



# THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

**KOWETHAS TREVITHICK**

NEWSLETTER 164 SUMMER 2014



Known to the Trevithick Society as the Gawns wheel, it was re-christened the Lady Evelyn in 2006 once it had been restored to its original site at Laxey on the Isle of Man.

# CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

## *Horse and cart*

Elsewhere in this newsletter there are details of our Facebook social media page. A recent survey in a Society meeting at King Edward Mine revealed that only four members out of the twenty four present had any connection with Facebook. I know the understanding of its technology doesn't come easily to those of us who are elderly folk but this has happened in every generation. I well remember the fear some people had that the television set in the corner of the room was spying on them and there were those who rejected the motor car in favour of the horse and cart. I agree that both those innovations were expensive and that may have been the real reason for avoiding them. However, Facebook is free and it's the way we communicate with future members. In a few years most members of this Society will be able to skateboard, I wonder what technology they will be avoiding.

The recent AGM Weekend in North Cornwall was a very pleasant success in spite of the weather. It was clear that those present enjoyed themselves, renewed friendships and took the opportunity to celebrate their membership of the Society, its existence and achievements. Our thanks are due to those who organised the events and prepared the illustrated notes.

**Philip M Hosken**

# EDITORIAL

In a recent holiday on the Isle of Man I was particularly looking forward to seeing the Laxey waterwheels. The smaller of the two great wheels, as the plaque beside the wheel proudly proclaimed "was presented by the Trevithick Society as a gift from the people of Cornwall to the people of the Isle of Man". It was gratifying to see the three flags flying above the site (see front cover) with the Cornish flag in the centre reinforcing this link between the two celtic nations.

A few weeks earlier I was lucky enough to visit the Beamish museum near Newcastle, which greatly outshines anything we have in Cornwall, and should have been a template for that inadequate offering at Pool - Heartlands. One very pleasant surprise at Beamish was their acknowledgement that the development of the railway locomotive began with Richard Trevithick and was carried forward by a group of engineers in the north east which included George Stephenson. It was so refreshing that they do not peddle the myths that have long been taught in English schools that made the railway locomotive synonymous with the Stephensons.

**Colin French**

**Copy date for next newsletter: September 15th 2014**



**Established 1935**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I detail a query below from our Australian colleagues regarding a miners pick found in South Australia - the shaft is obviously new - basically they would like to know if there is anything about the pick that would suggest whether or not it is Cornish in origin.

The President of the Burnside Historical Society in South Australia recently made contact regarding a miners pick found in the surface workings at the Glen Osmond Mine located in the Adelaide Hills. Glen Osmond was one of a group of silver-lead mines that were Australia's first metalliferous mines and are in the Burnside Council area. The main period of operation

of the Glen Osmond Mine was 1842-1851 but it (including the surface workings) was reopened from 1889-1892.

Items like this can be particularly difficult to date, but my Australian friend would like to know if there is any feature that might suggest the age of the pick, and whether or not it might be Cornish?

I include several photographs of the pick below - the shaft was fitted onto the pick by the finder.

Please reply to **Rob Vernon**

[rbrtvernon@aol.com](mailto:rbrtvernon@aol.com)



## PUFFING DEVIL



The Puffing Devil required more maintenance than usual over the past winter. Some work was due to general wear-and-tear whilst the rest was the result of the very high temperatures the engine was subjected to during its visit to France. Both the front and back fabricated bulkheads of the firebox burnt through and had to be replaced together with three cast iron fire bars. A crack has developed on the bolt-on casting supporting the fire box door and therefore a 1/4" diameter hole has been drilled ahead of it in an attempt to prevent further splitting. Only time will tell if it has been successful.



A bracket has been made to connect the top end of the chimney to the engine. This has been done to overcome the ongoing problem with movement on the bottom joint and will stop flames from shooting out close to my backside every time we hit a bump when we go up Camborne Hill!



Two of the oak planks on the footplate have been replaced (Kindly supplied by David Ball Construction, who made the chassis). The inner one has been warped for some time but the second one couldn't stand the heat in France and became a danger to anybody standing on the engine.

The brake linings also needed replacing and as this is the second time this has happened we can, therefore, now say that the average life-span of brake linings is between 6-7 years.



All four wheels suffered from the French heat and have consequently shrunk. The two small wheels which suffered the worst have been removed and soaked in water. However, the two driving wheels cannot be removed without a huge amount of work so the engine has been left outside in the rain in the hope that this will do the trick.

The majority of the maintenance work mentioned above was undertaken by Sean Oliver.

### **John Woodward**

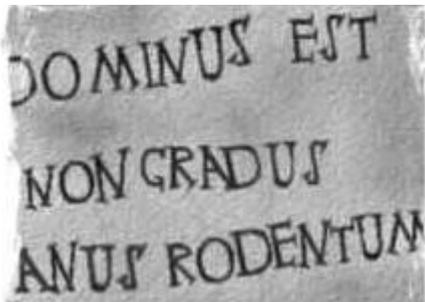
Custodian of The Puffing Devil

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Social networking has been with us since Man learnt how to write. The walls of caves carried messages that we read today. The graffiti preserved on the walls of Pompeii includes the raunchy and the political. It gives us an amusing look at what the Pompeians thought of their fellow citizens and the messages they sent each other.

Several websites exist, try:

<http://www.pompeiana.org/resources/ancient/graffiti%20from%20pompeii.htm>



It is clear that the Pompeian messages were intended to be read, probably by more people than the individuals to whom they were addressed. In that way the townsfolk got to know one another and Pompeii prospered.

Today we look upon the current forms of social networking as the modern

phenomenon of the digital age but they aren't. They are the current way in which the younger people communicate. In most cases they talk to one another and ignore us. They will never come around to our way of communication; if we wish to open our minds, talk to each other and those youngsters about Cornwall's industrial heritage and the ingenuity of its people we have little alternative but to open the Facebook pages.

Contrary to common belief, Facebook will not steal your soul. To prove it this Society has stuck its toe into murky waters and opened its own Facebook page. Simply open Facebook in Google, or similar, and sign in. Then put Trevithick Society in the field that says, 'Search for people, places and things', you'll be amazed who and what you find. Please tick the 'Like' box; it won't hurt or result in lots of unwanted emails. If you're really brave you won't let us do all the work and you'll write something yourself.

If you wish to respond to this note please do so through Facebook, thank you.

### **P.M.H.**

## **CORNISH BRICKS**

A lady from Delabole recently contacted the writer to say she had been running the North Cornwall Museum at Camelford for some years but had now retired. She was pleased to report she had successfully placed the museum artefacts in various other museums but had a problem with the brick collection. She admitted she was at a loss but someone advised her to contact the British Brick Society who, in turn, advised her to contact the writer. A visit to her store at Delabole proved that she had a good selection of Cornish bricks so the Society has accepted them and at the time of writing approximately half of the collection has been removed.

### **K.J.T.R.**

## 'CORNWALL' AND ACHIEVEMENT

The announcement in April that Cornwall and its people should be recognised by the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities sparked international attention to the Duchy, its people and their heritage. One who noticed was Richard Dean who sent us an account of the 'Cornwall' locomotive in the February 1906 issue of *The Railway Magazine*.

Originally designed by Francis Trevithick, the third son and biographer of his father Richard Trevithick, it was built at Crewe for the London & North Western Railway and ran for the first time in 1847, just 43 years after Richard had built and successfully operated the world's first railway locomotive.

We do not know whether the design of Francis' high speed passenger locomotive was in any way derived from his father's 1803 London Road Carriage but both had remarkably large driving wheels. Francis employed wheels that

was no less than 8'6" in diameter and exceeded his father's by six inches. (The LNER Mallard had driving wheels of 6'8") The configuration was a 4-2-2 layout and the driving axle crossed the locomotive over the top of the boiler; the trailing axle was located in a tube that passed through the firebox.

This was not the only example of the LNWR's faith in the design as drawings dated 1856 still exist for a similar but smaller locomotive with 7'0" driving wheels, a wheel configuration of 2-2-2 and a 20" stroke. As designed, neither locomotive provided any protection for the crew.

Each 24" stroke of the 'Cornwall' locomotive propelled it over 26' on the hand laid rails of the day. In those days operating a railway was a fiercely competitive business and the ability to travel fast was seen as a greater attraction than the dangers inherent in doing so. At one time the 'Cornwall' claimed a speed record of no less than 117 m.p.h. whilst careering down the Madeley Bank. While this speed has never been confirmed and it would have been very difficult to record, one has to imagine a train travelling at the



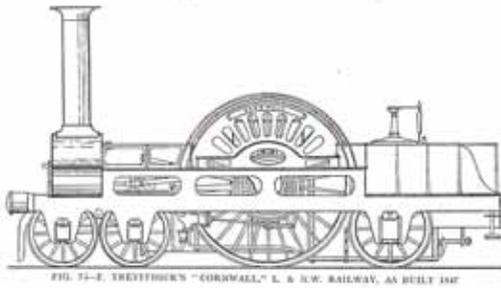


FIG. 75—TREVITHICK'S "CORNWALL" L. & N.W. RAILWAY, AS BUILT 1814

phenomenal speed of, say, 90 m.p.h. in the mid-19th Century.

In later years a speed attempt would be a well-publicised, regulated affair and a locomotive, such as the Mallard in 1938, would pull a dynamometer car and six coaches. We do not know how many carriages were pulled by 'Cornwall' some 90 years earlier, whether they were loaded with terrified passengers, which they probably were, or if the passengers were informed before the journey that they were likely to become the fastest people on Earth.

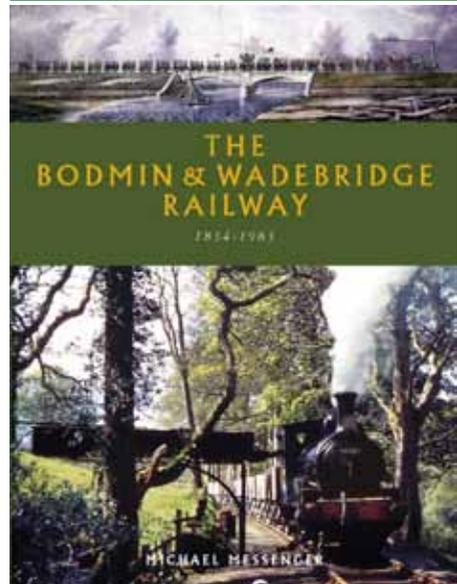
The engine crew had no protection from the wind or flying embers as they stoked the boiler and the locomotive continued to gather speed as they hurtled with some uncertainty and blind faith in the technology of the day into the record books or to their violent deaths. Local newspapers may have recorded the impressions given by passengers as they staggered trembling with gratitude for remaining alive out of their primitive carriages at the end of the run.

In 1847, whilst hauling a goods train, 'Cornwall' struck a coal train with some force and the driver was killed. However, the locomotive survived and was proudly displayed as the 1851 International Exhibition in Hyde Park. In 1852 'Cornwall' was rebuilt by J. Ramsbottom with a 2-2-2 configuration, a new boiler over the driving axle and some protection against the wind and weather for the crew. It continued to work mainly express trains between Liverpool and Manchester in 45 minutes until it was retired in 1905. While no records survive of the mileage covered

in its earlier configuration it is known that it covered 928,838 miles in its later years. It can be confidentially assumed that 'Cornwall' covered well over a million miles during its lengthy career and it now resides in the National Railway Museum at York, a fitting tribute to Trevithick ingenuity and Cornwall as the source of high pressure steam development.

## P.M.H.

### CORNISH BOOK RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD



A recently published Cornish book has been recognised in a national award. *The Bodmin & Wadebridge Railway*, by Michael Messenger and published by Twelveheads Press, has been awarded the prestigious 'Railway Book of the Year Award' by the Railway & Canal Historical Society at a presentation in Newcastle. The judges commented that it was 'a model of how the history of a railway should be written'.

The book was short listed last year for the Holyer an Gof Awards of the Cornish Gorsedd. It tells how the pioneering railway was opened in 1834 to be one of Britain's earliest steam railways and how it encouraged the farming, mining and quarrying communities to flourish in this part of North Cornwall until it was connected to the national system in 1895.

The author, Michael Messenger from Chacewater has also written *Caradon & Looe; the Canal, Railways and Mines, the history of the Liskeard & Caradon Railway* and the *Liskeard & Looe Canal*.

The Railway & Canal Historical Society is the UK's leading transport history Society and was founded in 1954 by historian Charles Clinker who lived at Padstow.

## PUBLICATIONS

Courtney Rowe's book *Marconi at The Lizard* has again been reprinted and is now available at £9.99. By the time this Newsletter reaches you we shall also be offering a *new history of Ding Dong Mine* by Peter Joseph and Gerald Williams. This is the first detailed history of this ancient mine, whose engine house dominates West Penwith, and is excellent value at £15.99.

September will see the publication of John Manley's new *Life of William West*, which sheds new light on a major figure in Cornish mining and engineering. The generation of engineers which came after Trevithick and Woolf has been somewhat neglected by writers, which makes this book particularly important. There will be a launch for John's book in Liskeard on 13th September.

Two of our earlier volumes have now been reduced in price. Tony Clarke's translation of Moissenet's 1857 volume on *The Mechanical Methods of Dressing Tin Ores* is a bargain at £13.99 and our reprint of the *1884 Harvey Trade Catalogue* is also a snip at £6.99. Finally for members who were unable to attend this year's AGM

in Bude, we have a number of the *AGM Tour Notes* still available for purchase. The Notes cover Delabole Quarry, the coastal slate quarries between Tintagel and Trebarwith and the Bude Canal. Cost is £6.00 plus postage; orders for these to the Chatline, 01209 716811.

## Graham Thorne

### KING EDWARD MINE

The Annual Open Day was very successful considering the weather looked likely to be inclement. This forecast reduced the attendance of both exhibitors and the general public. Nevertheless there was a very good atmosphere generated with many visitors expressing their thanks for an enjoyable visit. The shop did a very good trade and there was a good level of interest in the archaeological dig site, where, at one stage it was raining heavily but a goodly number of visitors were asking questions and taking a keen interest.

The storage building in the Home Field is currently being erected, and, once complete, the items/artefacts/useful bits, and, if past experiences are correct, rubbish, will be transferred to it from the boiler house where, once refurbishments has taken place displays and interactive models will be viewed and used by the visiting public. At the time of writing contractors for the upgrading of the counthouse and adjacent buildings are due to arrive on June 9th. We shall see!

The archaeological dig at the stamps site continues. More of the cobbled coal yard has been exposed illustrating that more of this feature is intact than was previously thought.

Some time ago John Ralphs, father of Ben Ralphs the mainstay of mill guiding during the season suffered a severe medical episode at his home in St. Buryan. Extremely prompt action by John's wife Joan, the air ambulance and Treリス hospital saved the day and John has now recovered. On May 14th. a musical and pasty evening was staged

at King Edward to raise funds for the Air Ambulance Appeal. This was a great success and raised exactly one thousand pounds. Congratulations go to Lincoln James who organised the evening which went without a hitch. It was a delight to see the mill full of people enjoying the music and the atmosphere.

**K.J.T.R.**

## **CAMBORNE TREVITHICK DAY**

This event is normally the Society's best "shop window" but this year the weather was totally against us with heavy showers and wind coming in tremendous gusts buffeting the tent quite severely making it uncomfortable for all and depressing sales to a very disappointing level.

Many thanks to Phil Hosken, Lincoln James, Dave Mann, Alan Renton, Sheila Saunders, Kenn Shearer and Barbara Tripp who helped (and survived) the rough conditions.

**K.J.T.R.**

## **BANGALORE MUSEUM**

On Trevithick Day a local man approached the Puffing Devil crew and said that when he was in India he was amazed to find Bangalore Museum had a very good exhibit about Richard Trevithick and the invention of the high pressure steam engine. A search of the internet revealed the Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum, Bangalore's exhibit includes a creditable model of a Trevithick stationary high pressure engine.

**C.N.F.**



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEEKEND

Judging from comments received the weekend was a success. On the Friday twenty two souls assembled at the Delabole Slate Company's quarry and were shown a film of the quarry operation and then, once fully rigged in the appropriate safety wear, the party were led down into the massive pit. Unfortunately no stone extraction was taking place at the time but we were able to see at close quarters where the huge blocks of slate were sawn out of the face by diamond wire saws. Back on the surface we were then taken to the processing sheds to see how the large lumps of slate are reduced by sawing to whatever size is required. In one shed a gentleman was splitting roof slates by hand and demonstrating he asked if anyone would like to have a go. Robert Metcalfe took up the challenge and received a round of applause for his efforts. We then saw how slate was polished and how various plaques and house names were prepared. The etching of numbers and letters was interesting as a plastic membrane covers the slate block but has the lettering cut out of it and then the block is grit blasted to remove the unwanted material leaving beautifully incised letters and figures.

The evening on Friday saw us at the Widemouth Manor Hotel to listen a presentation by Chris Jewell of the Bude Canal Society. Chris left no stone unturned during his lecture but it laid out the details for the field trip destined for the Sunday morning.



Saturday saw twenty brave the elements to view the coastal quarries between Tintagel and Trebarwith Strand. After meeting at Trebarwith Strand some cars were left there and we departed for Tintagel to start the walk. The wind was an exceptionally strong on-shore but we



did not suffer any rain. This run of coastal quarries were run by families and little is known of their history but the size of them makes for spectacular views and members marvelled at the construction of the strong points and whim plats built into the sheer cliffs. Thanks go to Peter Daniel who has an interest in the area and whose input was very welcome. We finally descended into Trebarwith Strand via an ancient holloway where we appreciated a respite from the gale force winds and it clearly illustrated why such things were built in exposed areas. After refreshment we then proceeded up the valley to Prince of Wales Quarry to view the unusual engine house which, some years ago was conserved. A debate then followed on the pros and cons of conservation methods.

With the possibility that not everyone would wish to be atop very high cliffs we suggested that an alternate venue would be the two aircraft museums at Davidstow. Davidstow, was a WW2 airfield but these days is probably better known as the home of, amongst other delicacies, Cathedral City cheese. A small group decided to take this option quite enjoyed the experience.

Late afternoon saw everyone assemble for the Annual General Meeting at the Widemouth Manor Hotel to be

followed by dinner. At the A.G.M., chaired by the writer, the current trustees were all re-elected with the addition of Jerry Rodgers, who takes over from retiring treasurer Chris Coombes. Jerry is a long time Society member and we look forward



to working with him in Council. The current officers were re-elected with the exception of Chris Coombes as mentioned above. The Chairman, Phil Hosken, explained the business of becoming a C.I.O. (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) as opposed to being a Registered Charity. After some discussion it was passed that the Society changes its status to C.I.O. Two positions were also voted in at the A.G.M., that of Puffing Devil Manager filled by John Woodward and Society Historian filled by Pete Joseph.

The Sunday morning saw twenty five meet at the sea lock at Bude to be taken on a canal tour by Chris Jewell. A number of original buildings have survived which Chris pointed out and he also noted some conversions that had taken place. Having examined the dock sides at Bude a short car trip to Helebridge to see the canal company workshop which has some tooling and lineshafting still in situ. Also in the workshop are a number of artefacts from the area and one of great interest is a canal tub boat. The canal in its thirty five miles had two locks and six inclined planes. To negotiate the inclined planes the tub boats were fitted with wheels were hauled up the planes on rails. By now it

was mid-day and Chris Jewell had to leave us so our final destination on the canal, Hobbacott inclined plane, was under the guidance of member Michael Heard. This plane was a water balance operation and



at over nine hundred and twenty feet in length was quite a sight. Michael described the operation and then the more energetic members accompanied him down the incline to view the balance water discharge and general layout.

We took the decision again this year to produce a separate "Notes for the A.G.M.", and Pete Joseph and Graham Thorne are to be congratulated on the quality of its production.

#### **K.J.T.R.**

### **DAVIDSTOW MUSEUMS**

The attractions surrounding the AGM included the two museums on the former R.A.F. Davidstow airfield.

Those of us who preferred to remain inside on the Saturday were well rewarded at the Davidstow Airfield and the Cornwall at War Museums. The former related the history of the airfield situated in the best and worst of Cornwall's weather at almost 1,000 feet above sea level, the activities of those stationed there and some of the aircraft they used. The Cornwall at War Museum comprehensively covered the activities of both friend and foe in Cornwall during the two World Wars. Those of us who spent a couple of hours there were impressed and well rewarded for our excursions.

These two museums are comprehensively stocked and very well displayed by the volunteers who run them. They're well worth a visit.

P.M.H.

## GRAVE BUSINESS

Mike Blackburn came down from North Wales recently to give the Society an absorbing lecture on the history of the Ordnance Survey. Mike has many other interests and one of them is the history of Richard Trevithick and members of his family. A particular quest whilst in Cornwall was to find the grave of Francis Trevithick, Richard's biographer. He also suggested that the Society should hold details of the Trevithick family.

As we do not hold such details we checked with the Cornwall Family History Society and they kindly provided a plan drawn from their extensive surveys of memorial inscriptions. This explained that the earlier burial recording of 'St Mary's Penzance, Madron Chapelry' meant that the grave was located at 'Plot 9' close to St Mary's Church in Chapel Street, Penzance.

This correspondent was intrigued to note that it was apparently next to that of Alexander Marrack and his two sons, his ancestors.

The CFHS records showed that the Francis Trevithick grave stone bore the following information:

EWART Elizabeth,  
17 Mar 1881, Age 69  
TREVITHICK Francis,  
Born 1812, 22 Oct. 1877  
TREVITHICK Mary,  
1820, 25 Feb. 1889, 69  
TREVITHICK Mary Margaret,  
1856, 15 Jul. 1864, 8

Armed with these details and knowledge of the location we went to find the Francis Trevithick grave but there was nothing there but grass. Mike Blackburn

subsequently searched but also to no avail.

Since Mike's visit to Penzance we received an enquiry from Masayuki Fujimoto of Kobe who was in Cornwall seeking information about the sons of Francis Trevithick. They were employed as engineers at the Kobe Works where they did so much to establish the Japanese railway system and the water system for Kobe. The authorities in Kobe are researching much of its history as they continue to rebuild the city after its devastating earthquake in 1995.

He was interested in researching the lives of Francis and his sons before the latter departed for Japan and any traces, such as graves, of them subsequently. We took Masayuki to St. Mary's and he stood respectfully on the grass that is apparently the grave of Francis Trevithick. We had more fruitful pickings in Gulval churchyard where a line of Trevithick graves included that of Richard Francis Trevithick who had returned from Japan and Frederick Harvey Trevithick, a former Chief Engineer of the Egyptian Railways.

We then toured what remains of the Harvey foundry at Hayle where many Trevithick engineers first burnt their fingers and Masayuki sat on Jane Trevithick's window sill at the former White Hart Hotel. He left next day for further research at the British Library.

We would be obliged to receive information from anyone who might know the whereabouts of the Francis Trevithick



*Masayuki Fujimoto examines the Frederick Harvey Trevithick grave in Gulval cemetery.*

family gravestone that was in place when surveyed in December 1994. Is this a new form of grave robbery?

A carefully researched Trevithick Family Tree would be appreciated by the many people who make enquiries.

#### **P.M.H.**



*Masayuki Fujimoto sitting on Jane Trevithick's window sill.*

#### **Trevithick grave details**

Before any more Trevithick gravestones disappear it may be wise to record the salient details on the five graves in Gulval churchyard. This might also encourage family history researchers who will not now have to travel to the far west of Cornwall.

1. Richard Francis Trevithick  
Ivy Trevithick
2. Alfred E Trevithick  
Born Sept. 8 1853  
Died Oct. 29 1944
3. Arthur Reginald Trevithick, C.B.E.

Born August 1858. Died Sept. 1939  
Also his wife Annie Elizabeth who died  
Feb. 2 1948. Also their son Richard  
Ewart Trevithick 1891 – 1978

4. Frederick Harvey Trevithick MICE  
Chief Mechanical Engineer, Egyptian  
State Railway 1883-1912  
Died 9 Dec. 1931 in his 80th year  
Also his wife Henrietta Kate Trevithick,  
MD, JP (nee Cornford)
5. Jane Elizabeth Trevithick  
Born 27 Feb. 1847  
Died 26 Sept. 1926

#### **MINING IN THE SEA**

Former CSM student Mike Proudfoot of Marine Minerals Ltd. gave an excellent explanation to the East Cornwall Branch of the work being undertaken along the North Cornish coast to recover minerals washed out to sea from the hundreds of years of mining inland.

He emphasised how the sea bed was explored and replaced so that only the ore bearing deposits were brought on board the ships. This was a much more successful and acceptable method than that employed some years ago.

The little meeting room at Liskeard was full and we are grateful to Mike Proudfoot for providing such a convivial evening.

#### **P.M.H.**

#### **THE CORNISH SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

Cornwall shipping of yesteryear was highlighted in the previous newsletter. Its contribution to the whole Cornish industrial scene was essential. Without imports of coal and iron from Wales the mining, manufacturing and clay industries could not have existed and flourished as they did.

The study of this important shipping industry has been adopted for study by the Institution of Cornish Studies of Exeter University at Tremough Campus,

Penryn. Its director, Dr. Garry Tregidga, pointed out in a meeting of those interested that the links between Cornwall and Wales go much deeper than industry. The fundamental Celtic connection extends into all manner of music, language and religion. These basic links were enhanced by material needs and, for over 200 years, hundreds of little ships, mainly with Cornish crews, braved the high seas in what is now called the Western Approaches.

Cargoes were not restricted to coal, iron and, on the return, copper ore between Wales and Cornwall. The little ships would sometimes go far afield with loads of coal to other countries and bring back more exotic cargoes to enhance the Cornish dinner tables.

Those who attended the Tremough meeting saw a Power Point presentation that set the scene for the study. They heard how this Society had approached every harbour master or authority from North Devon around Land's End to the Tamar and learnt of the friendly responses and advice they had received.

One harbour master, Geoff Penhaligon of Looe, told of the records from the C19th he had discovered, tidied and filed when he took the job some ten years ago. They contained details of ships, their captains, voyages, shipments and

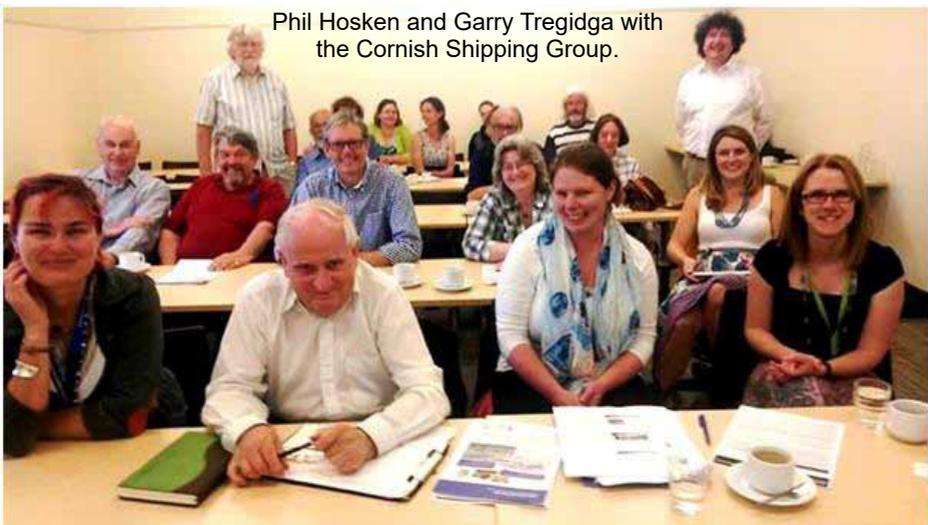
ultimate destinations of their cargoes. He even had the numbers of the railway trucks into which the goods were off loaded and he was prepared to make them available for study. There are many such stories.

HELP! We are told that the late Clive Carter, one time chairman of this Society, published an article entitled 'Coals to Portreath' in the first issue of Archive magazine, March 1994. It is several pages long, includes a number of photographs and would be of great interest to the researchers. Do you have, or could you trace a copy? We would be much obliged. We have both of Clive's books relating to shipwrecks on the Cornish coasts.

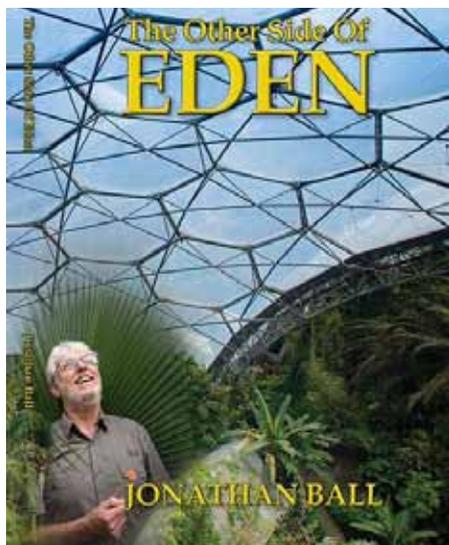
This is important, multi-faceted research that will involve many people over a considerable period of time and the Trevithick Society is currently accepting free Associate Membership applications from all those involved during the course of their research. Anyone interested, and there are so many ways in which this subject can be approached, is invited to contact either Dr. Tregidga at [G.H.Tregidga@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:G.H.Tregidga@exeter.ac.uk) or myself.

Prof. Bill Jones of Cardiff University and the Welsh Maritime Institute in Swansea are also involved.

**P.M.H.**



## BOOK REVIEWS



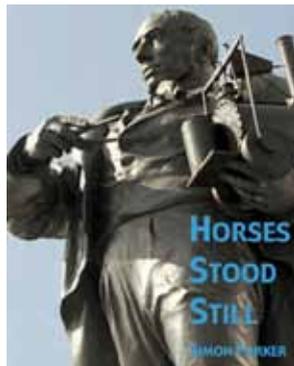
*The Other Side of Eden.* Jonathan Ball. Paperback, £20.00 ISBN 978-1-908867-24-7. Available at Waterstones and on-line through Amazon

Cornwall has many things of which it can be proud. It probably has the most famous clay pit in the world. Jonathan Ball has eventually told the unsavoury story behind the creation of the Eden Project.

Smit and Ball took huge personal risks as co-founders of the innovative architectural and environmental vision that became the internationally acclaimed Eden Project. Ball was removed from Eden against his will. Without due recompense he lost his architectural practice. Three high profile appearances in the Royal Courts of Justice over four years followed to save his name, his family home and his professional reputation.

This is the story of one man's unflinching resolve and success in righting a public wrong, of a Cornishman looking to the glory of his nation and finding that enthusiasm, brilliant ideas and promises are not always enough.

**P.M.H.**



*Horses Stood Still: The Lost Letters of Richard Trevithick.*

Well known West Country author and journalist Simon Parker has compiled and published some thirty two Richard Trevithick letters addressed to his daughter Elizabeth. They reveal what was important to Trevithick, what he thought of the people he met in life and what drove him on. Set in the months before his death at the Bull Inn at Dartford, they reveal Trevithick's feelings, the pride he had in his lifetime's achievements, his love and appreciation of his wife, an acknowledgement of his failures and the many sorrows he was to carry to the grave.

Parker has retained Trevithick's spelling so we do not have the sanitised version of his life as depicted by Francis Trevithick and other writers. These letters also avoid the Victorian melodrama created by his son and taken as factual by many subsequent authors.

In addition to his book we are fortunate that Parker has provided us with a very special set of CDs in which Cornish baritone Ben Luxon reads all the letters. His rich Cornish accent adds a delightful touch of authenticity.

The book and the set of CDs are both priced at just £5 each including p&p and are available from Simon Parker at Scryfa, Halwinnick Cottage, Linkinhorne, Callington, Cornwall PL17 7NS (Cheques payable to Scryfa) or by emailing: [simoncharlesparker@btinternet.com](mailto:simoncharlesparker@btinternet.com)

**P.M.H.**

## LEVANT REPORT

Following the major strip-down and inspection of the Whim engine last winter, it has performed very well. Only settling in adjustments have been needed to the sweep rod bearings and to the gab gear which operates the steam valves via the eccentrics. The replacement oil tank for the steam boiler has been moved adjacent to the boiler house and is now in the blowdown pit and currently under test. We can then dispense with the daily service tank in the boiler house and the old oil tank in Skip Shaft and its associated pump and electrical controls.

We are currently looking at a directive from the National Trust, that by the year 2020 all NT properties must be capable of providing 50% of the energy used from renewables! Whether this is possible on historic sites remains to be seen. It certainly will not be possible to install solar panels or wind generators but a suggestion so far has been to tap some power from the Whim using a generator. In my view this is not a source of 'free' power as it will require extra steam to provide that power. A more viable way of recovering energy would be to tap the wasted heat from the condenser and cooling pond. Another suggestion (should we secure a pumping engine like the Carpalla) is to refurbish the upper pond, and use the engine to pump water into that and drive a turbine. It may be possible that a grant could be secured to help pay for it. We are currently investigating a suggestion from Ron Plaster, who helped us with the difficult task of restoring the outside bearing whilst he was working at the Kew Engines Trust. Ron has suggested a way to help liaise with the Science Museum for the acquisition of the 40" Carpalla engine held in storage at Wroughton Airfield. This could then be erected into the empty engine house adjacent to the Whim.

I have to report with regret that three more members of the earlier 'Greasy Gang' have passed on. These are Eric King aged 90, Willie Alford aged 85, and last and



by no means least is Milton Thomas aged 92. Milton of course was the leading light for driving the project forward to complete the restoration of the Whim. Willie and Eric also did sterling work in helping with the project and sympathies are expressed to all their families. After retiring from teaching in 1980, Milton led the 'Greasy Gang' in his own inimitable way, and I had the great pleasure in working with him on many occasions. A great respect for him was held by all because he would not ask anyone to do a job that he wasn't prepared to do himself. After nearly nine years of tireless work he and the 'Greasy Gang' ran the Whim in steam for the first time in 63 years. For his unparalleled achievement, Milton received the rarely awarded Trevithick Medal. A true accolade indeed!

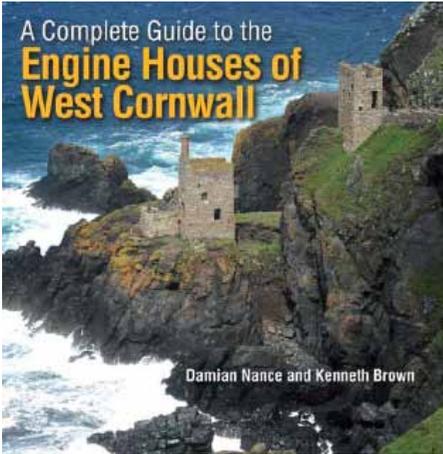
Eric King was a long term member of the Society and served as Membership Secretary for some years and was also a member of the Cornish Institute of Engineers for which he served as an auditor. He was an expert guide at Levant and went about his business in a quiet and efficient manner. Having spent a lifetime in the gas industry, where he served in senior positions, his engineering expertise was always in demand. In particular at Levant he experimented with heat recovery from the hotwell cistern and, through his son, was able to supply up to date thinking to difficult engineering problems.

### Ron Flaxman

Photo above: Willie Alford, Fred Dibnah and Milton Thomas.

Photos right: the Greasy Gang at work led by Milton.





## **A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE ENGINE HOUSES OF WEST CORNWALL**

Nowhere in the world has metal mining been of greater importance than it has in Cornwall, and it is in recognition of this extraordinary heritage and the global influence of the pioneering technology developed here that the county's mining landscape was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006 on a par with the Pyramids of Giza and the Great Wall of China. During the 19th century, Cornwall produced most of the world's copper and tin, as well as substantial quantities of lead, silver, arsenic, tungsten, zinc, iron and uranium. What made this unparalleled productivity possible was the development, pioneered by Cornishman Richard Trevithick, of the Cornish beam engine, a reciprocating steam engine capable of driving pumps that could

keep the ever-deepening mines free of water. Although few of these great engines survive, many of the buildings in which they were once housed remain to this day, forming characteristic features of the Cornish landscape that have come to symbolize the county's rich mining heritage and now stand as silent monuments to the mining industry for which Cornwall was once justly famous. This book introduces these remarkable engine houses by providing an illustrated guide to those in West Cornwall using contemporary and archival photographs supplemented with brief descriptions of the engines the buildings once contained, simple interpretations of some of their key features, and short histories of the mines of which they were part. It is not an exhaustive treatment, nor is it meant solely for the enthusiast, but rather, it provides an overview intended for all those interested in these historically important structures. Together, the authors bring over a century of expertise to this fascinating guide. Damian Nance is a St. Ives-born geologist with a lifelong interest and knowledge of Cornish engine houses, and Kenneth Brown is a leading expert on Cornish mining history and co-author of the highly popular "Exploring Cornish Mines" series.

### **PUBLISHED BY LIGHTMOOR PRESS**

Damian Nance and Kenneth Brown  
ISBN13: 9781899889853, 184 pages, 210 x 210 mm. Printed in full colour throughout on gloss art paper. Price: £18.00

Visit: <http://lightmoor.co.uk/new.php>

## **MEMBERS' BENEFITS**

Trevithick Society members are entitled to free entry (on production of the membership card) to the following attractions:

- King Edward Mine
- Cornish Engines at Pool (East Pool Mine and Michell's Whim)
- Levant
- Geevor Museum

Members of this Society and the CSM are entitled to 20% OFF the History of Camborne School of Mines by Lawrie Piper. This remarkable tome of some 440pp records the history of mining education in Cornwall from the 1700s and includes all manner of information about people and activities at CSM.

So far copies have been despatched to locations as far away as Peru, Japan, Colorado, Camborne and Chacewater! To take advantage of this offer go to [www.trevithick-society.org.uk](http://www.trevithick-society.org.uk) for further details.

## SOCIETY MEETINGS

### Society Programme

The West Cornwall Branch meets at King Edward Mine (KEM) at 7.30pm on the 2nd Friday of the month.

The East Cornwall Branch (ECB) meets at the Public Rooms at Liskeard and start at 7.30pm, unless stated otherwise.

#### **Saturday 6th September (ECB)**

Visit to Kelly Mine-Dartmoor. A chance to see the preserved ore dressing floor of this fascinating 'shiny ore' mine, Car sharing to be arranged.

#### **Tuesday 16th September (KEM)**

Joint meeting with CBMS: CBMS 40th Anniversary Meeting: DVD *Jack Trounson Remembers*.

#### **Saturday 13th September (ECB)**

*The last Great Cornish Engineer - William West*. Book launch. At Liskeard Museum and 'The Book Shop' Liskeard. 1030-1300.

#### **Friday 10th October (KEM)**

*Steam on the Western Front*.  
Phil Hosken.

#### **Tuesday 14th October (ECB)**

*Bearah Tor Granite Quarry*. A talk by Ian Piper about an historic Bodmin Moor Quarry.

#### **Tuesday 11th November (ECB)**

*Pensilva - A history*. A chance to learn about the development of this mining community on the edge of Bodmin Moor. A talk by Angus Holland of the Pensilva History group.

#### **Friday 14th November (KEM)**

To be confirmed. We hope this will be a film evening with David Jewell.

#### **Tuesday 9th December (ECB)**

*Christmas quiz*.

Come along for an evening of pre-Christmas fun with a Cornish history slant.

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For up-to-date news follow us at:  
<http://teamanley-ts.blogspot.com>

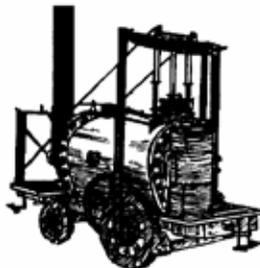
**Non members are welcome to all talks.**

### Rally and Show Programme

The projected show programme could be subject to change but at the time of going to press the following dates are in the diary.

15th./16th./17th. August, WESES Steam & Country Fair, Stithians.

20th./21st. September, Grand Henham Rally, Suffolk.



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The Trevithick Society, a registered charity, is a recognised body of the study of industrial archaeology in Cornwall. Membership is open to all who are interested in the region's great industrial past, whether or not they live in Cornwall. The Society takes its name from one of Britain's foremost inventors and pioneers of the Industrial Revolution, Richard Trevithick, a Cornishman whose name is inseparable from the development of steam power. This newsletter is published quarterly and, together with the annual journal, is distributed free to members. Letters and contributions are always welcome and should be sent direct to the editor.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Trevithick Society.

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