

glassy surface in a totally unnecessary manner. The swan closed in. Having earlier survived attention from the dishevelled pair, I was not at all intimidated, but to be on the safe side, and keep in the swan's good books, I placed a precious square of chocolate on the gunwale; it was his neck of the woods after all. Without deliberation, my peace offering was beaked off to the bottom of the creek. We elevate them to protected bird status, yet they have absolutely no consideration for others.

A little while later I was floating around in the creek mouth, warming myself in the early sunshine. The dripping bag was hoisted. Like raising the flag, it was becoming a custom. The fish returned on the tide and I was again in the centre of a splashing, flapping circus. Shortly afterwards, a flock of small gulls with black heads (no pimples) joined the fray, adding their link to the food chain. There are times when you have to escape the hurly-burly, so I headed back up the creek to explore the upper reaches. With my back resting against the painting stool and my naked feet raised to the sun, I made my way back up past the submerging mooring tree. Keeping to the sunny side, I watched my 'pennant' sleeping bag cast a moving shadow, 'contouring' the trees above the darker waterline area. Less than a mile on, the inlet petered out in a confusion of fallen trees. I turned Epic round and took my leave of Frenchman's Creek.

With wind assistance I rode on down to the pontoon at Helford Point, disembarked and wandered round the headland to picturesque Helford village. Dwellings, including the waterside Shipwright's Arms (the thatched inn, I nobly left in my wake the previous evening) are situated on the protected slopes of an inlet. I strolled through the village to the top of the hill, and strolled back down again. While reconnoitring I noticed Rose Cottage tea garden, and felt it time to eat.

Checking my watch for the nearness of lunchtime, I found it four or five hours away. Enquiring into opening time I was fortunate to meet Kate, who kindly opened half an hour early, inviting me to take a seat in her sunny retreat. At the onset I intended to take a simple breakfast. My request went something like – "Perhaps a little toast?" Soon I was exercising a most rewarding lack of willpower. The mention of something cooked in a pan or under a grill tipped the balance. The great outdoor fried bacon aroma, wafting from the kitchen, served the coup de grâce.



Porthoustock

7½ x 19"

'Porthoustock awaited my pleasure (though I did not know at the time).'