

Purbeck's Stone Industry

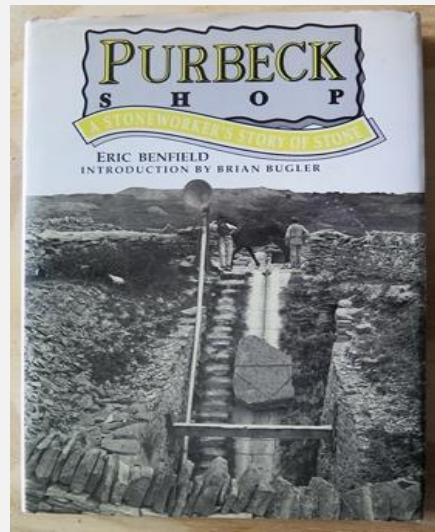
Two books published eighty years apart are dedicated to the subject of Purbeck Stone. Both written by life-long stoneworkers whose knowledge of the subject has come from their antecedents and gained from their personal experiences working in the industry.

Eric Benfield's *Purbeck Shop* published in 1940 and Treleven Haysom's *Purbeck Stone published in 2020*.

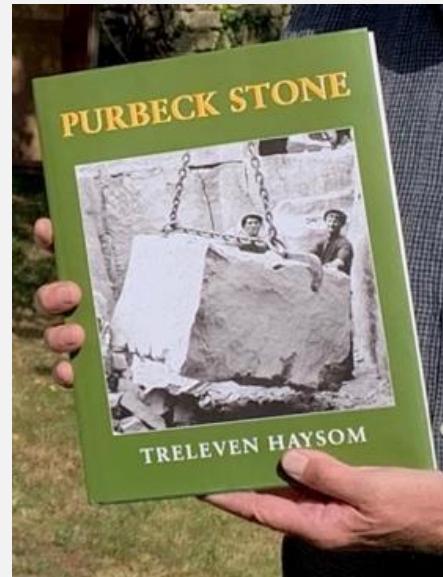
Trev, in his book described as 'the definitive account of a stone' explains the complicated geology and the characteristics of the different limestone beds, the youngest being Purbeck marble. Each bed, named by the men who first quarried them. Once I read the first two chapters I found the going easier. Trev explores the industry's past, drawing on existing records, scrutinizing the work located around the country, identifying its provenance while investigating the archaeological remains in the redundant quarries.

There is a chapter describing Purbeck's Marble trade throughout the 12th-14th centuries and the Stone trade that followed. Trev explains how cliff stone was extracted along the four-and-a-half-mile stretch of coast at the southerly edge of the plateau and precariously lowered into boats by gibbet and derricks. How shafts were sunk in the Inland Quarries where freestone was dug in narrow underground candlelit 'lanes' referred to as 'quarrs' by the quarrymen. Another chapter is dedicated to the masons' skills of which Trev was an expert, considering how much of their work was completed in Purbeck before being transported out.

Trev has also drawn on evidence from the earliest Purbeck marble workings during mediaeval times and the Stone Industry which evolved after the Norman Conquest and thrived periodically through until the 1950's when the traditional methods, used by his father, gave way to machinery.



Purbeck Shop, *A Stone Worker's Story of Stone* by Eric Benfield. First published in 1940 and again in 1990 by Eric's grandson Brian Bugler.



Purbeck Stone
by Treleven Haysom
Published in 2020
'The definitive account of a stone'