

Trip to Cornwall in September 2013 with Ellen Lanyon, Marsha Richman and Dick Lanyon

Prepared in October 2025 by Dick Lanyon

Marsha and I spent six full days with Ellen in the United Kingdom in late September 2013, just a couple of weeks before her passing. She had first asked me two years before about traveling with her for one last trip to Cornwall. The finality of her request hadn't struck me until after she passed on October 7, 2013. For Ellen, this trip was more than about Lanyon, although she wanted to see some Lanyon sites. She also wanted to revisit places and people she had experienced previously.

The week prior to the Cornwall visit Marsha and I were in Ireland and we flew to Heathrow early on **Saturday, September 21** meeting Ellen who was comfortably waiting for us after her overnight flight from Chicago, where she spent a busy week at Art Expo. We gathered our belongings, picked up our rented vehicle and began to drive west.

Our first stop was in Bath to tour the Roman antiquity. However, our accommodation was seven miles east at the Lorne House in Box. All accommodations in Bath were taken as it was the weekend of the annual Jane Austen Festival. We left our luggage and had lunch in Box, then proceeded to Bath.

We toured the city spending most of our time in the Roman Baths, a remarkable restoration of a multilevel Roman bath house and temple. Ellen found much delight in the statuary and curios displayed in the Roman restoration and museum. Trudging up and down was exhausting and we returned to the Lorne House tired. After the long flight and taxing day, Ellen opted to rest and not have supper. Marsha and I found The Northey, an easy walk. The dessert menu included Spotted Dick, unknown to us, a moist dense cake containing currants or raisins served with ice cream or clotted cream.

The Lorne House rooms were traditional old English but the lavatory was beautifully modern. After a restful night, we were on our way to Penzance on **Sunday, September 22**, crossing the River Tamar into Cornwall. Dick thought he remembered, but in the 30 years since he was here before, we passed the town of Zelah in St. Allen Parish on a new bypass. Returning to Zelah, the Hawkins Arms, a restaurant and inn was still in business, named for Sir Christopher Hawkins, one time the owner of vast acreage, leasing land and houses to Lanyon tenants. We diverted on a local road barely wide enough for our car between the vine-covered stone hedgerows and came upon Saint Allen Parish Church.

The dark gray stone church was typical of Cornwall, a simple one-story edifice and a massive square stone tower. The church is distinguished by it also having a slender octagonal tower, probably symbolic of a one-time affluent congregation. Presently, it has a small rural congregation. Still visible, although difficult to read, we found the grave markers of our great-great grandparents, John and Peggy Lanyon, in the church yard. Ellen was obviously pleased; she had never been here before.

Inside the small church, she admired one stained glass window dedicated to John and Peggy Lanyon and three other stained glass windows dedicated to other related Lanyons. Having had

many questions about where in Cornwall our Lanyons were from, Ellen was now satisfied and pleased to have seen and walked upon the ground of our ancestors.

Back in Zelah we also saw Henver, Polstain and Trevalso, three houses occupied by John and Peggy and other Lanyons over two hundred years ago. Presently, no Lanyons live in St. Allen Parish. Unfortunately, the Hawkins Arms was closed as it was late Sunday afternoon and we ended up in Truro for lunch. Afterwards, we took a brief tour of the city and Truro Cathedral. Ellen was always interested in cathedral art and artifacts, so it was no surprise that she was impressed with the brass lectern donated to the cathedral by Henrietta Lanyon in 1877.

On the road again to Penzance and upon arrival we settled in at the Estoril Hotel, 46 Morrab Road, for two nights. The hotel is up the street from the waterfront in a residential neighborhood. Ellen climbed to her second floor room and allowed Marsha and I to carry her luggage. While Ellen rested, Marsha and I walked through a nearby subtropical garden, along the seaside promenade and through town. Dinner was at the nearby Queens Hotel on the promenade.

We were enshrouded in thick fog on **Monday morning, September 23**, and after an Estoril breakfast we dropped Ellen at the bus station so she could cross the peninsula to the Leach Pottery Studio, and the Barbara Hepworth and Tate Museums in St. Ives. At Leach Pottery, she met with Warren Mackenzie, a sculptor and fellow alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, who was leading a short teaching residency.

Meanwhile, Marsha and I toured West Penwith, visiting Madron, Lanyon Quoit, Lanyon Farm, Morvah, St. Just and Lands End. Driving through thick fog was challenging and we made a few wrong turns. For a light lunch, we stopped the Lamorna Pottery and enjoyed a scone topped with fresh strawberry jam and clotted cream. As we approached Mousehole the fog was less dense. We were hoping to stop, but the charming seaside village was so crowded with tourists, we decided instead to visit Trengwainton Garden, a National Trust property. The house and grounds were owned by the Bolitho family and donated to the trust, just like the Lanyon Quoit and surrounding area. Following a walk through the lovely garden, with vistas of Mounts Bay, we drove to St. Ives to pick up Ellen and noticed the fog was beginning to disappear on the moor.

Ellen had a rewarding day in St. Ives, managed the hilly streets, enjoyed lunch and conversation with Warren and was pleased to have visited the town. We were given a tour of the studio and display rooms, and talked briefly with Warren before departing. For Ellen, this encounter with Warren and visit to Leach Pottery was reminiscent of her days there 62 years earlier. With clear skies, we retraced our ride and went back to Madron and the Lanyon Quoit.

With fewer trees in Madron, the setting of the church was more impressive than at Saint Allen. The Madron Church is known as the mother church of Penzance as it is the oldest church in the area. Ellen remembered the Lanyon Quoit from past visits, but was again impressed by its command of the landscape. She had no difficulty negotiating the stile to pass over the roadside hedgerow and the dung left behind by the pastured livestock.

We returned to the Estoril to rest before dinner at The Admiral Benbow, famous for its being a long standing business and the location for the filming of the opening scene in the movie of

Kipling's *Treasure Island*. On the roof is the fictional figure of Octavious Lanyon lying on the ridge as a lookout for the authorities when the place was occupied by rum runners and those who pilfered shipwrecks. Ellen's former colleague, Derek, joined us for dinner and the two of them had a spirited discussion of Derek's former career as an art critic in Chicago and Washington, D.C. After a pleasant stroll through the streets of Penzance, we climbed to our rooms at the Estoril for a good sleep.

Tuesday, September 24, began clear and sunny, and after breakfast Marsha and I walked along the Penzance Promenade to Newlyn and back while Ellen stayed behind to read. We loaded our luggage and left the Estoril for our visit to privately-owned Tremeneheere Sculpture Garden. Marsha dropped us off and headed back to Penzance. Ellen took it slow and easy on the sloping paths, enjoying the work of four sculptors (David Nash, Kishio Suga, James Turrell and Billy Wynter) embedded in the landscape. We covered most of the garden when we encountered another elderly couple and engaged in casual talk.

The woman asked about some odd grass formations and Ellen immediately explained about the work of David Nash, remarking that lineal grass formations were typical of the sculptor's work. Pointing to the landscape, she then described the work of the other three sculptors in detail to the amazement of the couple.

When asked how she knew this, Ellen matter-of-factly stated that she is an artist herself and makes it her business to know about the work of other artists. This led to the woman revealing that they had met the famous Cornish painter Peter Lanyon many years ago, and Ellen then revealed her name, her knowledge of his work, having met him in the 1950s when on her Fulbright Scholarship, talked about Saint Ives, Leach Pottery and concluded by stating "We are visiting with Peter's widow, Sheila, and their son Andrew this afternoon." The other couple was awestruck; it was as if they had encountered Moses descending the mount.

Arriving back at the entrance, we found Marsha waiting in the gift shop. The day had become overcast as we headed to Marazion where Marsha saw the opportunity for some shopping, a visit to Saint Michael's Mount, and more importantly, time away from the two Lanyons. Ellen and I left Marsha there and continued south along the Lizard coast to Porthleven.

Ellen had some directions she received over the phone from Andrew and I wasn't confident that we would ever find their home, called Sunnyside. Before the visit we had time for lunch in a shop down the street. Our visit with Sheila, Andrew and Andrew's wife, Jacqie, lasted about an hour. Sheila is 91 years of age, sat in her chair under a shawl and lap robe, and drifted in and out of the conversation. News of both families flowed. Ellen was intrigued with Andrew's work with old photographs and recent publications. The domicile surroundings were spartan. I felt relationship with Andrew, 10 years younger than I, as he seems to live in the shadow of his father as I live in the shadow of my sister. After we departed, Ellen remarked how satisfied she was to have again connected with these former acquaintances.

On the drive back to Marazion, Ellen remarked to me that Andrew's brother, Matthew, is a painter in a style like his father and exhibits widely. Peter and Sheila had six children, but there was no discussion of the other siblings during our visit. As the older sibling, Andrew cares for

Sheila. Back in Marazion, we found Marsha having a latte, heard about the wonders we had missed in the castle on the mount and walked around the village. We entered a gallery and found an older piece of Matthew's work priced at £2,500. He didn't become a serious painter until 1988 when in his late 30's, but appears to have become successful. Ellen was disappointed that she didn't know about him in time to visit his gallery in Saint Ives or his studio in Penzance.

We drove to our next accommodation, Molesworth Manor in Little Petherick near Padstow. After registering, we went into Padstow, a town on the north coast on the west bank of the River Camel estuary leading to the Celtic Sea, listing itself a historic fishing village. As in all other coastal Cornish towns, the streets were narrow, straight only over short distances and except for areas around the harbor, quite hilly. Marsha had already made a reservation for supper at Rick Stein's Café. Rick is a busy entrepreneur, having several tourist businesses in the area. After supper we strolled around the town and Ellen expressed interest in coming back to do some shopping, then we headed back to Molesworth Manor.

At breakfast on **Wednesday, September 25**, Ellen admired an old metal hand water pump that had been mounted on the wall for decoration, indicating that she wanted to sketch it. I could see these images showing up in a future print. Part of the routine at every breakfast was Ellen asking about the plan for the day. This day, it was decided that Marsha and I would go for a hike while Ellen stayed at the manor to read and do homework she had brought along for her subsequent trip to Cambridge. We agreed to return by 2:30.

Molesworth Manor was a true manor house, with rooms galore, many hallways and beautiful original decoration. Ellen became very busy after breakfast with her camera as Marsha and I departed for Padstow, photographing the carvings of animals on the wooden staircase, stained glass windows and other decorations. From the harbor area, we hiked north along the South West Coast Path following the River Camel. The tide was on its way out and the sandy beaches were lengthening. We got as far as Hawker's Cove and a nearby lifeboat station, just short of the mouth of the river. Boats were still able to navigate the now very narrow river channel. We crossed several stiles between farm fields and one tributary stream on the way out, and on the way back, we walked on the exposed sandy beach.

Leaving Marsha behind in town, I found Ellen reading on a couch in the large parlor. Ellen revealed that she had sketched the pump and had a lengthy conversation with Jessica, the lady of the manor who, she stated "...also vacuums." Jessica had explained to Ellen that she spent several years as a young woman in and had traveled around the USA. They obviously had lots to talk about.

It was also revealed that the manor was once the home of the vicar in the church in Little Petherick. Before returning to Padstow, we went looking for the church. Little is an apt adjective, as upon driving through the village we found ourselves in the next village, Saint Issey, before we realized it. Doubling back and after getting tangled in a road construction traffic backup, we spotted the church, typically Cornish, nestled in the trees just off the roadway. The church was not open for visitors.

Back in Padstow, a couple of hours were spent shopping before supper, but Ellen never found what she was looking for, a pull-over outer shirt similar to those worn by Cornish fishermen over

their heavy woolen sweaters. We took supper early so we would have sufficient rest for an early departure the following morning. Upon arriving back at Molesworth Manor, Ellen informed us that her bedroom window looked out over the farm yard next door, full of machinery and cows. I suspect that those scenes were also captured by her camera. We arranged with Jessica for an early breakfast.

We departed before sunrise after our breakfast on **Thursday, September 26** for the return trip to Heathrow. Despite very foggy weather the drive was remarkably smooth and fast. We only stopped for fuel and at a swanky Starbucks for hot chocolate, coffee and treats. The way to the rental car return was well marked, the courtesy bus to the terminal was comfy and we soon found ourselves waiting for the departure of the London Express to Paddington Station.

Ellen was doing remarkably well and was energized for her new project, making a new edition of four prints at The Print Studio in Cambridge with Kip Gresham. With luggage we opted for a taxi ride to Saint Pancras Station rather than the Underground. Marsha and I were catching the train to Paris and Ellen was staying at a nearby hotel. It was time to say goodbye and part company. Marsha and I were off for a week in Italy and Ellen would be in London for a few days to see friends before her trip to Cambridge.

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Dick and Ellen waiting at Heathrow on the morning
of September 21, 2013.



The Roman Baths seen on September 21, 2013, drain to the River Avon which flows to the Bristol Channel.



On September 21, 2013, the dessert menu at The Northey featured familiar favorites and a new one, Spotted Dick.



Even under cloudy skies, the west Devon country side is beautiful as we approach Cornwall on Route A30 on September 22, 2013.



St. Allen Parish Church front gate and original west entrance which is no longer in use on September 22, 2013.



St. Allen Parish Church south entrance which is currently in use on September 22, 2013.



St. Allen Parish Church looking west along its south facade on September 22, 2013 with its traditional square tower and distinctive circular tower on the west façade.

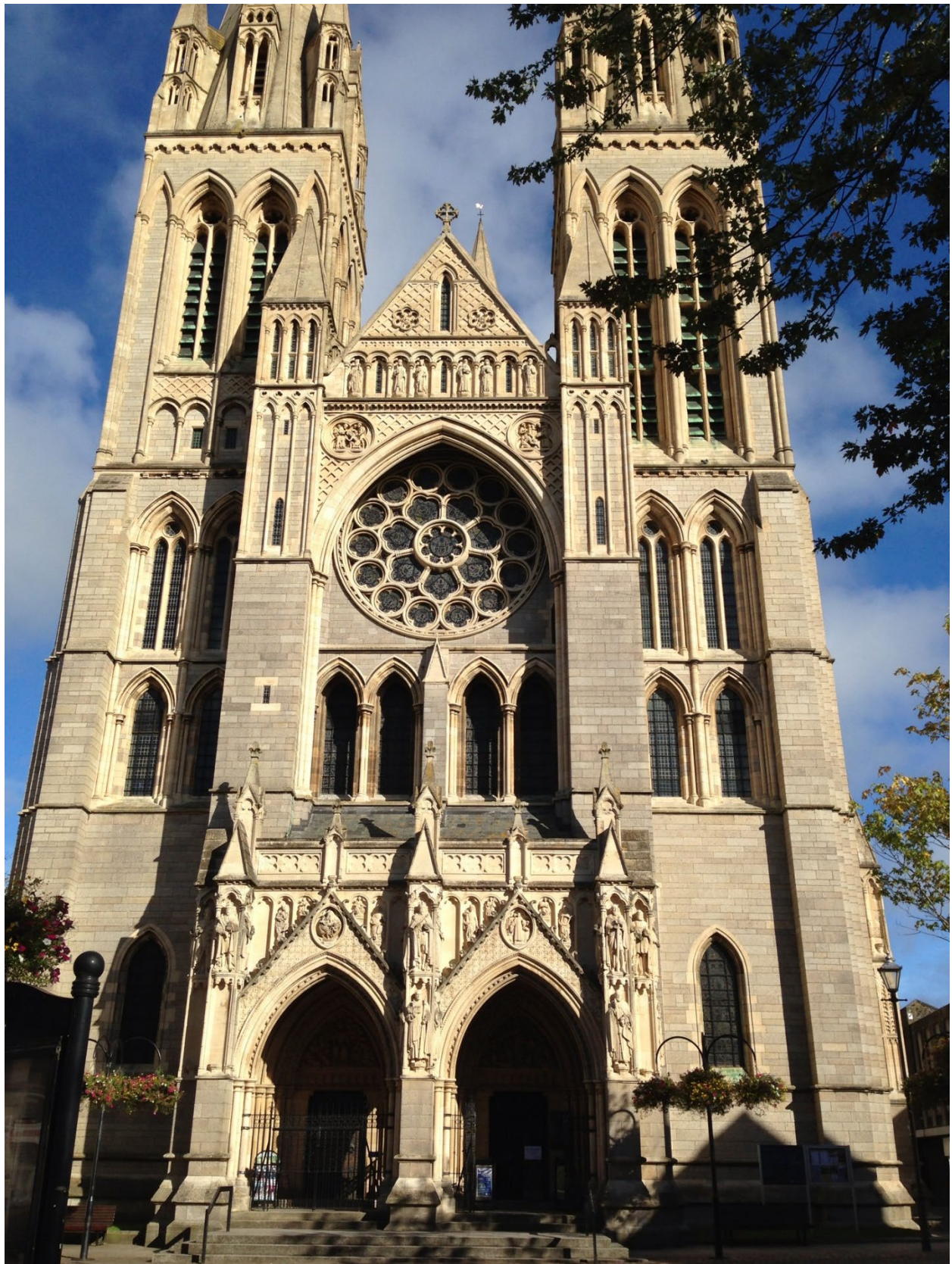


Dick is reading some of the grave markers in the yard surrounding St. Allen Parish Church on September 22, 2013.



Grave marker for Peggy Lanyon, wife of John Lanyon, great-great grandparents of Dick and Ellen. John's grave marker is similar and is to the right. Eliel was their eighth child.

September 22, 2013



Truro Cathedral west entrance on September 22, 2013.



Brass lectern gifted to Truro Cathedral by the Lanyon Family in 1877. Henrietta Lanyon's name is inscribed on the ball beneath the eagle's feet. Photo courtesy of the Truro Cathedral.



Roadside marker for Lanyon Quoit on September 23, 2013. The quoit is about half way between the two towns on the Madron to Morvah Road.



Lanyon Quoit looking approximately northeast on September 23, 2013.
The quoit is about 100 feet from the road and the underside of the horizontal slab stands about five feet above the ground.



Lanyon Farm is about one-third of a mile northwest of Lanyon Quoit on the same road. During tourist seasons it may be open for tea and pastries.

It was not open for business on September 23, 2013.



The tree offers a respite from the fog to show the gate and front entrance of the Lanyon Farm on September 23, 2013.



Between the fog on September 23, 2013, and the hedgerows along narrow roads, it was easy for Marsha and Dick to get lost.



Except for the Isles of Scilly there isn't any land beyond this point until the North American Continent. On a foggy day like September 23, 2013, one would believe there is nothing out there.



Near the end of land at Lands End on September 23, 2013. The fog also helped to obscure the businesses that crowd this tourist attraction.



The delight of strawberry jam and clotted cream on a scone at Lamorna Pottery offered a break from driving in the fog on September 23, 2013.



The fog and tourists were dispersed along Grenfell Street and the quay in Mousehole on September 23, 2013.



Beauty and the Beast was one of the themed displays at Trengwainton National Trust Garden on September 23, 2013.



A lovely scene without fairytale figures.



Cinderella and Ugly Sisters.



Puss in Boots



Jack and the Beanstalk



Rapunzel, Witch and Prince.



Without fog a clearer view of Lanyon Quoit looking southwest with the hedgerow and moor in background on September 23, 2013.



Without fog the Lanyon Farm house is visible behind the sign on the road between Madron and Morvah on September 23, 2013.



The Admiral Benbow restaurant on Chapel Street at Abbey Street in Penzance on September 23, 2013, with Octavious Lanyon on the roof.



Our breakfast table at the Estoril Hotel on the morning of September 24, 2013.



The Estoril Hotel front entrance on the morning of September 24, 2013.



Looking north up Morrab Road from the Estoril Hotel on September 24, 2013.



Front garden on Morrab Road near the Estoril Hotel on September 24, 2013.



Walking west along the Penzance Promenade toward Newlyn on September 24, 2013. Mounts Bay is on the left.



House and garden on the Strand in Newlyn on September 24, 2013.



A side street looking up from the Strand in Newlyn on September 24, 2013.



Ellen and Dick begin their walk in Tremenheere National Trust Garden to view sculptures on September 24, 2013.



The causeway leading to St. Michael's Mount and its castle on September 24, 2013. The causeway is underwater at high tide.



The chapel in the castle on St. Michael's Mount



A parlor in the living quarters in the castle on St. Michael's Mount on September 24, 2013.



Restoration work is underway in the Great Hall in the castle on St. Michael's Mount on September 24, 2013.



Outside the chapel in the castle on St. Michael's Mount on September 24, 2013.



Looking down from the castle on St. Michael's Mount at the rock garden and the shoreline at low tide on September 24, 2013.



Front façade and door of Molesworth Manor in Little Petherick south of Padstow in Cornwall on September 24, 2013.



Looking north across the inner harbor in Padstow on September 24, 2013. The inner harbor can be isolated from the River Camel at low tide by a wall with a gate. The River Camel is to the right.



A stile in the hedgerow between farm fields on the South West Coast Path along the River Camel north of Padstow on September 24, 2013.



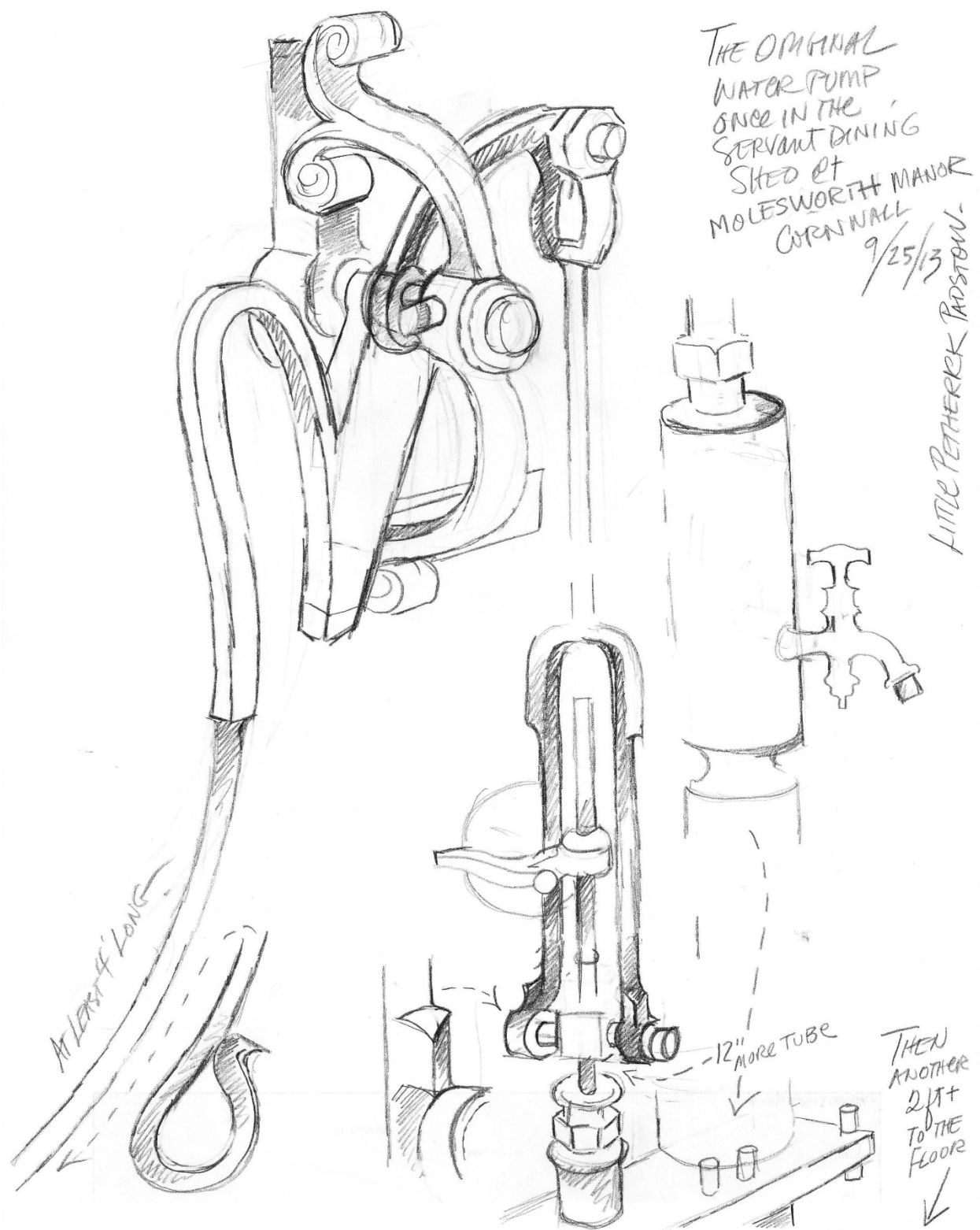
Dick walking on the exposed sand along the River Camel at low tide on September 24, 2013.



Marsha enjoying the walk along the River Camel on the South West Coast Path north of Padstow on September 24, 2013.



Looking south along Middle Street on our last evening in Padstow on September 24, 2013. Rick Stein's Shop (gray sign) and Café (black sign) are on the right.



Ellen's sketch of the metal water pump.