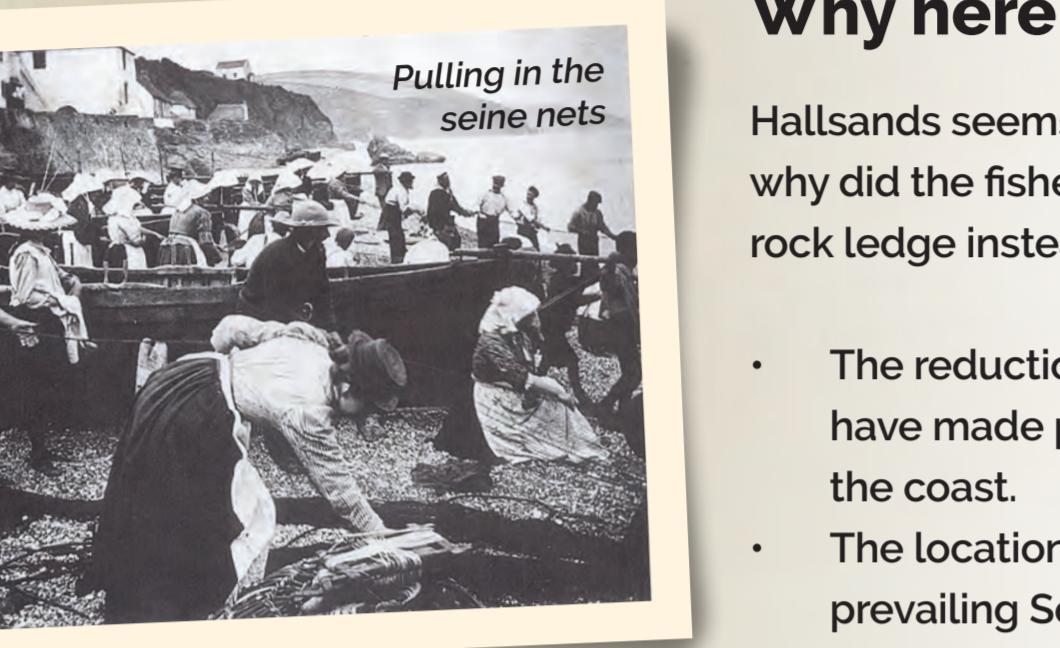


Living on the Coast

Why here?



Hallsands seems to have always been a fishing community but why did the fishermen choose this narrow and uncomfortable rock ledge instead of the more open ground to the north?

- The reduction in piracy, with the advent of the Navy, must have made people feel more secure about living right on the coast.
- The location was tucked into the 'lee' of the cliffs from the prevailing South Westerly wind and the flat rock ledge provided instant foundations for the first houses.
- The long shallow beach was ideal for pulling the boats up on.
- The proximity to the good fishing around the Skerries bank.

Fishing at Hallsands

The village was well located for the fishing and potting grounds. 'Pits' in the seabed this side of the Skerries sandbank, just off shore, had plentiful fish, and crab pots were strung just behind Start Point. It was a hazardous business, with irregular earnings and frequent losses at sea. Crabbing was carried out most of the year, interspersed with capturing larger shoals of fish with seine nets. A seine boat would be launched and rowed around the fish casting out a net from the boat and eventually encircling the shoal. This would then be pulled in from the shore.



1897-1900

Dredgers and villagers co-exist.

Autumn 1900

Beach levels have fallen noticeably, and no new shingle is coming into the bay. The Hallsands platform is unprotected and the rough stone between the clefts in the rock ledge is being demolished by waves and washed out to sea. Houses are damaged.

November 1900

Villagers petition their MP about damage to the houses. At spring high tide the sea now comes within 1m (3ft) of the village rather than the 21 – 24 metres (70-80ft) it had been before dredging started. Cracks appear in houses at the south end of the village and the sea wall is undermined. Following another Board of Trade Inspection, Jackson is ordered to provide new concrete footings to the sea wall and a concrete slipway for the boats, to compensate for the lack of beach.

March 1901

Kingsbridge Rural District Council writes to the Board of Trade, complaining of damage to the road. Part of the sea wall protecting the London Inn collapses and needs rebuilding.

September 1901

A new inspector, Captain Frederick, concludes in his report that the beach had fallen 2 – 3.5 metres (7-12 ft). He recommends dredging should be stopped. The licence was restricted immediately.

1st January 1902

Villagers take action, pull ashore dredger marker buoys and prevent them from mooring.

8th January 1902

The licence to dredge is revoked. After nearly 5 years of dredging, around 650,000 tonnes of shingle have been removed.

This is roughly the same as removing 1.5 metres deep from the whole of Slapton beach, from Torcross the Stree Gate, at low tide.

August 1902

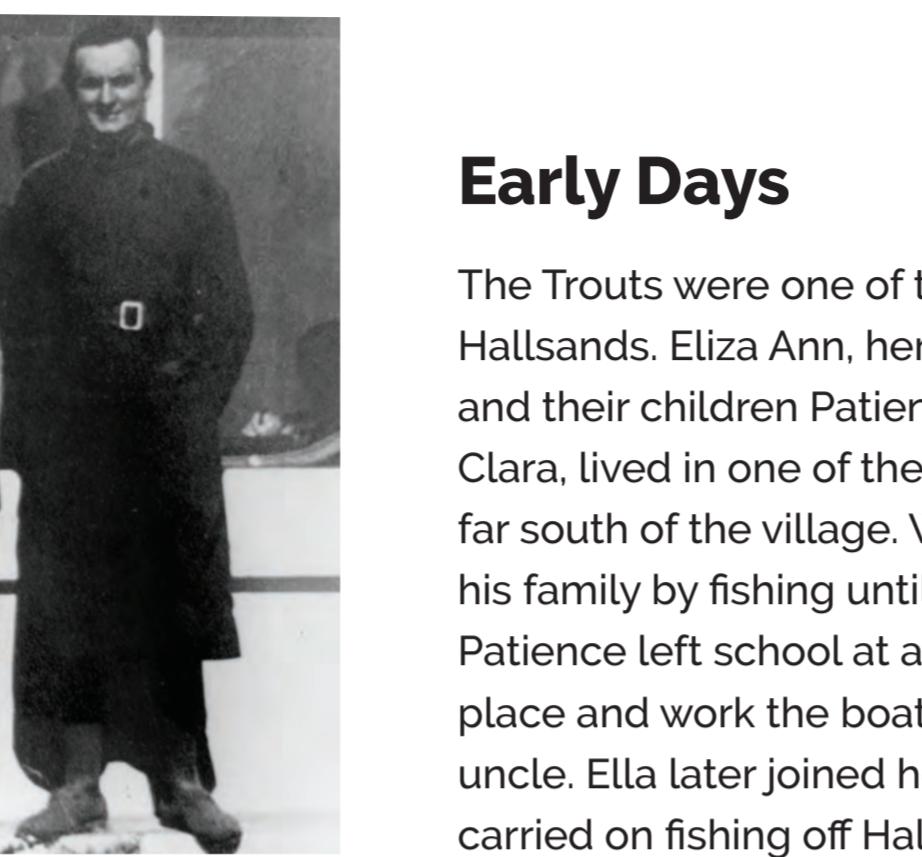
The beach appears to recover, but this is only an illusion. Sand rather than shingle has drifted in on the gentle summer waves.

Winter 1902/3

All the new sand is removed and it is agreed that the level of the beach is at least 2m (6 ft) lower than when dredging began. The winter storms bring extensive damage to the sea wall and houses, one is flattened and another made uninhabitable. Many struggle on with waves crashing over roofs and down chimneys, flooding houses. It is clear that the villagers need help.

March 1903

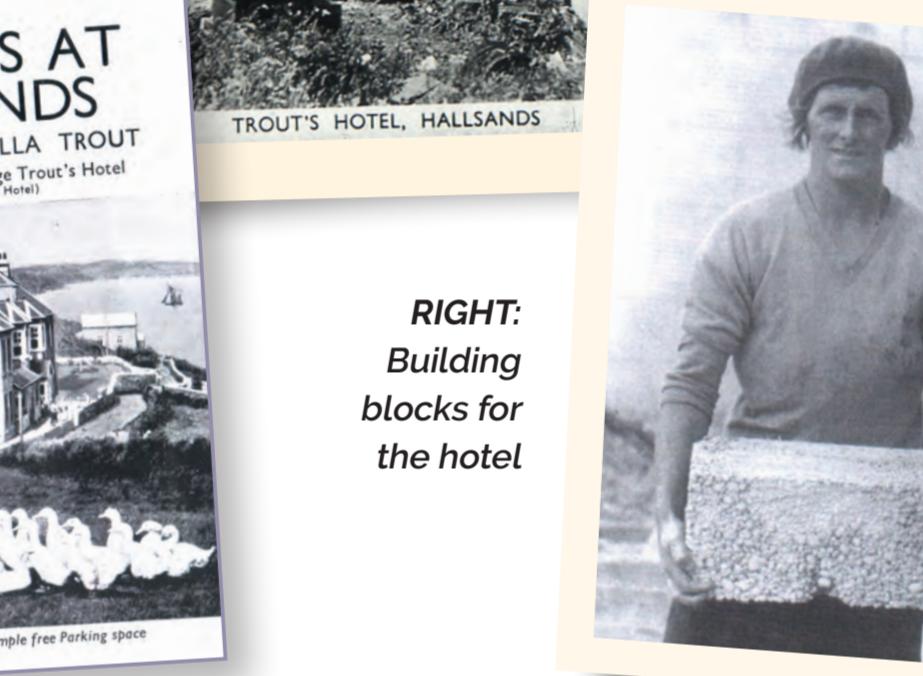
Richard Hanford Whipp is appointed as Honorary Engineering Advisor for the fishermen, to ensure they get a fair deal. He gives his services free of charge and is a strong champion. He is the first person to scientifically analyse the shingle which makes up the beach, to show that it could not be replaced from another source when it was removed by man.



Early Days

The Trouts were one of the large families in Hallsands. Eliza Ann, her husband William and their children Patience, Ella, Edith and Clara, lived in one of the end houses at the far south of the village. William supported his family by fishing until he became ill. Patience left school at age 14 to take his place and work the boat full-time with her uncle. Ella later joined her sister and they carried on fishing off Hallsands all of their lives. Their father was very proud of the way his daughters had gone out into a very male world and taken on supporting the family. He died a couple of years later.

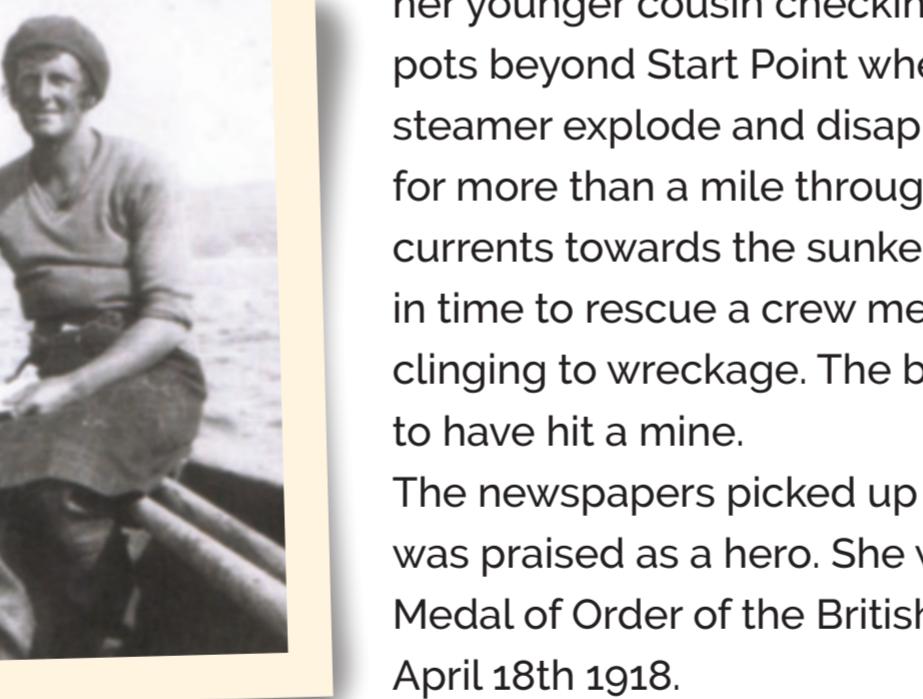
The girls had all grown up with the dredging and talk of the beach dropping. As their house was on the end, it received the full brunt of the storms and waves. It was one of the first to be damaged and the women decided that they must move.



RIGHT: Building blocks for the hotel

Hallsands Heroine

In September 1917, Ella was out with her younger cousin checking the crab pots beyond Start Point when they saw a steamer explode and disappear. She rowed for more than a mile through dangerous cross currents towards the sunken ship and arrived in time to rescue a crew member who was clinging to wreckage. The boat was later found to have hit a mine. The newspapers picked up the story and Ella was praised as a hero. She was awarded the Medal of Order of the British Empire, or OBE, on April 18th 1918.



Ella's big dream

One day whilst out fishing with her sister Patience, Ella got the idea to build a house on the cliff top above Hallsands. Using money saved from their wartime fishing, Ella bought the land and a second hand wooden building that would serve as the family home whilst they waited for their compensation.

Prospect House

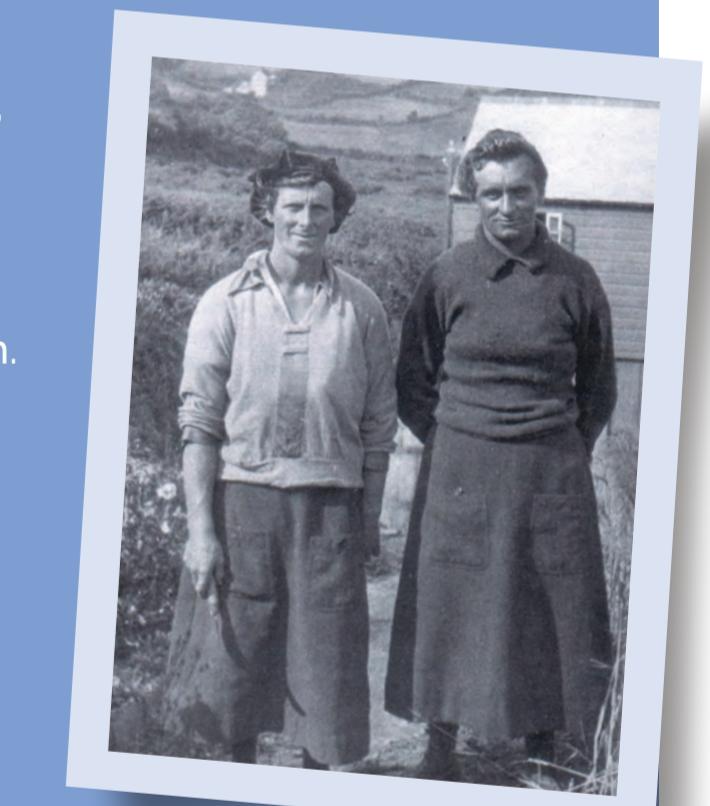
Disappointingly the authorities decided that of two homes the Trouts were due £15, much less than they were expecting. A chance encounter with a visitor gave Ella the idea of asking her bank for a loan suggesting that if they built extra rooms for holidaymakers they could cover a mortgage. He promised that the family would be the first guests! The guest house opened in 1925 and was successful, they asked for another loan to extend it. They were not granted the full amount but undeterred, Ella and Patience did much of the work themselves, including making 800 blocks from beach shingle, digging trenches and installing hot air cold water in every room.

Trout's Hotel

Trout's Hotel was the model of self-sufficiency, providing its own vegetables, eggs, chicken and fish. The family ran the hotel alongside the fishing, even taking visitors out in motor boats for trips and to fish themselves.

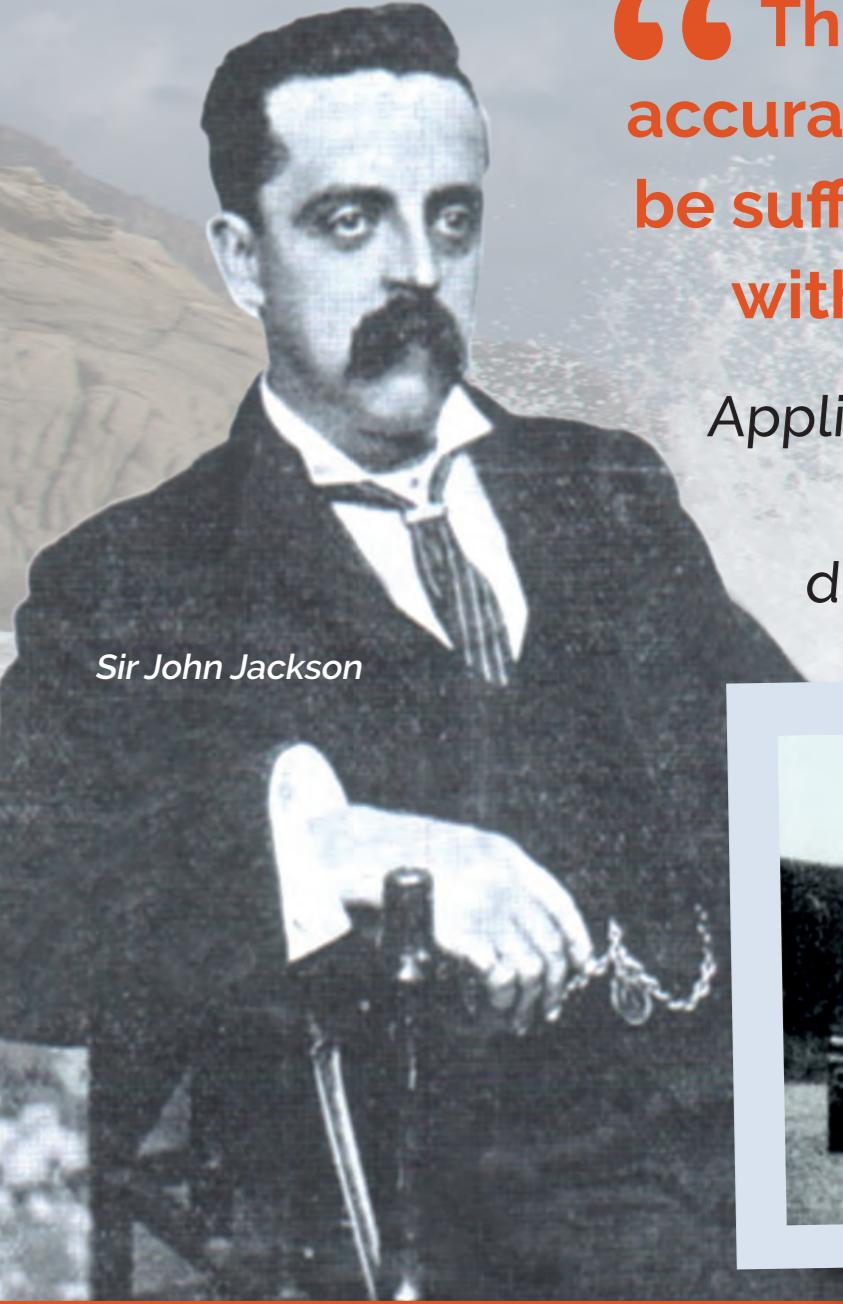
Ella had achieved her dream. Patience died suddenly in 1949, leaving Ella without her best friend and soul mate. In 1952, aged 55 Ella decided to leave the hotel to her younger sister Edith. Things ran smoothly for a while before closing in 1959. Edith then lived there in seclusion until her death in 1975.

The hotel was sold by auction and re-sold following restoration. It has now been redeveloped into luxury apartments and houses, and the name changed back to the original - Prospect House.



The demise of Hallsands

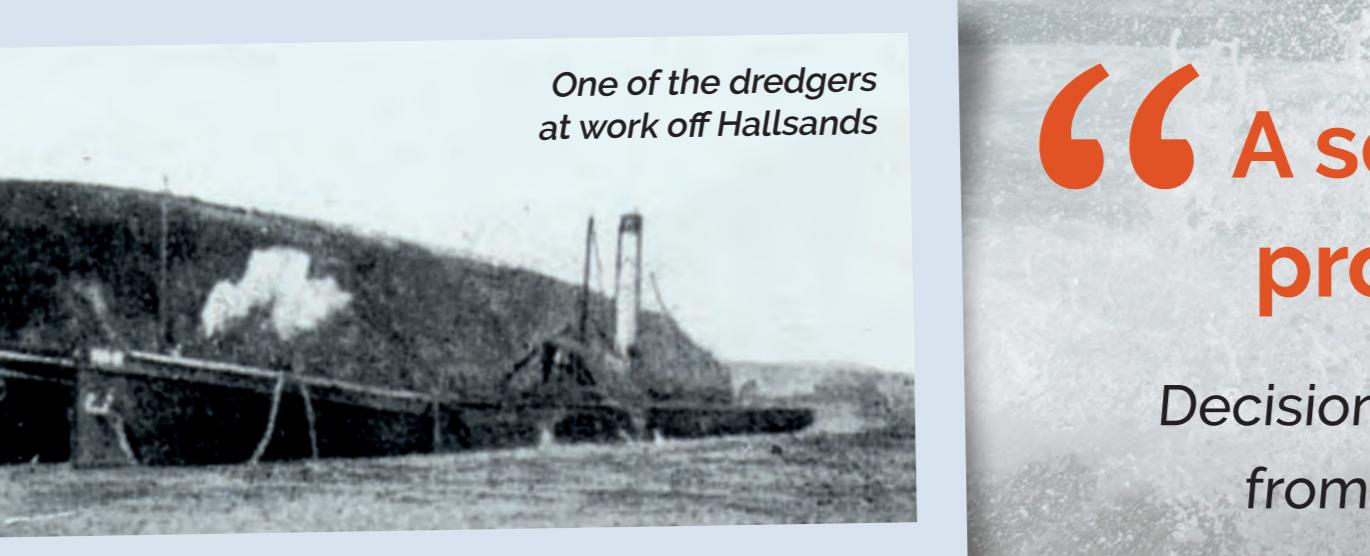
The tale of the demise of Hallsands is a long and complicated one. A timeline of events, globally, nationally and locally, which affected the village, as well as what happened here, is told all around the bottom edge of these panels. This section tells the story in pictures and words from the time – quotes, newspaper articles and reports.



Sir John Jackson

“ The quantity required cannot be accurately stated but in no case will it be sufficient as to in any way interfere with the cliffs or adjoining land. ”

Application letter to Board of Trade from Sir John Jackson; for permission to dredge off Hallsands. 5th August 1896



One of the dredgers at work off Hallsands

“ A sound business proposition ”

Decision to extract shingle from Start Bay, 1894



Construction of extension of Keyham Docks

Dredging

“ (in) conducting dredging or carrying away sand and shingle (he) was to do so in such a manner as to not expose the land above high water mark to the encroachment of the sea, and not to cause damage or nuisance to persons using the foreshore or owners of property above the high water mark. ”

Licence granted to Sir John Jackson by the Office of Woods and Forests (owners of land above high water mark) to dredge, and carry away sand, shingle and other materials from that part of the sea bed between high and low water marks at Start Bay and opposite Hallsands and Beeson Sands (Beesands). ”

“ In the event of a heavy gale from the east...few houses will not be flooded, if not seriously damaged. ”

Decision to extract shingle from Start Bay, 1894



Construction of extension of Keyham Docks

Damage

“ ...whether he will hold a local enquiry upon the allegations as to the damage to fishermen's cottages and from the fishing industry likely to result there from. ”

From Mildmay's parliamentary question to the President of the Board of Trade, 13th May 1897



Frank Mildmay MP



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



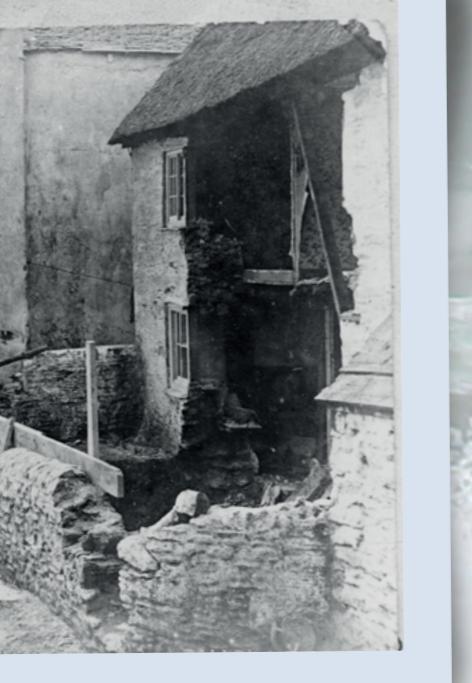
Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



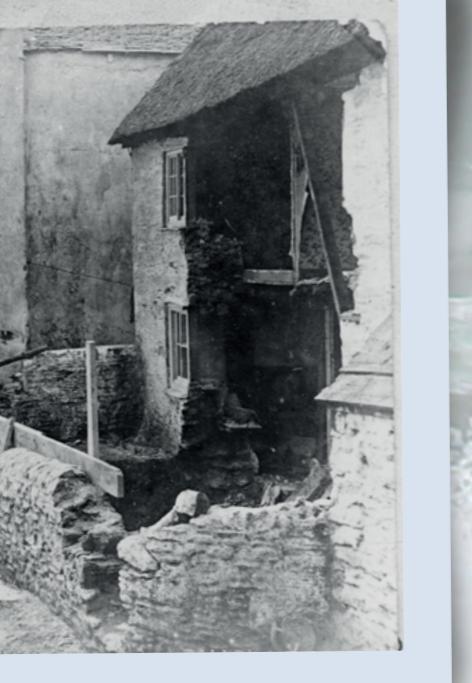
Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



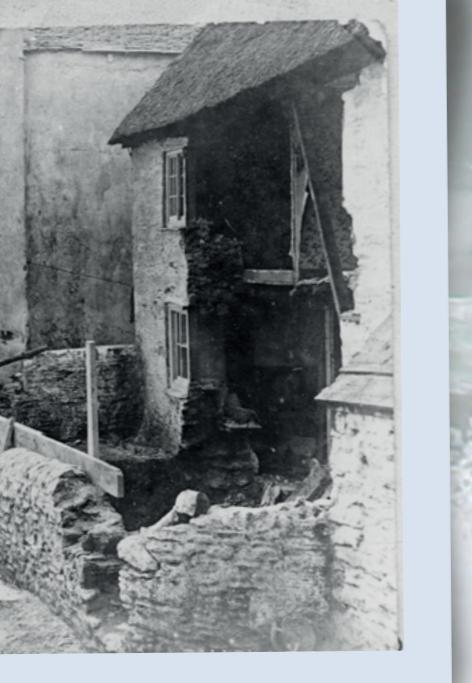
Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



Ruins of Mrs Login's house, 1904



