



POLPERRO'S ANNUAL MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL

(3rd Saturday in June for 9
days)

First talked about in 1995, The Polperro Festival was born from a mixture of known old traditions and a desire to attract more people to this beautiful village through music, arts and heritage. Jonathon Couch, one of Polperro's most famous residents, wrote of the festival in his book '**A History of Polperro**' printed in 1871

These are short edited excerpts. The full book can be found online (ISBN 978-0954423377)

"On the eve of the fair is the prefatory ceremony of a bonfire. The young fishermen go from house to house and beg money to defray expenses. At night -fall a large pile of faggots and tar-barrels is built on the beach, and amid cheers of a congregated crowd, the pile is lighted. Men and boys dance merrily around it, till the fire burns low enough, then they venturously leap through the flames."

"The next day the fair begins; Stalls, laden with fairings, sweetmeats and toys, line the lower part of Lansallos street, near the strand. There are besides, strolling thespians; fellows who draw unwary youths into games of hazard; ballad singers; penny-peep men, who show and describe to wondering boys the most horrid scenes of the latest murder; jugglers and tumblers to display their skill."

"The second day is much livelier than the first, and has for it's great event a wrestling match on the strand, or perhaps a boat race."

On the third day we have the mayor-choosing, never a valid ceremony, but a broad burlesque. The person chosen to this post of mimic dignity is generally some half-witted or drunken fellow who, tricked out in tinsel finery is wheeled through the town, stopping at each inn. He then demands a quart of the landlord's ale, which is gauged with mock ceremony. His attendants often made some facetious end to the pageant by wheeling the mayor with some impetus into the tide."

So, the modern-day festival was born. We still have the bonfire (tide permitting) and the mayoral ceremony still happens, although nowadays it is with someone of a more upstanding nature! Over the years since the first festival of '96, the various committees have worked hard to keep traditions alive and each have added their own take on proceedings; this has kept Polperro festival going where other events and traditions have fallen.

Polperro festival is a non-profit making event, run by volunteers and survives only on donations from the public and businesses alike. If you are at our festival, or one of the fund-raising events, dig deep and keep the festival alive!

Keep an eye on our website for festival plans and the Fireworks and Christmas Market.



www.polperrofestivalsandlights.co.uk

