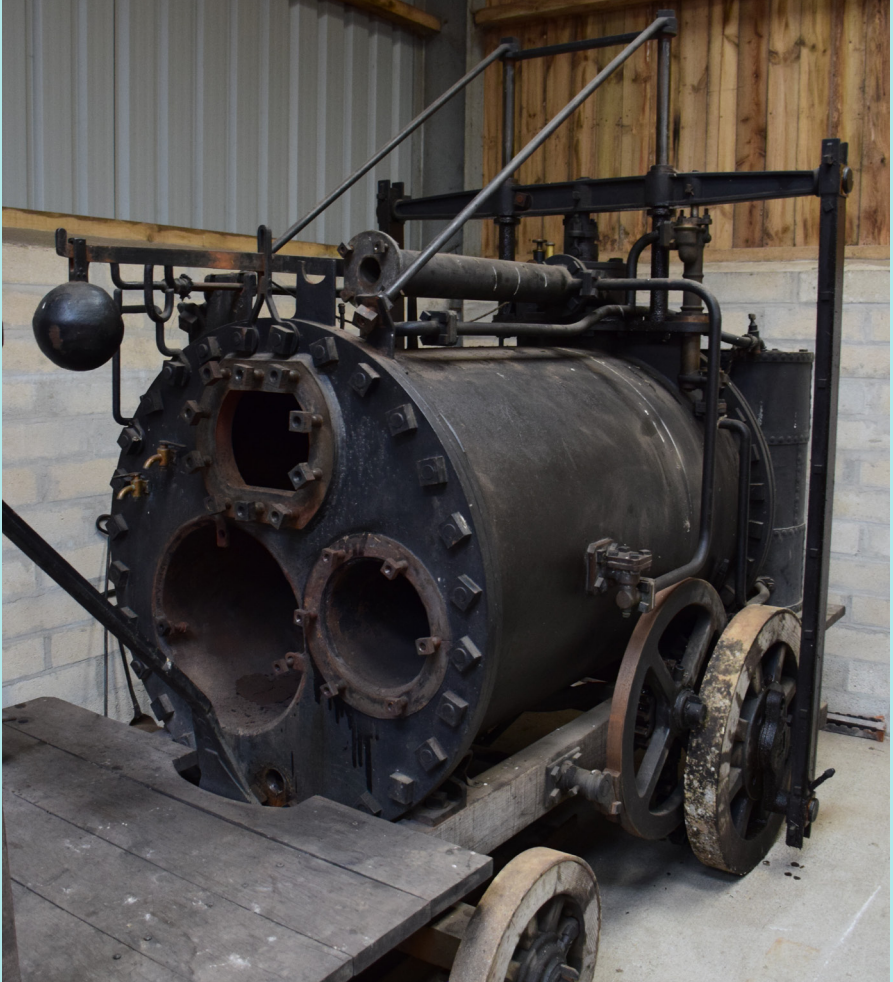




THE TREVITHICK SOCIETY

KOWETHAS TREVITHICK

NEWSLETTER 187 SPRING 2020



The Puffing Devil stripped down ready for its second ten year boiler test.

NEW MEMBERS

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

Stephen Veal Callington

Kevin Knight Looe

Ian Montgomery Hull

Mr Towler Looe

DECEASED MEMBERS

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

Alan Greaves Nottinghamshire

Our condolences to Alan's family.

EDITORIAL

As Editor I have now produced over half of the Society's newsletters since they began in May 1973 as A4 handouts. There were a few A4 sheets issued before that date starting in December 1970, but the present continuous run began in May 1973.

I took over from Martin Beckett in November 1995 with newsletter No. 91 and have edited every issue, apart from one where, due to illness, Pete Joseph kindly stepped in. When Martin Beckett was Editor the articles were typed out and roughly pasted, with glue, onto paper

sheets, then passed to the printer to be typeset. I believe the proofs were then returned to Martin for checking before the final set was photographed and etched onto aluminium plates from which the newsletter was printed in the form of the familiar A5 booklet.

When I took over, I had use of desktop publishing software and was able to layout the entire newsletter on the computer and then present the printer with an electronic file containing the completed document. The printer would then feed this file into his computer system which would generate the aluminium printer plates. Those plates were then used to print the black and white newsletter.

Since then St George Print was taken over by C.A. Print, when the original owner retired. When C.A. Print closed, we had to find a new printing company. The other major disruption was a software change from Pagemaker to Adobe InDesign CS4 and the time it took me to learn a completely new software package. The production of a full colour newsletter first took place in December 2007 (newsletter 138). This proved to be a seamless process.

Today, I do not even have to visit the printer to hand them the finished electronic file, as everything is transmitted by email and the boxed newsletters arrive at Kingsley's door usually within a week of arriving in the Calco Paper Services inbox.

Having done all that, I am now taking the liberty to publicise my forthcoming book on the *Flora of Cornwall*, which is the culmination of over thirty years of surveying work by myself and a small group of dedicated volunteers.

CNF

Copy date for next newsletter:

June 30th 2020



TM

Established 1935

NEW FLORA OF CORNWALL - PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER

This *Flora of Cornwall* is based on the most intensive and comprehensive survey ever undertaken in Britain. Two and a quarter million flowering plant and fern records have been computerised and every single one kilometre square of Cornwall (3964 squares) has been surveyed by a small team of volunteers.

The result is a 550 page, full colour, hardback, slightly larger than A4, book. It covers 3050 species and hybrids, includes over 1200 distribution maps and more than 1500 photographs.

The introductory chapters discuss the physical influences affecting the flora (climate, geology, soils and topography), as well as the many human factors that have shaped the flora including tin streaming, mining, quarrying and agriculture. These sections are followed by discussion of such topics as vegetation history, key habitats, losses and gains, rare and/or threatened plants, botanical regions and a history of recording in Cornwall.

The species accounts (460 pages) follow the introduction. Two reductions of sample pages are below:

The author, Colin French, is the West Cornwall recorder for the Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland.

Payment

Please send a cheque for the required number of copies of the *Flora of Cornwall* at the discounted price of £40 each (including postage & packaging, UK only).

Be sure to enclose your delivery details including telephone and email address.

Please send to:

Dr. Colin French
12 Seton Gardens,
Weeth Road,
Camborne.
Kernow.
TR14 7JS

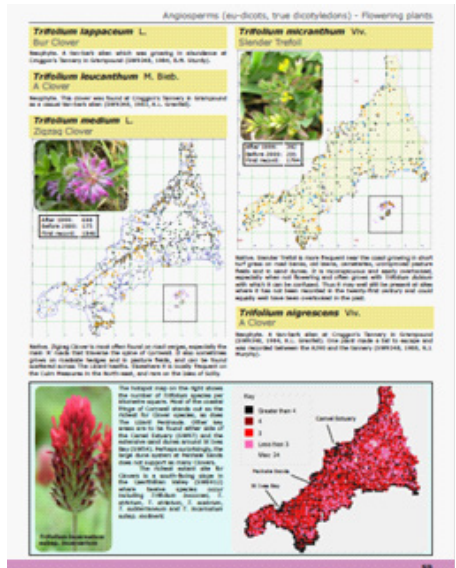
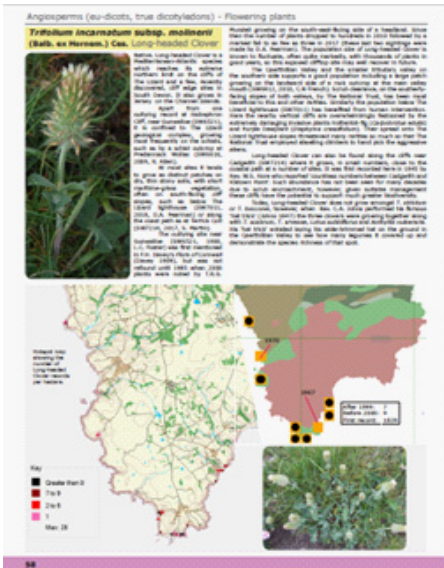


Cornish Eyebright

or

email: whealagar4@gmail.com to exchange details and pay by BACS.

Full price £50 - publication summer 2020.



A CORNISH BEAM ENGINE, KOLAR GOLD FIELD, INDIA

Cornish type beam engine houses survive at a number of locations around the world. In places like, for example South Australia, and Linares, Spain, they are well recorded, and their history researched, and published. However, even at Linares, where engines were frequently moved from shaft to shaft, it is still possible to discover an unrecorded engine house base amongst the mining rubble.

Recently, while researching the early history of the Kolar Gold Field, India, I came across references, and several photographs of an engine house, of what may probably be the only Cornish beam pumping engine ever erected on the Indian sub-continent.

The engine was located on Ribblesdale's Shaft (see photograph)

that was worked by the Mysore Gold Mining Company, Ltd. (formed 1880), and managed by John Taylor and Sons. There are actually two Ribblesdale's shafts in what was the Mysore Gold concession, but the engine house was erected on the southern shaft. The northern shaft was sunk later when the northern portion of the Mysore concession was transferred to the Champion Reef Gold Mining Company of India, Ltd. in 1889.

Hatch (*Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India*, No. 33, 1902) refers to the engine several times:

'The only example of a Cornish beam pumping engine is at the Ribblesdale shaft of the Mysore Mine. It has a vertical cylinder of 36 inches diameter with a stroke of 9 feet in the cylinder and 8 feet in the shaft, and the usual form of Cornish valve-gear with plug rods and tappets. It is found to work with great economy.' (p.37).



'At the Ribblesdale shaft of the Mysore Mine, there is a battery of eight 30 by 7 foot Lancashire boilers, supplying steam to the compressor, cage and skip-hoisting engines, a capstan-engine, and a Cornish beam pumping engine.' (p.33).

At present, I have not been able to identify who manufactured the Cornish engine, or the precise year it was installed. Possibly, it was erected just prior to the Mysore Gold Mining Company taking over the concession in 1880, or more likely in the mid-1880s. Google Earth images show the site to be partly overgrown with no obvious engine house remains. I was wondering if any other members of the Society had further information about this engine?

Water in the Kolar mines does not appear to have been a major issue. 'Beyond the water produced by seepage from the surface, which is a variable quantity according to the season of the year, there is no great amount of water to contend with, especially in the lower levels of the mines.' 'When water is met with during shaft or winze-sinking, it is either baled by hand from the sump into the buckets, kibbles or skips, or it is dealt with by Cameron or Evans pumps worked by compressed air. Worthington pumps actuated by compressed air are also employed. They are usually fixed for permanent work in those places where it is impossible or inconvenient to extend the Cornish lifts.' (Hatch p.27)

Cornish pump lifts were in place in several of the shafts, and were probably worked by horizontal compound engines manufactured by Hathorn Davey, Leeds. John Taylor and Sons produced their own engines for winding and stamping, at their Sandycroft Foundry, Chester. Engine components were usually hauled to the mines by bullocks. The photograph on the right shows one of the cylinders for a Sandycroft winding engine being transported in that fashion in 1912.

Dr. Rob Vernon,
Bredon, Tewkesbury.

TREVITHICK SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS FOR SUMMER 2020

A Look at the Mining Industry Remains of the Great Flat Lode between Redruth and Camborne.

- Dates: All Wednesdays.
May 13th; June 10th; July 8th;
August 5th; September 9th.
- Location: Marriotts Shaft car park at 10.30 am. Time approx - three hours.
- Directions: From A30, Camborne exit A3047 take road signed Four Lanes. Continue for approximately two miles and after passing the "Countryman" take next turning on the right and the car park will be on your left.

Please note there are no facilities on this walk. The "Countryman" pub is the nearest and also has a good lunch menu.

Wear stout footwear and suitable clothing for exposed countryside. Unfortunately this walk is not suitable for wheelchairs.

No booking required. Just turn up and pay the guide. Members £5 and non members £8. Any queries contact Kingsley Rickard, on k.rickard@talktalk.net or on the Chatline 01209 716811.

To support our friends of the Harvey's Foundry Trust at Hayle, Kingsley will be leading walks around the Foundry area of Hayle on the following dates:

May 12th; June 9th; July 7th; August 4th and September 8th.

These are to be booked through Harvey's



Cylinder for Winding Engine on way to Circular Shaft.
Weight 15½ tons.

ROAD WORKS AS THEY USED TO BE

There are probably very few photographs of workmen digging up

roads. The top one shows a Holman Zitair compressor and comes from the Society's Holman collection. The lower one, which is undated, must be very rare as it was not a typical subject for early twentieth century photographers.



MINING HISTORY TOURS

It is proposed to run a series of Mining History walks in 2020 around West Cornwall for The Trevithick Society. These will mainly be on Thursdays, but other dates can be accommodated if enough members of the Society wish it.

Two walks will trial at Easter and then if enough interest is shown, will commence again in June, July and August.

Costs to members of the Society will be a nominal £5 on production of a membership card. Non-members will be welcome at a charge of £8.

Proposed Dates and Venues are as follows:

Easter 2020

Thursday 9th April. Wheal Owles and Botallack. 3 hours approx.

Monday 13th April. Cot Valley, Cape Cornwall and Kenidjack Valley. 3 hours approx.

June 2020

Thursday 4th June. Wheal Owles and Botallack. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 11th June. Breage and Wheal Vor, with Wheal Metal. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 18th June. Godolphin and Tregonning Hills. 4 hours approx.

Thursday 25th June. Godolphin Mine and Lower Woods. 3 hours approx.

July 2020

Thursday 2nd July. Wheal Peevor and the Mineral tramway. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 9th July. Wheal Busy and Killifreth. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 16th July. North Levant and Levant Mine. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 23rd July. Rinsey, Wheals Prosper and Trewavas. 4 hours approx.

Thursday 30th July. St Erth and the Red River Valley. 3 hours approx.

August 2020

Thursday 6th August. North Boscaswell Mine, Trease and North Levant. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 13th August. Wheal Maid and the Poldice Valley. 3 hours approx.

Thursday 20th August. Porthtowan, Wheal Charlotte and Wheal Coates.

Thursday 27th August. All day walk of the Tin Coast from Pendeen to Cape Cornwall.

Any members or persons wishing to participate in the walks should book places by contacting the Society Secretary using the following details:

Home Phone - 01326 573649 (A message may be left).

Email - leonard-phillips1@sky.com

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Kingsley sent this in:

An Archaeologist is a person whose career is in ruins.

Given the state of the once all mighty cotton industry in Britain the Editor cannot help thinking that:

An Industrial Archaeologist is a person whose career is in tatters.

FIRST TRANSATLANTIC COLOUR TELEVISION TRANSMISSION

Cornwall has long been at the forefront of communications technology. In the case of the Packet Ships (1688-1850) and the development of a postal service with the colonies, the geographic position of the port of Falmouth was critical. The same was probably true in 1901 when Marconi sent the first transatlantic wireless message from Poldhu. Similarly the submarine cables connecting Britain with much of the rest of the world, that beach at Porthcurno and elsewhere, reflects the importance of geography.

Cornish people have also had an important role in communications. The transport revolution of road, rail and steam ships at sea, owes a great deal to the development of high pressure steam and the pioneering work by Richard Trevithick. Even the first powered flight took place in 1902 by Cornishman Richard Pearse in New Zealand.

Furthermore it is well known that the first transatlantic television transmission via the Telstar satellite on 11th July 1962 was received at Goonhilly Earth Station. The photographs below commemorate a lesser known event which passed without a fanfare. They were taken by Denys Bryant, whilst visiting Goonhilly Earth Station in October 1968 and are photographs of a television screen at Goonhilly. They show the Olympic Games from Mexico City and were actually taken as the first live transatlantic colour transmission was received.



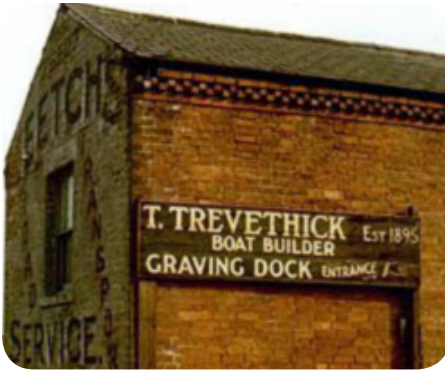
TREVETHICK BOAT BUILDER

Whilst searching through my filling cabinets I came across an article from *The Lenton Listener*, Issue 13 July-August 1981, which Alan Greaves sent to me in 2003 for inclusion in the newsletter. Rather belatedly here is "The Tom Trevethick Story".

In Nottingham, anyone wandering along Gregory Street towards Lenton Lane must notice the sign high on a wall pointing down to the canal wharf (photo right). It points to Tom Trevethick's boat yard, the oldest in Nottingham, first opened for business just as the canal was completed in 1796. Tom's father, Thomas Trevethick came to the yard in 1903 but boat building was already a family tradition. Tom's grandfather had worked on sailing ship construction as a mast and block maker in the nineteenth century. A point of interest is that somewhere in Tom's family tree is one Richard Trevithick, the Cornish engineer, pioneer builder of high-pressure steam engines and 'father of the locomotive'. A Victorian account of Richard's great works has in fact been passed down through the family and is now in Tom's possession.

Thomas Trevethick started the business in Gainsborough in 1895 then moved to Lenton - a better spot for canal and river trade. Naturally when moving 'house' he used a horse drawn boat of his own design and construction. At the yard Thomas took over two coal-fired pleasure steamers from a Mr Gilbert. Each





Thursday and Sunday these were made available for trips to Trent Lock and back; price one shilling and three pence. These regular canal trips continued until the First World War.

When he was 13, the present owner Tom Trevethick was put to work full time in the business. The Trevethicks had recently taken over an old gravel wharf near Wilford Bridge and, after building landing stages, kept about four canoes and forty rowing boats there for hire. Tom looked after the boat hiring all summer long in a houseboat moored alongside. He found himself in charge of the whole business when his father was called away in the First World War to work in the Cammell Laird shipyards in Liverpool. On his return, Tom continued with the boat hire. The Second World War strangely enough turned out to be a boom time for the Trevethicks. Many families were not able to go away for a holiday, so they made up for it by using local amenities more. A trip in the 'Success' or the 'Victoria' down to Colwick Pleasure Park, with its swings, roundabouts and ice creams was often a real family treat. It is only in fact about four years since Tom gave up running trips along the Trent.

The rise and fall in the fortunes of the Trevethick boat yard has quite closely mirrored the fate of the canals. Until the mid-1920s as many as six men might be employed on the construction of new boats

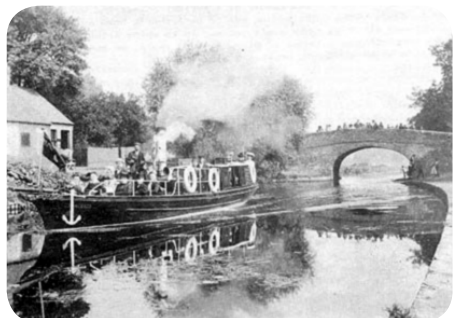
and the repair of old. As the lorry asserted itself as the major means of bulk carriage, canal trade fell away and business in the yard declined. The post-war rise in the use of the canals for leisure pursuits has meant, naturally enough, something of a revival in trade. The old boats needed to be overhauled and new ones built. But the introduction of boats with fibreglass hulls has largely knocked the bottom out of the wooden boat market. Tom Trevethick has stayed with the traditional skills and craftsmanship of wooden hull manufacture and receives his commissions to build boats from true enthusiasts.

Perhaps the majority of the yard's work is taken up with the repair and maintenance of the many old wooden craft which are still in use. Such boats need an overhaul and their hulls repainted each year if they are not to deteriorate and rot. For jobs like these, Tom makes use of the only dry dock in Nottingham, constructed soon after the boat yard was first opened for business.

Tom is now retired from boat yard work but still manages the business.

It is interesting to note after a quick search online that T Trevethick Boat Builders still operate at Canal Wharf, Gregory St, Old Lenton, Nottingham.

CNF



A Trevethick cruiser steams past the boatyard c.1908.

PUFFING DEVIL

As I write, The Puffing Devil is part-way through its second ten year boiler test. It has been stripped down by Sean Oliver, John Goodyear and myself. We were ably assisted by Tom Fogg, a steam apprentice, who just happened to be present on the day. The engine has passed the cold test - ultrasonic tests, etc. It now has to be reassembled and prepared for the second part - a hydraulic and steam test. When we were dismantling the engine everything was proceeding at a rapid pace such that we thought we would finish early. Unfortunately, a single bolt on the firebox front cover had other ideas. Try as we might it would not budge. Even using an acetylene torch on it failed to free the nut a smidgen. So after an hour and a half of frustration, off with its head was the cry, and an angle grinder was procured.

John Sawle has had the chimney elbow bend sand-blasted and he painted it with suitable heat resistant paint. He has also arranged for Teagle Machinery Ltd. to cut out two firebox back plates (one as a spare) and a sacrificial plate for the front of the firebox. Sean Oliver will complete the three plates by undertaking some specialist welding and other fabrication.

The next outing for the Puffing Devil will be on Trevithick Day - Saturday 25th April 2020. We should be positioned in Basset Street and be able to drive up and down for most of the day. At some stage, (time to be arranged) we have been asked to appear in front of the Library near the Trevithick Statue to participate in a choir concert. We will be providing the steam whistle at appropriate moments.

Without wishing to steal anyone's thunder I am told that there will be a second Trevithick replica on display on Trevithick Day, which will make a special extra attraction.

CNF

BECOME A FRIEND OF TREVITHICK DAY

The Trevithick Day committee has set up a new scheme to help raise funds for the Day. Their website says:

"Like many of the tens of thousands of people who attend each year you probably enjoy Camborne Trevithick Day and would like it to continue. The day is entirely run by volunteers and is reliant on donations and sponsorship. If you would like to become a Friend of Trevithick Day for just £10 a year, every penny will go towards the running of the day and help ensure the event will go ahead in years to come.

When you become a Friend of Trevithick Day you'll receive this exclusive enamelled badge. The badge is black and gold, the colour of Cornwall and Trevithick Day, and it features a detailed image of Trevithick's Puffing Devil – the world's first steam powered vehicle – which he drove up Camborne Hill. The badge measures 29mm or just over 1" in diameter.

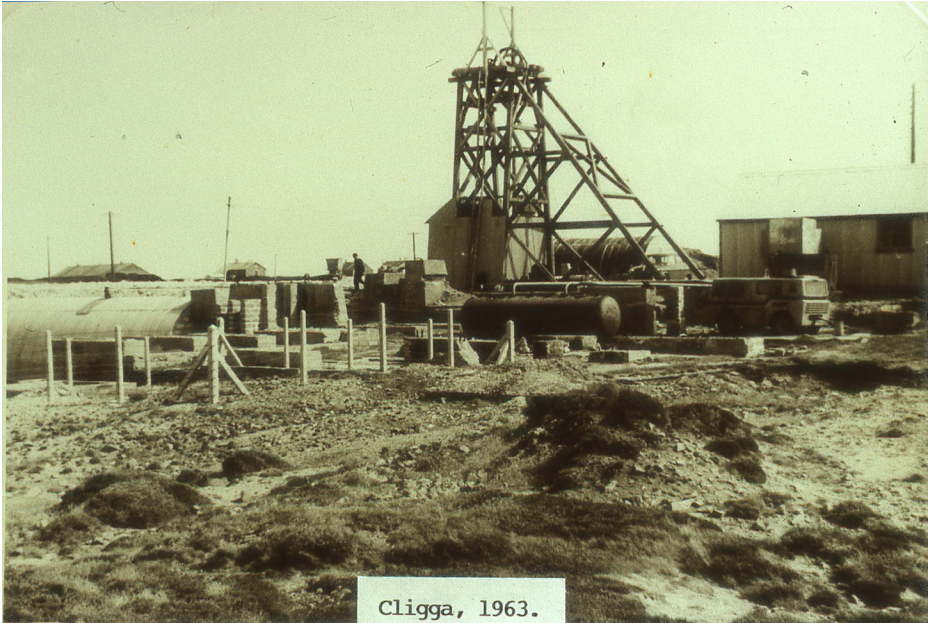
With thanks to the Trevithick Society for use of their image.

You'll receive an exquisite Friend of Trevithick Day badge and a complimentary Trevithick Day programme will be mailed out to you each year hot off the press (usually at the beginning of April), and of course you will have our gratitude for helping us to keep Camborne's unique event running year after year."

see <https://trevithickday.org.uk/become-a-friend-of-trevithick-day/>



FROM THE ARCHIVE



Cligga, 1963.

Here are two photographs from the archive. The one above shows the headgear at Cligga Head in 1963. What must be a Holman compressor can be seen too. The photograph below is of Great Work, Carleen in 1927. It is labelled Leeds' 60" with Cap'n Teague's Whim.



LEVANT BOILER HOUSE MAINTENANCE

During the winter of 2017-18, a considerable amount of work was carried out to the small diameter steam pipes, condensate returns and mixing tank, etc.

Over the years a large amount of alterations have been done to most of the pipe work. Consequently, the mixing and preheating tank was no longer working satisfactorily which resulted in water not being heated anywhere near the required 80 degrees. This, in turn, meant that the water treatment was not emulsifying into the boiler feed water, causing over dosing and congealing in the pipe work and feed pump.

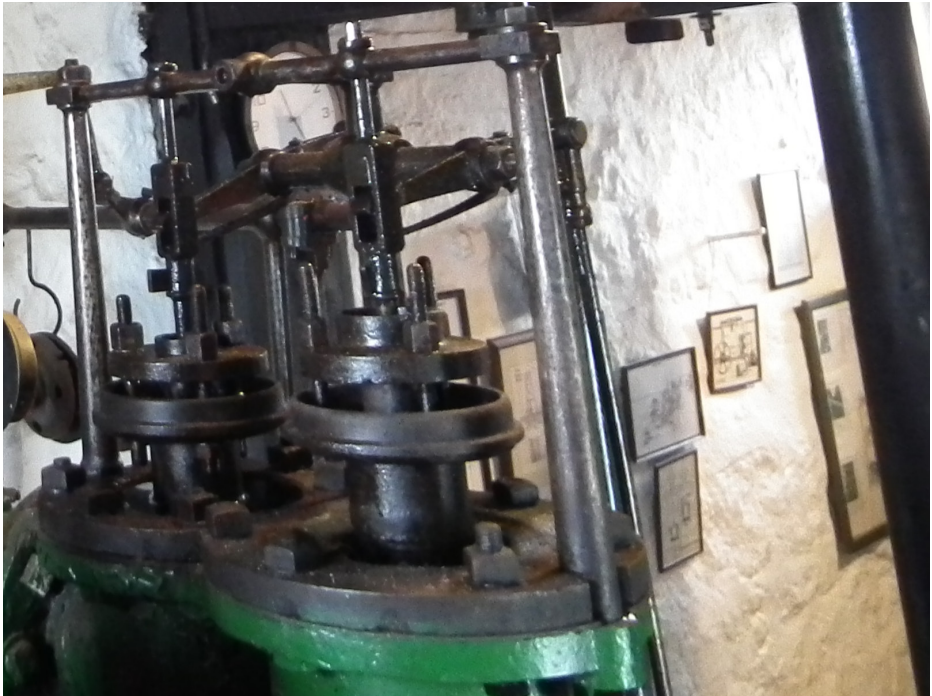
As a result of that winter's work, the monthly average fuel consumption for the engine dropped by 33% and the total site energy consumption dropped by 26%.

The work was undertaken by Mike Penberthy and myself.

John Woodward

Common Drain for Steam and Hot Water

A new drain has been constructed using 1½" diameter mild steel galvanised pipe and, where possible, all discharges have been routed into this common drain which discharges outside.



High Pressure Pipe Blanking Cover over steps

A new steam-rated blanking cover and gasket has been fitted and the condensate return feed re-sited to stop water pooling.



Steam Supply to Mixing Tank

On the advice of the boiler engineer a new supply has been installed using stainless steel pipe and insulated with Rockwool steam pipe insulation.



Boiler High Pressure Cut Off Switch

At the end of the last season the switch started to become temperamental. A new switch was supplied and fitted by the boiler engineer.

Water Treatment Feed Pump

This pump is small and low powered. A metal stand has been made to hold the treatment container.

High Pressure Safety Valve and Steam Exhaust

On stripping the safety valve, the piston was found to be tight with dirt from the water and the spring rusty. A new safety valve has been fitted, with the valve set and sealed to 9.5 bar by the manufacturer.



Pressure Reduction Valve

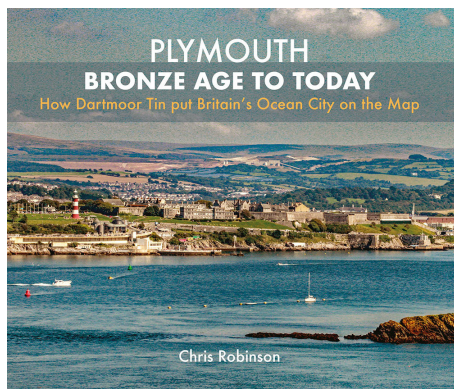
The valve was stripped for its annual service and a considerable amount of water treatment sediment was found inside. It was cleaned, re-assembled and re-fitted.



Small Gauge above Driving Position

The red line on the glass was incorrectly positioned on 120 p.s.i. It has been re-positioned to read 140 p.s.i.

BOOK REVIEW



Members will have read elsewhere in this issue that this year's AGM, in Plymouth, includes a lecture by local historian, Chris Robinson, on the mines of Plymouth and Plympton. Chris's company, Pen & Ink Publishing, has just now issued his book on the subject, *Plymouth: Bronze Age to Today – How Dartmoor Tin put Britain's Ocean City on the Map*. The book was originally intended mainly as a promotional vehicle for Wolf Minerals at Hemerdon. When that company went into administration, the Plymouth Barbican Trust stepped in to ensure that all Chris's substantial research on 4000 years of mining in the area could see the light of day.

The book is in three parts. *Scratching the Surface* begins with the Bronze Age and covers the industry to the end of the seventeenth century, including the story of Plympton as a Stannary Town. *Going Underground* includes the mines around Plympton, such as Bottle Hill, Wheals Sidney and Julian and Mary Hutchings. Also covered are mines at Mount Batten, Wembury, Whitleigh, Shaugh Prior and Bickleigh. This section owes a huge debt to the researches of Owen Baker, long term Society member, a stalwart of Council and Journal Editor. The third part, *Twentieth Century Foxed*, is a detailed treatment of the history of Hemerdon tungsten from its discovery

in 1867, via the attempts at working in two World Wars, to the currently stalled operations by AMAX and Wolf Minerals.

Chris Robinson has been assisted in this book by Ernie Loze, mineral dealer, and James McFarlane, senior geologist with Wolf Minerals and now Tungsten West, as well as our own Owen Baker.

Plymouth: Bronze Age to Today contains a great deal of unpublished material and comes in landscape paperback format at £19.95. It makes fascinating reading and we look forward to welcoming Chris on Friday 1st May.

Graham Thorne

CORNISH INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERS

Thursday 9th April 2020, at 6pm

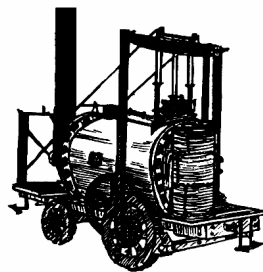
The UNEXMIN Project: Robot Submersibles Investigate Geology and Industrial Archaeology in Ecton Mine, Staffordshire.

Location: Chapel Lecture Theatre, Tremough Campus, Penryn. TR10 9FE.

Submersibles developed in the EU Horizon 2020 UNEXMIN project have been used in the Ecton copper mine, flooded since 1858. All investigations were by imaging and non-contact instruments.

Members are invited to attend the above free lecture. The Cornish Institute of Engineers AGM will precede this talk.

<https://www.iom3.org/cornish-institute-engineers>



SOCIETY MEETINGS PROGRAMME

KEM: 7.30 pm start at King Edward Mine, Tron, Camborne TR14 9DP.

Liskeard: 7.30 pm start at The Long Room, Liskeard Public Hall PL14 6BW.

Friday 17th April (KEM)

Battle Beneath the Trenches

By Robert Johns

Monday 20th April (Liskeard)

A Sailors Tale

By Duncan Matthews

May: 1st-3rd AGM Weekend

Monday 8th June (Liskeard)

Passmore Edwards

By Dean Evans

Friday 12th June (KEM)

The Date and Significance of the Antler

Pick found on the Carnon Valley Tin

Ground near Truro

By Simon Timberlake

Friday 10th July (KEM)

Sets and Spells

By Roger Radcliffe

Monday 13th July (Liskeard)

Mine Models of Cornwall

By Dr Keith Russ

Friday 14th August (KEM)

Passmore Edwards

By Dean Evans

Non-members are welcome to attend.
Non-members £2.00 please.

Contact:

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2 Hillcrest Close

St. Columb

TR9 6BP

crewesy@aol.com

(01637 881 556 07772502725)

For up-to-date news check:

<http://www.trevithick-society.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/trevithick.society/>

MEMBERS' BENEFITS

Trevithick Society members are entitled to free entry (on production of the membership card) to the following attractions:

- King Edward Mine
- Cornish Engines at Pool (East Pool Mine and Michell's Whim)
- Levant
- Geevor Museum
- Poldark – free entry to site and reduced fee for underground mine tour

Also:

- 10% off book purchases at Tormark.
- 10% off purchases at KEM shop.

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The Trevithick Society, a registered charity, is a recognised body of the study of industrial archaeology in Cornwall. Membership is open to all who are interested in the region's great industrial past, whether or not they live in Cornwall. The Society takes its name from one of Britain's foremost inventors and pioneers of the Industrial Revolution, Richard Trevithick, a Cornishman whose name is inseparable from the development of steam power. This newsletter is published quarterly and, together with the annual journal, is distributed free to members. Letters and contributions are always welcome and should be sent direct to the editor.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Trevithick Society.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Individual members	£28.00
Family/joint members	£33.00
Overseas members	£35.00
Corporate members	£35.00

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