

Property

Property of note: Porloe Farm, Mylor Churchtown, Cornwall
The Relocator: Dartmouth, South Devon | Snapshot comparative



Porloe Farm, Cornwall. On the market with Jonathan Cunliffe for £3,250,000

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jonathancunliffe.co.uk



Fairy tale setting

Porloe Farm is an exquisite small private estate above the Fal Estuary with a fascinating backstory, now looking to create a new chapter. *Words by Imogen Clements.*

We frequently talk of houses having character. Some seem steeped, quite literally, in character, as if over time they've calmly absorbed the story of each of the individuals who have lived between their walls. "Indeed," agrees Christopher Perkins, owner of Porloe Farm, Mylor, near Falmouth, "if only walls could talk."

This issue's Property of Note more than meets the description – a beautifully arranged Georgian home of considerable note, whose welcoming wall is heavy with wisteria and whose location is nothing short of fairy tale, nestled in a lush valley just a few minutes' walk down its private track to the Mylor Creek.

To look at, you'd think this house's character had been one of privilege. A beauty born of wealth whose stock

was maintained and passed down through generations of nobility. Certainly, that is how it started out.

Built by a prominent 18th-century packet ship captain named Thomas Patrickson Braithwaite, Porloe Farm was to be his residence while his ship was being built in nearby Flushing. From Flushing, Braithwaite would set sail back and forth across the Atlantic to pick up wares and cargo on behalf of the state.

"An interesting character was Braithwaite," reveals Christopher. "Packet ship captains were permitted some limited trade of their own. He somewhat exceeded that and was wanted by customs and excise for compromising transactions in Brazil. He disappeared for six months and it's thought he hid in the house's cellar, until eventually he re-emerged and was apprehended and hauled up to London. I think he was bailed by the ship's owner and able to continue

his transatlantic voyages, presumably careful not to fall foul of the law. It's been suggested that there's a secret tunnel that extends from the house to the creek. It's not something we've been brave enough to investigate, but it was built in prime smuggling era, so it wouldn't surprise us."

Christopher's knowledge of the property and how he talks about it belies a deep fondness for the house, which is natural. He and his wife bought it 25 years ago. It was not, at that point, the privileged, well-maintained trophy home of a wealthy mariner, but more akin to a structural 'Cinderella', tattered and abandoned over a period of years and in need of a thorough makeover.

"We'd known the house and admired it from afar for some time. I ran a yacht chartering business from Mylor and occasionally charters would arrive when their yacht had been delayed, so we used to put them up at the farm, who ran a B&B. The farm was tenanted and subsequently sold to a private owner who began work on it but got as far as replacing the roof before pulling out for reasons of which we're not entirely sure. The house remained empty for four years, until it came up for sale again and we bought it."

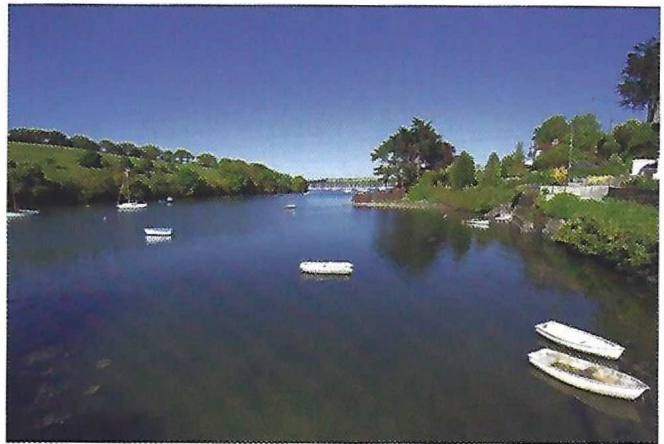
Christopher explains that by now the house was in such disrepair that, beyond the roof, it needed a huge amount of work: "Plaster was falling off the walls, the ceilings were collapsing, and we needed to replace every single piece of external joinery."

The full refurbishment took a year and a half, which was quick considering the scope of work required, but Christopher had worked in the building sector, built and renovated several houses, so he knew more than most. "And being from the area, I had a very good local builder on the case. He assembled a team while I acted as project manager and it was a good, productive working relationship."

The resulting house marries 18th-century elegance with modern-day homeliness. There is a ground floor extension to the rear to provide an extra bedroom, bathroom and living area. "Because the house is Grade II listed, we had to ensure that although linked to it, the extension didn't impose at all on the main house." As a result, it is a separate entity, an annexe that was often used as guest quarters but could easily be a nanny or granny flat.

The single-storey extension preserved the uninterrupted views to the creek for the upper rooms and they also created a conservatory with a solid roof: "we thought one entirely glazed could get too hot." The conservatory sitting room has proved to be one of the Perkins' favourite rooms. The main house's drawing room and dining room provides the grandeur – reception rooms for social occasions, drinks parties, dinner parties and the like, whereas the conservatory is the refuge in which to kick back and relax.

The property also has a detached home office converted from former stables, and there is a tennis court, stables and an all-weather equestrian school. "My wife was a keen rider, to the level that she competed, hence we built



The detached home office



the school.” They also ensured early on that all the land was fenced and well maintained. “We have sheep on it currently from a local farmer.”

The walk down the track that leads from the house to the creek takes just 10 minutes and passes a lush, gently sloped valley whose banks catch the sun, making it the ideal spot to enjoy a picnic before taking a dinghy out onto the water. “You can drive down the track there should you want to tow a boat, and we have Cornwall Community Mooring rights. There is a slipway on the beach to allow you to launch a boat.”

It’s clear that Porloe House has been an extremely happy home for the Perkins. They took it on when their daughter was university age and just after their sons had flown the nest, and it’s now proven a big draw for the second generation, particularly with all the roaming and sailing adventures it offers.

“As much as we love the house, we need to face up to the fact that it’s time to downsize.” With the vibrant sailing community nearby at Mylor, the bustling design-centric university town of Falmouth a mere 15-minute drive away and numerous good schools in the area – Porloe Farm is just a 20-minute drive from Truro – Christopher hopes a new family will take residence and that Porloe Farm brings as much joy to them as it has to his own family.

We live in interesting times. A few years ago, such beautiful parts of Cornwall would have been impractical for many whose work revolved around the capital or required frequent travel abroad. Broadband and much improved transport connections have meant that the market for some of Cornwall’s more spectacular properties (built in a maritime age when the region was booming) is now considerably wider. Porloe Farm, with its unique magical position, its neatly located home office, enviable sporting facilities and a ‘swallows and amazons’ lifestyle for all the family, makes it an attractive proposition for many.

This is a house rich in adventure with fascinating and very happy stories to tell, were walls to talk. The question is, whose story will be next? **M**

Porloe Farm has four bedrooms, four reception rooms, a separate home office and additional barns, stables and 19 acres of land comprising pasture and some woodland. It is on the market at the guide price of £3,250,000.

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