

the outcrop, I had reason to jot, '5-20 see *St Micks*'. Set against the hazy mainland, St Michael's Mount was rather understated compared with the dark rocks and white water close at hand. Even so, it was still unmistakably the most charismatic of Cornish landmarks.

For much of the next hour my gaze was drawn to the Mount. Gradually, the mysterious form dominated the background hills. Architectural details on the summit became more defined. Behind me, the distant giant dishes of Goonhilly Downs were visible in the clear air. Fascinating as the radio telescope dishes were, they did not hold my attention for long. Ahead, the dramatic structure atop the steep-sided island demanded precedence. Within half a mile, the intriguing castle still retained mystery. It was impossible to distinguish between constructed and natural formation, for I approached the shaded side. Had I been in sombre mood, the scene would have seemed quite eerie. Dusk, with a double bass bowing sighing moans, would have done the trick. Having skirted left, the castellated towers and tall ornate chimneys appeared in a cheerful light – the sun bathing the stone.

On the sunny side, in the lee of the outer harbour wall, I downed sail and rowed into St Michael's surprisingly large harbour. On my right, towards the outer end of the wall, I tied up close to a sturdy wooden ladder. It was from the top rung a few minutes later that I dropped my only jumper into the water. My visit to the island was not a chance gate-crashing. The previous year, a couple who live on the Mount called at my gallery and invited me to pop in after I had mentioned my proposed trip to them. The invitation was more genuine than a casual, "We live by the harbour, drop in next time you're passing." I called. They were out, but would be back at nine o'clock before the causeway disappeared beneath the waves.

I wandered over to Marazion to be impressed once more by the majesty of St Michael's viewed from another angle. Mainland cod 'n' chips was next on the agenda, and that too was magnificent. The waters rose, urging me to re-cross the slippery stone causeway, to call again at the terraced cottage behind the harbour buildings. After an enjoyable chat over cups of tea, Richard and Maggie offered me a bed for the night, but I had to do what a man had to do and settled for my wet woolly going in the drier. They must have wondered at such odd behaviour.



**St Michael's Mount**  
19'x 19'

'St Michael's Mount, with little transformation, became the vampire's Transylvanian haunt.'