

Extracts ref: **Richard Trevithick** from

The MEAD & WEST FAMILIES IN CORNWALL 1751-1941

By C.J.H. MEAD, published Falmouth 1941

(p.55): The Family of Vivian is a very old one in Cornwall.

John Vivian of Meadowside, Hayle, was the only son of Captain John Vivian (1809-1857), and a nephew of William Vivian (1813-1870) who married Eleanor West.

His [John's] grandfather was [Packet] Captain John Vivian, of Trenawin, who drove Trevithick's first locomotive through the streets of London in 1803. (see p.40).

He was born at Phillack in 1784, and was a Captain in Her Majesty's Packet Service, and Commander of the HERALD running between Hayle and Bristol, the first steamer ever used on the Cornish coast. He also commanded H.M. Brig. LITTLE CATHERINE, CORNWALL (1842-59), COLOMBIA (1859-60).

He married in 1809 at Gwinear, Elizabeth, daughter of John Rosewarne, who bought him Trenawin in Gwinear. He died at Hayle in 1871.

(pp. 38-41) The following notes dealing with William West's association with Richard Trevithick (1771-1833) have been extracted from the "Life of Richard Trevithick" compiled by Francis Trevithick, C.E., son of the famous inventor, and published in 1872 by E. and F.N. Spon, London & New York;

"On the death of his father (Richard Trevithick Sen.) in 1797, Trevithick was elected and employed to fill the vacant position of leading engineer in Cornish mining. About this time, while preparing machinery at Hayle Foundry, his friend, William West, fell in love with and married Miss Joanna Harvey. Trevithick followed his friend's example, and while on high-pressure engine business at Mr. Harvey's foundry, fell in love with, and married Miss Jane Harvey, a younger sister of Joanna Harvey.

In about 1796 or 1797, Trevithick invented his high pressure engine. The first model was made by William West. This was worked in Trevithick's house at Camborne, and was to have been shown in the lawsuits between Boulton and Watt the Cornish engineers. ... The model was made of bright brass and a facsimile is now at the Kensington Museum. It is a perfect specimen of a high-pressure steam engine, with cylindrical boiler adapted to locomotive purposes.

In 1802, Trevithick, West, and Andrew Vivian patented the high-pressure engine which they intended to adapt to any purpose where power from coal was cheaper than from men and horses. This was principally for their application of the engine to the purpose of [the] driving of carriages upon railroads".

The first steam-carriage was in progress in 1800, and on Christmas Eve, 1801, conveyed the first load of passengers ever moved by force of steam. The first day it ran about the streets and up the [very steep] Beacon Hill. The engine was called "Captain Dick's Puffer," from the steam and smoke puffing out of the chimney at each stroke of the engine. The next day it went down to Crane, a short mile, so that Captain [Andrew] Vivian's family, who lived there, might see it.

A second locomotive was tried in Camborne. In the commencement of 1803, this was tried out in London. In August 1803, Mr. Felton, of Leather Lane, London, was paid for building the coach. The boiler was wholly of wrought iron, and, with the engine attached to it, was put together in Felton's carriage shop. Trevithick, William West and Andrew Vivian were with it. William West was the principal man in putting the engine together.

One of the first trips is described by Captain John Vivian, of Trenawin (died Hayle 1871), of her Majesty's Packet service, who was, about the middle of 1803, on board his uncle's vessel [Was this the LITTLE CATHERINE packet? CHECK! *] in London, and was invited to steer the locomotive along the Tottenham Court Road and New Road.

"I was steering and Captain [Richard] Trevithick and someone else was attending to the engine. Captain Dick [Richard Trevithick] came alongside of me and said, 'She is going all right.' 'Yes,' said I, 'I think we had better go on to Cornwall.' She was going along five or six miles an hour, and Captain Dick called out: 'Put the helm down, John,' and before I could tell what was up, Captain Dick's foot was upon the steering-wheel handle, and we were tearing down six or seven yards of railing from a garden wall. A person put his head from a window and called out: 'What the devil are you doing there! What the devil is that thing!' This adventure was followed by six or eight months' trials in the streets of London.

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