



THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

KOWETHAS TREVITHICK

NEWSLETTER 194 WINTER 2021



To mark the 250th anniversary of Richard Trevithick's birth the plinth of his statue in Camborne was appropriately lit up.

Reg. Charity No. 1,159,639

EDITORIAL

Due to the pandemic the Puffing Devil did not make an appearance in 2021. However, a booking was received for it to take part in an event in Redruth at the beginning of December. This was to mark the start of a new bus route to Falmouth. Unfortunately the event had to be postponed because the necessary road closure order could not be arranged in time.

This event has now been rescheduled for Saturday 26th February. So, covid restrictions permitting, the Puffing Devil will be on show on that day, together with a number of traction engines and other displays.

Hopefully, Trevithick Day will go ahead in 2022 and the Puffing Devil will get its principal outing for the year. That is undoubtedly the best place to see the engine as we drive up and down Cross Street on the last Saturday in April.

CNF

NEW MEMBERS

The Society gives a very warm welcome to the following new members and looks forward to meeting them at any Society events:

William Houston Grange Over Sands
Dr Stephen
Champion St Ives, Cornwall

SUBSCRIPTIONS PAID BY STANDING ORDER

May we remind members that the 2022 subscriptions are now due. Those members who have not already paid or have a Direct Debit set up please pay by BACS, Paypal or Cheque. Further details can be obtained from the Membership Secretary by calling 01209 716541 or at membership@trevithick-society.info.

In 2019 we transferred the method of collecting subscriptions each year to Direct Debit. A few members, who have completed a Direct Debit form, left their Standing Order open with the result that their subscription was double paid. A time consuming exercise was then undertaken to refund the second payment. Please will you ensure that you cancel the Standing Order as that can only be done by you and not the Society.

Also, I give notice that, with effect from 1 January 2023, the Society will not refund any double payments of subscription but will take it as a donation.

Jerry Rogers
Society Treasurer

DECEASED MEMBERS

The Society is saddened to report the passing of the following members:

Mr G P Reynolds	Middlesex
Mr D Howard	Liskeard
Mr M Holmes	Torpoint

Copy date for next newsletter:

March 15th 2022



TM

Established 1935

TREVITHICK NAMEPLATE



Ralph Ingham, who is part of the Puffing Devil crew, sent in the photograph of the class 37 diesel locomotive nameplate astride a mantle piece. It has been purchased by Paul Garnett, the track maintenance engineer of the Wensleydale Railway and comes from loco number 37417. This engine was built in 1965 at the English Electric Vulcan Foundry Works. On 31st January 2004 it was named Richard Trevithick, to mark the 200th anniversary of the Penydarren Locomotive, and then it featured in the May issue of the Society newsletter.



According to the internet, the number 71000, seen in the fireplace above, refers to The Duke of Gloucester steam locomotive - an ex BR Standard Class 8P 4-6-2 Pacific Locomotive.

CNF

OTTERBURN MILL



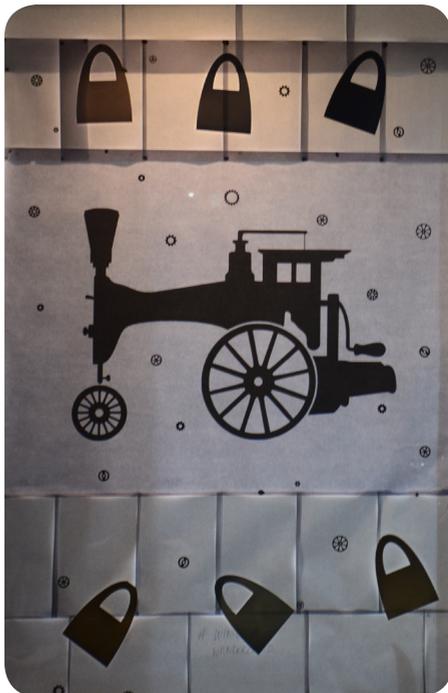
It is always good to receive photographs of industrial relics. Whilst on holiday in Northumberland Julie and Anita Noall photographed this Cornish Boiler at Otterburn Mill. This former textile mill, which produced tweeds and other fabrics, is best known for producing pram rugs. Like so many ex-manufacturing sites it is now a shopping complex.

The information board states:

Cornish boiler - this coal-fired boiler was used to produce steam and hot water for washing wool and cloth. The boiler worked on a water jacket principle with a maximum working pressure of 50lbs/sq. in. In the first half of the twentieth century, tramps regularly slept overnight next to the boiler for warmth.

CAMBORNE CELEBRATES TREVITHICK 250

The year 2021 was due to be an important time of celebration in Cornwall as it marked the 250th anniversary of the birth of Richard Trevithick and the 220th anniversary of the Puffing Devil going up Camborne Hill. Despite most events being cancelled, in November the Trevithick Day Association organised a Window Wanderland display trail in Camborne. Shops and homes throughout the town were adorned with a creative array of artwork on the theme of “Trevithick-inspired engineering and innovation”. A selection of window displays is shown including that of the sewing shop “The Make Space” in Cross Street which turned the profile of a sewing machine into a traction engine. Shops and homes throughout the town were adorned with a creative array of artwork on the theme of “Trevithick-inspired engineering and innovation”. A selection of window displays is shown including that of the sewing shop “The Make Space” in Cross Street which turned the profile of a sewing machine into a traction engine.





On Christmas Eve local traction engine owners staged a spectacular parade of engines. Due to the pandemic this event was not publicised otherwise huge crowds would have thronged the streets. The traction engines assembled in Basset Road before heading for the Trevithick statue where the procession sounded their steam whistles. Unfortunately the roof of the Passmore Edwards' Library is leaking and the building is clad in scaffolding whilst repairs are underway.







The engines ascended Camborne Hill passing the brass plaque commemorating the 1801 journey. At the top of the Hill they were greeted by a small crowd, then each engine carefully manoeuvred to the rear of Tyacks Hotel where the crews sojourned for a festive meal.





Bryher's Boys sang as the engines reached the top of Camborne Hill.



Remarkably, in his Santa guise, Cap'n Dick can be seen emerging from the chimney in the photograph above.

RODNEY LAW

It is with great sadness the Society reports the passing of past Chairman, Rodney Law, at the age of 96.

Rodney first came to Cornwall to attend Dolcoath Technical College in 1943 where the late Kenneth Brown was on the same course and the two became lifelong friends. Rodney had no experience of Cornish mining or engineering but became enthused with the subject and then studied it all his life, along with his other lifetime interest of horology. From 1945 to 1948 he was in the Royal Engineers and reached the rank of Captain and upon leaving the service took a mechanical degree course at Imperial College. From 1951 until 1963 he was based in Rugby with English Electric. In 1963 he joined the staff of the Science Museum at Kensington as Assistant Keeper in the Department of Mechanical and Civil Engineering, retiring in 1985 as Deputy Keeper.

He joined the Cornish Engines Preservation Society in 1948 which amalgamated with the Cornish Waterwheel Society to become the Trevithick Society in 1970 and was Chairman from 1977 to 1994. My abiding memory of him is on field trips, whatever the weather, or the state of the industrial site we were visiting, Rodney was always attired in a business suit. In spite of the severe image thus displayed he was always very helpful towards queries posed by members and happy to use his prestigious store of knowledge. His system for dealing with clerical work was legion – if in doubt pile it up!

KJTR

THE GOONVEAN ENGINE TRUST

After lengthy delays the Trust has now been legally formed and is registered with the Charity Commission. There will be a meeting of all interested parties at the Lappa Valley Railway site at 11-00am. on Saturday January 22nd. If you wish to attend please park at the main car park and upon entering the site, catch the train timed for departure at 10-30am. On leaving the train the meeting will be held in the large new building on the first floor in the Party Room. Paper hats are not obligatory!

KJTR

WEST WHEEL JEWELL

The Society has been contacted by Mr Peter Davies who lives at the mine in a substantial property, possibly the count house. Mr Davies requests any information on the mine and its workings. In particular he quotes that a Charles Glasson lived at the property. If any member has any information or any connection with the mine, please contact Mr Davies at:

“Glenmoor”
Vogue
St. Day
Redruth
TR16 5NR

Please send a copy to Kingsley.

KJTR



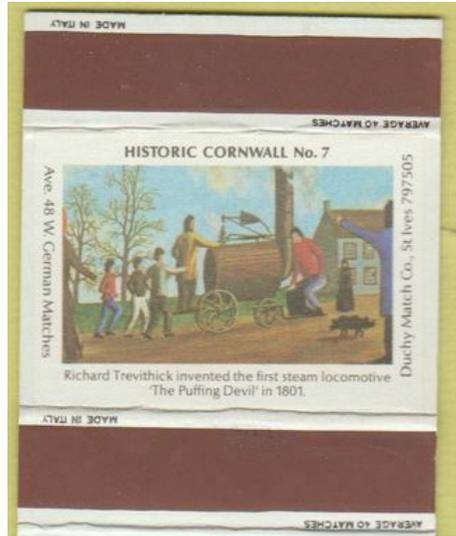
REMINISCENCES

Several years ago I was given a small book entitled *Reminiscences of Cornwall* which just has one chapter called Reminiscences of Camborne. This undated booklet was written by William R. Tuck but is believed to have been printed in the 1880s and largely refers to events prior to 1825 as it mentions people the author knew who were alive in the eighteenth century. Unusually for a Victorian book it includes some humour.

“I have heard it said that the Cornish folk are proverbially addicted to practical joking I once heard of a case in point, which for its strategy and cool daring in execution, is almost unrivalled. I will give it as told me, many years after, by one implicated in the plot, and, therefore, its veracity may be vouched for: The daughter of a Cornish incumbent had occasion to consult a dentist, and came to Truro for that purpose. She was attended and paid his fee, which, however, the patient considered excessive. She said nothing, but bore it in mind that if ever a chance should fall in her way she would be quits with him. Knowing well that there was no way of getting her money refunded, she concocted the following scheme by writing a letter purporting to come from Augustus Smith, Esq., of Tresco, Scilly Islands, sent it to a friend, and requested to have it addressed to N. Stephens, Esq., Dentist, Truro, asking him to come to Tresco, and attend to him (A. Smith) and his family. Mr. Stephens quickly prepared himself and set out on his mission, a distance upwards of fifty miles; on calling on his distinguished patient next morning, he was electrified to find it all a hoax only to be kept prisoner in the island for nearly a week, the boat being unable to cross to Penzance through the stormy weather which then prevailed”.

CNF

MATCHBOX COVER



The matchbox cover pictured above was found on sale on EBAY in the USA. The label depicts the Puffing Devil and was made by the Duchy Match Co. and was part of a Historic Cornwall series.

Just before the summer holidays I set the Camborne Cub Scouts (8 to 10½ year olds) a challenge for the recess to see how many items they could get into a matchbox. They all looked blankly back at me as none of them knew what a matchbox was. How times have changed!

CNF

BOOK REVIEW

It may be a British characteristic but is often the case that projects which never come to fruition are as fascinating to us as those which succeed. The 'might have beens' or 'never weres' also tend to attract their share of speculation and legend. A good Cornish example of this is the Great Western Railway's proposal for a brand new branch railway from Plymouth to Looe. This was one of a number of major works proposed in the late 1930s and backed by a government seeking to reduce unemployment.

The Looe proposal receives a mention in most railway histories of the area but details have been scant and in some cases contradictory. This has now been splendidly rectified by our member, Alec Kendall, in his latest offering, *The Great Western Railway's Last Resort*. Here we find details of the proposed route, which left the main line near Trerulefoot and terminated on the cliff at East Looe. The very substantial engineering works, the proposed stations at Hessenford, Millendreath and Looe are described, as well as the luxury hotel – designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens no less – the 18 hole golf course and possible residential developments all of which would have transformed Looe as a resort. The new Looe station could have handled through express services as well as diesel railcars shuttling from Plymouth. Alec also gives details of post war activity which shows that it was not just the Second World War which brought the scheme to an end. Had it gone through, Looe would have changed utterly and the existing branch would surely have closed. Some might feel that this would have been too big a price to pay.

The Great Western Railway's Last Resort must be the definitive story of this fascinating project; it runs to 150 pages with generous plans and illustrations. Alec has made a lifetime study of the railways of Looe and Caradon and it shows.

A very few copies are available for Society members at a price of £25 including postage. All income will be donated to the Caradon Heritage Project. If you want to reserve one, please contact Alec direct at Kendall940@btinternet.com. Do not delay.

Graham Thorne

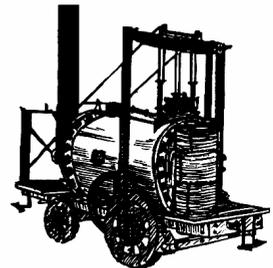
PUBLICATIONS

Members may recall that last year's Journal No. 47 included a Victorian Murder Mystery by railway historian Roger Langley. A collection of ten murder stories from Roger's pen has recently been privately published; all the stories are set in Cornwall and have a connection to our railway and industrial history. A small number of copies are available for purchase at a cost of £10. If interested, please contact me to confirm availability.

Our Mount Wellington book has been selling well but there are still copies available to buy at £15. The book has attracted much favourable comment from Cornwall and beyond: "*A superb book . . . a must for anyone interested in recent Cornish mining history.*" "*A fascinating first-hand account.*" "*The story told from the inside . . . a pretty hairy tale.*"

Finally this year's Journal has attracted considerable [favourable] comment. My thanks to all who have been in touch.

Graham Thorne



THE REVOLUTION VERY LIGHT RAIL VEHICLE

The home of the world's first steam railway locomotive is playing host to the latest in rail technology

A new low-emission, lightweight train is being demonstrated in Ironbridge, with the hope of reopening disused railway lines and extending existing networks. It is fitting, then, that this is happening just a stone's throw from the place where the world's first steam railway locomotive was built.

The Revolution Very Light Rail (RVLR) vehicle utilises the latest technology to provide a high-quality, affordable solution to facilitate the growth of the UK railway network. But rewind the clock over 200 years, and you will find the beginnings of rail locomotive propulsion as we know it.

The Coalbrookdale Company built the world's first steam railway locomotive to a design by Richard Trevithick in 1802 – 27 years before Stephenson's world-

famous 'Rocket'. Just as the consortium behind the RVLR vehicle has utilised the latest in innovation, Trevithick came to Coalbrookdale from Cornwall because he believed the Coalbrookdale ironmasters owned one of the few companies who could build a boiler that could withstand much higher pressures than the normal riveted wrought-iron plates.

The original Trevithick locomotive has not survived, but a replica, built in 1990 in Telford, currently runs at Blists Hill Victorian Town, which is part of the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, along with Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron. Fund raising is currently under way to cover the cost of repairs and maintenance of the replica.

Nick Ralls, Chief Executive at The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, said: "Ironbridge is known the world over as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. It was the Silicon Valley of its day and a centre for innovation. The Trevithick locomotive is just one example of this. It is incredibly fitting, therefore, that a new innovation in rail travel is happening right here in the World Heritage Site."



Photo credit: Eversholt Rail & Transport Design International

The companies behind the RVLr, Eversholt Rail and Transport Design International, have worked closely with Harworth Developments, which owns the site of the former Ironbridge Power Station, over the past six months to develop the demonstration site. The speed with which the passenger line, (unused since 1963), has been recommissioned and the necessary buildings, platform and other infrastructure features installed, illustrates how rapidly a reopening can be implemented.

Tim Burleigh, Head of External Relations at Eversholt Rail, said: "Revolution VLR's design and performance characteristics make it an attractive and sustainable rolling stock solution for many of the line reopenings being proposed through the 'Restoring Your Railway' programme. It is highly cost-effective, which will assist scheme sponsors in developing compelling business cases against the backdrop of an increasingly challenging economic environment."

Tim Hurdiss, Associate Director – Major Projects, with Harworth Group, said: "We're delighted to be working with TDI and Eversholt Rail to bring Revolution VLR to our Ironbridge site, where we are transforming the former Ironbridge Power Station into a mixed-use development of up to 1,000 homes, alongside a range of commercial, leisure and community uses. Together we are exploring the possibilities of how the former sidings and freight line could be brought back into use, opening up the prospect of passengers one day being able to arrive at Ironbridge by rail."

John Reddyhoff

In this article, which appeared in "Rail Business Daily", it is interesting that Coalbrookdale now claims to be the birthplace of the railway locomotive. In reality, the 1802 locomotive is thought to have been designed as a small portable engine to be moved about a factory complex on rails rather than something to pull wagons. At best it can be considered as a prototype for the Penydarren railway

locomotive.

The article is also pushing the boundaries to suggest the Industrial Revolution began at Ironbridge. Undoubtedly the Industrial Revolution began in Britain, however, its origin is an amalgam of what was happening at a number of industrialising centres such as in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Cornwall.

Finally, my understanding is that cast iron boilers came before boilers made from riveted wrought-iron plates because the early wrought iron plates were too small for such a use. In any case, large cylinder castings had been made for decades so that technology was well established.

CNF

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.
- 10% off purchases at KEM shop.

LEVANT CONDENSER WATER INLET

The cold water inlet to the condenser is operated by a foot pedal situated at the driver's position. The pedal is connected to a 5ft pivoted horizontal arm which, in turn, is connected to a vertical wrought iron weighted rod and finally connected to the valve.

The above controls when cold water enters the condenser whilst next to it is a second valve which controls the quantity of water entering.

The weighted rod had deteriorated to such an extent that it had to be replaced. A new mild steel rod was made together with new brass fittings at each end.

Previously, a large mild steel ring had been placed on the foot pedal assembly causing everything to be out of balance. To counteract this, four lengths of knicker elastic had been attached to return the foot pedal to battery. Both were discarded which restored the original balance. A new stop has now been attached to the pedal to restrict it from being pressed down too far and disengaging the valve on the other end of the assembly.

John Woodward



Rod counter balance weight.



Old and new vertical rods.



Restored counter balance weight.



Lower end of rod.



Above: Foot pedal with added weight.



Left: Upper end of rods.

The left valve controls when the water enters the condenser and the semi-fixed right valve controls the quantity.



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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

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