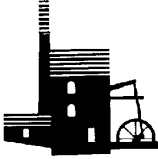


# THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY



**Suddenly my scooter has lost all its fascination!**

## CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

My message this month is necessarily brief as much of what I have to say will be included in my report to the AGM in September. Once my present work commitments are finished it is my intention to resume editorship of a new book for the Society embracing mining and industrial Cornwall. I am quite determined, not merely to produce yet another book of just mining photographs, and that the format will be quite different—the intention being to use colour and examples of “ephemera” like mine shares, bill headings etc. If any member would like to contribute just send me a photocopy or a laser scan plus a few details of anything you might regard as suitable.

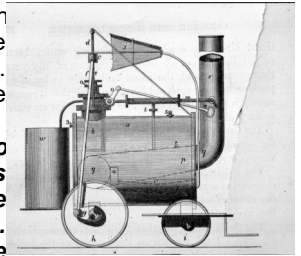
**Clive Carter**

## EDITORIAL

The Trevithick Society has been awarded the London Cornish Association Shield for XXXXX and this will be presented at the Gorsedd Ceremony to be held on Saturday \$\$ September at St. Columb. Our President, Eric Edmonds, will be there to receive this honour on behalf of the Society.

***The Stannon China Clay Pit on Bodmin Moor is due to close imminently. In view of this an extra field trip has hastily been arranged for October 6th which will be the only chance to see and photograph the pit in operation. Members wishing to attend should meet at 1.30pm at the Old Inn, St. Breward.***

The Camborne Road Locomotive has kept quite a few members busy this summer, tending to its needs at the many events it has appeared at. It has been out and about most weekends, along with the bright yellow Society tent which provides welcome shelter for the crew, and houses the bookstall and a small display.



Future outings for the replica:

### *September*

- 1st Bodmin & Wenford Railway.
- 2nd Helston Charter Celebrations.
- 8th Tuckingmill Fun Day
- 13, 14, 15 Royal Cornwall Show
- 23rd Falmouth Se-Tech 2001

### *October*

- 3rd Roseland School, Tregony

### *December*

- 24th Camborne Hill Run bicentenary



This list is liable to change, so it is always best to contact the Society chatline 01209 716811 to confirm the latest news.

The Parkandillick engine will be in operation on the AGM weekend on Sun. 23rd September between 2-4 pm

**Copy date for next issue is October 12th, 2001**

**Colin French**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I wish to congratulate the Society and those involved in the building of the Trevithick Camborne Road Locomotive.

My reason for writing was that I was in Catalonia the other day and we visited a disused salt mine. There we saw an interesting electric winder made by a French company Als-thom in Belfort (see photograph on page 2 and below). I think they still exist.

There is no link with the West Country but they do date, I think, from the early 20th century. It has direct drive DC motors on the winding drums with power provided from rotary converters in the basement.



**Richard Fishwick**  
rctf@mac.com

Dear Editor,

In reply to the request for information about Jebus Bickle in the last Newsletter I wish to make the following comments:

"Jebus Bickle, a Camborne and Hayle consulting engineer, was a member of a six-man Expert Advisory Committee appointed by the board of Cornish Tin Properties Ltd. shortly after its registration in July 1906. The company was formed to acquire, develop and explore tin-mining properties in Cornwall and elsewhere. At the time of its registration the company had an option on Trebell mine in Lanivet and was considering an option on West Wheal Vor in Breage. It also held a license on a property in the St. Austell district, which it intended to pay for with shares credited as fully paid. J.H. Collins was mentioned in the offer for sale of shares, without his permission.

During the spring of 1907 the company assisted in the flotation of New Wheal Eliza Consols Ltd., near St. Austell, and close to J.H. Collins' house. Cornish Tin Properties was struck off the Register in 1916."

**Justin Brooke,**  
Chymorvah Vean,  
Marazion.  
TR17 0DQ.

Dear Editor,

I have just finished reading *Trevithick—First in Steam*. Trevithick really was at the cutting edge of technology. I am now moved to find out more about him.

I was certainly captivated by the description of the work in building the replica. It must have required an outstanding degree of dedication and resolve to complete the project on time. It is a very appropriate project too for Cornwall!

I was delighted, but not surprised, you received so much support from CompAir. As editor of *The Engineer* (1969-80) I had much to do with the company and enjoyed much of their hospitality. I found them a good firm.

I am writing a biography of Zerah Colburn (1832-70), who was the editor of *The Engineer* from 1858 to 64, before starting *Engineering* in 1866. The book runs to some 350 pages and is far too long—so will have to be cut back and re-focussed.

Colburn was an American who became a railroad superintendent at the age of 19 or so, before he came to England. He was well versed in New England railroad engineering and wrote extensively on the subject—even one book with D.K. Clark and another that Clark finished after Colburn's death.

Like yourselves, I am finding difficulty in discovering the past—in this case retracing Colburn's steps. He started work in Boston, Mass. at 12 at a time when the railroads were growing fast, following the arrival of early British locos to New England.

I wonder what, if any, books might have been available for a young man of 13 or 14 (1845-6) in Boston to read about railway engineering. Any light you can shed on this dark corner would be most welcome. There certainly were some railway journals—he started a weekly journal himself in 1854.

Meanwhile, my sincere congratulations to all those involved with the project.

**John Mortimer** MSc, Ceng, FIMechE

The Old Barn,  
Willen Village,  
Milton Keynes.  
MK15 9LT

His address is Anchor Watch, Rospletha Cliff, Porthcurno, Penzance TR19 6JS, Telephone 01736 810717.

Most of the outstanding stabilisation work on the site has now been completed. On Higher Bal engine house, the grilles to prevent access to the shaft have been fitted. The Electric Winder House has been given two coats of masonry paint and the window grilles have been installed. The four inch Evans steam water pump, which was donated to the Society, is, at present, in the Winder House. It has been stripped down, cleaned, re-assembled and operated on compressed air. The old Drawing Office is now to be retained.

The potholes in the approach road have been filled and the road given a coating of tar and chippings. The missing granite steps of the Count House have been replaced. The relatively modern concrete block compressor house has been demolished and excess rubbish and hardcore on the site has been removed.

The work programme for the Man Engine Shaft is nearly finished, delayed by the wet winter. The top section of the shaft has been lined with vertical timbers and the soil levelled off around the shaft. The top of the shaft has to be protected with specially made safety grilles and fencing. The top steps of the spiral staircase to the tunnel have to be replaced and protective fencing installed before the public can be admitted to the area.

**Eric King**

## LEVANT REPORT

We are now in the peak summer season and the engine is being steamed six days per week. The engine is running well and there are many visitors around. However there are frequent manning difficulties in providing the full cover of engine driver, steward and guide. Any members or friends who are willing to help do these very essential jobs would be very welcome and training would be given.

If you would like to help in this way, the Custodian, Eric Mason, is the organiser of the Drivers and Stewards Rota, and he would be very pleased to hear from you.



## MEMBERS EVENING FRIDAY 27 JULY

An audience of nearly forty were drawn to Cornish Engines at Pool for the Members Evening, and, in spite of numb bum syndrome (the seats were designed for twenty minute occupation) were entertained by various "turns" for almost two hours.

Colin French started off the proceedings with a computer projection of the Society CD-ROM. This was a look at the Camborne Road Locomotive, during its building and then its outings over the Trevithick Day weekend, some of which promoted light hearted and good natured barracking much enjoyed by all. The audience then heard from our long distance visitor for the evening. This was Debbie Ruder, Curator of the Powerhouse Museum at Sydney, Australia. Debbie was spending a short time in Cornwall and was hoping to obtain information on Boulton and Watt and appealed to Members for any information. The following day she spent the morning with Kenneth Brown and afternoon with Stuart Smith viewing sites of interest. Following Debbie the audience were treated to a very amusing account by George Wilson of the introduction of the Nimrod to the Royal Air Force and the unfortunate circumstances created by the failure of Rolls Royce Spey engines which seemed to be working on Murphy's Law principle at the time. George was directly involved in Gibraltar and explained the reasons for the failures even producing a turbine blade securing nut with its tab washer to help illustrate the situation. His story of how the RAF, which only had three Nimrods at the time, each of which was running into mechanical problems, and yet had to fly with the spares to keep its brothers airworthy was quite hilarious. After George, Kenneth Brown presented an illustrated item on blowing engines. The engines themselves are scarce but a number of enginehouses exist. Ken spoke of the site at Tondy, South Wales, to which he had been invited recently and whilst in South Wales he visited other sites including the impressive Ynysfach enginehouse at Merthyr Tydfil which he illustrated. He also

described the actions of beam blowers and explained that air tubs were twice the cylinder diameter and spoke of those with "horn" type beams, that is to say, one end of the beam is curved in an upward arc at the crank end. The Ironbridge blowing engines, David and Sampson, were also featured. These are a pair of beam blowing engines built in 1851 for the nearby Priorslee Ironworks, last used in 1959. They were then donated to the museum at Blists Hill. Last on the programme was the writer who provided a short presentation on the relatively little known Post Office underground railway which crosses London from Paddington to Whitechapel. This operated twenty-two hours each day with five intermediate stations at main mail offices. Electrically powered it uses 440v DC via third rail, return through the running rail and with track circuiting through the other rail. The track is 2ft gauge, all trains are automatic with no driver and it was opened for use in 1927.

Our thanks are to the Trevithick Trust for use of the venue and to Ieuan Harries for opening the site out of hours.

**Kingsley Rickard.**

## KING EDWARD MINE OPENS

After many years as the teaching mine for Camborne School of Mines, King Edward Mine (formerly South Condurrow) has opened to the public as a heritage centre and tourist attraction, administered by the Trevithick Trust. A great deal of refurbishment has taken place to the site in readiness for the opening.

The Society has stored much of its collection of mining relics at King Edward, thanks to the generosity of the Camborne School of Mines, and many of these items will be on show.

## TO ALL MODEL MAKERS....

The Society has been presented with a partly completed model of an 80" Cornish Beam Engine by a member who joined CEPS in the early days.

The scale is 1" to 1' and it is based on a set of drawings in the Society's collection, together with a number of sketches.

The house, beam, bearings, cylinder & valve gear are complete, but not the parallel motion, valve actuating rods and levers, and the two cataracts.

Would any member experienced in such work who would like further details and would be prepared to complete this model for the Society please let me know.

**Eric Edmonds.**

## STRONTIAN

Should any members of the Society be holidaying in the Scottish Highlands they may be interested in visiting the remains of the lead mining industry near Strontian on the Ardnamurchan peninsula.

The element strontium was so named as it was isolated from the local strontianite by Thomas Hope in 1790.

The lead mines were opened by Sir Alexander Murray in 1722. By 1729 various mining concerns had erected numerous storehouses, smithies, furnaces, workers dwellings up the valley to create settlements at Anaheilt, Scotstown and Ariundle. The output increased to about 600 tons per year and 500 people were employed by the mid 1700s, and in 1753 60 tons was used on the roof of Inverary Castle. The output declined from 1769 when the mines were only worked intermittently and mining had ceased by 1871.

Reworking of spoil and open cast mining for Barytes was conducted from the 1960s to 1980s to be used as a drilling lubricant

on North Sea oil rigs.

Mining was mainly conducted from galleries into the hillsides which also drained the workings, consequently there are few shafts and no engine house remains.

The most extensive remains are at Corrantee Mine that involves a 2 mile scenic walk up through forest and moorland from Polloch. There are the stone remains of a large wheel pit that operated the crusher with one of the iron crushing rollers and other broken iron artefacts still remaining. Nearby are the traces of the leat coming from the mine entrance further up the hill and possibly another wheel pit. The walls of a large building and a very small building remain and there is an extensive spoil heap.

There are remains at Fee Donald Mine which also involves a long pleasant walk, this time from the Ariundle Nature Reserve up Strontian Glen.

At the mine site there are extensive spoil heaps and the partial remains of a few walls of unknown use. The signs of a tramway about 300 metres long can be identified. A sparsely guarded shaft drops down to an adit and there are mine entrances into the hillside.

Beside the road from Strontian to Polloch the spoil heaps and adits of Bellsgrrove, Middleshope and Whitesmith mines may be seen and continued quarrying for roadstone.

The outer walls of Strontian Post Office, next to Loch Sunnart were part of the smelting house and the ingots were then transported by sea.

What was sadly lacking was a detailed guide to any of the sites as we have become so used to walking and exploring with the 'Bob and Ken' books that we have become spoilt!

**Bryan Collins,**  
31 Surrenden Road,  
Staplehurst,  
Kent.  
TN12 0LY

## PUBLICATIONS

### PRICE INCREASE

From the 28th of July the price of Society publications is being increased. The following are the prices that will apply, which are subject to the Members 10% discount from Willow Books + post and packing.

- Mine Accidents in the St Just District £4.99
- Drawings of Levant Whim £6.99
- Cornish Pumping and Rotative beam Engines £2.99
- Cornish Explosives £18.99
- Levant - A Champion Cornish Mine £5.99
- The Cunnack Manuscript £5.50
- Illustrated Catalogue of Pumping & Winding Engines £4.99
- Cornish Engines and the Men who Handled Them £2.50
- Michell - A Family of Cornish Engineers £3.50
- Trevithick - First in Steam 1801 - 2001 £3.99
- Trevithick Day CD £7.99
- Marconi at The Lizard £7.99
- News Letter Binders £4.00
- Levant leaflet £0.40
- Society Notepad £1.00
- Postcards (each) £0.20
- Set of eight postcards £1.25
- Society Newsletters £0.25
- Society Journals £6.00

This increase is necessary to alleviate an administrative problem but members are still entitled to their 10% discount on all publications ordered from Willow Books.

### BOOKSHOP AT AGM

At the 2001 AGM of the Society there will be an extensive range of publications and items of interest available to members. As

a rule, books are available on one or two occasions during the AGM weekend but, since this is a special year, books will be available all day on Saturday the 22nd of September. The Book Shop will be at the Falmouth College of Arts, as for the various lectures, in a Seminar Room immediately adjacent to the theatre. The room is quite separate and the bookshop will be open all day without going to the lecture theatre. Enter the building where the lectures take place and the bookshop will be immediately on your right. Also with the bookshop there will be a display of exhibits relevant to the conference.

With the new book service available to members if there is a particular publication you would like to collect on the AGM weekend order it from Willow Books, who will be there on the day and it will be there for you to collect.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Contact:

Willow Books,

Unit 2A,

United Downs Industrial Estate,

Saint Day,

Redruth,

Cornwall, TR16 5HY.

Tel: 01209 822011. Fax: 01209 822321

E-mail [anna@willowbooks.co.uk](mailto:anna@willowbooks.co.uk)

Web: <http://www.willowbooks.co.uk>.

Personal contact: Anna .

## HON. SECRETARY RETIRES

Tony Brooks will be retiring as Hon. Secretary and is stepping down from the Council at the AGM. He has been a Council Member for twenty years and his deep knowledge of Industrial Archaeology, well reasoned arguments and constructive contributions to the debates at Council, and his sense of humour, will be sorely missed.

Should any member like to stand for election to the Council, and/or wish to fill the vacant position of Hon. Secretary, please seek nomination before the AGM. See enclosed nomination forms.

## Dicon Nance 1909-2001



On May 11, 2001, Dicon Nance, one of the Trevithick Society's oldest and longest standing members, died at his home near Widecombe on Dartmoor at the age of 91. A member of the Society since it was first established and a founder member of its predecessor, The Cornish Engines Preservation Society, Dicon Nance was a lifelong scholar of Cornish mining history and the beam engines that had made that history possible.

Born in Nancledra, Cornwall, on October 17, 1909, Richard William Morton Nance was the younger son of Robert Morton Nance, best known locally as the Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd and for his pioneering work in reviving the Cornish language, but who was also an artist and one the foremost maritime historians of his day, founding the Society for Nautical Research. Dicon Nance's childhood drawings and ship models showed that he had inherited his fathers' interests and considerable practical skill. This, and the home tutoring of one Courtney Arthur Raleigh Radford, which perhaps encouraged a degree of individuality and originality but was the extent of his formal education, would set the stage for a career

as an accomplished craftsman, designer and model maker.

Dicon Nance's career spanned several continents and a wide variety of occupations. He first worked for Bernard Leach (whose daughter, Eleanor, he was later to marry), both at the fledgling Leach Pottery in St. Ives and at Dartington, in Devon, the present pottery of which he helped to build. At the St. Ives Pottery, he used his knowledge of Cornish mining practices to build, amongst other things, a small watermill for crushing minerals used in making glazes that bore a striking resemblance to a diminutive set of Cornish stamps. More significantly, he designed and built a 'kick' wheel that even Leach adopted in preference to the traditional oriental version. Later marketed throughout the world as the 'Leach Wheel', it continues to be manufactured to this day.

A conscientious-objector during the Second World War, he somehow managed to persuade the authorities that he would be doing his bit for the war effort by gathering seaweed for agricultural use from inaccessible coves around West Cornwall with an elaborate aerial ropeway and hoist of his own design. This labourious occupation introduced him to the local agricultural community and, in so doing, to surviving examples of the Cornish haywain and wagon. In characteristic fashion, these he carefully measured and, years later, used his measurements to make models for the Truro Museum.

During the latter part of the war, he developed other examples of alternative technology at Achimota College in what is now Ghana, working on a pottery project with Michael Cardew and Harry Davis, and, from 1956 to 1958, for the Thailand-UNESCO Fundamental Education Centre (TUFEC) in Ubon Ratchathani, where he introduced a wheel-barrow design that could be made with ease from the raw materials available in any Thai village. Returning to St. Ives following the war, he first joined his brother Robin's cabinet-





Dicon Nance (right) and Michael Leach (left) with the "Cripplesease", a steam traction engine they built as teenagers. Photo taken on the occasion of its donation to Camborne Technical College, Spring 1940.

making business, and later became an assistant to the sculptor, Barbara Hepworth, a position he held until his retirement in 1974.

Dicon Nance's interest in steam was already well established when, still in his teens, he and his future brother-in-law, Michael Leach, built a small steam traction engine entirely from scrap. Known affectionately as the 'Cripplesease', this engine was to take them on an epic return trip from Carbis Bay to the Lands End fueled with gorse faggots and stream water scavenged along the way. A generation later the engine was rediscovered and extravagantly restored in the belief that it was Trevithick's original 'Puffing Devil'. Dwarfed by its competition, the refurbished Cripplesease still makes appearances at traction-engine rallies today.

But it was the beam engine, and the Cornish engine in particular, that was to become his lifelong fascination. One freezing winter's day in his youth, this

interest compelled him to cycle from St. Ives to Camborne to visit Cooks' Kitchen pumping engine at South Crofty. The engineman was bemused and astonished that anyone should go to such lengths to witness his daily chores, especially since Dicon arrived totally unable to speak! Year's later, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1955, he brought his 3-year-old son, Damian, to South Crofty to witness the final stoke of Robinson's engine. Although this effort to share his enthusiasm would bear fruit in his son's later life, the decision to bring him almost proved disastrous. Having climbed up unseen under the engine's catch wings, Damian had to be snatched off the striking block seconds before the engine came indoors for one of her last strokes.

Fortunately, Dicon's quick action saved his son (and the engine) from what would otherwise have been a rather ignoble end!

Regular working hours during the post-war years allowed Dicon Nance to marry his interest in beam engines with his skill as a model-maker. Several examples of the meticulous models he produced during this period can be seen at the Truro and St. Ives museums, and his greatest model-making achievement – a magnificent 1/16th-scale model of Oppie's 80-inch engine commissioned by the Newcomen Society of America – forms the centrepiece of their museum in Exton, near Philadelphia. Photographs of this model revealed such precise detail as to deceive even his fellow enthusiast and beam-engine authority, the late Jack Trounson. In addition, he built numerous ship models. Although many were commissioned by boat owners, a fine collection of St. Ives fishing boats is currently on display in St. Leonard's Chapel on Smeaton's Pier, one of which is a model of the 'Godrevy', a St.



Dicon Nance's 1/16th scale model of Oppie's 80-inch engine (originally built for Poldice Mines in 1861-21 by Williams' Perran Foundry) on display at the museum of the Newcomen Society of America in Exton, Pennsylvania.

exploring the engine houses around Kit Hill just two months before his death.

While firmly rooted in Cornwall's past, many of Dicon Nance's interests were clearly ahead of their time. His solitary pursuits, often considered eccentric in his day, are now given worthy titles such as mining history, industrial archeology and alternative technology. An unassuming but profoundly thoughtful man and a perfectionist in all his work, he offered a consistent, quiet example and possessed a delightful sense of humour that endeared him to many that scarcely even knew him.

Following a simple ceremony conducted by his family, Dicon Nance was buried at Zennor Church where he joins his father and his elder brother Robin. Predeceased by his wife Eleanor (née Leach) and his eldest son Benjamin, he is survived by his partner, Jessamine Kendall; his sister, Phoebe Procter; by two sons, Damian and Jonathan; and by three grandchildren, André, Sarah and Christopher.

**Damian Nance**  
**Jenny Nance**

Ives pilchard boat that, as a young man, he single-handedly refitted and restored to her original rig. His model of a West Country schooner also hangs in memory of his brother-in-law, Bill Procter and others lost at sea, in Zennor Church.

On moving to Dartmoor following his retirement, he turned his attention to the mines of South Devon. He was amongst the first to volunteer his services in the restoration of Kelly Mine near Bovey Tracey, and took upon himself the task of surveying the little-known engine houses of the once-extensive copper and silver-lead mines that border the moor; activities he continued until well into his eighties. Indeed, he was out in the pouring rain

## TREVITHICK 2001 PROJECT

The Camborne Road Locomotive will have been seen at a surprising number of venues by the end of this year, many of which have been arranged at very short notice. This is despite the loss of several important events, due to the Foot and Mouth Outbreak such as the St. Agnes Traction Engine Rally.

The replica has an important educational role to play and it was especially pleasing for it to take part in an event at Camborne School on 12th July, where groups of school children were shown the workings of the engine and taught something about its significance.

A fun day was had at RAF Portreath where a ladies driving challenge raised £11,000 for the Marie Curie appeal. A wide range of vehicles were used in the challenge including JCBs, buses, road sweepers and of course the predecessor of them all.

RNAS Culdrose welcomed the completed engine at their Air Day on 18th July, having made components for its construction. There the engine was able to steam up and down within an enclosed area to the delight of the assembled masses, between two helicopter hangars.

The replica was able to appear in the main street of St. Austell during White Gold Week thanks to lmerys for funding the

transportation of the engine (see front cover).

When the engine was being unloaded from the low-loader a shop manager expressed his concern that the smoke from the chimney might set off the fire alarms on his premises. So it was decided not to steam the engine. On hearing that, the very helpful Traffic Warden in the town went out of his way to find another location in the street where there were no such concerns. He even helped to arrange a tow to the new location. There the engine was operated as a static exhibit and the crew were kept very busy talking to the multitude of shoppers that took time to marvel. It was remarkable how many people came forth with cameras and just how many people knew about the replica, having seen it on television or in the newspapers. Even a direct descendent of Cap'n Dick came forward and made herself known to the crew.

From St. Austell the engine was transported to the Royal Cornwall Show Ground where it took part in a vintage vehicle rally organised by Rotary Wheels.

The Boconnoc Rally was a three-day event. The first day was a wash-out with very few visitors braving the elements to see the engines on show. Saturday saw an abatement in the inclement weather, and although drizzle kept drifting across the site, it was a much more successful day. The disappointment of the previous two days was soon forgotten on the Sunday when the sun shone and all was resplendent. The Camborne Road Locomotive was parked on the drive in front of Boconnoc House, which was a wonderful setting. Most of the time it





factory in Camborne where it was built. Again we must thank CompAir UK for their continued support of the project which has proven invaluable.

Transport at a cost that is affordable for most charitable events in Cornwall is a problem that the Society seeks to solve. Currently, a lorry with a low loader has to be hired to transport the engine to most events and the cost involved can be prohibitive. To help overcome this, it is intended that a specially designed trailer that can be towed behind a tractor will be procured. Once this comes into service the transport costs will be considerably reduced and more events within a reasonable distance of Camborne will be able to have the replica.

The engine still has an embargo on travelling outside Cornwall, due to the regulations that accompanied the European funding received by the Project. This scuppered its appearance at Portsmouth, as a guest of the Royal Navy, for the Tall Ships festivities. It is hoped that the benefits to Cornwall in having the engine appear at such events will one day be appreciated and the interpretation of those rules suitably relaxed in the future.

We will be staging a re-enactment of the Camborne Hill Run on Christmas Eve, its actual bicentenary, and this is being organised in conjunction with the West of England Traction Engine Society. This is in the early planning stages and we would

#### **NEW MANAGEMENT FOR GEEVOR**

The Trevithick Trust will be relinquishing the management of Geevor from 1st October 2001. The mine is owned by Cornwall County Council who have appointed Heritage Projects to manage the site from that date. Although an "up country" company the hands-on management will comprise a syndicate of local people, some of whom were at Geevor with the Trevithick Trust.

Society Council members Clive Carter, Pete Joseph and Kingsley Rickard recently met with representatives of the new team to appraise the situation and to offer the Society's help if required. It was decided that the Society artefacts currently on display will stay at Geevor and the relevant agreement will be signed prior to the take-over date. It has also been agreed that members shall continue to enjoy free entry on production of their programme card. The Society wishes the new managers well in their future endeavours and looks forward to a long and happy relationship.

The changes at Geevor do not affect Levant, which is owned by the National Trust and will continue to be administered by the Trevithick Trust.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Trevithick - First in Steam 1801-2001* by Colin French and Phil Hosken. Published by the Trevithick Society 2001. 32 pp, £3.99 ISBN 0 904040 51 8

This is a book of three parts. The first is a brief uncritical introduction to the life and achievements of arguably Cornwall's greatest engineer and inventor. The authors lead us through Richard Trevithick's early years at the end of the 18th Century as a schoolchild and then as a young mines engineer. In his early 20's he successfully pioneered the use of high pressure steam and the non-condensing engine. Here was the big breakthrough that would, in time drive much of the world's industry, trains and ships and, of great interest to us, the world's first "car".

The second chapter, "Going up Camborne Hill", concentrates on Trevithick's Camborne road locomotive and the famous trip up Camborne Hill. There is the argument as to exactly which is Camborne Hill. Some say Beacon Hill, but the consensus is that it probably was Fore Street. It matters not, though as someone has pointed out if it was Beacon Hill "they would have never made it over the railway crossing".

The final chapter is a record of the building of the replica of the Camborne road locomotive by the Trevithick Society, a project that the authors were in no small way involved. This was a complex project both to fund and to manage. Whilst this is the story of the project, it is really a story about people - all those people, volunteers and paid, whose drive, energy, enthusiasm and hard work made the whole thing possible. This book perhaps goes a small way towards recognising their efforts. Fittingly (no pun intended), the final erection took place at the CompAir Holman factory in Camborne whose bicentenary is also in 2001.

This book was published just before Trevithick Day, which was on the 28th April 2001, where the replica was to have its first public outing. Problems beyond the team's control prevented a full run through the town. However on the following day the

replica was driven successfully up Camborne Hill under its own steam—just!

This book is not stuffed with engineering detail, and, with a sense of humour running through it, is eminently readable. It is well illustrated with numerous plates and contemporary drawings. For those who wish to learn more about Richard Trevithick there is a really useful list of further reading at the end.

Everybody should have one!

### AWB

A CD-ROM version of the book has also been produced costing £7.99. This includes all the text, photographs and illustrations from the book. The CD-ROM format allows much more to be reproduced than the printed page. So there is video footage and some music (a rendition of Going up Camborne Hill) included as well as many more photographs (all the modern ones are in colour).

The CD-ROM has four main sections.

- Richard Trevithick 1771-1833
- Trevithick 2001 Project
- Trevithick Society
- Trevithick celebrations 2001

The first is a potted history of RT and the Camborne Road Locomotive. The second section deals with the building of the replica. The third is a copy of the Trevithick Society Website, and the final section deals the Trevithick Weekend and Princess Anne's visit. It also includes video footage of the replica on Trevithick Day taken by Rod Caldwell from Australia and innumerable photographs submitted by members of the Society.

The CD-ROM uses Microsoft Internet Explorer or an equivalent Internet Browser to read and display the contents.

An earlier version of this CD-ROM went on sale on Trevithick Day and in consequence does not include the section about the Trevithick Weekend and the video footage. If any member, who bought this first version, would like it updated, please return their CD-ROM to Colin French (see

address on back page of Newsletter).

*The Toll-houses of Cornwall* by Patrick Taylor. Publishers: Federation of Old Cornwall Societies, pp.80 paperback. £7.95.

This lavishly illustrated book, there are nearly eighty photographs and other illustrations in it, should be of interest to all fascinated by Cornish history. Mr Taylor explains the development of the turnpike system during the early modern period, due to the need to finance better highways for easier travel. The 18th century introduction of trust-built toll houses by non-profit making trusts, for the public good and to help commerce is also covered. The jewels in the crown in this book are the many wonderful photographs of toll houses throughout Cornwall. Some we see every day, some are in obscure places and some are barely recognisable to the uninformed, but they are there to remind us of our history, and long, may they remain.

The nice little photograph of the toll house at Pool, wantonly destroyed by the authorities of Cornwall College, serves to remind us that all of these relics are in danger to some extent, due to the ignorance and irresponsibility of such organisations. Patrick Taylor has done a great service to us in gathering this information and explaining it in a readable and informative way. Well worth reading.

## **JAB**

*Exploring Cornish Mines, Volume 5*, by Kenneth Brown and Bob Acton. Landfall Publications. £8.25.

This, the final volume in the series, provides five guided tours across the breadth of Cornwall: Okel Tor Mine, Calstock; The Mines of Lockett, Wheal Peevor and its neighbours; St. Ives Consolidated Mines; and St. Just United & Cape Cornwall. These are followed by a chapter giving revisions and corrections to the previous volumes and an index to the whole series.

As expected the layout of this book is very similar to the other volumes with each walk mapped out and described in meticulous detail explaining the extant features seen

en route and bringing many to life by anecdotes or relating them to notes of historical incidents. This is accompanied by plenty of photographs, the occasional illustration and inset boxes which encapsulate some of the mine's history. The photographs are a mixture of old and modern and serve to help the reader interpret the features on view and to visualise what the mine was like when in full production. In this respect the photographs from St. Just United and Cape Cornwall are most useful, for although that area abounds with industrial archaeological remains it consists mainly of the less conspicuous structures that are usually missed in the clamour to look at engine houses, and yet to the Industrial Archaeologist it is precisely those features that are the most valuable as pointers to the past operations.

The five sites chosen are perhaps less well known and less visited than those dealt with in earlier volumes, and yet there is plenty for people to see. Wheal Peevor, for example, has much to commend itself to visitors, especially as it has not been sanitised by derelict land reclamation. As the authors point out, it is a prime site for sensitive restoration. However, it would be a real tragedy if it went the way of the mines along the Great Flat Lode.

The standard of production set by the previous volumes has been surpassed and like its predecessors will no doubt prove a cherished addition to the library of those that enjoy exploring Cornish mines.

## **CNF**

*The Kalmeter Journal. The journal of a visit to Cornwall, Devon and Somerset in 1724-25.* Translated and edited by Justin Brook. Twelveheads Press. 80 pages, 19 illustrations. ISBN 0 9540317 0 9. Hard back £19.50.

Henric Kalmeter was a native of Sweden who spent four years in the United Kingdom travelling widely and gathering detailed information about mining and industrial processes and organisation. These observations were recorded in his journal and used to provide practical advice to the Department of Mines and others in

Sweden.

The two months he spent in the South West form the bulk of this book and despite having only limited time at any one mining district, he managed to glean a surprising amount of valuable snippets that provide a remarkable insight into the local economy, including such facets as pilchard and herring fishing at St. Ives and the Delabole slate quarries. It is, however, his accounts of the state of mining and the working conditions he saw that are the most perceptive and reveal his true interest. He recorded such things as the names of mines (including the English meaning of their Cornish names in several cases), the number of people working, the amount and type of ore produced, how the mines were drained and the various costs involved; such as 25s for the rag and chain pump men at Balnoon, whereas the miners only received 18s a month.

There is a separate section in the book entitled "On the working of tin mines and the smelting of tin in Cornwall" which is a well considered summation and overview of the whole industry and its organisation.

Kalmeter was evidently very good at extracting information in a remarkably short space of time and clearly had the right connections to know where to go and who to speak to, and yet nagging doubts creep in when reading the text as to its accuracy or the extent to which he was shown what people wanted him to see. Certainly it is far more informed and informative than many subsequent traveller's journals and probably better than a *Mining Journal* prospectus. Even so, without corroboration, the observations from such a fleeting visit should be treated with caution.

Nevertheless, this is an extremely important piece of historical literature which undoubtedly fills many gaps in knowledge about the state of the evolving industries at this relatively little-known period of the eighteenth century.

Justin Brooke has shown considerable skill in translating and editing this journal for the text has a clear, succinct, and easily understood style and the standardisation of the spelling of place names and some of the terminology used certainly helps orientate the reader. It is truly fascinating!

## CNF

The launch of Alan Renton's new book on the history of fog signals was held at the Lizard Lighthouse on June 11th. A beautiful day with startlingly clear visibility did not prevent the highlight of the event from occurring—the sounding of the fog signal!

The book, *Lost Sounds*, presents the story of the development and implementation of fog signal machinery at lighthouses around the UK coast, from the elemental guns and

### LOST SOUNDS BOOK LAUNCH

bells in the early nineteenth century to the huge compressed air operated sirens and diaphones which were often in service for up to three or four generations. Each chapter concentrates on the developments at a particular lighthouse to cover the historical, philanthropic and scientific story of how the signals came about, how they worked and what they sounded like.

At the launch, Stuart Smith of the Trevithick Trust, introduced the author to the invited guests who then spoke about the book and how he came to write it, and then described the Lizard engine room and its fog signal history. Since automation in 1998 the Lizard has had a small electric emitter, but the siren in the engine room had been in service since the early 1900s. The former Principal Keeper, Eddie Matthews, then started up the fifty-year old engines and invited everyone outside to hear the old siren—an unusual but thrilling experience!

*Lost Sounds*, Whittle Publishing, Caithness. 210 pages, 16 illustrations, 55 photos. ISBN 1 870325 83 4. £16.95

# TREVITHICK SOCIETY EVENTS AND CONTACTS

**SEPT 22st—23rd —SE-TECH 2001 & AGM**

**SEPT 23rd—Parkandillick in operation**

**OCT 6th—Stannon Clay Pit —see editorial**

**OCT 19th—CSM**

*Cornish Underground Scenes.* By Paul Deakin.

**OCT 26th—East Cornwall**

*Devon Great Consols Mine, an example of Victorian enterprise.* By Dr. John Goodridge.

*Meetings are held in the Lecture Theatre,  
Camborne School of Mines at 7pm.*

*East Cornwall Branch meetings will be held  
at the Public Hall Complex, Liskeard at 7.30pm.*

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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.*

### Subscriptions 2001:-

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Overseas members	£18
Corporate members	£18
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