



## Any fort in a storm

Interesting coastal houses for sale include a formerly piratical home on the Helford, a hidden, creekside recording studio and three Napoleonic-era forts

**T**ODAY sees the launch onto the market, for the first time in 41 years, of historic, Grade II-listed Trerose Manor at Mawnan on Rosemullion Head, which overlooks Falmouth Bay and the Helford River estuary in Cornwall. For sale through Falmouth-based Jonathan Cunliffe (01326 617447) at a guide price of £1.95 million, the story of Trerose Manor is the story of the families—some distinguished, others less so—who have owned it over the years.

The ancient manor of Trerose—‘the house on the headland’—once included much of Mawnan parish and extended upriver. Here, following the departure of the Romans from Britain, Helford’s heavily wooded creeks and inlets provided a safe haven for the native Cornish, who dodged the advance of Anglo-Saxon invaders by stealthily escaping, under sail or oar, via the Helford to Brittany. Centuries later, some returned with William the Conqueror to reclaim their stolen lands.

Smuggling and piracy were a way of life for many of Cornwall’s great seafaring families,

**Set on a beautiful stretch of the South West Coast Path, Grade II-listed Trerose Manor overlooks Falmouth Bay and the Helford estuary on Rosemullion Head, Cornwall. £1.95m**





among them the Killigrews of Arwenack in Falmouth, who acquired Trerose in the late 1500s. Despite their notoriety, the Crown was usually prepared to turn a blind eye to such activities in return for Cornish support when invasion threatened.

Between 1540 and 1545, Henry VIII built Pendennis Castle and St Mawes Castle to protect the River Fal and the Carrick Roads against invasion by France and Spain and appointed Sir John Killigrew as the first governor of Pendennis Castle. The Helford estuary, however, was never fortified, which no doubt facilitated the Killigrew family's nefarious activities. In the case of the second Sir John, who succeeded his father as governor, these included cattle theft, 'evil usage in keeping of a castle' and using his office of piracy commissioner to trade with the pirates and smugglers who frequented the coast he controlled from the castle.

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In 1635, Sir William Killigrew sold Trerose to Sir Nicholas Slanning, who also succeeded him as governor of Pendennis Castle. A Royalist commander during the Civil War, he was killed at the battle of Bristol in 1643. In 1675, Trerose was sold to Brian Rogers, a merchant of Falmouth, and, for the next 300 years, was owned by a number of prominent local families before the current owners acquired the house in 1979.

The present house is a smaller 18th-century reconstruction of a much larger manor house of 13th-century origin, the architectural elements of which can apparently still be seen. Extended in two or three phases in the 19th century, the manor is now L-shaped in format, with the reception rooms and all five bedrooms overlooking the dreamy, part-walled gardens.

Trerose Manor is set on a particularly beautiful stretch of the South West Coast Path, with footpaths leading down to the beach or up towards Durgan, where Trebah and Glendurgan are among the country's most celebrated exotic gardens open to the public.

Moving east up the coast to Fowey, it's only a short boat-ride from there to what is surely Cornwall's most unusual waterside property, The Old Sawmills. This stands in its own private inlet on the western bank



*Above:* The Old Sawmills stands in a private inlet on the River Fowey, Cornwall. £2.25m  
*Below:* The immaculate Georgian-style Lea House near Lymington, Hampshire. £8.75m



of the River Fowey, between the quaint village of Golant and the town.

Set amid 32 acres of private woodland with no road access, The Old Sawmills is for sale for the first time in 48 years, through the Exeter office of Strutt & Parker (01392 215631) at a guide price of £2.25m.

In medieval times, the hidden creek, known as Bodmin Pill, was used by merchants as

a landing point to avoid paying landing dues upriver at Lostwithiel, the ancient county capital. The Old Sawmills is also thought to have provided author Kenneth Grahame, a regular visitor to Fowey, with inspiration for *The Wind in the Willows* on a picnic to the creek in May 1907. In 1943, the site was requisitioned by the US Army in the run-up to the D-Day landings. ➤





**Spitbank Fort, built in the 19th century to defend the Solent, Hampshire, against the threat of invasion, is now a boutique retreat. £4m**

Having acquired the property in 1972, owner Dennis Smith, who describes himself as 'a music-industry mentor', transformed the 3,135sq ft main building into one of the UK's first residential recording studios. The legendary studio, where bands such as The Stone Roses, Oasis, The Verve, Supergrass and Muse worked by day and partied by night, is on the lower ground floor.

The comfortable main house comprises a large conservatory with dramatic water and woodland views, a huge central open-plan kitchen/sitting room, seven bedrooms and five bath/shower rooms. With further accommodation available in the two-bedroom lodge, The Old Sawmills has also been a successful holiday let in recent years. It comes with two private pontoons and the right to a mooring on the Fowey estuary.

The area around the Georgian market town of Lymington, Hampshire, is home to some of the UK's most enviable coastal estates, of which only a handful ever reaches the open market. Such a rare bird is the immaculate Lea House estate, half a mile south of Lymington, comprising an elegant Georgian-style house set in 36 acres of beautifully landscaped gardens and grounds with every leisure facility

you could wish for and mesmerising views across the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Savills (01962 834010) quote a guide price of £8.75m.

Lea House offers some 5,434sq ft of well-organised living space, including a spacious reception hall, four main reception rooms, family kitchen with an adjoining conservatory, a master and two further suites, three further bedrooms and two bath/shower rooms. A one-bedroom annexe on the first floor has its own separate access.

A state-of-the-art spa complex, with folding doors opening onto various outside seating areas, includes an indoor swimming pool, tennis court, sauna, gym and treatment rooms. Outside, children young and old are enchanted by the AstroTurf adventure playground, with its zip wire and treehouse, and riders can enjoy the freedom of the paddocks and fields surrounding the estate's two acres of formal gardens.

In the early 16th century, Henry VIII built an extensive set of coastal defences at either end of the Solent, part of his network of Device Forts that effectively controlled access to east and west. In the late 1850s, a perceived threat of invasion by France led to the commissioning of a fresh series of forts in the Solent by the

Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston. The massive, armour-plated structures took 15 years to build, by which time the French threat had receded and they were no longer required.

During the Second World War, the forts were used to defend the Portsmouth dockyards. Life on site was grim; those serving were deliberately chosen for their inability to swim, to avoid any attempt to escape.

Decommissioned after the war, the forts were sold off in the 1980s. Spitbank Fort was converted into a museum, and later hosted TV programmes and weekend raves. In 2012, No Man's Fort and Horse Sand Fort were bought by businessman Mike Clare's Clarenco, which has invested an estimated £8m on restoring the properties, which are now for sale—either individually, or as a group of two or three—through Strutt & Parker (020-7318 5190).

Selling agent James Mackenzie seeks offers around £4m for Spitbank, a 33,000sq ft boutique retreat on three floors; £4.25m for No Man's Fort, a 99,000sq ft hotel, restaurant and leisure complex on four floors; and £750,000 for Horse Sand Fort, a blank canvas, with 100 chambers and living quarters, plus the original gun carriages. 🐉