



## COMPANY PROFILE

---

### BRIEF HISTORY OF WATERGATE BAY

The complete beach lifestyle experience. Set on its own spectacular surfing beach on the North Cornwall coast, The Hotel & Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay has earned a reputation as one of the 'must visit' coastal destinations in the UK. Laid-back living and great places to eat and drink mix with exhilarating beach sports, in a distillation of the best the country has to offer.

[www.watergatebay.co.uk](http://www.watergatebay.co.uk)

### THE ORIGINAL BUSINESS

John and Mary Ashworth bought the Watergate Bay Hotel in 1967, initially running it as self-catering flats. Built in 1904, the property was originally intended to serve as a railway terminus hotel for a proposed Newquay to Padstow branch line. During the Second World War, it became an RAF Officers Mess and was later converted into married quarters, but fell into disrepair during the 1960s.

The Ashworths converted the premises back to a 55 bedroom hotel in 1971, adding an extension to include a living area and restaurant. It was successfully run as a seasonal family hotel for the traditional bucket-and-spade holiday.

### THE EXTREME ACADEMY IS BORN

In 1999 John and Mary's son, Henry Ashworth, bought the beach café and opened the Extreme Academy. Henry's vision was to create a "ski resort on a beach" - to make Watergate Bay a place where people could be active and get amongst the elements one minute, and relax and eat well the next. Watergate Bay's original beach complex of café and shop was converted into The Beach Hut Bistro & Bar and The Shop on the Beach, a clothing and equipment shop. The Extreme Academy's sports schools transformed the beach into a mixture of classroom, playground and the wild outdoors, offering lessons for people who wanted to try new sports or improve their skills.

A £500,000 rebuild of the beach complex added a second storey in 2002, creating an upstairs bistro, an upper floor to the shop and facilities for hosting sporting events. The waves of Watergate Bay have hosted surfing competitions since the 1960s; more recently the beach has seen top-level

kitesurf events, Zapcat surf powerboat racing, and in 2007 the first ever polo match to be played on a UK beach. Polo on the Beach has grown in popularity each year, with the 2009 edition of the event attracting over 3,000 spectators to the beach, and winning Silver in the best event category at the 2010 South West Tourism Awards.

The Extreme Academy has also pioneered a series of firsts in kitesurfing, setting up the country's first kitesurf school and becoming the first UK venue to host an event on the PKRA world kitesurfing tour.

In 2005 world champion waveskier Carl Coombes joined as Sports Manager. Since then Carl has increased the portfolio of sports taught at the Extreme Academy, adding waveski and stand-up paddlesurf to the original portfolio of surfing, kitesurf and traction-kiting.

Carl's enthusiasm for beach sports rubbed off on his son Josh, who started surfing aged six. Now 18, Josh took up kitesurfing seriously three years ago and his progress in the sport has been astonishing – he is now a qualified instructor at The Extreme Academy, competes in BKSA Wave Rider events and is a member of the prestigious Flexifoil wave riding team.

The Extreme Academy continues to support surfer Harry Timson through sponsorship. Aged 15, Harry has already won numerous British, English and UK Pro Surf Tour titles in the under 12 division, and has spent time in Hossegor training with top French coach Didier Piter. He has been picked for the Great Britain team for the last three years, and represented his country at the 2010 World Surfing Games in Peru.

2010 saw the Extreme Academy sports school completely rebuilt to include heated changing facilities with hot showers, and a new booking and equipment hire office.

## THE BEACH HUT

Located right next to the sand, The Beach Hut has stunning views across Watergate Bay from both the indoor tables and from the decked balcony that runs around the restaurant. It's all about relaxing here, and the chilled out beach vibe of Watergate Bay is mirrored by The Beach Hut's interior: cool, coastal colours, pale wood and funky banquettes to sink into after a day on the beach. Open 365 days a year, the menu runs from breakfast through coffees, lunches and afternoon cakes to dinner. Daily specials reflect the best of Cornish seasonal produce and the iconic Extreme Hot Chocolates are worth a visit by themselves.

Executive chef Neil Haydock joined in Spring 2010 to oversee The Beach Hut, The Hotel's Brasserie and The Living Space Bar. Neil brings a wealth of experience and passion to his cooking, which champions Cornwall's talented food producers and wealth of local ingredients. Before joining The Hotel & Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay, Neil was Executive Chef at Fifteen Cornwall, plus top London restaurants including Terence Conran's Bluebird and the exclusive Sandy Lane Hotel in Barbados.

## THE BUSINESSES MERGE

In 2005 the Watergate Bay Hotel merged with the Extreme Academy to create a unique beach lifestyle destination. Renamed The Hotel & Extreme Academy, Watergate Bay, the business today employs 100 full-time staff and a further 50 seasonal employees. Staying true to Will and Henry's original vision of creating a 'ski resort on a beach', the newly merged business offered guests

the facilities to play sports on the beach; learn to surf, waveski, traction kite or kitesurf; eat in a selection of restaurants; sleep in contemporary beach house style accommodation; shop for the latest surf gear and accessories; or simply soak up the atmosphere.

## THE HOTEL REDEVELOPMENT

By 2001, the hotel found itself competing in a difficult and ever-declining market, and the decision was taken to re-position the hotel, targeting a new generation of young, affluent visitors to Cornwall, mostly on short breaks. A key part of this strategy was to open the hotel year round. In 2004 Will Ashworth, then aged 28, took over the running of the hotel from his parents, John and Mary. The same year, the hotel embarked upon a three phase £3.5 million redevelopment. Phase one saw the building of a new wing of 18 sea-view rooms of contemporary design, all with balconies giving spectacular views across the bay. In early 2005 the refurbishment of the hotel's public areas was completed, with the restaurant becoming the chic Brasserie, and the creation of the contemporary 'Living Space'.

Then in winter 2006 work began on remodelling the bedrooms in the original Victorian part of the hotel. The 30 new rooms were completed for the 2007 season, bringing the English beachside holiday experience into the 21st century with a look that combines reclaimed solid oak floors and white painted tongue and groove bedsteads with funky modern table lamps, reproduction bakelite telephones and original artwork. Vibrant wallpaper and fabric designs from Osborne & Little and Designers Guild sit alongside traditional beach stripes to provide a contemporary twist on the traditional Cornish seaside look. The modern technology that you'd expect from a world class hotel is there too, including plasma screen televisions and MP3 docking stations.

In June 2010, the newly-refurbished Coach House rooms received their first guests. Meeting the same standards as the rooms in the main hotel, albeit without the sea views, the Coach House comprises 19 beautiful new rooms - 12 family suites along with one standard and six superior doubles.

Design inspiration comes from classic and gorgeous New England-style simplicity, with wooden floors, white painted tongue and groove and cool off-white backgrounds juxtaposed with soft bursts of colour, prints and texture through vintage-style cottons and linens. There is even a nod to The Hotel's original Victorian architecture with some subtle features.

## FIFTEEN CORNWALL

In May 2006 Fifteen Cornwall, the Jamie Oliver-inspired restaurant, opened at Watergate Bay. Taking over the top floor of the Extreme Academy building on the beach, the restaurant quickly became one of Cornwall's must-visit dining destinations.

The restaurant is dedicated to the same inspirational social enterprise goals set out by Jamie Oliver and the team at Fifteen London. Each year the restaurant gives up to 20 apprentice chefs a unique opportunity to turn their lives around. All profits from Fifteen Cornwall go to the registered charity, the Cornwall Foundation of Promise. The charity's purpose is the creation of fantastic career opportunities for disadvantaged, local, young people.

Henry and Will were instrumental in bringing Fifteen Cornwall to Watergate Bay; Henry is one of the trustees of the Cornwall Foundation of Promise, whilst Will is one of the directors of Fifteen Cornwall. Dave Meneer joined Fifteen Cornwall as CEO in September 2007. Previous to this, he

was Marketing Director at the Eden Project.

Head Chef Andy Appleton has been at Fifteen Cornwall since April 2007, taking up his current role in Spring 2010. Originally a Senior Sous Chef at Fifteen London, Andy was part of the team that launched the world-renowned restaurant with Jamie Oliver. Andy then took over as Head Chef at the Italian style Tabernacle Bar and Grill before returning to the Fifteen family at Watergate Bay.

Since May 2006 over 100 apprentices have enrolled onto the Fifteen Cornwall programme, with 61 of them graduating. The restaurant has welcomed over 400,000 diners for breakfast, lunch and dinner, virtually every day of every year since opening. It has done over £15 million worth of business in that time and this has made up the profit that fuels the training scheme.

Fifteen Cornwall has received more than £1 million in grants from Objective One and the South West Regional Development Agency.

**[www.fifteencornwall.co.uk](http://www.fifteencornwall.co.uk)**

## BEACH RETREATS

2006 saw the launch of Beach Retreats, a marketing and letting agency for coastal self-catering accommodation. Each property that joins the Beach Retreats portfolio has met exacting standards. Whether it's a stunning contemporary apartment or a beautiful character cottage, all properties are located close to the best beaches on the South West coastline, surrounded by great places to eat, play, shop and relax. They all have stylish, well designed interiors, and are equipped to a very high standard. Beach Retreats manages the lettings for the business's own self-catering accommodation, as well as offering a complete marketing and letting service for privately-owned properties.

**[www.beachretreats.co.uk](http://www.beachretreats.co.uk)**

## THE VILLAGE

The first phase of The Village - an £8 million project to create 29 holiday apartments - opened at Easter 2011. Built on the site of the former sports hall behind The Hotel, the semi-detached houses have been designed to blend into the North Cornish landscape while incorporating the latest thinking in sustainable, energy-efficient design and construction. Designed by the award-winning Architects Design Group, the apartments far exceed the current Government targets for energy efficiency, and reflect the growing year-round appeal of Watergate Bay.

**[www.thevillagewatergatebay.co.uk](http://www.thevillagewatergatebay.co.uk)**

## THE FUTURE

Starting in Autumn 2011, the hotel's indoor and outdoor swimming pools will be redeveloped. Building on the ethos of creating a ski resort on a beach, the area will provide a great way to unwind after a tough day on the beach, all year round.

Planning permission has been granted and the design team has now started work on creating the interiors for the new swimming pool, gym, treatment rooms and lovely snug with awesome sea views.

## CONTACT

The Hotel & Extreme Academy  
Watergate Bay  
Cornwall  
TR8 4AA  
Tel: 01637 861239  
**[www.watergatebay.co.uk](http://www.watergatebay.co.uk)**

### General Enquiries

Rosie Halloran  
Wild Card PR  
Tel: 01872 243560  
Email: **[rosie.halloran@wildcard.co.uk](mailto:rosie.halloran@wildcard.co.uk)**

### Events Enquiries

Jim Michell  
Barefoot Media  
Tel: 01208 895089  
Email: **[jim@barefootmedia.co.uk](mailto:jim@barefootmedia.co.uk)**  
**<http://press.barefootmedia.co.uk/extreme-academy>**

## IMAGES FOR MEDIA USE



WATERGATEBAY.CO.UK

COMPANY PROFILE

Please send all image requests to [rosie.halloran@wildcard.co.uk](mailto:rosie.halloran@wildcard.co.uk)  
All files are available as CMYK 300dpi jpegs.  
Please ask for any other formats.