business by November 1783, when a public stage-coach, or 'diligence' as it and others were known, had started running along the new road over Bodmin Moor.

It was advertised in the press as a 'new and elegant diligence' between Exeter and Falmouth, running on alternate days in each direction through Okehampton, Launceston, Bodmin, and Truro. Going down to Falmouth, it stopped overnight at a Bodmin inn, and coming up, at Launceston. It's certain that the coaches changed horses at John Broad's house, and might also have rested briefly at one or both of the next inns along the road, at Five Lanes and Pounds Conce.

On another lease that John Broad acquired In August 1784, he was described as an innkeeper of the parish of Altarnun, the earliest surviving record of him as an innkeeper.

AND THE POST BOYS TOO

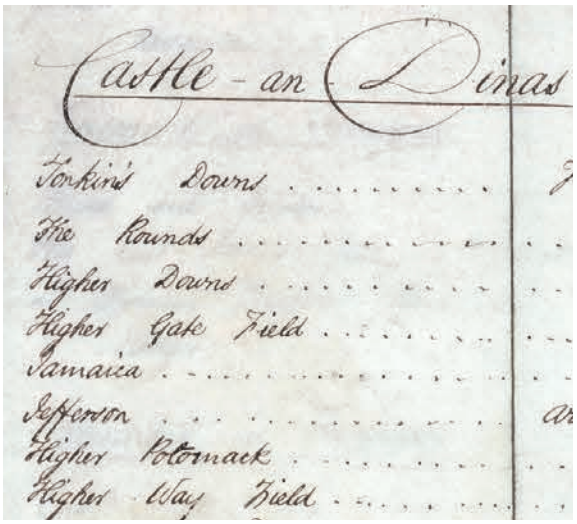
It's apparent that the Royal Mail post boys also adopted the new road over Bodmin Moor as their best route for carrying the international and domestic mail.

John Broad's house would have been a popular port of call, probably to change horses, but at least to provide essential sustenance for horse and man. The earliest indication of post boys on the route was a press report of January 1787 describing how a post boy, who must have travelled via Jamaica Inn, was stopped on his way from Bodmin to Truro by a highwayman who stole all the mail.

THE NAME JAMAICA INN

An expenses claim of April 1789 - 'At the Jemecia Inn, beer, four pence'- was submitted by a local landowner's servant, and is the earliest surviving record of the name Jamaica Inn.

The name's origin has been the subject of much speculation. Cornwall's maritime links with Jamaica, through the port of Falmouth, have already been mentioned. Falmouth is one of the many English place-names occurring in Jamaica. And of course Jamaica Rum was a significant import, whether officially through the harbour or illegally by smugglers. Cornwall produced two governors of Jamaica – Edward Trelawny (1738-1751) and his kinsman Sir William Trelawny (1768-1772). But there are no records to suggest that any member of the esteemed Trelawny family ever had anything to do with the inn on Bodmin Moor or its surrounding land.



The above field names recorded in 1839 at Castle an Dinas, Ludgvan parish, include Jamaica and two other famously remote places: Jefferson, a town in Missouri that began as a trading post in the wilderness between St. Louis and Kansas City, and Higher Potomac, which must refer to the Potomac River, flowing from the remote highlands of West Virginia. Section from Ludgvan Parish Tithe Apportionment map, from the collections at Kresen Kernow, Cornwall, ref. TA/129.

Historian Lesley Trotter has discovered that James Scawen, one of the landowners of the estate on which Jamaica Inn was built, was the heir of a Cornish great uncle who had traded with Jamaica. But that was about 200 years earlier, and so a tenuous link. It's also possible that the builder and first innkeeper of Jamaica Inn, John Broad, had sailed to Jamaica during his seafaring days, but there's no known evidence for it.

Another possibility, not previously aired, is that Jamaica was the name given by John Broad to his entire 20-acre smallholding, because of its remoteness. Place-name experts advise that in the 1700s and 1800s, farms in remote, hilly locations, or single fields farthest from the farmhouse, were often sarcastically named after famous, extremely distant places, such as California, Newfoundland, and Gibraltar, or whichever was the Timbuktu of the day. In Cornwall, the most-readily conjured far-distant place was surely Jamaica.

And there was at least one other place in the county called Jamaica, recorded in 1839. It was a field on a remote hillside at Castle an Dinas, north of Ludgvan, near Penzance. Two adjacent fields had similarly exotic names (see image and caption at right). It has been explained that these three fields were named after places visited by their owner during youthful travels, but they are also remote fields named after remote places.

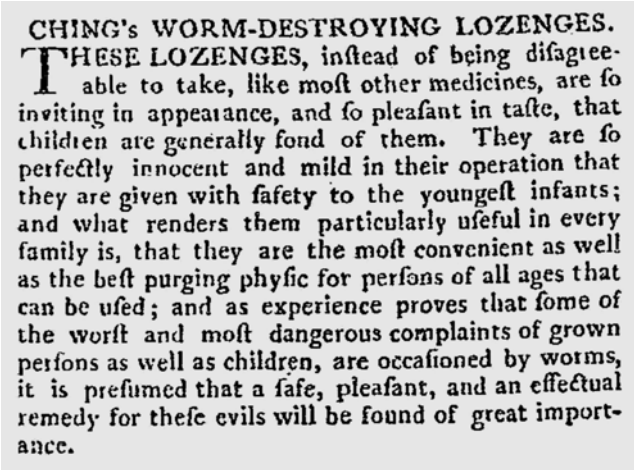
A BOLD VENTURE?

There is also evidence that Jamaica Inn was known originally as Bold Venture. See pages 17 and 18.

JAMES BROAD'S WORMS

It appears that John Broad's elder son, James, wasn't feeling at all well in the spring of 1797, when he decided to try a newly advertised medicine.

Ching's Worm-Destroying Lozenges had been developed by Dr John Ching, a chemist in Launceston. Apparently, so effective was the medicine that James Broad agreed to his testimonial being used in future press advertisements, which over the next few years appeared in newspapers across Britain, as far away as Aberdeen. His graphic account read:



CHING's WORM-DESTROYING LOZENGES.

THESE LOZENGES, inſtead of being diſagreeable to take, like moſt other medicines, are ſo inviting in appearance, and ſo pleaſant in taſte, that children are generally fond of them. They are ſo perfectly innocent and mild in their operation that they are given with ſafety to the youngeſt infants; and what renders them particularly uſeful in every family is, that they are the moſt convenient as well as the beſt purging phyſic for perſons of all ages that can be uſed; and as experience proves that ſome of the worſt and moſt dangerous complaints of grown perſons as well as children, are occaſioned by worms, it is preſumed that a ſafe, pleaſant, and an effectual remedy for theſe evils will be found of great importance.

Aberdeen Press and Journal 17 September 1798.

'I James Broad, of the parish of Altarnun, in the county of Cornwall, aged 35, do certify that about three months ago, having much pain in my stomach and bowels, I took one dose of Mr Ching's Worm Lozenges, by which I voided one worm eight feet long and another seven feet, and the next day a great number of other small worms of various sizes, from one inch to eight feet in length. Thus I lost the pains in my stomach and bowels and have been perfectly well ever since. Witness my hand this 24th day of July 1797, James Broad. Signed and attested in the presence of Humphrey Lawrence Esq and George Hill, Gentleman [both] of Launceston, and John Broad, father of the said James Broad, landlord of the Jamaica Inn, on the road from Launceston to Bodmin, of whom particulars may be known.'

James would not have known that the principal operative ingredient of the lozenges was deadly mercury. In 1803, a coroner's verdict on the death of one poor customer recorded that she was 'poisoned by Ching's worm lozenges.'

That case was ignored by the newspapers, which were keen to retain Dr Ching's lucrative advertising revenue. Consequently, his enterprise grew very quickly into a national wholesale medicine-supply business. Whether James's story was true or whether he and his father were just paid for the endorsement, we will never know.

JAMES BROAD TAKES OVER

John Broad died in December 1798 and was buried at Altarnun churchyard. He was probably in his 60s.

The two quarter-share leases on Tolborough Down estate and the informal grant to occupy Jamaica Inn were taken on by his elder son, James. He had almost certainly been assisting his father and stepmother to run the inn since the family had moved there when he was a teenager. At the time of his father's death, James and his wife, Mary, had four surviving children, aged nine to six months.

A Royal Mail coach with coachman and guard. Mary Evans Picture Library.

ROYAL MAIL COACHES ARRIVE

In July 1799, newspapers around Britain reported an expansion of the network of Royal Mail coaches, with a new route established between Exeter and Falmouth.

Since 1784, there had been a rolling programme of replacing post boys on the major routes with new Royal Mail coaches. Part funded by carrying passengers, the coaches were built to a new, bespoke design and operated by the best available coachmen, each accompanied by a guard, making Royal Mail coaches the fastest, most reliable, and most secure public coaches on the roads.

Their introduction on the Exeter-Falmouth route meant a lucrative new contract for Jamaica Inn, providing replacement horses and the opportunity to sell refreshments when the coaches called in daily, in both directions. The Royal Mail coach was competition for the long-established privately run coach service, also calling daily at Jamaica Inn, but only in alternate directions. To service the coaches, two calling each day and one each night, Jamaica Inn reportedly employed three ostlers and kept 30 horses.

TWO BROTHERS – TWO INNS

It was probably around 1799 when James Broad's younger brother John became the tenant keeper of the then-nameless inn at Five Lanes, the next inn along the moor road towards Launceston. It's likely that he serviced the same coaches every day as his older brother at Jamaica Inn.

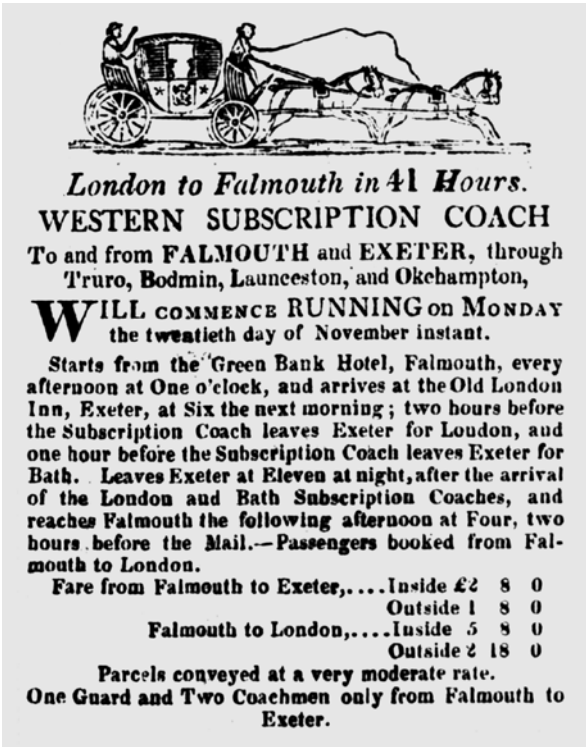
BROTHERS' EARLY DEATHS

By 1801, both joint ownerships of Tolborough Down had changed hands, so James Broad took the opportunity to obtain, from one of them, a formal and more-secure lease on Jamaica Inn and its 20 acres.

The term agreed with new owner, Baron Eliot, Edward Craggs-Eliot, of Port Eliot, St Germans, Cornwall, was for the longest life of himself and his brother John. It was timely because in November 1803, James died aged 40, leaving his widow, Mary with five surviving children, aged 14 years to seven months.

John Broad became the holder of the new formal lease on Jamaica Inn and of the two quarter-share leases on the entire Tolborough Down estate, held from the other joint owner. He and his recently acquired wife, a former widow, Elizabeth Bullen, ran the inn at Five Lanes at least until June 1806 when the tenancy was due to expire. It appears that John's widowed sister-in-law, Mary Broad, ran Jamaica Inn. A record confirms that Mary was in charge there in March 1811.

John Broad died in August 1812, aged 43. The lease on Jamaica Inn was therefore terminated. It was immediately granted to a London merchant who already held, from the same joint owner, the lease on the rest of the half-share of Tolborough Down. Of the other two quarter-share leases on the estate held by John Broad from the other joint owner, one was terminated on his death, but the other, which had been assigned from a head lease on the life of someone still living, was legitimately bequeathed to John's widow, Elizabeth.



London to Falmouth in 41 Hours.

WESTERN SUBSCRIPTION COACH

To and from FALMOUTH and EXETER, through Truro, Bodmin, Launceston, and Okehampton,

WILL COMMENCE RUNNING on MONDAY the tweatieth day of November instant.

Starts from the Green Bank Hotel, Falmouth, every afternoon at One o'clock, and arrives at the Old London Inn, Exeter, at Six the next morning; two hours before the Subscription Coach leaves Exeter for Loudon, and one hour before the Subscription Coach leaves Exeter for Bath. Leaves Exeter at Eleven at night, after the arrival of the London and Bath Subscription Coaches, and reaches Falmouth the following afternoon at Four, two hours before the Mail.—Passengers booked from Falmouth to London.

Fare from Falmouth to Exeter,....	Inside £2	8	0
	Outside 1	8	0
Falmouth to London,....	Inside 3	8	0
	Outside 2	18	0

Parcels conveyed at a very moderate rate.

One Guard and Two Coachmen only from Falmouth to Exeter.

The Exeter-Falmouth coach, which had called at Jamaica Inn on alternate days, was changed In 1815 to a new upgraded service called the Western Subscription (as advertised above). It promised the same comfort and security as the Royal Mail, but with cheaper fares, thus sparking a short-lived price war – see advertisement on the opposite page. By 1823 the Western Subscription would be replaced by the Regulator.

‘FALSELY PROMISED’

Jamaica Inn did not always provide the best kind of welcome and comforts for casual visitors, of any rank in society. A letter of 11 September 1818, sent by Gordon Booker, a grandson of the 3rd Duke of Gordon, described a day spent shooting on Bodmin Moor, followed by a visit to:

> “... Bold Venture alias the Jamaica Inn, where good entertainment is falsely promised ... We resolved to give our horses some corn and to indulge in some bread and cheese or a chop, being of dinner very hungry. It unfortunately happened, said our hostess, for the first [time] these 14 years that the guard had forgot to bring her bread. She was entirely out of cheese ... There was a piece of carrion-looking mutton, but we could not eat it without bread, and the potato crop had failed. The oats were still in the field, unluckily for the horses ...”

The identity of the hostess is not revealed, but we might deduce that it was Mary Broad, who at that time would have been in charge for a little over 14 years since the death of her husband in 1803. The reference to Bold Venture is expanded on page 18.

INNKEEPER THOMAS DUNN

It’s not clear how long the widow Mary Broad continued to run Jamaica Inn, but it wasn’t any later than 1829 when a new tenant innkeeper was appointed.

Thomas Dunn, aged 28, took a 14-year lease, initially jointly with Joseph Dunn, perhaps his brother. However, from 1830, Thomas ran the inn with his new wife, Anabella. She was a daughter of Elizabeth Broad’s first husband, the late Robert Bullen, by his first wife.

ROYAL
FALMOUTH AND LONDON
MAIL.
THROUGH
EXETER, OAKHAMPTON, LAUNCESTON, BODMIN, and TRURO, every Day.

MESSRS. WATERHOUSE, LAND, WYNN, PEARCE, PAPE, CARTWRIGHT, DICKER, and Co. beg leave to return thanks for the liberal Support they have hitherto experienced by the above MAIL COACH; and respectfully inform the Public, that on MONDAY the 20th November, they REDUCED the FARE from FALMOUTH to EXETER,—

Inside, to..... £2 0 0
Outside,..... 1 5 0

Short Stages in proportion; and Parcels and Packages equally reasonable.

The quality of their Horses, and the superiority of the Mail Coaches, are too well known to require comment.—Two Coachmen only from Falmouth to Exeter, as usual.

The Proprietors are not answerable for any Package or Parcel above the value of FIVE POUNDS, *unless entered as such, and paid for accordingly.*

Dated November 24, 1815.

Royal Cornwall Gazette 2 December 1815.

BOLD VENTURE

Gordon Booker's letter, postmark-dated 11 September 1818, in which he referred to 'Bold Venture alias the Jamaica Inn.' Correspondence of G W F Booker, from the collections at Kresen Kernow, Cornwall, ref. G/1909/135.

The letter on Page 17, dated 1818, is the earliest surviving record of Jamaica Inn having an alternative name of Bold Venture.

For decades to follow, the two names are mentioned several times in surviving records, expressed interchangeably for the inn and the place around it. It's possible that Bold Venture came first. There are or were at least three other places in Cornwall called Boldventure. It was a name sometimes given to industrial sites, especially speculative mining enterprises.

Near Jamaica Inn were several such sites, notably a horizontal shaft into the Tresellyn tin mine. There were also tin-streaming works, said to be 'of great antiquity.' Tin-streaming was an ancient process of breaking open with picks the beds of naturally mixed gravel, then diverting valley streams to run forcefully over the debris. The water washed away the lighter, unwanted stone, leaving the heavier tin ore to be collected.

BROAD FAMILY ERA ENDS

Elizabeth Broad, holder of the Broad family's last-remaining quarter-share lease on the Tolborough Down estate, died in November 1830, aged 76.

In the following year, her executors surrendered the lease to Francis Hearle Rodd, of Trebartha Hall, who by acquisitions made in 1828 and 1829 had become the outright owner of the entire 1,565-acre estate, including Jamaica Inn and its farm. It was the end of an era for the Broad family, which began when John Broad took on the land upon which he would build Jamaica Inn, 57 years earlier.

NEW ROAD TO THE INN

Francis Hearle Rodd, the owner of Jamaica Inn, was one of the leading Cornish landowners engaged in bringing unproductive moorland into cultivation and thereby creating new tenanted hill-farms.

Advances in agricultural science meant that naturally acidic soil could be neutralised by applying sea-sand and lime, brought from the south Cornwall coast. To increase the speed and quantities of deliveries to the moorlands, a canal was opened in 1827 from the town of Looe, running north to Liskeard. From there, cargoes were taken farther north by waggon, on a new road constructed alongside the River Fowey, beginning north of Liskeard at Trekeivesteps and ending at Jamaica inn.

Rodd must have had a major influence on the construction of this road. It allowed him to create several new tenanted hill farms on his Bodmin Moor estate, establishing a new, albeit widespread, community of farmers and labourers around Jamaica Inn. Some of these new residents also earned a living by reworking the old, often abandoned tin streams (see Bold Venture opposite).

Waggoners from Liskeard who dropped-off the last of their loads at Jamaica Inn, could take in sustenance for themselves, and for the return journey they could reload with horse and cattle manure collected from the moorland farms, much of it from Jamaica Inn's own stables and cattle house, to be sold as fertiliser to farmers downstream.

This map of 1843, oriented with north to the left, names the emerging hamlet around Jamaica Inn as Boldventure and shows the new road from Trekeivesteps, north of Liskeard, coming from the top right to meet the turnpike road, near the B in Boldventure. The unidentified Jamaica Inn is the building, coloured pink, set back from the left side of the turnpike road. Section from Altarnun Parish Tithe Map, from the collections at Kresen Kernow, Cornwall, ref. TM/4.

RODD FAMILY INHERITANCE

After the death of Francis Hearle Rodd in 1836, aged 69, his agricultural initiatives were continued by his brother and heir, Rev Dr Edward Rodd. He died in 1842, aged 74, and so it was his son and heir, Francis Rodd, who continued the family's work of expanding farmland on Bodmin Moor.

OVERTURNED AND SMASHED

On a day in August 1839, at about midnight, when staff at Jamaica Inn were awaiting the Royal Mail coach from Falmouth, they were startled when four coach horses galloped into the yard, without the coach.

A search party went back along the road. They found the coach, overturned and smashed, at the bottom of a steep hill that preceded the subsequent climb to the inn. In the darkness, the inside passengers were tending to those who had been thrown from the unprotected top of the coach. All were brought to Jamaica Inn; a surgeon was summoned to attend the seriously injured, while the others were sent on to Launceston by carriage. A cart was procured to carry the mails.

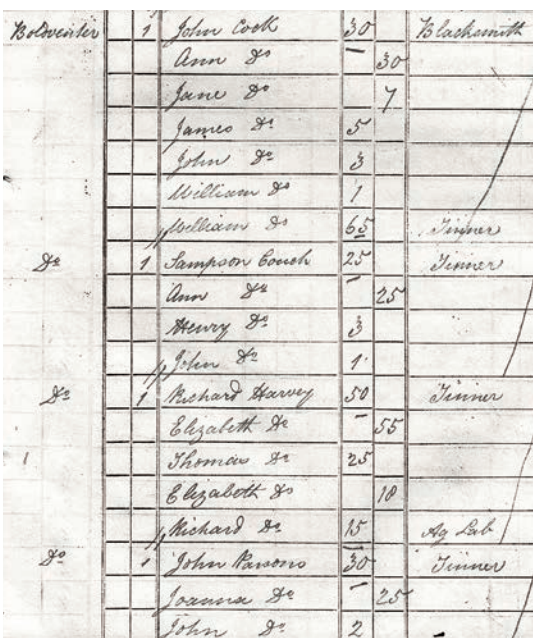
One of the injured had broken ribs, another's arm was 'severely broken,' a third's face was 'dreadfully disfigured,' and the guard suffered a 'shocking injury to his knee.' It transpired that soon after leaving Falmouth, the coachman was seen to be drunk and was ordered by the passengers to change places with the young guard. However, the guard's inexperience at driving caused the coach to descend the steep hill too fast and it failed to make the turn at the bottom. The coachman reportedly ran away from the scene.

"... caused the coach to descend the steep hill too fast and it failed to make the turn at the bottom."

BLACKSMITH AND TIN-STREAMERS

The 1841 census revealed that the moor around Jamaica Inn had by then become home to 250 people, mainly farmers and labourers living in isolated houses.

On the turnpike immediately neighbouring the inn, were a blacksmith's house and forge, and three other houses, occupied by tin streamers. This emerging hamlet was recorded as Boldventer, apparently reflecting the Cornish pronunciation of the earlier name of Boldventure (see Page 18) and on the way to the later-established spelling of Bolventor.



Boldventer		1	John Cook	30		Blacksmith
			Ann Do	—	30	
			Jane Do		7	
			James Do	5		
			John Do	3		
			William Do	1		
			William Do	65		Tinner
Do		1	Sampson Couch	25		Tinner
			Ann Do	—	25	
			Henry Do	3		
			John Do	1		
Do		1	Richard Harvey	50		Tinner
			Elizabeth Do	—	55	
			Thomas Do	25		
			Elizabeth Do		10	
			Richard Do	15		Ag Lab
Do		1	John Parsons	30		Tinner
			Joanna Do	—	25	
			John Do	2		

Some of the neighbours of Jamaica Inn recorded in the 1841 census as 'Boldventer.' Extract from the census for Altarnun Parish, The National Archives (TNA), ref. HO 107-140-2 (31).

LAST COACHES OVER THE MOOR

A network of railway lines developing rapidly throughout Britain in the 1840s forced radical changes to a transport economy that had been the reason for Jamaica Inn's existence.

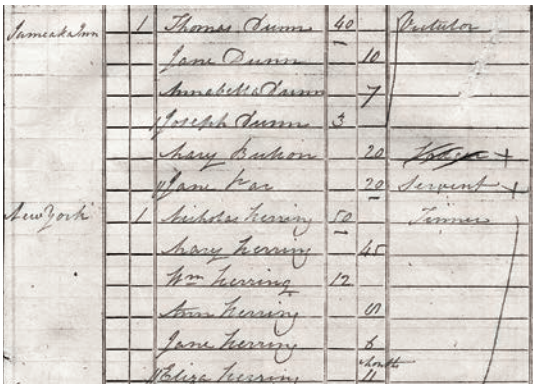
In 1840, a railway line opened between London and Southampton docks, immediately bringing into question the future of Falmouth's international packet service. Its transfer to Southampton began late in 1843 and was completed soon afterwards. In the short term, the Royal Mail coach continued to carry the domestic mail daily along the moor road by Jamaica Inn.

However, by 1844 it was reported that of the eight seats on the coach (four inside and four on top), the average number of passengers carried had reduced to three and often there were none. The Regulator coach over the moor had been replaced by a one-horse omnibus running on alternate days between Truro and Exeter.

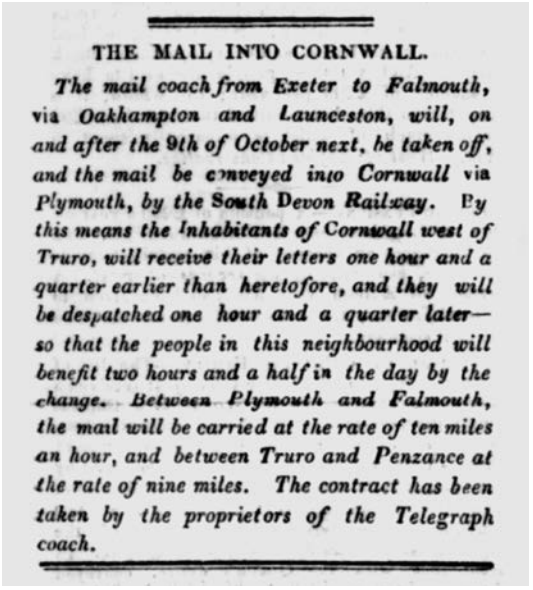
Otherwise, there was what was described as the 'ghost' of a two-horse freight waggon running twice a week between Falmouth and Exeter, and the 'shattered remains of a van,' with one horse, going between Launceston and Bodmin once a week, and 'sometimes not that.'

Trade at Jamaica Inn coming from traffic over the moor road was further threatened in April 1849 when the South Devon Railway Company completed a line between Exeter and Plymouth. It was decided that the Royal Mail into Cornwall would in future be taken by train to Plymouth and then by coach along the road to the south of Bodmin Moor, to Truro, Falmouth, and Penzance. The last mail coach across Bodmin Moor ran on 9 October 1851.

Straightaway, the proprietors of The Times coaches started running a service on alternate days between Launceston and Truro, going over Bodmin Moor, but it proved unviable. Within a year, it was withdrawn.



The 1841 census record for 'Jameaka Inn' and for a nearby farm also named after a distant place, 'New York.' Extract from the census for Altarnun Parish, The National Archives (TNA), ref. HO 107-140-2 (40).



THE MAIL INTO CORNWALL.

The mail coach from Exeter to Falmouth, via Oakhampton and Launceston, will, on and after the 9th of October next, be taken off, and the mail be conveyed into Cornwall via Plymouth, by the South Devon Railway. By this means the Inhabitants of Cornwall west of Truro, will receive their letters one hour and a quarter earlier than heretofore, and they will be despatched one hour and a quarter later—so that the people in this neighbourhood will benefit two hours and a half in the day by the change. Between Plymouth and Falmouth, the mail will be carried at the rate of ten miles an hour, and between Truro and Penzance at the rate of nine miles. The contract has been taken by the proprietors of the Telegraph coach.

Penzance Gazette, 20 August 1851. © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to the British Newspaper Archive. www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk.

BOLVENTOR IMPROVED

Francis Rodd, owner of Bolventor and Jamaica Inn after inheriting from his father in 1842. © National Portrait Gallery.

Reducing traffic over the Bodmin Moor turnpike did not diminish the zeal of landowner Francis Rodd in developing his Bodmin Moor estate, physically and spiritually.

In September 1843, an advertisement seeking a new tenant at Jamaica Inn revealed that the attached farm had been expanded from 20 acres to 50 acres. In 1846, Rodd built, nearly opposite the inn, a Church-of-England school under the auspices of the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, otherwise known as a National School. And in 1848, he built a church and parsonage, sited farther along the turnpike road, about 100 metres to the west of Jamaica Inn.

OLD-BOOZERS AND GENTRY

Bolventor National School as seen today.

By 1852, Jamaica Inn had begun a new mode of survival, its main clientele being divided in two parts.

Recollections of a visit to the inn on Christmas Eve 1853, by one John Burton, provide a colourful account of the taproom, where he described a 'lot of old boozers, principally moormen'. He described one old soak as a 'doggish-looking, cross-eyed cove … his underlip was thrown out of shape by the constant use of the pint or quart.'

At the same time, Jamaica Inn was becoming increasingly popular with the sporting gentry. There were game-bird and wild-fowl shooters, fishermen trying the upper reaches of the River Fowey, and followers of hare hounds, who met at the inn occasionally and who included members of the owning Rodd family. A guidebook for gentlemen travellers in Devon and Cornwall, published in 1859, confirmed that Jamaica Inn was 'frequented by sportsmen in the winter and affords comfortable though somewhat rude accommodation.'

APARTMENTS CREATED

As the railways became increasingly popular and horse-drawn traffic over Bodmin Moor continued to decline, Jamaica Inn needed to attract more custom by providing something better than 'rude accommodation.'

In September 1871 an advertisement for a new tenant boasted that the 'hotel is in course of entire reconstruction with a view to secure separate sets of private apartments, in addition to ordinary inn accommodation.' It was clearly aimed at attracting more of the leisured classes.

TEMPERANCE ERA BEGINS

Changes at Jamaica Inn took an extreme turn in February 1880 when another advertisement for a new tenant declared that the house was 'not thenceforth to be used as an inn.'

This obtuse phrase meant it was to be an alcohol-free temperance house. It was a move guaranteed to alienate the local moormen, who were perhaps deemed by the Rodd family to have spent too much time in the taproom and not enough in church. To compensate for the loss of beer sales, the advertisement suggested that part of the inn might be converted into a shop and that there were also opportunities to trade in locally produced corn or to run a 'large manure agency.'

At the time of this advertisement, the owner of Jamaica Inn, Francis Rodd, was aged 72 and only weeks away from death, so it must have been his son and heir, Francis Rashleigh Rodd, who decided that boozing at the inn must end.

NEW BOARD SCHOOL

The hamlet of Bolventor was an early beneficiary of the the 1870 Elementary Education Act, which established state education in non-sectarian schools for all children aged five to 12, to be provided by local school boards. The first major act of the Altarnun Parish School Board was to erect a 'Board School' at Bolventor, located a short distance from Jamaica Inn, along the road from Liskeard. It was formally opened in October 1878, and replaced the National School, which became the Church of England Sunday School.

Major Edward Francis Stanhope Rodd, owner of Bolventor and Jamaica Inn after inheriting from his father in 1928. Courtesy of the Rodd Family, Trebartha Hall.

MOTOR-CAR BOOM BEGINS

Little would change at Jamaica Inn until around 1920 when the beginning of mass-produced motor-cars created the new pastime of motor touring. The route over Bodmin Moor experienced a sudden revival, for its scenery and as the most direct road into Cornwall from Exeter. In 1923, it became part of the newly classified A30, running from London to Penzance, and one of the first 30 of Britain's A-roads.

RODD INHERITANCES

The owner of Jamaica Inn, Francis Rashleigh Rodd, died in 1922, aged 83, and was succeeded by his brother Edward Stanhope Rodd. He died in 1928, aged 80, and was succeeded by his son, Major Edward Francis Stanhope Rodd, then aged 42.

A YOUNG WRITER'S INSPIRATION

In November 1930, Jamaica Inn welcomed as guests for one night, two young women of privilege, who were intent on a bracing winter's horse-ride on Bodmin Moor.

They were 31-year-old Foy Quiller-Couch, of Fowey, on Cornwall's south coast, daughter of the then-revered author and literary critic Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and 23-year-old Daphne du Maurier, a budding novelist and daughter of the then-famous, London-based actor-manager Sir Gerald du Maurier. At that time, Jamaica Inn was geared to attract visitors of such social standing, usually in the pursuit of leisure.

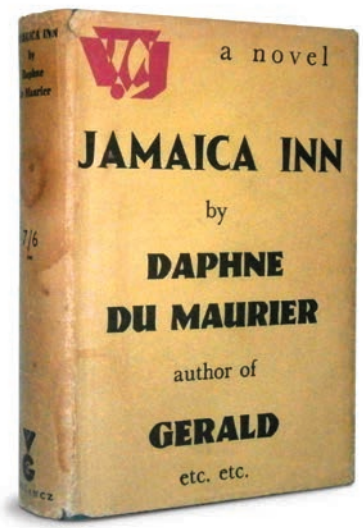
Daphne du Maurier was a hard-working young writer, but without any ties. When not staying at her parents' grand house in Hampstead, she divided her remaining time between visits to friends in Paris, and staying, sometimes alone, at her family's south Cornwall retreat at Bodinnick-by-Fowey. No doubt that's from where she and her Cornish neighbour had travelled to reach Jamaica Inn, probably by car. With her first two novels written but not yet published, du Maurier's imagination was in full flight. In her autobiography she wrote of the inn: "I thought of the travellers in the past who must have sought shelter there on wild November nights ... the drinking deep and long, fights breaking out, the sound of oaths, men falling."

The two women must have hired horses from the inn stables, because Daphne recorded in her diary: "In the afternoon, we ventured out across the moors, desolate, [and] sinister, and foolishly [we] lost our way. To our horror, rain and darkness fell upon us, and there we were, exposed to the violence of night with scarcely a hope of returning ... we let the reins lie loosely on the necks of the horses, and they led us back ... by a miracle we saw in the distance the light from Jamaica Inn."

The following year, again in November, Daphne and Foy returned to stay at Jamaica Inn, this time for two nights. Daphne recalled that it was pouring with rain: "I remember reading Treasure Island over a peat fire and something must have stirred within me to come to life in after-years."

Daphne du Maurier photographed in about 1930.

STORY BECOMES A BEST-SELLER



First edition cover of Daphne du Maurier's novel Jamaica Inn, published in 1936. Image: West Hull Rare Books, www.westhullrarebooks.co.uk.

Daphne du Maurier's 'Jamaica Inn' appeared in January 1936, her fourth novel to be published.

It was a gripping tale set in the early 1800s and based on a fictitious innkeeper who was a murderous leader of one of the infamous ship-wrecking gangs operating in Cornwall at that time. In an introductory note, du Maurier wrote: "Jamaica Inn stands today, hospitable and kindly, a temperance house ... In the following story of adventure ... although existing place-names figure in the pages, the characters and events described are entirely imaginary."

Nonetheless, some experiences of the heroine, Mary Yellan, reflected those of the author. Yellan is also aged 23 when she arrives for the first time at the inn, also on a bleak November day, and she also becomes lost on the moor at nightfall. Jamaica Inn quickly became Daphne du Maurier's first best-seller, bringing great attention to the real inn. In 1937, when innkeeper Bert Horrell hosted the first horse trials of the East Cornwall Hunt, the event took place in the large field next to what was then already being reported as the 'famed Jamaica Inn.'

RODD FAMILY OWNERSHIP ENDS

An obvious potential to exploit Jamaica Inn's new-found fame was spotted by a Launceston auctioneer and estate-agent, Walter Dennis.

Sometime in 1938, the 48-year-old, a partner in the long-established firm of J Kittow and Son, reportedly bought the inn along with the rest of the Rodd family's then-2,300-acre Bodmin Moor estate. Major Rodd's reason for selling is not known. Outstanding inheritance tax could have been a factor, as might have been the fact that he had four daughters and no male heir.

FILM IS A BOX-OFFICE HIT

Walter Dennis might already have known when he bought Jamaica Inn in 1938 that its sudden fame was about to escalate beyond measure.

The novel had attracted the attention of a famous British actor and Hollywood film star, Charles Laughton, and his business partner the successful German film producer, Erich Pommer. They bought the film rights and hired as director the rising-star Alfred Hitchcock, who was a friend of Daphne du Maurier's father and almost certainly knew Daphne.

Production started in 1938. One of the opening scenes, using a replica stage-coach, was shot on an old rough road on Bodmin Moor. But the rest of the filming was done at Elstree Studios near London, where Hitchcock built sets for interior scenes and one huge set to represent the exterior of Jamaica Inn and parts of Bodmin Moor.

Initially, Daphne must have been thrilled about the film. However, Charles Laughton's insistence on playing a leading role was one of several pressures on the screenplay that led to radical changes to the original story and characters. Daphne was furious and demanded, without success, that her name be removed from the titles. Hitchcock was also unhappy with Laughton's interference and with the finished film. It was released in May 1939. Critics disliked it, but it was an immediate box-office hit.

Poster for Hitchcock's 1939 film Jamaica Inn. Image: Mayflower Pictures / Album / Alamy Stock Photo.

INTERRUPTION OF WAR

The full potential of the film and the consequent opportunities for commercial success at the real Jamaica Inn, were delayed by the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

GENERAL PATTON'S EGGS

Lieutenant General George Patton in 1943.
Image: GL Archive / Alamy Stock Photo.

After 20 years as tenant innkeeper at Jamaica Inn, Bert Horrell quit in March 1940 and was replaced by Claude Finnamore, a local church organist who supplemented his income from the inn by giving music lessons.

During meagre war-time trading, the inn survived with rental income from Bolventor Post Office, which relocated to the inn along with the office of the English China Clay Lovering Estate. Things changed from May 1943, when several thousand American troops were posted to Cornwall. Large numbers were stationed at Bodmin and Launceston, and intense military exercises took place on Bodmin Moor, in secret preparation for the D-Day landings.

The moor, the road, and Jamaica Inn were suddenly busy. Among high-ranking visitors was US Lieutenant General George Patton, who later, when promoted to four-star General, would lead the American Third Army in its post-D-Day push into Germany. There is a story that Patton stayed at Jamaica Inn for a few days, and, at a time of egg rationing, he supplied his own eggs to be cooked for his breakfast. It might not be true.

JAMAICA INN & WEST-COUNTRY CLUB, BOLVENTOR, Nr. LAUNCESTON, is NOW OPEN. The Club is Fully Licensed to Members. Breakfast, Lunch, Tea, Dinner. Board-Residence. Bed & Breakfast. Hacks & Hunters for Hire. Children's Ponies. Instructors in attendance for learners. NOW YOU CAN ENJOY THE MOORS! 'Phone Pipers Pool 250.

Western Morning News, 19 March 1946.

NEW CLUB AND NEW TRUNK ROAD

On 14 April 1945, when the war was not quite over and Hitler not yet dead, Jamaica Inn was bought by a Plymouth agricultural merchant, Stanley Thomas.

His first application to get the inn relicensed for public alcohol sales was refused, so in March 1946 he opened it as the Jamaica Inn and West-country Club, with alcohol sold to club members only. In the same year, the A30 was added to the group of 100 major UK roads designated as Trunk Roads, to be maintained entirely by the national government.

A TOURIST ATTRACTION

Not until April 1950 was Stanley Thomas granted a full public-house licence for Jamaica Inn, at the fourth attempt in four years.

He began a programme of upgrading the inn. He developed a bar in the old stables and bought other properties in Bolventor to expand the business. He continued to live in Plymouth, and appointed a manager to run the inn, the charismatic Herbert Grose, a former Royal Horse Guardsman. Grose had only been in post for a few months when he managed to get Jamaica Inn and himself featured in a Daily Mirror comic strip, cleverly promoting the attractions of the wildness of the inn's location and that it had a ghost.

Charles Laughton's film 'Jamaica Inn' was still being regularly re-run at cinemas throughout the UK, continuing until late in 1952, after which repeat showings on the newly available television service would keep it in the public imagination. The book, the film, several radio adaptations, and Herbert Grose's publicity skills combined to make it widely known that the famous Jamaica Inn was a real place and was worth a visit. And it was easily accessible on what was once again the main route into the county. Jamaica Inn had become a destination for tourists.

This inn-sign commissioned by Stanley Thomas was presumably meant to depict Joss Merlyn, the murderous, ship-wrecking innkeeper of Daphne du Maurier's creation. However, Joss merlyn didn't have an eye-patch, a distinction that most famously belonged to the pirate character Long John Silver in Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island.'

Daily Mirror 20 July 1950. © Reach PLC/Daily Mirror/Mirrorpix. Image created courtesy of the British Library Board.

TOO SPOOKY TO STAY

During the 1950s, Jamaica Inn became a great commercial success but was unexpectedly back on the market in 1959, under unusual circumstances.

Manager Herbert Grose, who earlier had married a younger member of staff, said that his wife wanted to move with their baby daughter to a 'less-spooky place,' upon which, the owner, Stanley Thomas, who was still running his agricultural supplies business in Plymouth, said: "I don't care to go on without Herbert." However, it wasn't until 1962 that Jamaica Inn was sold to William Palmer, a retired Leicester businessman. He and his wife, Margaret, moved in and ran the inn for two years before deciding that the typical 500 visitors a day was not the relaxing, semi-retirement enterprise they had had in mind. They retired to Torquay, Devon.

Alistair MacLean. Image: Ian MacLean/ An Iodhlann, Tiree's Historical Centre, www.aniodhlann.org.uk.

AUTHOR ALISTAIR MACLEAN

The surprise new owner in 1964 was the hugely famous and successful author Alistair MacLean. Aged 42, he shocked the literary world by announcing that he was giving up writing to become a hotelier.

Among his many best-selling adventure books, 'The Guns of Navarone' had recently been released as a blockbuster film, and he had just published 'Ice Station Zebra,' which later would also be adapted for the wide screen. After Jamaica Inn, he bought two more hotels, one near Worcester and the other at Wellington in Somerset.

But it was a short-lived diversion. He quickly returned to writing. While he retained ownership of the hotels, he visited them rarely. His next book, 'When Eight Bells Toll' was published in 1966 and would become a film in 1971. By that time, MacLean had become a tax exile living in Switzerland, and he began to sell his hotels.

MUSEUM OF CURIOSITIES

The purchaser of Jamaica Inn In 1973 was John Watts who, along with his father, already had several hospitality-business interests, in Plymouth, Exeter, and Torquay.

He appointed a succession of managers to run the inn, which at the time still had only 11 letting bedrooms, none with private bathrooms. For the next 10 years, the fame of Jamaica Inn might have waned, until a resurgence of interest in 1983 when the first television adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's novel was broadcast as a mini-series on ITV, with an all-star cast led by Jane Seymour.

John Watts wanted to offer visitors more interesting things to see. He bought the entire contents of a long-established visitor attraction, the Museum of Curiosities, which was previously displayed in Arundel, Sussex. To house the collection, John erected a new two-storey building behind the old stable block.

Opened in May 1988, its primary exhibits were model scenes of small taxidermy animals in human poses, which had been created during the late 1800s by a Sussex artist, Walter Potter. His original collection had been supplemented in later years by all sorts of curious historical artefacts. John Watts and his wife, Wendy, acquired and added more curiosities so that at its peak the collection had about 10,000 items.

Detail from Potter's tableau 'The Rabbits' Village School.' Image: Marc Hill / Alamy Stock.

DU MAURIER MEMORIAL ROOM

After the death of Daphne du Maurier in April 1989 at her Cornwall home at Par, between Fowey and St Austell, there was an auction of her household effects. John Watts purchased the star lot, her Edwardian Sheraton-revival writing desk, along with several other items of memorabilia. He put them together in a display at the inn called Daphne du Maurier's Writing Room.

Daphne du Maurier's writing desk and other memorabilia in the display at Jamaica Inn.

THE WRONG PARROT

The inn sign, in place at the time of writing, still depicts the fictitious ship-wrecker Joss Merlyn, now with the real-life parrot, Percy.

By 1990, a long-established novelty at Jamaica Inn was the resident pet, Percy the Parrot.

It was a Blue and Yellow Macaw, indigenous to the South American tropics and one of the world's biggest parrots, measuring up to a metre from head to tail-feather-tip and with a wingspan of a metre and a half. It had been brought to the inn in the early 1970s by Reg Carthew, who by then had worked at the inn as a handyman and barman for about 25 years and would continue for many years to follow. Percy lived long and became so important that in 1990, when a replacement hanging sign was made for the inn, Percy was depicted on the shoulder of a new impression of Daphne du Maurier's fictitious ship-wrecker.

The new-look Joss Merlyn still wore a wrongly placed eye-patch. So, with the addition of Percy, confusion was now complete with the 'Treasure Island' pirate, Long John Silver, who had been portrayed by Robert Louis Stevenson as having both an eye patch and a parrot on his shoulder. In 1991, Percy surprised everyone by laying eggs, but her name wasn't changed. She was retired from the inn in 2000, after nearly a lifetime's service entertaining customers.

JAMAICA INN BY-PASSED

An aerial view of the hamlet of Bolventor, now by-passed by the A30 dual carriageway at the bottom of the frame.

In September 1991, a new section of the A30 road over Bodmin Moor was opened, by-passing Bolventor and Jamaica Inn.

Increasing investment in upgrading the road reflected the continuing growth of tourism in the county. By taking away the passing traffic, the new road increased pressure on Jamaica Inn to develop even more as a destination attractive to tourists.

SMUGGLING MUSEUM

Expanding on the theme of Daphne du Maurier's novel, owners John and Wendy Watts collected artefacts related to all forms of smuggling, from historic to modern times.

They were brought together with existing displays on the life and works of Daphne du Maurier, to form a new museum. Originally, it was housed in Bolventor's old state school, which the couple had bought after its closure in July 1992. The museum was relocated to the inn shortly after 2003, when the earlier Museum of Curiosities was closed. The closure was prompted largely by the premature death of Michael Ryan Grace, the taxidermist and maintenance man who had been hired to keep the exhibits in good order. Controversially, the collection was not kept together. It was sold at auction divided into several lots.

The smuggling museum at Jamaica Inn.

SIX MILLION WATCH TV DRAMA

After 40 years owning Jamaica Inn, John and Wendy Watts sold it in March 2014 to Allen Jackson, a businessman from Dorking, Surrey.

Within a few weeks of him taking over, a new television adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's 'Jamaica Inn' was broadcast by the BBC in three episodes, the first attracting six million viewers. Jackson expanded the du Maurier exhibition with memorabilia he bought at auction in 2019. He also built a new bedroom wing, expanding the accommodation from 17 to 36 bedrooms.

Jamaica Inn was purchased in August 2022 by the Coaching Inn Group, which is dedicated to preserving the heritage of old inns while making sure to serve the changing needs of today's customers.

PARANORMAL EVENTS

Since the days of manager Herbert Grose in the 1950s, owners and staff have reported numerous ghostly phenomena, such as sightings of mysterious male figures, inexplicable sounds of footsteps, chills, and strange senses of an invisible presence. So prevalent are these experiences that today, Jamaica Inn has a specialist team that organises paranormal-investigation events.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to previous historians of Jamaica Inn: Cornwall historian Dr Lesley Trotter, whose fully-referenced early history guided the research for this booklet; and Rose Mullins, who was curator of the inn's former Museum of Curiosities, and whose fulsome published history included invaluable accounts of her first-hand experiences and those of the many people she interviewed. Thanks also to the archivists at Kresen Kernow (the Cornwall Centre) in Redruth for their assistance during three days spent in their search room and with subsequent enquiries, and to Chris Timms, of the St Neot and Warleggan Community Archive who supplied copies of crucial documents, and to Karin Beasant, of Jamaica Inn's paranormal-events team, whose enthusiasm for a new history prompted and assisted this work.

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