

the estate, helping support the well-loved house and gardens that thousands of people visit each spring for their world-famous magnolia, camellia and rhododendron displays. The needs of game birds and the methods of shoots have greatly influenced the ways that large parts of central Caerhays have been developed. Woods, brakes and areas of seed-based feeding are established and maintained, adding greatly to the variety of the land cover. These are integrated with the inherited parks, that nearest the castle a classic Georgian and Victorian landscape park, that on the slope facing Caerhays a Victorian deer park, and that up the valley behind Caerhays a medieval deer park. In between all three are multi-purpose plantations, growing timber, acting as visual screens and backdrops, sheltering the

gardens from the Cornish weather, and harbouring large numbers of game birds.

Shooting may be seen as a continuation of the tradition of ornamentalised field sport that was carried on in the deer parks. Here scores of fallow deer were contained and hunted within large enclosures unencumbered by field boundaries, but instead made relatively open, decorated mainly by woods and clumps of trees. Just as a landscape of farming hamlets can be read as one of cooperation and neighbourliness, so a landscape of parks, as at Caerhays can also be read, as one linked to wealth and patronage. Both landscapes, farming and parkland, are beautiful not just because of simple aesthetics, but because these meanings are so clear. Through them we feel and appreciate the depth and weight of British rural history.

Caerhays is now the area's principal estate, but as late as the early 19th century there were other important houses and manors nearby at Tretheake, Trevenen and Trevithick. Indeed the western and eastern parts of the current core estate of Caerhays were acquired from Tretheake and Trevenen.



The magnificent garden in flower

DIRECTIONS TO CAERHAYS ESTATE



From Truro: first turning right off the A390 after Grampond (signposted to Tregony and St Mawes) then follow signposts to Caerhays.

From St Mawes & King Harry Ferry: take right turning from A3078 (signposted to Veryan) and next turning left signposted to Caerhays.

From St Austell: first turning after the end of Sticker by-pass (signposted to Tregony - B3287) turn right at first junction and then follow signposts to Caerhays.

From Mevagissey: head for Gorran Churchtown and look for signpost to Caerhays at Gorran High Lanes.

ADMISSION

Gardens

Adults £5.50
Children under 16 £2.50
Children under 5 free

House (conducted tour only)

Adults £5.50
Children under 16 £2.50
Children under 5 free

Gardens & House
Adults £9.50
Children under 16 £3.50
Children under 5 free

OPENING DATES

Gardens Open

18th February to 1st June
10.00am - 5.00pm
7 days a week
(Last entry 4.00pm)

House Open

10th March to 30th May
12.00am - 4.00pm
Monday to Friday
(inc bank holidays)

Reservations recommended

CAERHAYS CASTLE & GARDENS

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CAERHAYS CASTLE
ST AUSTELL CORNWALL

CAERHAYS ESTATE




CAERHAYS
ESTATE



Supported by the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – Sustainable Development Fund'




Looking towards the Estate from Porthluney beach

For nearly four hundred years, from the 1390s to the 1760s, and for twelve generations, Caerhays was in the hands of the Trevanion family, one of Cornwall's great medieval, Tudor and Stuart dynasties.

They were on the winning (Lancastrian) side in the Striving between the Roses, and from then on consistently among the county's top ten families, providing Sheriffs of Cornwall more often than any other, as well as Justices of the Peace and Members of Parliament. Between 1539 and 1571 Trevanions were appointed Escheator for the crown by the Lord Treasurer; they were thereby responsible for holding Inquisitions into estates of those deceased who were reputed to hold land of the monarch.

Royalist Charles Trevanion was Vice-admiral of the south coast of Cornwall when his son and heir Colonel Jack Trevanion was killed in 1643 during the Civil War siege of Bristol with his close friend

 Sir Nicholas Slanning. Two of the King's greatest Cornish soldiers, these and others killed in action were a great loss to the Royalist cause.

As for many great Cornish families, life was quieter for the Trevanions in the later 17th and 18th centuries and in 1767 the line died out. The estate passed in marriage to the Bettsworths, a Sussex family who were obliged through their marriage contract to change their name to Trevanion. They were so ambitious that in the early 1800s they decided to remove the old later medieval Trevanion pile, a house that resembled Cotehele, and replace it with a gothick folly castle, designed by John Nash, of Regent Street fame. It ruined them, and they fled

Painting of JC Williams



estate and country, bankrupt and in disgrace.

The house, or castle, stood virtually empty in the 1840s, occupied by farm labourers, but was rescued, restored and had its gardens improved by the Williams family who purchased it in 1852. The Williamses are one of Cornwall's great gardening families, plant-hunters and plant-breeders, of camellias, rhododendrons, magnolias,

enclosed land.

Scattered through the farmland are several 'rounds', farming hamlets enclosed, or defended, by circular banks and ditches and dating from the centuries before and after the birth of Christ. Aerial photographs reveal evidence for enclosures and fields associated with some of these rounds. On the higher ground there are some signs of earlier prehistoric monuments, Bronze Age

On the higher ground there are some signs of earlier prehistoric monuments and Bronze Age barrows

daffodils and all, helping to establish the classic form of Cornwall's plantsmen's gardens. Their wealth derived ultimately from the central Cornish tin and copper mines around Redruth, and they maintain contacts with that part of Cornwall.

 FARMING

The Caerhays estate occupies a block of classic anciently

barrows, again now mainly visible as crop marks on aerial photographs; these may have stood in patches of rougher grassland on the more exposed hill tops: small patches of downland.

After the Romans, but before the Normans, in the last few centuries of the first millennium AD, the patterns of settlement and farming that still underpin



Seeding a field near the cliffs



St Michael Caerhays church

any particular field (or bundle of strips) would be cultivated for just three or four years before being put down to pasture and hay grass for around twice as long. Over six, seven or eight years the grass developed a densely matted turf which, in the process known as beat-burning, was skimmed off, dried and burnt, and then the ashes scattered with other dressing material (dung, sea sand, sea weed, ditch cleanings etc) in advance of ploughing.

the shape of the farmland of Caerhays were established. Small hamlets with Cornish names, many of them with the early medieval tre prefix, meaning farming estate, were created, generally on the higher or mid-slopes, places like Treberrick, Trevarrick, Tregavarras, Trewolla, Treluckey, Trevennen, and Trevanion itself. These hamlets were typically less than a mile apart and each was surrounded by fields that were originally subdivided into strips and worked cooperatively and communally by the tenant farmers. Beyond the fields were valley side woodlands, dominated by oak, valley-bottom meadows and marshes (whose willows provided withies for basketry), and rough grazing land on any surviving patches of downland and on the more manageable cliffs.

Strip fields were generally enclosed earlier in Cornwall than up-country, from as early as the 13th century, and as communalism broke down so the importance of individual farmers grew. Most hamlets had shrunk to single farms by the end of the Victorian period, but farming regimes seem to have remained largely unchanged from medieval times until the middle of the 20th century. Under this convertible or ley husbandry,



Early 20th century staff

Now farming on the Caerhays estate is predominantly pastoral, crops (mainly wheat, barley and maize) being grown principally as fodder for cattle and sheep over-wintered in large covered yards. The scale of most enterprises has also outgrown the townlands of most medieval hamlets. Viable modern Cornish farms now typically work the land of two or three medieval hamlets; a single household now being supported by land that a few hundred years ago provided for perhaps a dozen.

 PARKS, WOODLAND AND SHOOTING

At the heart of modern Caerhays is a carefully managed landscape designed to be both ornamental and sporting. Organised pheasant and partridge shoots bring in considerable funds to