



THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

KOWETHAS TREVITHICK
NEWSLETTER 177 AUTUMN 2017



Congratulations! *The Man Engine* was awarded the best arts project in the National Lottery Awards. It is set to rise again in 2018.

Reg. Charity
No. 1,159,639

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION INCREASES

PLEASE NOTE!

The 2017 AGM ratified the proposal to increase membership subscriptions as from 1st January 2018. The last increase was ten years ago. The Council of Management meanwhile has tried to control costs to the best of their ability but unfortunately postage, printing and general costs have kept escalating.

The new rates will be:

Individual - £28

Family - £33

Overseas/corporate - £35

The student membership will be phased out.

Will members please note these rates are from January 2018 and make the necessary arrangements well in time to save the Membership Secretary a lot of unnecessary work and cost chasing defaulters.

The Treasurer is still fighting his way through the bureaucracy of the banking system to install a direct debit arrangement which will simplify matters for many members. There is now a small light at the end of the tunnel!

KJTR

Dear Member,

There is no rallying call from the Chairman in this issue of the newsletter due to work commitments. Instead there is a timely reminder about the impending rise in subscription rates, which will ensure the continued supply of newsletters and journals and will help support the work of the Society in promoting and preserving Industrial Archaeology. In this issue, there is also a questionnaire about the lecture programme and field trips. Please let Tracy, our Programme Secretary, know your views so that we can better meet your needs.

Thank you for your continued support.

Copy date for next newsletter:

December 15th 2017



Established 1935

TAX DISC COLLECTOR



The Society was contacted by Neil Jones, a tax disc collector, who has amassed a collection of over 250,000 discs at his home in Norwich. He wondered if he could acquire any Puffing Devil discs to add to his collection as that would certainly be a unique addition. Incidentally, the Puffing Devil is registered with the DVLA as Trevithick No 1. After discussing his request at Council it was agreed to let him have four discs in return for a suitable donation whilst keeping the most recent, seen above, for the archives.

CNF

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I have recently visited a large (40ft) waterwheel near Mylor, made in 1923 at W. Visick foundry in Devoran. This one still has flat rods, overshot water pipe, valves, water tank etc.

I cannot find any record of another waterwheel still in existence from this foundry - does anyone know of one please?

Tracy Elliott (tracyclimber@hotmail.com)

MAN ENGINE



Hearty congratulations are due to Will Coleman and his team, who created the Man Engine, which deservedly has been voted the best arts project in the National Lottery Awards. It is the largest mechanical puppet ever to be built in Britain and incredibly was seen by nearly a third of the population of Cornwall during its tour of mining-related centres, when it heralded the tenth anniversary of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

The project as a whole was a celebration of Cornwall's mining and industrial heritage and involved Cornish schools in preparing art works on mining to support the star attraction during its tour of Cornwall in 2016. Consequently, it was more than an incredible spectacle as it had educational role in explaining why UNESCO recognised the importance of Cornish mining and engineering from a global perspective.

The announcement of the award was made at King Edward Mine by the comedian David Baddiel and the award itself was presented by Martin Clunes at a BBC1 awards ceremony. It was especially good to hear Will Coleman speak Cornish during his acceptance speech.

In 2018 it is planned to re-awaken this giant mechanical miner and take him to England and Wales and share him with mining communities there.

MEMBERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

There has been poor attendance recently at some events and the Council would like to know what you like from the Society. The original idea was to run one lecture at KEM and one at Liskeard, every month, in the winter (about 10-12 lectures in all). In the summer, one field trip every month, both down west and up at the Cornwall/Devon border. This is about 10-12 field trips.

This has proved too much to organise and with poor attendance, we need to get the right balance. Without enough members at these events, they will stop completely.

Please use the questionnaire below to tell us what you want. This survey is also on our FACEBOOK page.

1. Do you still want a mix of winter evening lectures and summer field trips?
2. Do you want one lecture a month at Liskeard and one lecture a month at KEM? (10-12 in total)
3. Do you want one lecture alternate months at Liskeard and KEM (5-6 in total)
4. What sort of topics do you want for lectures?
 - Mining
 - Industrial History general
 - Local history in Cornwall/Devon
 - Unusual topics (Antarctica, Personal stories, Space)
 - Anything else?
5. What sort of field trips do you want?
 - Mining
 - Industrial History general
 - Local history in Cornwall/Devon
 - Anything else?
6. Please add any comments you feel may help us.

Replies can be posted to

The Trevithick Society, PO BOX No. 62, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 7ZN

or emailed to

tracyclimber@hotmailcom (please mark the subject Trevithick Society)

THE 2017 SHOW SEASON

The Summer season is now drawing to a close and it has been a successful and varied one. The Society has been represented at Camborne Trevithick Day, The Royal Cornwall Show, the WESES Steam & Country Fair, The National Trust at East Pool Mine, Tavistock Steam Fair, Camborne Show, Bude Heritage Day and Camborne Shopping Week. It is always difficult to assess the value of the publicity we get at such events but it is often said that "all publicity is good publicity". In spite of a somewhat mediocre summer weather-wise, the financial takings have been encouraging with the record being at Trevithick Day when the till notched up well over one thousand pounds. Those that volunteer to staff the tent enjoy the challenge of not knowing what the next enquiry will bring as it is not just serving customers but often

advising on where to go for information, answering technical queries, advising on conservation or answering historical questions. This makes for very varied days, meeting interesting and erudite people, and, of course, meeting Society members. The tent staff obviously cannot know all members, as we have several hundred, but it is nice when members pop in and introduce themselves and have a chat. No doubt little thought is given by most people to the preparations that go into attending these events but it must be remembered that stock has to be obtained, the tent and trailer cleaned and maintained, the retail stock and displays planned, bookings and arrangements made and staff rostered. My thanks to all who have volunteered with the Canary Crew and worked so hard during the past season.

Any members wishing to dispose of books for resale can always ring the Society chatline – 01209 716811

KJTR



LEVANT REPORT

The engine has run very well this summer season, and been in operation for seven days a week. Visitors to the mine have followed the general trend in Cornwall with increased visitor numbers, with up to 400 coming through the Engine House per day. Filming for the next Poldark series has started in the Pendeen and Botallack areas which I am sure will keep the interest going in the area.

At present we are training new engine drivers and guides and they all seem to be very promising. The training of the engine drivers especially takes some time as we have to be absolutely certain that they can drive the engine in a safe and sympathetic manner.

Some corrosion has been experienced to the pipework and boiler and we have recently been advised to change our boiler water treatment to raise the pH level. The mains water supply is very acidic and we have now raised the level nearer to alkaline at between 10 and 12. An annual service has been carried out by the boiler manufacturer CFB, and a new pressure certificate issued by Zurich Insurance for the next twelve months.

Some wedges had worked themselves out of the Sweep rod and we engaged John Woodward to machine them and reface the taper. Once we are into the winter shut-down period, John will



again be in attendance to assist us with some ongoing maintenance work including further work to the air pump. For this we will make good use of Courtney Rowe's painstaking drawings that were taken at the time of the initial refurbishment of the Whim.

The application for the Levant Whim to The Institute of Mechanical Engineers for a Heritage Award is still ongoing. As the committee for the Institute only meets every quarter, it may take some time for us to get the result. It is hoped to get international recognition for the Whim which could lead to funding for future projects, and increase our number of volunteers.

Ron Flaxman



TOMBOY GOLD MINE

Just about the time that we begin to think that mining is a queer game, we receive a copy of the recent annual meeting of the Tomboy Mines which makes for cheerful reading. The mine has endured strange vicissitudes which have afforded repeated chances for financial legerdemain. The problems have smoothed into more pleasant interludes and the chances for funny business have been transformed into opportunities for honourable dealings.

In 1897 the Tomboy was examined by "A galaxy of mining talent" and in 1899 was floated by "The Exploration Company" on the London Stock Exchange. Immediately thereafter the mine gave signs of impoverishment with the orebody fading completely away some 600 feet from surface and in 1903 mining operations were halted.

Meanwhile the company's advisor's had identified another opportunity at the adjoining "Argentine" Gold Mine which was then purchased.

No new company was formed with incidental "Loot" to the promoters, and cognisant of their duty to the shareholders (who thereby obtained the full benefit of the transaction) the directors absorbed this enterprise directly into the existing company structure.

Once more on its feet, the company did well. The purchase price of "The Argentine" was \$65,000 and profits of \$3,412,000 were made until, two years ago in

1911, that mine too became exhausted at 600 feet depth.

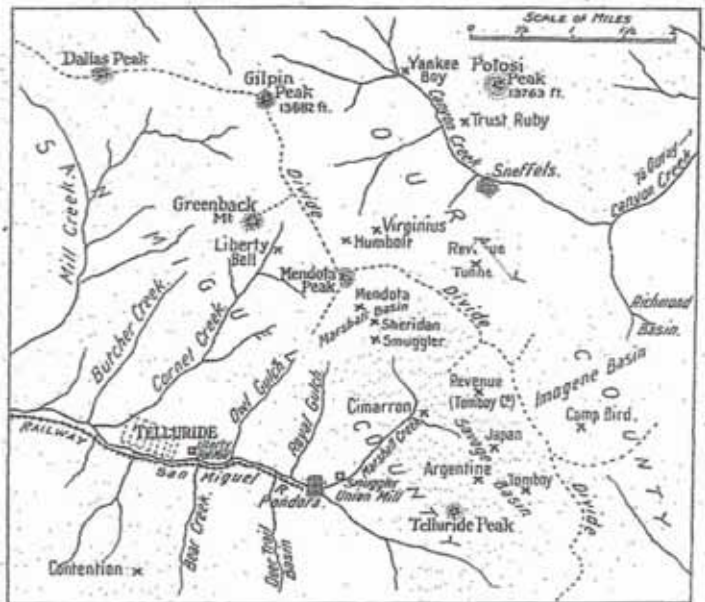
The directors again sought to rejuvenate the company, on this occasion purchasing for \$400,000 the contiguous "Revenue" mine. This necessitated the temporary suspension of dividends but now, all debts have been cleared, and the payment of dividends has been resumed.

The "Revenue" property is more than justifying its purchase. A profit of \$275,000 was generated in the last financial year and value of the ore reserves have been assessed at approx. \$500,000.

No fallacious hopes of enrichment, or even persistence in depth are entertained. "The Exploration Company" is far too wise to be lured by such a will o' the wisp, hence the shareholders are saved from the sort of geological bubbles currently being blown by some to those operating in Rhodesia.

The Tomboy is a credit to all concerned. It is an example of legitimate mining being properly rewarded.

Lincoln James



PART OF COLORADO, SHOWING THE TOMBOY PROPERTIES.

PUFFING DEVIL

This year the engine was situated in a new location at the W.E.S.E.S. rally at Stithians in August. For the first time we were amongst the Traction Engines and were on hard standing so the engine could be off its trailer. In many respects this was the best location we have had at this particular rally, as there was plenty of steam activity around us to watch and the many visitors could see the Puffing Devil in the context of the culmination of a hundred years of steam engineering development. This meant we had a steady stream of interested spectators. One young lad, about 8 years old, particularly stood out, as he wanted to know how every aspect of the engine worked and such was his enthusiasm that he kept coming back during the day with ever more thought provoking questions to answer.

The weather was kind too with only a few, albeit intense, showers to interrupt the three day event. Saturday was especially good, with the engine kept

in steam longer than normal due to the large crowds.

On the first day a group of Australian visitors showed particular interest in all the steam engines and told us that they do not have such steam rallies back home. In fact having seen the W.E.S.E.S. rally a few years previously, and liked it so much, they decided to make a second visit.

John Sawle attached an extra length of handle to a frying pan so the crew could demonstrate what a pre-Victorian fast-food outlet was like. The Puffing Devil is quicker than a microwave when it comes to cooking rashers of bacon as Ralph Ingham demonstrates in the photograph opposite!

The Society's yellow tent had at a prominent spot near the entrance. This location had the advantage that every visitor walked past it at least twice.

Special thanks go to Ralph and Sue Ingham, Sean and Molly Oliver for steaming the engine and John Sawle for his logistic support.





The week after the W.E.S.E.S. rally saw the revival of Camborne Shopping Week, with the Puffing Devil and Society Tent invited to take part on the Wednesday.

On the day we took over a substantial part of Commercial Square with the engine parked, on its trailer, next to the fountain, and the yellow tent erected on the raised area, where it fitted so snugly, one would have thought the Square had been designed to meet Society needs.

The atmosphere in the town was really good. It was nice and warm and several times during the day the visitors were entertained by *Proper Job* who sang a range of mainly Cornish songs. Not unsurprisingly they sang *Going Up Camborne Hill* a number of times throughout the day to which was added the accompaniment of the Puffing Devil's steam whistle. Proper Job can be seen singing in the lower photograph opposite.

Special thanks must go to George Le Hunte of the Camborne BID team for his seamless arrangements and to John

and Oliver Sawle who delivered the engine to and from Camborne on top of a full day of harvesting corn.

The Puffing Devil is now in storage for the winter and will next appear on Trevithick Day 2018.

It would be nice to have additional crew members to help with the operation of the Puffing Devil at future events. If any member would like to be involved please get in touch. On the job training will be provided. The engine attends around half a dozen events each year, however, unlike traction engines, it does need tending to practically all of the time, when on show. Help at any event would be much appreciated. Please call for more information (01209 613942).

Colin French





NEW BOOK

William Nicholson (1753- 1815)
Publisher and patent agent

William Nicholson (1753-1815) is best known to Enlightenment historians as the founder of *A Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts* – the first commercial monthly scientific journal in Britain. Taking a wide variety of articles from all levels of society, Nicholson's *Journal*, democratised access to technological developments, encouraged debate and accelerated the spread of scientific know-how.

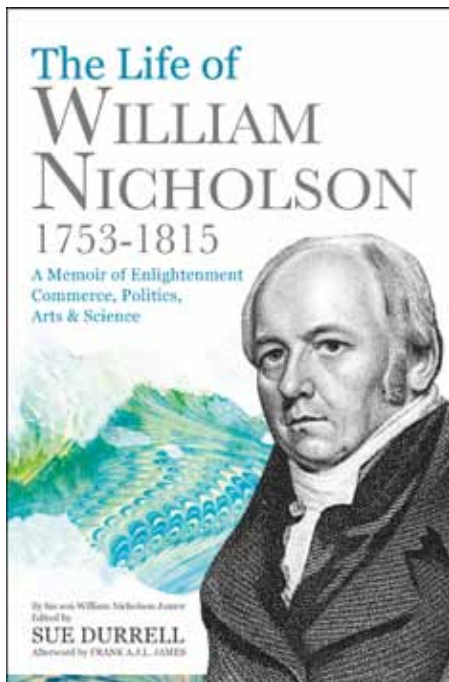
Nicholson was also an inventor, and he is responsible for the cylindrical printing press which he patented in 1790, a hydrometer, the revolving doubler, a file cutting machine and a scale rule. He registered four patents in his own name, and practised as one of the earliest patent agents, initially from his home in Red Lion Square and later from 10 Soho Square where he also established a scientific school.

Richard Trevithick was among Nicholson's consultees, having been introduced by Humphry Davy, as noted in a letter of 16 January 1802 to Davies Giddy:

“Mr. Davy says that a Mr Nicholson, he thinks, will be a proper person to assist us in taking out the patent, and we are to be introduced to him tomorrow, and then shall immediately proceed with the business.”

On 23 March 1802, in describing the patent process for GB 2599/1802 *Construction of Steam Engines*; application thereof for driving carriages and for other purposes, Trevithick noted:

“... Of course I immediately repaired to Crane Court, where I was informed that the patent was to be sealed on Wednesday (to-morrow); and that they did not know whether the specification must be lodged



on to-day, or a month from the sealing. They recommended me to Mr Davy at the Rolls Chapel Office, for information, where I immediately repaired, but I could not find the gentleman. From there, I shaped my course to Soho Square, and spent two or three hours with Mr Nicholson: had the necessary alterations made in the rough copy of the specification.”

Trevithick maintained contact with Nicholson, sending him two papers for publication in his *Journal* in 1802:

- Description of an Engine which operates by the Pressure and Descent of a Column of Water against a Piston; nearly in the same Manner as the Double Steam Engine operates by Means of Steam March 1802; and
- Method of applying a temporary Forcer to a Pump, so as to produce a constant Stream. July 1802.

More than 2,860 articles were published in William Nicholson's Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts between April 1797 and December 1813, including 33 articles related to steam – all articles can be accessed via <http://www.nicholsonsjournal.co.uk/nicholsonsjournal-index.html>.

The Life of William Nicholson, a memoir written by his son in 1868 and now at the Bodleian Library, has been edited by Sue Durrell and will be published by Peter Owen Publishing in November. www.peterowen.com, cost £13.99, sales@peterowen.com or telephone 020 8350 1775

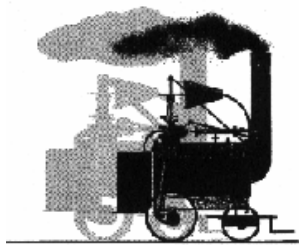
Members of the Trevithick Society who order direct from Peter Owen Publishing will receive a signed copy with free post and packaging.

COKE BREAKER

We have had an enquiry for information on a coke breaking machine. The gentleman concerned has produced a somewhat indistinct photo and the foundry mark describes it as a "Portway Patent Coke Breaker". It is a relatively small hand operated piece of equipment. The word "Portway" in the title could possibly mean a Bristol connection.

Can anyone throw any light on the subject?

KJTR



COMMEMORATIVE STAMP



Trawling the internet for information on Cornish Industrial Archaeology, I was pleasantly surprised to discover the above commemorative stamp which was issued on 04/07/1989. It shows an artists impression of the Towanroath engine house at Wheal Coates.

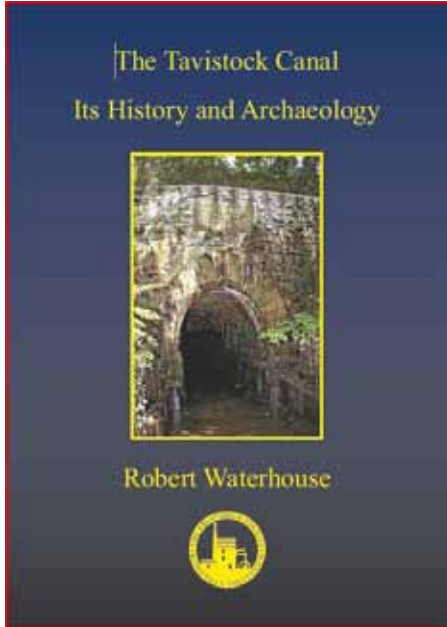
I also came across a useful website called Gooseygoo which maps industrial archaeological sites across Britain and Ireland. It has the makings of being a very useful resource. Not only does it map historic industrial sites, it also provides information on events, employment, and campaigns or projects, such as efforts to conserve the St Blazey Roundhouse and Turntable which is on the Heritage at Risk Register.

It can be located at:

www.gooseygoo.co.uk

CNF

PUBLICATIONS



New Book: *The Tavistock Canal*

Our autumn publication, *The Tavistock Canal: Its History and Archaeology* is the work of Robert Waterhouse and is published to mark the bicentenary of the canal's opening. As well as telling the canal's story, the book contains detailed archaeological drawings of the canal's structures; it also covers the mines linked with the canal, other associated industries and the plateway and railway systems in the vicinity. It is a large volume of some 550 pages, in an A4 format to do justice to the author's remarkable diagrams. Members who saw Robert's presentation at this year's AGM will be aware that these are of the highest quality. The book will also have an accompanying DVD to do justice to the largest and most detailed drawings.

The Society has only been able to publish this volume thanks to a number of generous individual and organisational sponsors. Their help has enabled us to offer this remarkable work at a cost of

£30 for a large format softback edition. There will also be a very limited number of hardback copies at £50. We expect the book to be available on sale by the end of October and are planning a launch event at Tavistock Museum on Saturday 11th November.

Graham Thorne

SOCIETY BOOKS IN PRINT

Christmas is coming so why not consider Trevithick Society books as a gift for friends and family. See elsewhere in this issue for details of our new autumn publication, *The Tavistock Canal: Its History & Archaeology*.

Books currently available are:

- Mine Pumping Engines in 18th Century Cornwall*, Stewart, £17.50
- The Great County Adit (Revised Edition)*, Buckley, £15.99
- Wheal Bassett*, Buckley, £14.99
- Cornwall's Fuse Works*, Hodnett, £20.00
- Hardback £28.00
- Dolcoath Mine*, Buckley – last few copies £18.99
- Holman to Compair*, Carter & Joseph, £18.50
- Great Wheal Vor*, Bennett, £27.00
- Hardback £47.00
- Hard Graft (Botallack)*, Joseph, £16.99
- Ding Dong Mine*, Joseph & Williams, £15.99
- William West: Last Great Cornish Engineer* £14.99

Christmas Offers

- Cornish Explosives*, Earl, £14.99 published at £25.00
- History of Camborne School of Mines* NOW £15.00 Half Price
- Moissenet on Tin Dressing* NOW £9.99
- Harvey & Co. 1884 Catalogue* NOW £5.00

All available from Tormark who give 10% discount to Society members on all orders.

01209 822101 www.tormark.co.uk

SOCIETY MEETINGS PROGRAMME

KEM: meet at 1900hrs for a 1930hrs start at King Edward Mine, Troon, Camborne TR14 9DP.

Liskeard: Meet 1900hrs for a 1930hrs start at The Long Room, Liskeard Public Hall PL14 6BW.

Friday 10th November (KEM)

Sonar Imaging. Providing 3D and colour images underground for use in mining.
By Neill Wood.

Monday 13th November (LISKEARD)

Poldark Put Your Shirt On - the real lives of West Country tin and copper miners and their families in the mid 19th Century.
By Ken Johns.

Friday 8th December (KEM)

Cornish Miners of the 21st Tunnelling Company. The story of the WW1 Tunnelling Companies that operated in Flanders from March 1915. By Ken Johns.

Monday 11th December (LISKEARD)

Same talk as Friday 8th December.

Contact:

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(07785 741287)

For up-to-date news check:

<http://www.trevithick-society.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/trevithick.society/>

**Non members are welcome to attend.
Non-members £2.00 please.**

AGM 2018

Date:

11th, 12th & 13th May

Location:

West Cornwall

More details to follow about venue for AGM Dinner and possible accommodation.

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
- Poldark – free entry to site and reduced fee for underground mine tour

Also:

- 10% off book purchases at Tormark.
- 20% off purchases at KEM shop.

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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.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Individual members	£28.00
Family/joint members	£33.00
Overseas members	£35.00
Corporate members	£35.00

PO BOX 62, Camborne. TR14 7ZN

The Chatline: 01209 716811

<http://www.trevithick-society.org.uk>