

THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER No. 26

AUGUST 1979

Edited by Colin Yelland, 'T'reireife', 45 Chough Crescent, St. Austell

1979 A. G. M.

To be held on Saturday 22nd September 1979.

1. 15 Coaches depart from Camborne School, Camborne. (Where car parks are available).
2. 00 (approx.) Arrive at Slip Quarry Nanpean (Grid Ref. S.W. 950558). Visit to Slip and Prosper China Stone Quarries.
3. 00 (approx.) Depart for Great Wheal Prosper China Clay Kiln Carbis, nr. Roche, to see one of the last working pan dries. It is also hoped to arrange a visit to either Cornwall Minerals Railway Buildings at St. Blazey or Charlestown Harbour.
5. 30 (approx.) Tea at Wheal Martyn Museum.
6. 00 A. G. M. at Wheal Martyn Museum.

(Price: £2.00 each)

Tickets for the coach will be available from:-

D. Ingham, Esq.,
25 Barrripper Road,
Camborne.

NANCLEDBRA STAMPS

The following article is a first hand account of the last working days of the Nancledra Stamps as told by W. Andrew Berryman of Nancledra.

CHYPONS STAMPS

My first account is of a Stamps known as Chypons - which I knew as a boy - which worked on a stream of water from Gew Mine and Coldharbour Moor. This small Stamps was composed of four heads, and was worked by a Mr. James of Trencrom, with his young sons. They owned a horse and cart, which for five shillings a day, hauled five loads. Later, a man called Mr. J. Hocking worked the Stamps, and took on the contract from the burrows at Wheal Kitty and neighbourhood. He and his sons worked from 7 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock in the evening, and after walking two or three miles to their home, would then walk or cycle to Lelant village for Brass Band, two or three times a week, and in the Summer, on Saturdays, would have to attend the Band at tea-treats, garden fetes etc.

AMALEBRA STAMPS

These Stamps, working before 1900, were first managed by a man called Mr. T. Troon of Ludgvan who walked the three miles to and from each day, and were later taken over by a tin dresser from Nancledra called Mr. J. J. Curnow, who also did most of the running repairs to the Stamps. This Stamps was served by tin stuff from Cripplesease and from a part of Wheal Reath, and the hauling was done by carts from my father J. Berryman and Sons, at a cost of 6/- per day for horse and cart. The weekly wage at this time varied from 6/- for a boy just left school, to 15/- and £1 for men working on the floors and in their spare time at the burrows helping to pick out the best tin stuff.

The Stamps was composed of eight heads and took quite a bit more power of water which had to be brought in from Georgia valley through Amalveor and Embla. The Stamps area covered, I should think, more than half an acre, owing to the need to save the fresh water sand after it had been through the process of taking out the slime - which was no good for building purposes and was left to be washed away in the river. Everything that went under those lifters and heads - which weighed three to four cwts each - was washed through by water brought in from the stream before it went

over the water wheel, then dropping down into the large bin close to the Stamps which had enough room for one man to get in and serve the Stamps with a small shovel. The lifters would flush the tin, sand and everything else that came from the old mine dump, into two, three or four strips which were twelve to fourteen feet long and three feet wide in which men could use shovels. After a foot had been washed away from the bottom of the strip, the bottom half that was left was second class needs and the half nearest the Stamps was the heaviest and best. All this was buddled and framed - the second class needs requiring considerably more than the first class needs.

THE MILL, NANCLEDRA

The next to follow on the same stream is the Mill at Nancledra, known by most farmers as a Grist Mill. It ground dredge corn, clean barley, wheat (usually for pigs), pure oats (chiefly for cattle, sometimes with a little maize added to make it richer for feeders, steers etc.). When the farmers could not grow enough corn for their stock, they would buy from the Mill, through Mr. G. Bazeley of Penzance, pig meal, bran, sharps, thirds, etc. This was brought around three days a week in a very heavy covered wagon, pulled by three big horses, and driven by a dear old man called Jack Eddy, who came to our place for tea with his pasty or heavy fogan.

This Mill was owned by a man called Mr. White, and when he retired the business was bought by my father John Berryman. My brother David John worked in the Mill, until he left to get more money working at the Branwell Mills, Gulval, whilst my two brothers helped on the farm and worked the horses and carts on the Stamps. We continued doing this contracting work until my brother David John could be released from the Mill to take over my job, when I was called to the Army in December 1915 (to be trained for the Somme Offensive in 1916).

The farmers came to the Mill from miles around - as far as Zennor, Trendrine, Trevega, Trowan, Trevalgan, Hellesveor, then back through Vorvas, Nance, Trevarrack, Trevarrow, Carbis Bay, Trencrom, Carntisko, Brunnion, Cripplesease and all the near farms.

My Father's Motto:-

"I worked and sang from morn till night - no lark more blithe than he,
And this the burden of his song for ever used to be -
I envy nobody, no not I, and nobody envies me."

LITTLE STAMPS OR STAMPS HILL STAMPS

From the Mill, the stream flowed through Nancledra, under the Blacksmith Shop and Mrs. Rogers dwelling house, to this next Stamps which was worked in conjunction with Chypons Stamps by James Bros. This Stamps was small in comparison with the others, and had only four wood lifters which were rather more than a foot square and about six feet high - it took a good stream of water to work it as they would be very heavy, and worked noisily. It worked day and night, looked after at night by a watchman called William Curtis. The tin stuff came from Tin Croft Mine and Carne Burrows hauled by a Nancledra man called Mitchell, with horse and cart, and together with Chypons Stamps a batch of tin was probably sent every two months to be smelted at Hayle.

The streams and waterways were kept in order by the owners of each Stamps linking up with each other.

LOCKE STAMPS

Locke Stamps stopped work in 1952-4 being taken over from two local men called W. Winn and Richard Hall by a man called Tonking from Newbridge. In the working of the Stamps, preparing the tin, it had to go through a number of buddles and frames, the frames being worked by a woman called Susan Blight.

When the tin was thoroughly clean and packed in small long shaped sacks, approximately 3cwt. in a sack, it was taken to smelting works at Chyandour or Hayle. After all this was done a certain amount of fine tin would accumulate in the frames sieves, barrels (half barrels) etc. This was not so valuable but worth about half the price of tin. This was taken to a local man with a Stamps, who had some more advanced machinery to treat it before it went to the smelting works.

Men's wages average £1 per week, boys wages from school 9 shillings per week. Horses and carts 6 shillings per day. After all these wages were paid, the owner would pay dues to the landlord so much per ton of tin sent. All men worked from 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. Saturdays one o'clock. All repairs to stamps were done by local blacksmiths. When new bottoms which were under the lifters, about 4cwt. cast iron, and lifters were needed they were made by Holmans of Penzance. On the floors was a dinner house with an open chimney where the kettle was boiled for hot tea with dinner. Fuel was gathered on the way to work in the morning.

This Stamps was worked by night with an elderly man called Pryor who lived at Conquer Downs, Towednack, Nancledra. He only had one hand and a crook on the other. Previous to these people having the Stamps another man had it called Jacob Prowse who was a tin dresser and he was in partnership with the Sandow family who it was said was a Member of Mineral Rights Committee. He also supplied cartage from the Wheal Margaret burrows. The Sandow family had quite a large family, and a farm called Trembethow Manor. The average amount of tin ore in the rough state from Wheal Margaret was nine or ten cart loads per day, one ton per load.

BARKLES STAMPS

Owned by D. J. Berryman and J. J. Curnow taken over from a man called Symonds from Crowlas. My father owning the land at Barkles renting it from Glanvil, Hamilton & Ward had the job to supply the tin stuff from Wheal Reath by supplying horses and carts about 6 loads each per day. There were two sets of Stamps at Barkles about 500 yards between so that the tin etc. was washed down to the bottom floors where it was worked by perhaps 3 men and a boy, where it went through the same process at Locke.

I might say that the stuff varied in value from sometimes £5 - £7 or a little more per ton of tin, especially if it came from a special part of the old mine dumps called by a special name "Neds". I asked the farmer why it was called Neds and he said all the fields around that place were called Neds. It must have been the name of the mine. Five loads from this side (Neds) and six from this side of Gee's old house was sent down past Wheal Margaret and carted then down the lane and back down the hill where I once had a fright. I was driving the horse and cart and my horse must have put his foot on a stone and fell with a ton of stuff on his back. I had to shout for help and the Sandow boys came and got him up. No harm was done more than shock. We used to do the farm work after we done our days work, cut hay or corn with a reaper and two horses then we should turn the hay or corn with pikes in the evenings ready for drying the next day if it was dry enough we should pook it and cart it on wagons or wanes or even carts. This hay being all loose had to be tied down with two ropes per wagon because we had quite a long way to come over the road from Carne to Nancledra.

It was different for the corn cutting it had to be cut different with a machine that had two seats on it, one to put it on sheaves and then was taken away by men to make way for the next time around until the field was completed. These sheaves of loose corn would be left on the ground to dry for a few days according to the weather and when dry enough would be bound with hand by binds taken from the last sheaf you bound up. Two men could bind an acre in half a day and then put them in shocks or mows built by a man as high as could be put up to a sharp point. After they had been in the field for about one week it would be carted home and put in a rick until father could arrange for the threshing machine which would separate the corn from the straw using this for the cattle and the corn to be taken to the mill for grinding.

The stream, the river Lydd, which did this work rises on Amalveor Downs and flows into the sea at Marazion

Andrew Berryman,
Nancledra, Penzance.
1978

MEMBERS QUERIES

From Mr. G. Smith, Grogan, Chy-an-Gwel, 119 Brasenose Road, Didcot, Oxon. :-

I am currently researching the history of Sara Burgess's Pennryn Foundry who were particularly known for their broad gauge Vertical Boiled locomotives supplied to Falmouth docks and would appreciate any information on this. I believe both Sara & Burgess come from the Perran foundry. I have a limited amount of information on them but as yet have not located any company records. I should also particularly like to view a trade catalogue as they were general founders (some of their products are still dotted around Pennryn).

From Mr. R. Dudley, 24 Clumber Road, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire. :-

In my village here at Poynton, there used to be a Cornish Beam Pumping Engine. It commenced work in 1875 pumping the water out of Lord Vernons Collieries, it worked continuously until the collieries closed in 1935. In the late 1930's the Beam and Engine were broken up for scrap. The Pump House was lined and used for a water tower until 1950 when it was finally demolished, with I might say great difficulty. I am trying to find out as much as I can about its early beginnings. What I am looking for is documentary evidence of plans, letters regarding its purchase and if there are any photos.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

I am very short of material for future newsletters and I would be grateful if members would make an effort to contribute. The Newsletter is only as good as the articles that are contributed!