

# THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER NO. 17

MAY 1977

Edited by J. Hodge at Trannack House, Penzance

## 1977 A. G. M. WEEKEND

Full details will be given in the August Newsletter, but the following gives some idea of the visits which will probably form part of the programme.

A. G. M. and a lecture, probably by Mr. Rodney Law, at the Science Museum. (24th September).

Visits to the Kew Bridge Pumping Station and to the Wandsworth Brewery (where there are two large steam engines).

A visit to the Bull Hotel, Dartford, where Trevithick died, probably to coincide with the unveiling of a plaque by the Dartford Society.

Lunch on the Sunday at the G. W. R. Hotel, Paddington.

We had hoped to give details of British Rail mini-weekends, which are likely to be the most economical method of attending the weekend from a distance. However, even though our interest is in September, B. R. are apparently unable to quote prices and hotels, because of the Jubilee!

At its meeting on 29th April, the Council of Management elected a new Chairman and Vice-Chairman. They are Mr. Rodney J. Law, of the Science Museum, London S. W. 7 2DD and Mr. F. B. Michell of Penhawes, W. Trewirgie, Redruth.

Both are members of the Society (and of its predecessor) of very long standing, and both have been members of the Council for many years. Mr. Law is a Vice-President of the Newcomen Society and Deputy Keeper, Department of Mechanical and Civil Engineering at the Science Museum. He nobly attends most of the Council's meetings in Cornwall and is a tower of strength when details of engineering history are being discussed.

Mr. Michell, who retired recently as Vice-Principal of Camborne School of Mines, is a descendant of famous Cornish engine designers and is a wonderful source of information on mining matters.

## The Carn Brea Mining Society

The Society's programme for the coming year is as follows:-

All indoor meetings are at 7.00 p. m. at the Camborne School of Mines.

### Indoor Programme

Tuesday	21st June 1977	'Underground Photography' by John Watton.
Tuesday	20th September 1977	'Some peaceful applications of nuclear explosives' by J. Shrimpton.
Tuesday	18th October 1977	'A study of rocks by Thin sections' a practical evening with Dr. A. Bromley.
Tuesday	22nd November 1977	'Mineral Railways' by M. Messenger.
Tuesday	13th December 1977	'Marazion Area of Mines' by Justin Brooke.
Tuesday	17th January 1978	'South Crofty Past and Present' by Mr. G. Pengelly.
Tuesday	21st February 1978	'History of Explosives in Cornwall' by Bryan Earl.
Tuesday	14th March 1978	'A Mining talk' by Mr. J. Trounson.
Tuesday	18th April 1978	AGM and a Selection of Mining Films.

### Outdoor Programme

Wednesday	15th June 1977	Visit round South Crofty surface installation.
Sunday	3rd July 1977	Visit to an ECC Clay Pit.
Sunday	31st July 1977	An Underground visit to Rosevale Mine, Zennor.
Sunday	4th September 1977	Pendeen to Cape Cornwall walk studying items of mining and geological interest. Led by Mr. R. Orchard and Clive Carter.
Sunday	9th October 1977	Geological visit to the Lizard Peninsular led by Dr. A. Bromley.
Sunday	5th March 1978	Wendron area of Mines. Led by Mr. E. Rabjohns.
Sunday	2nd April 1978	Walk round Perranporth mining and explosive works area. Led by Mr. B. Earl.

Trevithick Society members are welcome as visitors - some meetings will in fact be joint meetings.

The Royal Cornwall Gazette - 100 years ago

- 7-10-1876 - Machinery for sale at Wheal Grenville Mine, Camborne, including 60" cylinder pumping engine with 11 ton boiler, 22" winding engine with boiler, and 12 head iron stamps axle.
- " - Machinery for sale at New Rosewarne copper and tin sett at Gwinear including 66" pumping engine with balance bob and two 10 ton boilers, horse whim and new steel wire rope, tramroad iron, buddles, and water wheel.
- " - Penhale Wheal Vor are driving two ends in the hope of meeting with the lode which was so productive at old Wheal Vor.
- " - "Polrose Mine still returning a little tin".
- " - Wheal Jennings in the Gwinear district is owned principally by Mr. Richard Jennings a large proprietor of oil wells in Pennsylvania, Messrs Williams & Co. and Messrs Harvey & Co. The mine returns from 6-7 tons of tin per month at a very small loss and the Lords have given up the dues during pleasure.
- 14-10-1876 - To be let - Cusgarne flour and grist mill with two pairs of stones recently erected by Mr. Bone of Truro on the most approved principles.
- " - Advertisement - Cornwall brush manufactory of W. Burridge at 118 Kenwyn Street, Truro.
- " - "Crenver and Wheal Abraham, after such an eventful history, with such costly law proceedings, with such a contractor as Mr. Griffiths, is likely to be terminated in law Courts, if we are to take Saturdays action as a criterion. The party who fully intended to purchase materials gave the men a suit of clothes, and agreed to give £2. 5s. a week; now they want the men to return their clothes. This the men refused to do and state their intention of suing the party for a weeks pay.
- " - Great Wheal Vor United Mines - Quarterly meeting held at the City offices when it was reported that the sinking of West Metal shaft had been continued. The balance against the mine now stood at £884. Machinery on the mine worth £3000 and monthly expenditure was about £267.
- 21-10-1876 - Four water stamping mills, burning house and dressing floors at Stenack, St. Ives, in the occupation of Mr. John Date for sale by public auction. The premises measure 780 ft. in length and 52 ft. in breadth and form a gentle slope, "thus saving much expense in dressing and preparing tin for the market." The stream of water belonging to these stamps has uninterrupted flow. The lower stamping mills are held for the remainder of a term of years at the yearly rental of £14. 00 which terms will expire at Christmas 1886. The remainder of the property is held for a term at a yearly rental of £40. 00 which will expire at Christmas 1883.
- 21-10-1876 - The unionised clay workers of the St. Austell district again threatening a strike. A warning that unless those workmen who have not already joined the union do so by the 31st October a strike will result. The causes are a rumour that wages are to be reduced and that men belonging to the union are to be dismissed. -(Editorial page 4) "It is monstrous to think that a man with a wife and family can live on less than 2/6d. per day. Anything lower must be what the last straw was to the camel; and if the men had to strike against such a thing as this they would have the sympathy of the whole county". However, major producers stated that the rumour was unfounded.
- " - Penryn Town Council have concluded a lease of 75 years with the bone mill Company at a rental fo £90 per annum and the Company is about to lay out the sum of £2000 or £3000 in improvements.
- " - Another explosion at the Heredsfoots Powder Mills - two lives lost. They were at work in the house used for breaking up the powder, which was the case in the previous accident in May. Since that date grooved rollers have been used instead of mallets for breaking the powder, but apparently the grooves are apt to get clogged or choked and it becomes necessary occasionally to clean them out. This was being carried out with a copper chisel when the explosion occurred.
- " - "To my brother Samuel" by John Harris:-  
 Around the fire they now divine  
 the future of this imp of mine,  
 and wonder if the boy will be  
 a sailor on the restless sea.  
 Or traveller 'mid Italian wells,  
 or digger in Australia's dells,  
 or farmer by Ohio's lake,  
 or huntsman in the red mans break,  
 or ragged bard, caressed and chid,  
 OR TINNER, - WHICH THE LORD FORBID

- "See the bright image" from "The Lands End, Kynance Cove, and other poems" by John Harris
- 28-10-1876 - Killifreth - The lode in the bottom of the mine (the 50 fathom level) has been cut and proved to be an excellent lode of tin. The 30 east continues rich for copper - good yellow ore. The stamps engine house will be completed in a few days when the engine will be put in at once.
- " - 27 able bodied men principally labourers and men who have been employed on the railway works in the Hayle area left the neighbourhood of Hayle on Thursday for the Cape of Good Hope. "Many of them are married".
- 4-11-1876 - To be sold at the direction of the Court of the Vice-warden of the Stanneries, materials at West Wheal Gorland mining Company at Gwenap; 24" Rotary engine of 4 ft. stroke, 16 head iron stamps axle, 3 horse whims, two round buddles and small waterwheel, railroad, and iron tram wagon.
- " - Stamping mills and burning house to be let at Twelveheads. Late in the occupation of Mr. William Buckingham and now used by the Killifreth Mine adventurers.
- " - A new mission cutter for the missions to seamen at Falmouth named "The Sickle" has been launched at Falmouth docks. Of 6 tons, yacht measurement she is 28 ft. 8 inches overall with neat counter stern, 8 ft. 6 inches in beam and built by Mr. William Henderson of the Bar Falmouth for £160. Mr. John Harris had been specially requested to write a verse entitled "The Launch of the Sickle".
- 'Tis not because her keel is firm, and safely placed her gear;  
Her timbers sound and cable safe  
Her deck unstained and clear.  
Her slim mast shivering in the light  
Her pennon in the breeze;  
That we would rejoice to launch today  
The "The Sickle of the Seas".
- No; not for this but more because  
Her peace flag waves above,  
To woo the hardy mariner  
To seek the God of love.  
Her aim - the overthrow of wrong  
When wars last spoils are won,  
To bear to every seamans birth  
The gospel of his son.
- Go forth to reap the ocean waifs  
At the great masters call;  
For in the harvest field of Christ  
There is a work for all;  
And he will guide evangel bless  
Who stilled the stormy sea,  
And walked in his  
The waves of Galilee.
- God speed thee on thy holy work  
For which now set apart. .  
And may good news be borne by thee  
To many a sailors heart.  
We bind the bible to thy prow  
Invoke the heavenly breeze,  
And pray once more that God will bless  
"The Sickle" of the seas.
- 4-11-1876 - At Rosewall Hill, Lelant, 50 to 60 men are at work on the north part of the mine, Mr. Brown of Buckfastleigh being the proprietor. 4 tons of tin are sent away monthly. Nearly £30,000 has been expended.
- 11-11-1876 - Sale of machinery and materials at Camborne Vean Mine including one whim engine with boiler and wire rope, tramroad underground (about 200 fathoms) etc.
- " - Editorial - page 4 - on the clay workers union.
- " - Further verse (page 4) on "The Sickle".
- 18-11-1876 - New Pembroke mine at Par station Cornwall - Machinery for sale including 80" pumping and other engines. The mine is about 100 fathoms deep and over £30,000 has been expended.
- " - At Hayle Foundry we see a good many of the men are on half time, as the Company at present have but very little local work, and a contractor in the district told us that men offer to work for 2 shillings a day, and he has given them 2/3d.

- " - At Trumpet Consols "we were pleased to see so much tin being sent away that the harvest wagons of the farmers were required on Saturday last to carry the tin to Penzance".
- " - Page 8 - Long article on the strike of the clay workers at S. Austell.
- " - New Pembroke Mine - details of mine machinery for sale including, 80" pumping engine, 12 ft. stroke, 25" drawing engine with iron cage, 20" horizontal stamping engine with 3 iron stamps axles carrying 32 heads, 20" horizontal whim engine, tramwagons, etc.
- " - Description of production and machinery at New consols mine otherwise known as New Wheal Martha, near Callington.
- 9-12-1876 - Machinery at West Roskear Mine to be sold as a result of action brought in the courts of the Vice Warden of the Stanneries by the St. Day fire brick and china clay company Ltd.
- 9-12-1876 - At Trelow, St. Issey a small pumping engine was put to work on Monday last.
- 16-12-1876 - The Barrow Drill at Dolcoath drives  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times fast as hand labour, although there are nine men with the machine and only six would be required to drive an end.
- 23-12-1876 - Hogs Hill, in the St. Neot district, now closed, but interesting for being worked as a large open quarry, the rock being trammed to a blake's stone crusher and then by means of shutes to the stamps, all worked by water power.
- 30-12-1876 - Mining intelligence - report on history of Holmush mine, Callington. (details of machinery and processes).

P. S.

#### New Members

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Messenger. Mr. A. W. J. | 204 High Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex.                                 |
| Cocks. Mrs. R. M.       | Egloshayle Farm, P.O. Box 68 Macclesfield, South Australia.             |
| Iddison. Mr. P. F. J.   | 38 Duchy Avenue, Heaton, Bradford, Yorks.                               |
| Green. Mr. P. W.        | 401 Marshall Hall, Shoreditch College, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey. |
| Green. Miss R. M. P.    | 8 Strangways Terrace, Truro, Cornwall.                                  |
| Cockle. Mr. J. H.       | 24 Trelander South, Truro, Cornwall.                                    |
| Curties. Mr. M.         | White Wings, Hurst Road, Milford-on-Sea, Lymington, Hants.              |
| Tarbox. Mr. R. E.       | 97 Rutland House, Middlesex Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes.            |
| Hooper. Mr. John.       | 57 Roche Road, Bugle, St. Austell, Cornwall.                            |
| Hooper. Jeremy          | " " " "   |
| Higgins. Mr. J. P.      | Kabul House, Ferrybank, Arklow, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.                   |
| Nevin. Mr. Donald D.    | 123 Myrtle Avenue, Cranston, R. I., 02910, U. S. A.                     |
| Smyth. Mr. E. F.        | Coombe, St. Stephen, St. Austell, Cornwall.                             |
| Higgins. Mr. J. T. W.   | Field Edge, 28 Trelissick Road, Hayle, Cornwall.                        |
| Rice. Mr. I. A.         | The Studio, Stone Farm, Chagford, Newton, Abbot, Devon.                 |
| Williams. Dr. P. M.     | 8 Polwarth Place, Edinburgh, Scotland.                                  |
| Pearce. Mr. A. N.       | 9 Trelawney Road, Newquay, Cornwall.                                    |
| Sandry. Mr. T. H.       | Rumford House, St. Ervan, Wadebridge, Cornwall.                         |
| Holloway Mr. R. J.      | 6 Boscean Close, Troon, Camborne, Cornwall.                             |
| Parkhouse. Mr. W. J. D. | Hampden Hall, Stoke Mandeville, Bucks.                                  |
| Gresswell Mr. D. M.     | 10 Cherrywood Gardens, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks.            |
| Tredrea. Mr. N. F. T.   | 202 Herbert Street, Doubleview 6018, Western Australia.                 |
| Hughes. Mr. C. L.       | 21 Jenkins Street, Abercynon, Nr. Mountain Ash, Wales.                  |
| The Librarian,          | Devon & Exeter Institution, 7 The Close, Exeter.                        |
| Betty. Mr. J. M.        | 10 Linley Close, Threemilestone, Truro, Cornwall.                       |
| Gill. Mr. C. P. N.      | 20 Newnham Green, Crowmarsh, Gifford, Wallingford, Oxon.                |
| Calvert-Smith. Mr. P.   | 36 St. Georges Road, St. Margarets on Thames, Twickenham, Middx.        |
| Belk. Mr. L.            | 116 Irby Road, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside.                             |
| Lowe. Mr. M. J.         | 24 Gibsons Hill, Norbury, London. S.W. 16.                              |
| Geeson. Mr. C. T.       | Mill Cottage, New Mills, Ladock, Truro, Cornwall.                       |
| Andrews. Mr. T.         | Tolcarne, St. Anta Road, Carbis Bay, Cornwall.                          |
| Chapman. Mr. W. T. J.   | 68 Carisbrooke Gardens, Yeovil, Somerset.                               |
| Williams. Mr. D. J.     | 28 Mitchell Hill, Truro, Cornwall.                                      |
| Gabbey. Mr. J.          | 78 Premier Drive, Shore Road, Belfast, N. Ireland.                      |
| Hanson. Mr. C. A.       | 92 Dalewood Road, Sheffield.  |
| Osborn. Mr. J. H.       | Cophornes, Tresowes, Ashton, Nr. Helston, Cornwall.                     |
| Edwards. Mr. R.         | Hill Crest, 24 Mountain Ash Road, Abercynon, Mid. Glamorgan.            |
| Perry. Mr. L.           | 870 West 61st Avenue, Vancouver B.C., Canada.                           |
| Harry. Mr. H.           | Nanjizal, Crowlas, Penzance, Cornwall.                                  |
| Keavey. Mr. J.          | 17 Uplands, Skipton, North Yorkshire.                                   |
| Bird. Mr. R. H.         | 41 Windsor Walk, South Anston, Sheffield.                               |
| Elton. Julia.           | Clevedon Court, Somerset.   |
| Moorland Publishing Co. | Hartington, Buxton, Derby.  |
| Parsons. Mr. A. J.      | 23 Park Road, Redruth, Cornwall.  |

Downham. Mr. T.	65 Huntsmoor Road, Tadley, Basingstoke, Hants.
Blount. Mr. C. J.	32 Cherry Tree Drive, Brixton, Plymouth.
Eade. Mr. A. D.	Claremont Farm, Callington, Cornwall.
West. Rev. J.	The Vicarage, Northfield Lane, Barnstaple, Devon.
Roberts. Mr. P.	5 Richmond Road, Crownhill, Plymouth.
Bullman. Mr. D.	117 Raeburn Road, Sidcup, Kent.
Tregear. Mr. G. H. B.	5 Stanley Gardens, London. W11.
Davidson. Mr. I. S. Librarian.	Tolgus Tin (Cornwall Ltd.) Portreath Road, Redruth, Cornwall. County Library Local Studies Dept., County Branch Library, Redruth, Cornwall.
Gindry. Mr. E. T. E.	Flat 4. Regent House, Fore Street, Porthleven, Cornwall.
Saville. Mr. H.	80 Beechcroft Avenue, Barnehurst, Bexleyheath, Kent.
Rolt. Sonia.	Stanley Pontlarge, Winchcombe, Glos.
Henderson. Mr. B.	46a Windmill Hill, Ruislip, Middlesex.
Davies. Mr. D. W.	524 West Tenth Street, Claremont, California 91711, U. S. A.
Toms. Mr. V.	12 Queenwood, Llanedeyrn, Cardiff, Wales.
Prowse. Mr. J.	7 West View Road, Bere Alston, Yelverton, Devon.
Crompton. Mr. R. J.	9 Northbrook Court, Northbrook Avenue, Winchester, Hants.
Tregay. Mr. J. D.	28 Western Terrace, Falmouth, Cornwall.
Robey Mr. J. A.	30 Haywood Grange, Little Haywood, Staffs.
Buchanan. Dr. R. A.	Dept. of Humanities, University of Bath, Bath.
Bebbington. Mr. A. P.	Engledale, 516 Crewe Road, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire.
Phelps. Mr. A. R.	26 Sheerwater Crescent, Hastings, Sussex.

#### A Cornish Silversmith

Country Life of 17th March 1977 (p. 654) carried a letter, from Evelyn Hardy, about a Cornish woman silversmith, Mary Ash of Launceston who worked about 1680-90. She is known only to a few experts and her work is very rare and beautiful. Can any member contribute a note for the newsletter (or the journal if sufficient) on Cornish Silversmiths or similar craftsmen? It would be a most interesting departure.

J. H.

Justin Brooke of Chymorvah Vean, Marazion, asks for information on the following:-

WEST OF ENGLAND MINERAL COMPANY, Haye Marsh, St. Dominic. Formed to smelt antimony from Wheal Hope and Wheal Prosper (locations unknown), by a new process. Worked 1862-65; liquidated 1882.

SOUTH DOWN METAL, CHEMICAL AND BRICK COMPANY, South Down, Maker. Chemical and brick works; experimented with "blue billy" residual iron ore and wet process of metal extracting. Works leased from Lord Clinton. Worked 1872-92.

BOZEDOWN SILVER MINING COMPANY, LIMITED, Bozedown, Whitchurch, near Reading. Just across the river from Pangbourne. Registered June 1896, twelve shareholders.

SPLENDID MINING PROPERTY, ten miles from Plymouth, alongside GWR station. Offered for sale in Mining Journal, 17th August 1901.

J. Brooke,  
Chymorvah Vean,  
Marazion.

and also remarks that:-

FORTESCUE'S 80" ENGINE at Wheal Grenville, came top in Lean's Engine Reporter, June 1894, noted by the Mining Journal. (Reference article in Newsletter No. 15).

J. B.

#### Prince of Wales Engine House near Tintagel (See N. L. No. 15 p. 16)

The Prince of Wales Engine House Society reports as follows:- (via Mr. J. Lugg (Hon. Treas.) of 'Homeland', 17 Rockhead St., Delabole, and D. H. Westwell of 8 Mill Lane, Camelford.)

Jubilee Year will see the completion of a project which started with a "bang", almost died through lack of support, only to be rejuvenated again to achieve everything its supporters could have hoped for.

In 1973 the Publicity Committee of the former Camelford Rural District Council met one Wednesday afternoon to discuss what new events and places could be brought to the attention of the "visitor" the following summer. The ruins of the old Cornish Beam Engine House near Trewarmett were mentioned as a possible place of interest, but it was pointed out that part of it was structurally unsound, and certainly not a place to encourage members of the public to ramble. Following this meeting a group of local people who had known and visited the building on many occasions

decided to investigate further the possibility of renovation and the strength of public support pending an appeal.

A public meeting was called at which a member of the Trevithick Society spoke of engine houses in Cornwall. After some discussion it was decided that the Prince of Wales Engine House once contained a beam engine which probably performed two duties:-

- (i) provision of power to haul trucks from the Bowthick Quarry across the valley at the same time as
- (ii) pumping water from the large slate quarry pit below it

Erection of the Engine House would have taken place roughly in the middle of the last century with a working life span of probably no more than forty years. Whilst realising that they were dealing with a specialist subject, the assembled company decided to go ahead with the formation of a Society, a Committee was formed and Officers were appointed.

They had a head start because of the name of the quarry on which it stands. Everyone from the Prince of Wales downwards was asked to contribute. Much advice and information, many apologies and some money was received. The most encouraging donation of £100 came from Camelford Rural District Council, with its full backing. A report was drawn up by an interested local builder and another meeting was held to discuss matters. The builder's report told of something which perhaps not all the Society's supporters realised; that a massive task awaited anyone if a satisfactory job was to be carried out. Public support then waned and in a desperate gesture the Committee (two thirds of the original Committee had by now lost interest) decided to remove the dangerous part of the Engine House and "make safe" the remainder as far as funds would allow. Meanwhile the owners of the land, the Duchy, had granted the North Cornwall District Council a lease on the property, honouring an earlier commitment by the now defunct Camelford Rural District Council.

In fact nothing more was done to or on behalf of the project for two years except a couple of small fund raising schemes. Then one day last summer the Treasurer was visited by an Architect on holiday who had heard something of the Society. The founder members still interested attended a further meeting at which it was decided to have one further effort, possibly with grant aid under the job Creation Programme. Detailed plans were drawn up and application was made to the Manpower Services Commission. The application sought assistance for the provision of labour, transport and materials - and in addition a public appeal went out for materials and cash.

At this point the Society's luck changed -

- (i) the Commission approved the renovation programme and a grant of £7,973 which covered the whole of the estimated labour costs plus £750 towards materials and transport.
- (ii) a local resident gave the Society an old barn which stood on her property and which could be demolished, the materials being re-used on the Engine House. Further donations were received together with other gifts of materials and on Monday, the 8th November, 1976 the old Engine House was once again the centre of a working area; not this time providing power, but instead receiving attention itself to start a project which at one time seemed impossible.

Every effort is being made to restore the Engine House to its original state though the details of the interior are not available and any expert advice immediately available would be appreciated.

One lesson which may be learned from this project is that as long as a few people can keep faith with a project no matter how many set backs might be received they may well succeed. It is thought that the Prince of Wales Engine House Society have proved this.

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#### New Books

The Northern Mine Research Society promises a monograph on "The Caradon and Phoenix Mining Areas, East Cornwall" by Roy Shambrook.

Details from: Mr. R. G. Guthrie,  
186 Station Road,  
Billingham,  
Cleveland TS23 2RT

"Yesterday's Golcondas - Notable British Metal Mines" by R. H. Bird. Published by Moorland Publishing Co., The Market Place, Hartington, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 0AL. £3.95 plus 12p. in £ for postage etc.

This book is a most interesting and well produced collection of old and new photographs of mines, engine houses, surface equipment underground scenes and so on. Each one is accompanied by an informative description. The first section is on Cornwall, followed by Wales, Shropshire, Derbyshire, Isle of Man, Mid-Pennines and Northern Pennines.

"John Taylor - Mining Entrepreneur and Engineer 1779 - 1863" by R. Burt. Moorland Publications. £2.00 plus 12p. in £ postage etc.,

The first full biography of Taylor.

"A Cornish Farmer's Diary" by James Stevens (1847-1918), Edited by P. A. S. Pool.

This is the first Cornish farmer's diary to be published, and is a notable contribution to west-country social history, an authentic record of rural life in Cornwall at a time which, though just within living memory, seems remote indeed.

James Stevens (1847-1918) spent his whole life in the Penwith or Land's End peninsula of Cornwall, at Zennor until 1897 and thereafter at Sancreed, serving both parishes as Churchwarden. He kept a diary in 1877 and continuously from 1892 to 1912, thus leaving a simple and unpretentious daily record of life in family, farm, church, parish and market town, the limits of the small world which he seldom left. The entries for some years are printed in full, for the benefit of agricultural historians; for other years the editor has made a selection, and has added a long introduction putting the diary in its social, historical and topographical setting.

Obtainable through bookshops or direct from the editor at 37 Morrab Road, Penzance. £2. 50 plus 50p. postage etc.

"Tinner's Quest" by Violet Bibby, an exciting adventure story set among the Cornish mines in the mid. 19th century - perhaps a good present for younger and prospective members?  
Faber and Faber £2. 95.

The Old Metal Mines of Mid-Wales - Part 4 West Montgomeryshire. by David E. Birch.  
Published by The Pound House, Newent, Glos. GL18 1PS. Price £1. 35.

This latest edition (with one more to come) keeps up the high standard of its predecessors and is most interesting. Apart from the descriptions of the mines in the area there are some excellent photographs of engine houses, water wheels and other equipment, with an appendix on 'Steam in the Mountains' as a bonus.

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Russell Bayles has provided the following interesting notes on John Taylor, made by George Lloyd in 1962, now in Flintshire Record Office:-

THE SANDYCROFT FOUNDRY AND ENGINE WORKS COMPANY LIMITED

Notes on the Foundries at Rhydymwyn and Sandycroft.

In the latter part of the 18th century an eminent mining engineer, Mr. John Taylor, came up from Cornwall to the Rhydymwyn district for the purpose of prospecting and developing the mineral lead resources between the Loggerheads and Rhydymwyn and took up his residence at Plas Coed Du, some four miles from Mold. He was followed by a number of Cornish lead miners.

His new mines required crushing machinery and other mining plant which was manufactured at Redruth in Cornwall. It was a costly business to bring machinery by road to the sites in Flintshire and later John Taylor opened his own Foundry at Rhydymwyn in 1837 and named it the Mold Foundry. It was sited on the east side of the River Alyn above the bridge and the motive power for the crushing plant and foundry was developed by means of water wheels.

As the profits of the lead mines became of diminishing value, John Taylor devoted his energy to producing mining machinery including boilers and winding engines on a large scale and even exported such machinery to Spain and other parts of the Continent. Orders continued to increase and so did the costs, particularly of transport, for the nearest railhead did not come to Mold until 1849 and it was not until 1869 before the railway was extended to Denbigh.

Owing to difficulties in transport and consequently increasing costs, the Company decided to transfer its activities in 1862 to a site on the left bank of the River Dee at Sandycroft and adjacent to the Chester Holyhead Railway. This also enabled the Company to use water-transport in ships up to 300 tons burden. Incidentally, this new site was originally Cram's shipbuilding yard, where the famous clipper iron ship the "Royal Charter" was launched in 1854. The Company took many of their skilled craftsmen with them to Sandycroft, namely, John Jones, Robert Jones, Joseph Lewis, William Bryan, Robert Hughes, Henry Thompson, Samuel Manley, John Jones the Clock, who repaired clocks in his spare time, and many others from Rhydymwyn and the families of these men and descendants live in Sandycroft to this day.

John Taylor has left us a landmark in the Mold district i. e. "The Leete" and known to many as the most beautiful walk in Flintshire. In order to obtain water-power, before the advent of the steam engine, for crushing his Erwr-felin lead ore, he constructed an artificial waterway along the eastern escarpment of the Valley of the Alyn, from a reservoir at the Loggerheads, to Rhydymwyn, a distance of four miles, to convey water to drive the overshot water-wheels. It was quite a notable civil engineering feat for that period and the reason for this long artificial stream and path is that, below the Loggerheads in dry weather, the River Alyn sinks into cavities of the carboniferous limestone and flows underground for some four miles. Only in winter is there a constant flow of water above the river bed. It is interesting to note that Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy of Hamburg, 1809-1847, was entertained by John Taylor in 1829 at Plas Coed Du and during his visit, it is said that he composed "The Rivulet" there in allusion to the River Alyn. The visit is recorded on a granite tablet set in a stone wall at Rhydymwyn.

In the early days of the business at Sandycroft, John Taylor, eldest son of the Founder of the Company, took over the management and later Mr. Henry Enfield Taylor succeeded him. In 1874

Mr. Frank Taylor along with a Mr. Bricknell entered into Partnership and the Company was then known as Messrs. Bricknell and Taylor and Co. About 1890, Frank Taylor was appointed to control the Company's London Office at 6 Queen Street Place, where they set up as Mining Consultant Engineers and were thus in a position to recommend Sandycroft machinery. After Frank Taylor left for London, Mr. Edward Sydney Taylor took over the management at Sandycroft and lived in Aston. He was a generous and genial man and well liked by all. About 1890, the name of the Company was changed to The Sandycroft Foundry and Engine Works Company Limited.

There was little competition in the mining machinery business up to the 1890's and this was the peak period of prosperity. The South African Gold Mines opened in 1886 and the Company was overwhelmed with orders. During the peak period it is said that the profits exceeded the Company's Capital. For many years the Company was fully employed in supplying machinery to South Africa, India, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand and mines in other countries in which the Taylor family had controlling interests. "Sandycroft" became a household word, so to speak, in the Mining World and its machinery was of first class craftsmanship and quality of the first order and their mine pumps were par excellence.

In 1907 a handsome Corless Valve Winding Engine was made for the Oregum Gold Mining Co. in India and in 1912 the largest Corless Winding Engine in the world at that time was made at Sandycroft for the Champion Reef Gold Mining Co. Collieries and quarries throughout the United Kingdom were also supplied with winding engines, pumps, fan-engines and crushing plants.

It is interesting to record some of the personnel at Sandycroft about 1900. Sydney Taylor (managing director), John Kelly (works manager), William Copack (foreman turner), Robert Davies (foreman fitter), John Jones (foreman pattern-maker), Robert Jones (foreman moulder), Edward Griffiths (foreman boilermaker), Thomas Ledsham (foreman smith), Joseph Broughton (foreman electrician), Thomas Morcome (chief mechanical draughtsman), John Day (chief electrical draughtsman), Charles Freeman (chief estimator), J. Sampson Michell (chief accountant), John Williams (building foreman).

In 1894 the Company commenced the manufacture of electrical motors under the control of Doctor Nathaniel Keith of U. S. A. and about 1902 Sandycroft held the patents and developed the Hunt Cascade Electrical multiple speed motor. Hunt was an electrical draughtsman and this type of motor held sway for many years in special circumstances and was written up in text books at that time.

By about 1920 there was much competition in mining machinery and engine work and it is sad to relate that the Company appears to have ceased to be progressive, with the result that this renowned Works was closed down in 1925 through lack of orders. The story of this Company is well worth recording in the annals of the industrial history of Flintshire. The site of this old Foundry is now occupied by Graessers' Chemical Works.

I have written up this article from notes I have turned up which I once received from the late Mr. Hugh Williams (1875-1960) of Queen's Way, Shotton, who was an accountant at Sandycroft for some thirty-five years until the Works closed down. I remember him deploring the fact that the new management in 1924 burned all the early records of the Company including those from Rhydymwyn.

I have briefly referred to this fine old Foundry in previous notes.

George Lloyd,  
Shotton.  
March 1962

Michael Messenger sends the following report.

Conference of South Western Industrial Archaeology Societies at Street

This conference is an annual get-together of the industrial archaeology societies in South Wales and South West England. There is no formal constitution and the conference is hosted by one of the participating societies each year. Recently it has been held at Cardiff, Worcester and Exeter and this year, the eighth, the Somerset IA Society were hosts at Street, near Glastonbury. The Strode Theatre was well-filled on 16 April and brief details of the presentations, in order and omitting breaks for coffee, lunch and tea, are herewith.

"Slates of Somerset" - Michael Messenger & Chris Tilley

The slate quarries of West Somerset were very much a local industry but two, at least, were worked by a Cornishman, Nicholas Ennor, and they made an interesting comparison with the slate industry elsewhere.

"A Return to Steam at Crofton" - Roy Simmons

A detailed account was given of the engineering and other problems involved in the restoration of the two Cornish engines on the Kennett & Avon Canal. These are now working regularly under steam.

"Fussells Edge Tool Works at Mells" - Robin Stiles & R. Lewis

This was a second report on the incredible amount of hard work Bristol IA Society have put in excavating the remains of a substantial industry and conserving the remains. A first-class example of an active IA society contributing to local history.



"Some Preserved Steam in the USA" - Tony Jukes

The contribution by an Oxford House (Risca) IA Society member showed examples of road and rail steam in the USA and illustrated some American solutions to the problems of preservation.

"West Somerset Mineral Railway" - Michael Jones

An emergency 'fill-in' by the conference chairman was a fascinating and knowledgeable account of the railway that served the iron mines of the Brendon Hills with many interesting old photographs.

"The Chandos Glass Kiln" - Frank Hawtin

Somerset IA Society have recently excavated an early and rare glass kiln at Bridgwater and the site now forms an attractive amenity for the town. As well as an account of the excavation the history of the kiln has also been recorded.

"The Pentyrch Iron Works" - John Mahoney & John Owen

Although thwarted by demolition the South East Wales IA Society have surveyed a most interesting structure and recorded the history and development of this ironworks.

The very successful conference concluded with a stimulating discussion of the problems facing the societies, particularly those of organisation and membership. In addition there were a number of displays and, as usual, the day proved an excellent time for the exchange of ideas and problems, and to make comparisons with what other people and places were doing. Of course, new friendships were made and old ones renewed. It is sad that once again the Trevithick Society and Cornwall were not represented except by members attending with other societies.

Next year's conference will be at Risca, Gwent, on Saturday 15th April 1978 and will be hosted by Oxford House (Risca) IA Society. This active society has some fifty or sixty members and will shortly be opening their own museum in Risca. They hosted the conference some years ago.

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