

## 3.0 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1 The History of Nancherrow & Tregeseal

Nancherrow and Tregeseal developed due to their proximity to St Just and the presence of fast running water. Both were originally farming settlements at ancient crossing points on the stream that runs down to the sea at Kenidjack. The continuous change and improvement of the various routes over the stream is indeed one of the major themes in the history of the valley. The old routes from the east ran from Bosvargus through Tregeseal and northwest to Truthwall; the original route from St Just to the villages to the north crossed the stream at Nancherrow, and ran up No-Go-By Hill, crossing the Tregeseal - Truthwall lane at the top of the slope. This was replaced by a more direct turnpike road in about 1830 (the current B3306), while New Road, created in the 1850s, gave direct access to Holman's Foundry from the west (by-passing St Just).



*No Go By Hill was replaced as the main road in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with a turnpiked road (right) that provided a better link from St Just to Truthwall and beyond*

This sequence of new roads was a response to the ever expanding industrial importance of the valley. Milling was already well established here by the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the valley was literally full of stamping and corn mills, leats, ponds and sluices all the way down to the shoreline. The excellent source of waterpower enabled the continued provision of stamps and dressing floors for most of the mines in the area throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest cottages were additions to the old farming hamlets. It was only with the development of Holman's Foundry from 1834 that settlement really expanded among the mills in the valley floor, both in terms of workers' cottages and houses for the Holman family.

Although tin streaming continued into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, deep mining rapidly became dominant. The upper part of the valley, closest to the tin streaming grounds, had the largest concentration of mills, stamps and earlier cottages and there was an extensive group of smallholdings (now abandoned) up on the edge of the moorland, outside the settlement area. To the east of the valley, at Leswidden, china-clay working had also started some time before 1880, and continued until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The equally ancient and extensive industrial activity that took place at the lower end of the valley (Kenidjack) had little obvious impact on the settlement in this area.

Settlement retreated in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the more marginal areas around the valley, but the rows and cottages continued to grow in Nancherrow and Tregeseal in the 1850s and 1870s, reflecting the economic stability of Holman's Foundry at a time when mining was in recession in the area.

Where there is some evidence of retraction in population, and loss of housing, it is at Tregeseal, and up on the moors, further away from the focus around Holman's.

The valley continued as a favoured residential area throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, being sheltered and south facing, and the presence of higher status villas created a demand for servants and staff, particularly women, when their traditional jobs in the mines and dressing floors were disappearing.

By the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial activity had all but ceased, and since then Nancherrow and Tregeseal have been primarily residential.



*In the centre of the conservation area modern 20<sup>th</sup> century housing now stands on the former Holmans site, its lacks any relationship to its surroundings in design, materials or layout.*

## 3.2 Physical Development

### Pre-industrial/early industrial

The truly pre-industrial period here predates the earliest map evidence (1809), with mills and leats already developed in the valley floor by the 18th century and probably much earlier. The 1809 OS survey drawings show settlement on both sides of the bridge at Nancherrow Farm and No Go By Hill (the present main road was built between 1809 and 1841), and at Tregeseal Hill, on the northern slopes of the valley over another crossing

point at Busvargus bridge.

There were other scattered individual buildings shown in the valley which were probably industrial buildings rather than cottages, including a stamping mill on the later foundry site and Busvargus Mill. Busvargus was the principal settlement of the area, the manorial site in this part of the parish of St Just, and continued to be one of the main nonindustrial settlements throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although farms survive at both Nancherrow and Tregeseal, it is probable that both sites contained more buildings and occupants by 1809 than relied simply on agriculture.

### **Industrial (1820 onwards)**

By 1841 there had been much expansion; the numerous mills were already in full flow, but many of the main developments influencing the expansion of settlement were very recent. The Foundry had only begun in 1834, the Turnpike road to Truthwall was only recently laid out, and Nancherrow bridge is, unusually, named on the 1841 Tithe Map, so may have been a recent notable structure. Only one row existed at Nancherrow, possibly linked to the building of the Foundry, although there were more buildings at Nancherrow Farm, on both sides of the road, than were to be found at any later date. There were also more cottages along No Go By Hill on the site of the gardens of Alma Villa (now called 'Penrose') than existed later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Holman's Foundry as yet occupied only the southern half of its later site, and only the Foundry House stood nearby. In contrast, Tregeseal Hill and the valley by Busvargus bridge and Mill (including Tregeseal Row) were already as fully developed as they would be, with the sole exception of a courtyard development built by 1876 in the middle of the Busvargus Mill row. Further east up the valley, the mills and cottages around Blackberry Stamps and up to Lower Bostraze seem also to have been fully developed.

The early industrial focus in the valley seems, therefore, to have been within and east of Tregeseal, and to have predated the founding of Holman's Foundry, with the majority of housing there probably also predating the foundry. Little seems to have changed by the time of Symons' 1857 map, but by 1876 (the survey date of the 1880 OS map), the foundry had expanded to more or less its full extent and the two rows of Tregeseal Terrace and additional cottages up No Go By Hill had been built. The New Road, another turnpike road, had also been brought in from the south providing a direct route to the Foundry, and cottages built along the west side.



*Terraces at Nancherrow (left) and Tregeseal (right) sprung up in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are typical of the industrial type found in the area*

The early stages of industrialisation produced mostly workers housing, but one of the later 19<sup>th</sup> century features of the Valley is the number of villa residences taking advantage of the sheltered site. The earliest stimulus for these was probably the foundry house (Chypons), with a series of large houses subsequently built on the slopes above. This process was one shared by the surrounding farms, with Tregeseal and Nancherrow both enlarged and a new house at Busvargus.

As a result of the closeness of Nancherrow and Tregeseal to St Just, there seems to have been little provision of the sort of non-residential facilities that typified the mining villages of the area. A small Sunday school was built at Tregeseal, but no Institute, Chapel, Club or other schools were built, and there were no obvious shops - Toljy, now a gallery, has a shop front but is probably relatively late.

### **Post-industrial**

Although some mining and china clay working continued in the vicinity, the period after 1880 saw a general decline in all the valley-based activity apart from the Foundry, with all the stamping and corn mills having closed down by 1908 or shortly after. The settlement focus thereafter shifted even more to the Foundry, and the area around Tregeseal Hill and Busvargus Mill experienced slight decline in the late industrial period, which continued up until the 1980s. There has been recent housing development to the south of Busvargus Barn, with the Rugby Ground and clubhouse opposite, and most notably the recent redevelopment of the Foundry Site. There has also been a scatter of individual bungalows and houses, especially up No-Go-By-Hill, at Tregeseal Hill and Farm, and at Blackberry Stamps.



*Apart from the main area of redevelopment within the conservation area (at Holmans) there is a scattering of other 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century housing, these are a mixture of bungalows, rendered housing to more recent stone faced housing that has attempted to blend more with the traditional materials of the area.*

**Title**

**Nancherrow &  
Tregeseal  
c1880 OS**

**Key**

NB - This map cannot be used for the purposes of identifying whether or not a building is listed, as it is not a complete record. Buildings are added or removed from the list from time to time. Walls, outhouses and other structures in the curtilage of a principal listed building are also covered by listing designation, but are not shown here. Please consult the Historic Environment Service if you need to identify the listed status of a building or structure.

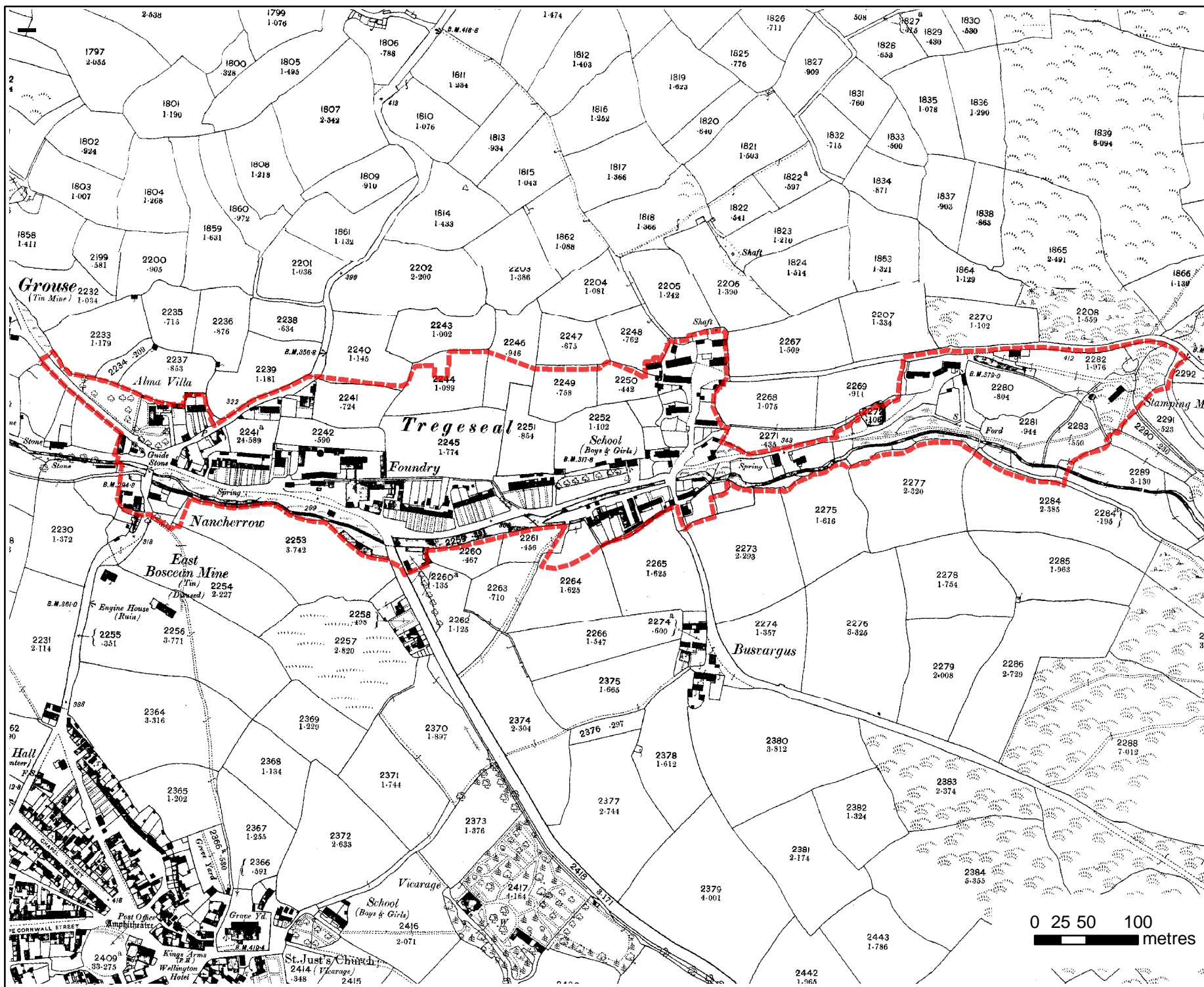
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August 2009



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**Title**

**Nancherrow &  
Tregeseal  
c1907 OS**

**Key**

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