

NEWSLETTER 144 JULY 2009



Established 1935

THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY



Reg. Charity No. 246586

The Puffing Devil drives through Minions as part of the Phoenix 100 celebrations. Mark Rivron driving and John Woodward steering.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

We are frequently told we are living in changing times: we are. The present recession will affect us all in some way; for many it will dramatically change their way of life.

There hasn't been a lot of change within this Society during the past decade, we've tended to consolidate what we do best, do more of it and enjoy the plaudits for our achievements. So where do we look for change that affects this Society and its membership?

The greatest change must be in communications and relationships. The rise of the digital age during the past ten years is said to have brought people together, made new acquaintances and exchanged information. Certainly the flow of world-wide enquiries brings an exchange of merry banter about interests and families with people we are unlikely ever to meet.

Many of our members, who lived in the age of the pen nib and typewriter ribbon, have taken to Internet Explorer and Outlook Express with alacrity. One has to ask whether Facebook and Twitter can be far behind. This increase in communication reveals other, more disturbing facets of human behaviour.

Kingsley Rickard and I returned well pleased after scouring The Lizard peninsula prior to the AGM Weekend in May. We'd found an excellent, first-class hotel with very reasonable prices for the annual dinner, been invited to enjoy the hospitality and experiences of BT FutureWorld at Goonhilly, had an eminent speaker in the form of a curator from the Science Museum and a number of good guided tours. The response, by way of attendance at the weekend, was disappointing. George Wilson, who handled the arrangements, explained what happened elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have to decide what to do in the future. The May weekend is built around the AGM as a social event for the membership and we are delighted to meet those who turn up but a five percent attendance does not warrant the volunteer time and expense. Some organisations dispense with the formal dinner in favour of a self-service buffet but the financial savings are minimal. The problem seems to lie with the acceptance of lonely digital communication as a replacement for conviviality.

Please drop a line to George, e-mail if you must, tell him what you think we should do in the future and whether you are likely to attend. Your response really matters to the future operation of the Society. Thank you.

Philip M. Hosken

EDITORIAL

Due to the volume of material provided for this newsletter several items have been deferred to the next issue. I hope the affected authors will not be too disappointed.

Colin French

Copy date for next newsletter: September 29th



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Follow up to the mystery dispenser at Kilkhampton.

Two elderly parishioners remembered; Mrs. C. Bartrop, nee Trewin, from a nearby garage and Richard Wickett whom I quote :- "I had just bought a second-hand Austin Tourer when I reached 17 years in 1928.

Mr. and Mrs. Tom Westaway were managers of the London Inn then. The machine was a petrol pump pushed out every morning, serving BP. The petrol then was a shilling a gallon and if I bought 3 gallons Mrs. Westaway (who always served) gave me a bar of chocolate". The Westaways left Kilkhampton in 1930 for Holsworthy. It's possible the 2 gauges portrayed showed petrol in the tank and quantity dispensed.

Thank you for placing original item.

R. Mike. Heard.

The following two contributions have been received concerning the W.H. Fray's Engineer's Booklet, which was mentioned in the last newsletter (No. 143).

Dear Editor,

When I was a student in Cornwall in 1944-45, I lodged at 57, Church View Road, Tuckingmill. The next door neighbour to the west (at No.55?) was one Sidney Fray, a bachelor who lived above or with a housekeeper. He worked as a watchman at Bickford Smith's fuse factory.

I understood that he had been injured physically and/or mentally by a fire at Bickford Smith's. There might be mention of him in an account of the fire in the West Briton, but I do not know when the fire occurred.

Also there was probably an obituary notice as the West Briton used to publish such on quite humble people. Sidney Fray probably died in the early

1950s. I think he may have been employed in some technical capacity before the fire. I encountered him once in one or other of the pumping houses at South Crofty, which I used to haunt.

I think it is highly probable that his father was in the employ of Bickford Smith's or the Tuckingmill Foundry.

Rodney Law,
27 Wolsey Road,
Ashford,
Middlesex. TW15 2RA.

The census records for William H Fray:

1911 Age 67, Edward Street, Tuckingmill,
Wife Mary Jane, Mechanical
Engineer in Fuse Works

1901 Age 57, Edward Street, Tuckingmill,
Wife Mary Jane, Mechanical Engineer

1891 (As Henry) Age 48, Edward Street,
Camborne, Wife Mary Jane,
Fitter (same children as in 1901)

1881 Age 39, Edward St, Tuckingmill, Wife
Mary J, General Engineer at
Fuze Works

1871 Age 29, Pendarvis Street, Tuckingmill,
son of Richard and Mary,
Machinist at Fuze Factory

1861 (As Frey) Age 19, Pendarves Street,
Tuckingmill, son of Richard
and Mary, "Something" Maker (Father
Safety Fuse Manufacturer)

1851, Age 9, Pendarves Street, Tuckingmill,
son of Richard and Mary,
Scholar (Father Safety Fuze Factor)

Brian Jones

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I would like to open by recording the thanks of this Society to Steve Farnall and the staff here at BT Future World for their kind, generous hospitality and for allowing us the use of their outstanding facility for this meeting and the lecture last night. We have all had a wonderful time here today and have some great memories.

I am happy to recall another year in which your Society has been able to accomplish its aims and obligations. I stressed, in my report last year, that this Society was close to administrative meltdown and urgently required people to fill several vacancies on its council. I am pleased to advise you that George Wilson stepped forward to become our Secretary and Graham Thorne has filled the important vacancy left by the retirement of Vernon Baldry as Publications Secretary.

The dedicated service of these two members during their first year in office does not obviate the desperate situation within your Society. At a time when we need to look to the future we are barely able to manage the present. The council is now composed entirely of people who have some responsibility for the operation of the Society. This is not a pleasant or desirable situation. It frightens others from joining the council because they fear that they may be put to work. It also means that we now have none of those important members 'without portfolio' who are able to contribute to the general debate.

The council will welcome members 'without portfolio' to attend its meetings. Of course, we must not overlook the fact that we still urgently need secretaries for such duties as the Programme, the AGM, council minutes and so on. These jobs are currently filled by volunteers who would be better able to undertake their other responsibilities if they were not being so distracted. To give you an example, I am only here because I do a number of subsidiary jobs that enable our officers to undertake their work; I should

have stepped down years ago.

One area of success where your Society has recovered former ground during the past year has been in East Cornwall. We are grateful for the enthusiastic work of John and Cheryl Manley who have seized opportunities to attract attention to the Society and promote its work. During the year there have been lectures in St Germans, Tavistock, Liskeard and Callington. The Manleys have led the Society's involvement in preparations for the centenary celebrations at the Phoenix Mine on Bodmin Moor which will take place on the 10th June. This will be preceded by a number of lectures in local schools.

Last year the Society attended Launceston Steam Fair and Bude Canal & Gurney Day. We have planned to attend extended versions of these events this year. We will also be at Delabole and other venues.

Last year I mentioned that we had just returned from the first Trevithick Industrial Dartford Celebration and we subsequently attended the first Trevithick 200 Weekend at Bridgnorth. I am pleased to inform you that both of these successful events based on the activities of Richard Trevithick some 200-years-ago were well-attended, organised by volunteers and are being repeated this year. I like to think of such events as extensions of the work undertaken in Camborne by those who built our 1801 replica and the organisers of Camborne Trevithick Day.

At Trevithick Day in Camborne last month I met a gentleman who thought it would be a good idea to follow in the footsteps of Trevithick and visit the mine at Cerro de Pasco in Peru and recover a piece of the original machinery for exhibition in Bridgnorth, where it was made. Put Experiences in Cerro de Pasco into Google or open

http://gosouthamerica.about.com/od/perucerrodepasco/a/CerrodePasco_2.htm

Geoff Smith-Grogan and I attended different parts of the Early Rail Conference at University College London

and the National Railway Museum, York. One result has been making the acquaintance of John Liffen of the Science Museum in South Kensington. As you know, John kindly consented to deliver last night's interesting lecture to the Society here at Goonhilly and we thank him for joining us this weekend.

The celebrations at Bridgnorth and by the Early Rail Society at the UCL ably recalled Trevithick's 1808 'Catch-me-who-can' locomotive, the world's first fare paying passenger railway.

The Society is working closely with the Association for Industrial Archaeology to organise its conference in Cornwall in 2010. It will also provide a Trevithick related event and a lecture for the Transport Trust's AGM weekend at Falmouth this summer.

Bearing in mind the Society's status as an educational charity, members have undertaken a considerable number of lectures during the year; many have been outside of Cornwall and more are planned for Bristol, Alton in Hampshire and Rotherhithe. Several of those in Cornwall have been in schools, one being to a group of over 300 primary school children. A recent event has involved a two hour oral history cycle ride around Hayle, something for which we are only marginally fit.

This would be a good time to repeat our annual thanks to Kingsley Rickard for fielding so many of the enquiries received by this Society and for being occupied fulltime on Society affairs.

Our curatorial activities have been ably led by Pete Joseph who has continued to accumulate artefacts relevant to Cornwall's industrial archaeology without really knowing where to put them. He has embarked on the digitising of the remarkable Mining Index compiled throughout his life by the late Justin Brooke; something he says will take him over the next eight years so long as he is not interrupted.

Highlights of the curatorial year have been a return visit to reveal and

survey the silver lead Hope Mine on Petit Sark where Pete and Kingsley were joined on this occasion by Sue Maunder. The visits to Sark have been made possible by the generous assistance of David and Susan Synnott who have enthusiastically taken part in the work.



Sue Maunder conducting survey on Petit Sark.



Kingsley, Pete, John, Sue & Cheryl at Trelubbus.

Further research and survey work has been carried out during several visits to an old tin stream works at Trelubbus, near Helston. This is an intriguing site that has attracted a lot of attention and the final conclusions have yet to be drawn.

A final solution has yet to be found for the equipment at Tor Down

Quarry. The retrieval of the Climax drill sharpener from the quarry has recently been recorded in the newsletter. This is a suitable moment to mention a group that has not previously appeared in these reports but is deserving of your thanks. Our Heavyweight Retrieval Gang is composed of Kingsley, Pete Joseph, Huw Rowe and Ron Thompson who kindly drives his lorry with its lifting gear all over the place on behalf of the Society.

A slight departure from our usual materials has been the preservation of the cobbler's shop from Carharrack. The Society has taken possession of this untouched, period workplace and transferred it lock, stock, segs and stick-on-soles to Dairyland at Newquay under a licensing agreement. This item illustrates the catholic nature of the Society's interest and concern for Cornish industry.

This should be the moment to tell you of our progress towards providing accommodation for our increasing inventory of artefacts. I told you last year of the developers who had obtained planning consent for a development at Trevu in Camborne, one that included an area for local heritage assigned to this Society and possibly a tourist information office. In the prophetic statement last May I suggested that progress would depend upon the continuing success of the housing market. You will not be surprised to learn that there has been little progress in that area. I have learnt this week that the costs of carrying out archaeological investigations together with the repairs to certain buildings on the site, in accordance with their status within the World Heritage Site, now make the project unviable. However, the developers are in negotiations with a housing association that is able to access funding from the government to complete the project. The existing plans, incorporating an area for this Society, are included as a part of those negotiations.

I am able to pass on one good bit of news regarding accommodation. I have learnt this week that, during its first month in existence, the new Cornwall Council has

completed the purchase of King Edward Mine after many years of negotiations by the former Kerrier District Council. Just what this will mean for the future of the mine will be revealed in due course and we will support plans for its rosy future.

This is a good moment to mention the Friends of King Edward Mine who have been accumulating a little money and waiting in the wings for the day when they can exercise their enthusiasm for developments at the mine.

A recent enquiry to the local regeneration company concerning the inclusion of Cornwall's industrial archaeology as a feature of its regeneration has just brought a reply.

You will have admired this year's Society journal and we have been so pleased with its content and appearance that it has been entered for two highly competitive publishing competitions. Our thanks are due to Owen Baker for his editorial expertise and Pete Joseph for his compilation.

Our thanks are again due to Colin French for another year of his devoted work on the newsletter. Have you noticed how each year now has a theme colour?

While it is not easy to maintain membership levels in these difficult times we should look on the positive side and I can tell you that we have received twenty-one new members during the year. Our thanks are due to Sue Maunder for her diligent attention to the essential tasks of keeping the complex records up to date and collecting the subscriptions. As the anchor for over 500 members this post requires tact and understanding. Sue has kindly provided full membership figures at the end of this report. I must draw your attention to one particular detail; this year John Dickinson celebrates fifty years as an active member of this Society.

For yet another year Stephen Thomas has been the Society's treasurer. As our activities increase, so do his responsibilities and our thanks are due to him for his frequently unnoticed

professional services, always so graciously provided. We have not got one, but if there was ever a good reason for the Society to strike a long service medal, it would be to give it to Stephen.

With his, 'Well, if you can't find anyone else, I'll have a go at it,' approach to the post of secretary, George Wilson has truly taken his responsibilities to heart and carried out two major tasks in addition to his routine Society work this year. With Sue Maunder and Owen Baker he has led the preparation of our revised Constitution in accordance with the new guidelines of the Charity Commissioners. The team have also examined our insurance policies to ensure we can implement the requirements of the new Constitution. These have been onerous tasks involving several meetings over many months and we thank him and his team for their joint efforts in these matters.

Your council is aware of ever-changing legal obligations and guidelines and will endeavour to keep ahead of the challenges they present. **NB. Some motor insurance companies wish to know if their clients are participating in voluntary activities. Members who use their vehicles in connection with the Society's activities are advised to contact their insurers in this respect. I have not noticed that this involves an increase in premium.**

The other 'new boy' on the council is Graham Thorne who decided to offer his services as Publications Secretary whilst helping at Trevithick 200 in Bridgnorth last year. He realised that he had a hard act to follow in the form of the previous secretary, Vernon Baldry, and it is a pity that he cannot be here today to hear our praise of the way in which he has risen to the tasks before him. His full report is attached to this and I will single out the republication of *The Harveys of Hayle* by the late Edmund Vale. In this the Society is grateful to his son Robert for assigning all rights in connection with the book, to those who are preparing the supplementary pages to update the original text and to

Pete Joseph for his patient compilation of the book.

I have been invited to address a council meeting of the Cornwall Heritage Trust next week and their chairman has been invited to address us in July.

The Puffin' Devil has had another eventful year with a special appearance at Bridgnorth. Our thanks are due to John Woodward and his crew. During the winter they have carried out maintenance work on the furnace and given the locomotive a fresh coat of paint. Many remarked how well it was running on Trevithick Day, a tribute to the team and its original designer, Richard Trevithick. It is planned to appear at the Phoenix 100 celebrations and Bude Canal & Gurney Day this year.

In a report like this, one tends to look back over a year's activity; I would like to assure you that your council is not always that retrospective. During recent meetings it has been looking at the future of the Society in this ever-changing world and realising that we cannot continue to stand still, comfortably doing as we have for years with me providing these self-congratulatory reports at each AGM. If we stand still we are effectively going backwards.

We have been discussing how to make best use of our vast curatorial inventory of Cornwall's industrial archaeology and the skills we have as individuals. We must find ways of sharing these resources with those who are interested and awakening interest in those who know little or nothing about it. This is where we seek the advice and input of our members. We are currently thinking of widening our web base to make the archives accessible and planning with educational and World Heritage officials a series of lectures throughout the age spectrum.

The awakening in government circles of the need for engineering skills makes the input of this Society imperative in Cornwall. In the past couple of months we have developed links with the Institution of Engineering & Technology, a well-known body created to advance

learning in all forms of engineering. This will all take a great deal of thought and discussion with other parties and we seek all the assistance we can get.

You may remember some talk a few years ago, following the closure of the CompAir-Holman factory, of a proposed community video made in Camborne and based on the tremendous archive of film we rescued at the time. Following two phone calls I received this Thursday I can tell that it is on again; the people concerned are approaching us instead of us trying to interest them. That is always a good sign and we will put further details in the newsletter. This is an example of yet another project that will require a lot of attention, skills we probably do not have, and help we will need from our members. I am sure the finished DVDs will be of social significance, a major historical contribution to Cornwall's industrial archaeology and an excellent teaching resource.

Vernon Baldry is compiling all our thoughts as the basis of a Business Plan by the end of this year. He, and the rest of us, will appreciate all the help we can get from our membership and elsewhere.

The plan is going to take a great deal of thought and discussion. That requires time and many people. Some of this can be achieved by those who have already started the ball rolling, but I stress, as I did when I opened this report, that we need people. The future planning of this Society will probably require someone with the necessary skills from outside our council to join us. We look to the membership for ideas.

I thank you for allowing me to take your time.

Philip M Hosken

Chairman, 16th May 2009.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY ANNUAL REPORT

Key Points:

- John Dickinson - member D001 joined nearly 50 years ago - in August 1959.
- 21 new members have joined in the last year.
- 36 non-renewals or resignations.

The details of membership are currently:

- 11 members overseas - in Eire, Spain, USA, Australia, Japan, Brazil & S Africa.
- 14 Life or Honorary members.
- 321 Individuals.
- 86 Couples.
- 12 Libraries or Museums subscribe and we exchange publications with 6 other societies.

In all over 500 people and 18 groups are members or have regular contact with us.

Over 50% of our members live Cornwall or Devon, well over half of these in the western half of Cornwall.

Sue Maunder

PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY ANNUAL REPORT

It was at the splendid Trevithick 200 celebrations at Bridgnorth last summer that I took the decision to offer myself as the Society's Publications Secretary. I have not had cause to regret that offer – yet! As I have said elsewhere, my decision was much influenced by the knowledge that I was taking over from a high quality act in Vernon Baldry.

Over the last year the Society has published a number of new books. May 2008 saw *Richard Trevithick: The Quiz Book*, compiled by Mastermind contestant Peter Richardson and containing no fewer than 659 questions on Trevithick. In early 2009 we brought out a new impression of J H Trounson's, *Cornish Engines and the Men who Handled Them*. This remains a steady seller over forty years after Mr. Trounson delivered the lecture on which it is based, a tribute to both author and content. The cover of the new impression is graced by a superb 1952 colour photograph of Robinson's engine at work, courtesy of our President, Bryan Earl.

We were also pleased in April 2009 to publish Claire Leith's memoir of her grandfather, Francis Oats, *Tin and Diamonds: A fortune in the making*. Oats, who went from working at Balleswidden, aged 14, to Chairman of De Beers and a member of the Cape Colony Parliament, was a pivotal figure in the mining history of St. Just and South Africa.

What of our plans for the future? Vernon's reprint of *Harvey's 1884 Catalogue* has been a great success. A new edition is with our printers and will be on sale later this summer. The previous printing, based on a copy at the Cornwall Record Office, lacked two pages missing from the original. We have now sourced these from another copy. A new cover has been designed modelled on that of our current major project, a new edition of *The Harveys of Hayle* by Edmund Vale. This was published by Bradford Barton, Truro in 1966; there were only 1,000 copies and second hand copies fetch high prices. The new edition, with some additional material should be published in October. There is a large format paperback edition and a limited hardback edition of 100 copies. I urge Members who are interested in the latter to register an interest now. I must record here the generosity of Edmund Vale's son, Robert, in making this new edition possible.

Alongside our Harvey projects, we need to keep a number of our best

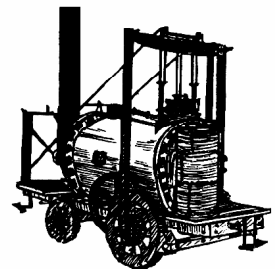
sellers in print, particularly those relating to specific sites, such as Levant and Lizard Radio. The sad and final demise of the Holman presence in Camborne will in due course be reflected in a new edition of the late Clive Carter's history of that company. We also have on the stocks a new history of Botallack, one which majors for the first time on the unsuccessful early 20th century re-working and what remains on the ground, which dates mainly from that period.

We have also reduced prices on some of our older publications. These include, *Michell: A Family of Cornish Engineers*, *The Cunnack Manuscript* and our Holman and Climax reprints. Society Journals for 2007 and earlier are also available at a discount to complete gaps in your collections. Details of these can be found on the Society website.

The September 2010 Association of Industrial Archaeology Conference in Cornwall will be an opportunity to show – and hopefully sell – our books to a new and informed clientele. I am always happy to discuss current or potential publications and can be contacted on 01621 892896 or at thornes@totham22.freeserve.co.uk

Finally I must again thank the two people who have made my early days in office significantly easier – Vernon Baldry for his patient handover of matters in such good order and Pete Joseph for his practical input and valuable advice, which contribute so much to the quality of our publications.

Graham Thorne



KING EDWARD MINE

The annual Open Day was staged on April 26th and we did have fears concerning the weather as the previous few days had seen considerable rainfall. We were lucky, the day kept dry and the crowds kept coming such that we had some one thousand six hundred souls through the gate setting a new record. The usual mix of entertainment, steam, stationary engines, old vehicles, music and, of course, our own mineral processing machinery in operation kept everyone happy. The car park field tends to hang very wet due to an underlying layer of clay and vehicles started to sink and leave deep ruts so to help solve the problem we ordered a load of wood chips to spread in the appropriate places. When this arrived it provided an unscheduled piece of entertainment as the truck got stuck in the middle of the field and had to be pulled out by tractor.

Thanks to all members who provided help at the event.

We have now received the news we have been waiting for – K.E.M. has now passed into public ownership. Readers will know that Camborne School of Mines leased the property from the Pendarves Estate for over a century. The very recent history has been complicated with the setting up of the museum, C.S.M. giving up their lease and the Trevithick Trust running the museum for a while until their dissolution. The local district council pondered for some while whether to purchase it, eventually deciding in favour, but not being able to complete the complicated legal process before their demise on 31st. March 2009. The problem then passed to the new unitary authority, Cornwall Council, which has recently taken possession. We now have to wait and see how we will fit into the new larger organisation and look forward to working with them.

K.J.T.R.

TREVITHICK DAY

The day dawned with heavy rain and leaden skies, however, the rain eased at about 6-30am and when the show crew arrived in Camborne town centre at 7am they had a brief dry spell in which they were able to erect the tent and display. Although showers continued through the day the two dances and the steam parade took place in the dry. Interest at the tent was fairly brisk but crowds were noticeably down on normal, no doubt due to the weather. Late afternoon brought about a very strong breeze necessitating the crew holding onto the tent and making conditions a touch uncomfortable so the displays were packed away earlier than normal.

Many thanks to helpers at the event – Phil. Hosken, Lincoln James, Pete Joseph, Dave Mann, Sue Maunder, Barbara Tripp and George Wilson.

K.J.T.R.

LAUNCESTON STEAM RALLY 23/24/35 MAY

As in the last couple of years, to help with our representation in East Cornwall, the tent and display were at the showground. The rally has, in the past, been held at Launceston rugby ground but this year moved to a larger site at Five Lanes just west of Launceston and adjacent to the A30 trunk road, and this year was extended to a three day operation.

Considerable interest was shown in the display and many diverse subjects were discussed. On the first day the weather was sunny spells, the second was baking hot with a cloudless sky and the third was wet but dried off in the afternoon which had the advantage of allowing the tent to dry before packing it.

Rostered crew for the rally were Phil. Hosken, Pete Joseph and the writer. Unfortunately Pete was indisposed and

Stephen Docksey very kindly stood in at short notice for the three days. Thanks also go to member Tony Dymond who is the trade stand co-ordinator for the rally for his assistance.

K.J.T.R.

BSMEE

I recently had the pleasure of addressing the Bristol Society of Model and Experimental Engineers. I thought I'd share just a little of what I discovered.

The Bristol Society was founded a hundred years ago and is one of the world's oldest such organisations. It has some 250 members and operates one of the finest model railway systems in the country.

Members of the Society are drawn from a great number of engineering trades and disciplines together with many enthusiasts who just love steam and other forms of traction. While interests are varied from clocks to ships, the Society has an outstanding railway system constructed on 4½ acres of land at Ashton Grove just half a mile from the southern end of Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge. Here the enthusiastic railway staff explain to the

children how the trains work and provide rides for their parents.

The railway system is really worth a close examination. Finished in Holman Bros green the trackside equipment is comprehensive, accurate and beautifully maintained. Points and signals are all integrated and remote controlled. With so much enthusiastic brain power at work it is difficult to think of anything that's been omitted.

One of the railway's outstanding features is the pair of recently completed tunnels that give a thrill to those on the trains and the civil engineers who took part in their design and construction.

A thrilling attraction to young and old alike, the Ashton Grove railway system and the BSMEE are well worth an admiring visit at anytime. Full details are available at www.bristolmodelengineers.co.uk

Centenary Celebration Show. The BSMEE will be holding a 'once a century show' at the Leisure Centre, Thornbury, near Bristol on the 21st – 23rd August this year. Details from the above web address or at 0117 967 5878.

P.M.H.



PHOENIX 100 CELEBRATIONS

The culmination of many weeks of planning came to fruition at Minions and the Phoenix mining area of East Cornwall in early June to celebrate the centenary of the inauguration of the mighty 80in. pumping engine on Prince of Wales Shaft at Phoenix United. The now derelict enginehouse was floodlit after dark and a specially written drama was performed in the days leading up to the big celebration on June 10th., which was officially opened by the Mayor of Liskeard. The Society tent and show crew, and the Puffing Devil, attended and were based in the middle of Minions village with the shop and café on one side and the public house on the other, so all needs were met! Member Charlie Daniel also attended with a Burrell traction engine, which as it turned out, was useful in loading the Puffing Devil on to its trailer at the end of the day but also in rescuing the Puffing Devil which dropped a wheel into a ditch when attempting to turn round after one of its road runs. All agreed it was a wonderful day with much interest being shown in the Puffing Devil and with the tent being extremely busy. It was also a pleasure to see our two Irish members Diane and Frank Hodnett at the event.

Thanks to members who helped at the event and in the planning – Stephen Docksey, Phil. Hosken, Cheryl & John Manley, George Wilson and the Puffing Devil crew - Mark Rivron and John Woodward.

K.J.T.R.

Photographs:

**Prince of Wales Engine House, near Minions, Bodmin Moor.
by Steph Warne.**

**Phil Hosken explained the significance of the Puffing Devil to local school children.
by David Hambly, Liskeard**

The 10th of June was a day to remember! Not only because it marked the passing of a hundred years from when the last large Cornish Beam Engine was produced, but also because the day offered learning about steam engines and mining development at Phoenix Mine and Caradon Hill.

Hundreds of the general public and 180 children from six schools arrived at Minions to see the Puffing Devil, visit Phoenix Mine and the Caradon Hill area. The children came prepared after teachers had received 'school packs' produced by John and Cheryl Manley with contributions from Pete Joseph. This provided interest and the motivation to ask questions to the many knowledgeable members there on the day.

Iain Rowe, who spearheaded the event, in particular talked about surface workings and tin processing. Trevithick Society guides at Phoenix Mine, Duncan



Matthews, Laurie Thrift, Louis Philips and Cheryl M talked about Phoenix Mine, and especially the Prince of Wales Shaft Engine House. Kenneth Brown had previously visited the site on a very windy day in March to offer his knowledge and support. This acted as a cascade for training guides and contributed towards the school pack information.

The Trevithick Society tent housed not only Phil Hosken, Kingsley Rickard, George Wilson and Stephen Docksey, but displays and literature which provided information about steam and Phoenix Mine. This included a copy of the original arrangement plan of Phoenix Engine, borrowed from Kenneth Brown, with labelling to offer familiarisation with the language of this engine's working parts. A 'Timeline', which put into context steam development and the mine development at Phoenix, was displayed. This will be seen by Princess Anne when she visits Cothele on July 13th, and then it is to be exhibited in Liskeard Museum.

The Puffing Devil under John Woodward and Mark Rivron's command

provided an image of steam power and motion that will be held in the memories of many for years to come. Perhaps, after seeing Trevithick's true genius, the inventive minds of our future engineers may feel likewise inspired.

Many thanks to all who supported the day, including Angela Woodward and James, who had a very early start and who were stalwarts throughout, and Rob and Cathryn Waterhouse who gave assistance as required during this fun and worthwhile event.

The day was one to remember. Many gazed at the steaming Puffing Devil in raw delight, and many absorbed the landscape with newly knowledgeable eyes. The day communicated all that is encouraging about preservation.

John and Cheryl Manley



SOME COMMENTS ON THE AGM WEEKEND

The Society has an obligation to hold a members' general meeting every year. An Annual General Meeting is usually a short affair and so as to add interest and particularly to make the journey to Cornwall worthwhile for some of our 'up-country' members we have traditionally arranged other activities spread over a weekend. The fact that it is in a different place every year, alternating between the East and West of the County is intended to add even more interest for local as well as the up-country members. You are probably thinking that you know that perfectly well so what is the object of this note?

This year we arranged the weekend activities in the Lizard area, because West Cornwall has more sites of historical interest in the world of long range communications than anywhere else in the United Kingdom. We were grateful to be offered the use of the auditorium at the Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station for a lecture on the evening before the AGM as well as for the AGM itself. In addition we were given a free guided tour of the site and its new Future World display. The Friday evening lecture was delivered by John Liffen, Curator of Communications, at the Science Museum in London. He gave a fascinating talk on the Wheatstone telegraph system developed in the mid-nineteenth century for use on the rapidly expanding railway system and soon adapted to provide country wide telegraph for a multitude of users. Its speed of communication completely changed the world of commerce and industry. It is a pity that this talk by a distinguished speaker on a subject of real industrial history was attended by fewer than twenty members.

On the morning of the AGM we had a tour of Marconi's wireless hut on the Lizard under the expert guidance of Courtney Rowe whose depth of knowledge never ceases to amaze. Mr Liffen was able to add quite a lot to his knowledge of Marconi's time in Cornwall and departed

with a copy of Courtney's book on the subject. The only disappointment was, once again, the number attending which was only twelve.

We had two additional activities to fill in the weekend; one on Friday afternoon and one on Sunday morning. On Friday we had a field trip to the recently re-discovered tin streaming works at Trelubbus between Helston and Wendron led by our curator, Pete Joseph, with expert comments added by Allen Buckley and Geoff Purcell. The turnout was only thirteen but this proved to be a suitable number for the restricted space in some parts of the site. The Sunday morning visit was a walk round Helston under guidance of Martin Matthews. In spite of unpromising weather at the start Mr Matthews was so interesting that some of us didn't even notice it had cleared up. He was aided by comments from time to time by local member Ivan Perry. Outside the town museum Mr Matthews pointed out that Ivan has taken upon himself the weekly task of polishing the memorial plaques on the cannon from HMS Anson, wrecked near Loe Bar. Twelve members took part in this walk, plus a local resident who joined us part way through.

The AGM was held in the Goonhilly auditorium and attended by only 28 members which is a disappointing turnout for our most important meeting of the year. It may not command the level of interest of some of our industrial history but it enables your Council to report on its activities over the previous year and say what its aims are for the next.

The dinner at the Nansloe Manor Hotel was voted a success both in terms of the food and the company. Again the numbers were disappointing with 24 booking but only 19 attending.

Overall it was an enjoyable weekend for those who attended with the only negative aspect being the numbers. This continues a trend which has been developing for some time but has taken a marked drop in the last two years. The AGM attendance figures for the last five years have been: 2004 (Morwellham), 50+; 2005 (Geevor), 48; 2006 (Wheal Martyn),

33; 2007 (Camborne), 42; 2008 (Looe), 27, 2009 (Goonhilly); 28.

Of those attending nine were from “up-country” and the other nineteen from Cornwall & West Devon. From figures kindly supplied by Sue Maunder it appears that there are nearly the same number of members in Cornwall and West Devon as live up-country. This might lead to an expectation that roughly equal numbers could be expected to attend the AGM from the local area and up-country. However, we need to remember that the up country members need to commit practically a whole weekend to attend, which can make it costly as well as time consuming so I would expect a much higher ratio of local to up country attendees, but that is only a personal opinion.

So, what conclusions can we reach? The attendance is falling and if we are to reverse this trend we have to identify the cause, or at least try to. We know that we have an aging membership and many of us are no longer as fit and agile as we were a few years ago. (The writer, only a year ago, could manage a five mile walk on the coast or moor, provided there was a pub at the end of course. Now two miles on the flat is a strain). This means that field trips can be difficult but the lecture on the evening before the AGM, the AGM itself and the dinner do not require any real agility. But is this the only reason? I believe that we need to seek higher attendance from our local members so I would like to hear from anyone, particularly local members who didn't attend the AGM, about why. It would be particularly interesting to hear from those who have attended in the past but have given up in the last two years.

You may wish to respond by writing to the Newsletter but I would be very happy to hear from you directly by letter, phone or e-mail. I will try to collate what opinions come out of this and bring them to the Council's attention when we are planning next year's AGM weekend. If you want your views to be kept anonymous I would still like to have them and I will respect your wishes. My address and telephone number are on the

back of the Newsletter, my e-mail address is gbwilson@macace.net.

The last point I would like to make is that next year the Society celebrates its 75th anniversary. It would be a fitting tribute to all the members who have kept it going for so long if we had a bumper attendance at our AGM and the associated activities. For your diaries the date of the AGM will be 22nd May 2010.

George B Wilson

TREVITHICK SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Tin and Diamonds, Claire Leith's memoir of her grandfather Francis Oats, was launched at Levant on 22nd May and is already selling steadily at £4.99. This book is a must for all interested in the mining history of West Penwith and in Cornwall's connection with South Africa.

A new edition of *Harvey & Co's 1884 Catalogue* should be on sale at the end of June. This edition, with a new pictorial cover, includes two pages, which were missing from previous printings, having been removed from the original at Cornwall Record Office. We have managed to source them from another copy. The price of this item remains at £12.99.

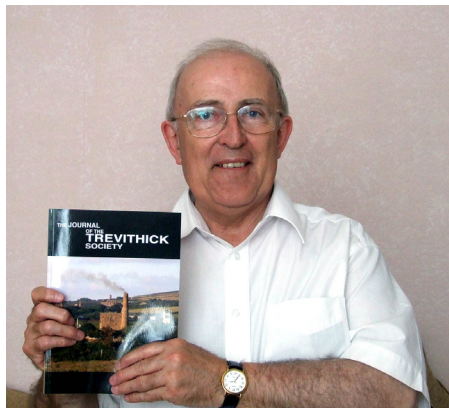
Work continues on our new edition of Edmund Vale's *The Harveys of Hayle*. At the moment we remain on course to publish in early October. The book is generating a lot of interest and in consequence the hardback edition is likely to be in quite short supply. I would urge members, who want to guarantee a copy, to contact me at the address below to reserve one. The hardback will cost £35.99 with a large format paperback at £19.99.

Graham Thorne

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A.I.A. AWARD

*Trevithick Society Journal wins
Major National Award*



At the end of June came the splendid news that the 2008 Issue of The Journal of the Trevithick Society had won the Publication Award for the best journal from the Association for Industrial Archaeology.

The stringent judging criteria for this award include “academic quality, readability, attractive layout and style, plus quality of illustrations [photographs and diagrams]”. The award is worth £200 but the benefit to the Society’s reputation in the field of Industrial Archaeology is massive.

One of the judge’s reports said, “To me, an outstanding Journal from the Society this year (as a member I have seen it steadily improve over recent years). Glossy and attractive (the cover makes you want to pick it up) with generally good academic quality and good use of illustrations with colour. The paper on Richard Thomas of Falmouth is particularly significant”.

I am sure all members will wish to join in congratulating the Journal team - Editor, Owen Baker, who has transformed an already well-regarded publication into one which now has the accolade of being a leader in its field, and Peter Joseph who has enabled the production of the new

style Journal to be achieved so efficiently.

The AIA Publication Awards – there are two others, one for Occasional Publications and one for Newsletters – will be presented by AIA President, Angus Buchanan, at the AIA Annual Conference in Lincoln on Saturday 5th September. Next year this important conference will be held in Cornwall. It is possible to win this award more than once. Can we win at home as well?

Graham Thorne

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Tudor Tin Industry by Allen Buckley. Penhellenck Publications. Softback, 202 pages. ISBN 978 187167866 6. Price £12.99.

The moors of West Cornwall are pock-marked by long-forgotten streamworks, coffin and other shallow excavations, which today preserve scant indications as to their history and methods of working tin. The mists of time have descended and so completely shrouded these early tin workings that to most people their origins are totally unrecognisable.

In his book, *The Tudor Tin Industry*, Allen Buckley sweeps away those mists of time, specifically for the tin bounds which operated in Tudor times. By cross-referencing a diverse series of contemporary rolls and manuscripts Allen has gleaned a wealth of information about the individual tin bounds of Penwith and Kerrier. This information is presented on a parish by parish basis, fleshing out the name, location and extent of the works, the names of the people who bounded, worked, and/or held a financial interest, together with a variety other snippets. For many of the individuals mentioned, details of their assets and the extent of their interest in the tin industry as a whole helps to build up a picture as to how the industry operated and was changing. Perhaps surprisingly about a third of the workings

were lode mines and whilst the majority were streamworks and operated on a part-time basis, there was an inexorable shift towards more capitalised, full-time lode workings, embracing new technologies and methods of organisation.

To assist the reader there are numerous line drawn maps showing the location of the Tudor workings as well as Agricola-esque sketches of various aspects of the tin working. There are also photographs of tin workings and artefacts.

One of the appendices lists the 2070 tanners, by parish, for the 1530s and as such gives an indication of the relative importance of the parishes for tin working. Purely as a list of people it is fascinating to see how many surnames persist today, as well as those that have disappeared.

Overall, *The Tudor Tin Industry* makes readily accessible a host of resources that require specialist knowledge and interpretative skills and opens a window on a little understood period of Cornwall's mining history. Above all it helps to interpret the wider mining landscape by providing documentary substance to the numerous remnants of long-forgotten tin workings.

CNF.

Two Engineers, Francis Thompson and Richard Trevithick by David K. Hulse. Tee Publishing Ltd. Softback, 160 pages. Price £11-95.

If anyone has read David Hulse's previous books then it will come as no surprise at the amount of research and detail he has crammed into this volume. The first named in the title, Francis Thompson (1747 – 1809) a Derbyshire mining engineer, took a keen interest in the water pumping problems of the area and insisted on the "engineer" description through his life, and so, usefully the book starts with a brief history of the Derbyshire Peak District mining area.

Looking at two of the mines in the area, Gregory Mine and Yatestoo Mine, the author explores their history, development

and Thompson's involvement and relates the wonderful story of Thompson, who had installed a seventy inch Newcomen engine at Yatestoo which proved underpowered, then decided on the radical step of installing a sixty five inch atmospheric engine underground sited at sough level (adit level in Cornwall) with a twenty foot diameter boiler to feed it. The exhaust was directed up a shaft over five hundred feet to surface. One surmises the draw on that would have required judicious use of the damper!

Thompson married a local girl and eventually built his own home, Hill House on the side of a steep valley at Ashover and in doing so used his knowledge to install an ingenious drainage system to stop the cascading water from flooding his home.

His connections with other well known names such as Boulton & Watt enter the story and detailed coverage is made of a number of mining engines connected with Thompson whose influence also spread to the textile industry. The author, well known for his excellent models, also discusses making engines in miniature. It was attempting the model of the Arnold Mill engine that provoked the research into Francis Thompson.

In the second section of the book, the scene changes to Cornwall and Richard Trevithick, best remembered for improving steam engine efficiency by introducing high pressure and the expansive force of steam. Richard did not take kindly to his education, but later, on joining his mine manager father, his practical mind and natural flair blossomed. Boulton & Watt had engines in Cornwall and Richard, convinced he could improve their efficiency fell foul of James Watt and a deep dislike ensued. Mine owners also disliked Boulton & Watt over the way they charged a premium on fuel saved over the use of an atmospheric engine. His use of high pressure steam led him to produce the first successful full sized self propelled road vehicle in 1801 and later, the Pen y Darren locomotive, the first railway engine. The author discusses

Trevithick's background, his association with Edward Bull. The author then moves on to stationary engines and talks in detail of the discovery of a Trevithick engine of 1804 in Austria, his lengthy stay in South America and other projects and gives him the credit for inventing the fusible plug, that most important piece of safety apparatus used in all steam engines today.

Here we have the story of two engineers, Thompson, of which little appears known of his childhood but who was an eminent engineer in his day, in tune with business, was married and had a settled family life, but has not, however, received the recognition he deserves. In comparison, Trevithick's early days are well logged, he was fiery, temperamental and restless. He was also married with a family but was seldom home, so much so that his in-laws cared for his wife much of the time. His genius showed through not only in connection with steam, but in general mining and tunnelling, marine salvage and civil engineering.

This book is profusely illustrated with both pictures and drawings with very clear reproduction and I certainly recommend this book which gives a good insight into the lives of these two engineers. A very pleasurable read.

KR.

Puffing Devil
Steaming
through
Minions.

Photographed
by Carlton
Crouch.



PUFFING DEVIL

Trevithick Day

Trevithick Day started overcast with showers. Even though the crew arrived at 6.00 am to flash up the engine, due to the cold weather, it took 3 hours to get up sufficient steam and drive it to its position in the engine line (approx 2 miles away).

The Puffing Devil was steamed stationary in Bassett Road, until the Camborne Hill parade mid afternoon. As usual, another engine led the way to warn the public that we were about to make our run. This year Sean Oliver was driving, I was steering with Colin French and Mark Rivron on the back.

The first two thirds of the hill went really well and then disaster struck. There had been a mix up with the instructions and the first engine had stopped to wait for us. So for the first time, we had no option but to stop behind it on the hill.

Once the first locomotive had cleared the top of the hill, to our amazement, with the help of two of our crew pushing, the Puffing Devil managed its first ever 'hill-start'. Something we did not think was possible.

It was not until we were back in

the engine line that Sean informed me that the chimney had broken away at the bottom immediately behind where I was standing. Every time we went over a bump in the road, the crack would open and a large flame would sweep out around my backside. Since Sean knew that our boiler suits were flame resistant, he refrained from saying anything at the time.

This year we had some good quality steam coal and it made a big difference. We burnt about one third of a ton that day. Apart from the problem with the chimney, the engine went really well and everybody enjoyed themselves up until the last hour when the heavens opened as we were packing away.

King Edward Mine Open Day

The following day, we were at Troon for the annual King Edward Mine Open Day. The engine was steamed stationary and burnt three bags of coal (75kg). I attended the engine in the morning accompanied by my son James, and Sean Oliver took over from us in the afternoon.

Minions

The engine was off-loaded from the trailer and steamed outside the village Post Office. From mid morning onwards, groups of school children were brought in succession to visit the engine where Phil Hosken gave them a talk about it.

Late morning and mid afternoon we took the Puffing Devil for a run along the road which passes through the village. On both occasions we conducted rather interesting three point turns on the south stretch and got well and truly stuck on the final turn of the day on the north stretch. Fortunately Charlie Daniel and his Traction Engine 'Janet' came to our rescue. No one can say we didn't put on a good show.

We were blessed with warm and sunny weather right up until around 4:30 pm when the heavens opened and everybody got well and truly drenched. The crew consisted of Mark Rivron driving, myself

steering and Master James Woodward stoking. In addition we also had with us Rob and Cathryn Waterhouse from the East Cornwall branch of the Trevithick Society who volunteered to help us for the day.

John Woodward

SOCIETY MEETINGS

West Cornwall Branch
Meets at King Edward Mine at 7.30pm.

18th September.

A combined evening with the Carn Brea Mining Society. A John Potter film *The Slate Industry of Cornwall*.

23rd October.

King Edward Mine.

by Tony Brooks

East Cornwall Branch
Meets at various places, please check the programme for details.

21st July.

7.30pm at Calstock Village Hall, a talk by Vic Harman of Calstock Archives on *The Making of Calstock Viaduct*. Refreshments available and a chance for an informal walk along the river afterwards.

8th September

7.30pm, Liskeard Public Hall, West Street. A talk by Tony Brooks on *Cornish Mining in the First Half of the 20th Century*.

1st December

Venue to be confirmed. A talk by John Manley on *Industrial Landscapes of Caradon Hill*.

Outside Event

The remaining outside events currently booked for the Society tent is:-

- Bude Gurney Day July 26th.

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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.

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