

# ECHMA NEWSLETTER

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## Special points of interest:

- Chairman's thanks and congratulates Committee for team effort.
- Thanks given to Cornwall Environmental Trust for funding purchase.
- Description of the miners' cottages.
- Photos from AGM day
- AGM and accounts

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN, BRIAN SPENCER

So, here we are: we now own a pair of miners' cottages with garden and adjoining land at Luckett, and one of the most intriguing mine sites in the Tamar Valley at East Kit Hill. Things have certainly changed from the early days of the Association when our sights were limited to, in one way or another, preserving the cottages even if we didn't own them outright.

Events have unfolded in perhaps a different way than we might have anticipated, but what has not changed is the continued support of you, our members and well-wishers, who have stayed with us. A big thank you to you all.

I wouldn't normally single out individuals because our success in reaching this point is down to teamwork, but mention must be made of, our solicitor, Pam Dorrington. As you probably know the purchase of the two sites was grant aided by the County Environmental Trust (CET) and so the whole procedure was complicated by the fact that three parties were involved—ECHMA, CET and the vendors, The Duchy of Cornwall, each with their own solicitors. Pam not only unravelled all the legal complexities involved (and believe you me there were plenty), but she willingly did it all without payment. We are truly indebted to her expertise and enthusiasm in seeing us through to the completion of purchase. Grateful thanks are also due to CET for funding the project and to Mandy Andrews from CET in particular who worked so hard to help us achieve our aims.

Finally, I want to thank the past and present members of the Committee who have put in so much work over the years. There is always room for more Committee members so there is no need to wait for the next AGM ....

With kind regards, Brian Spencer

East Kit Hill stack and engine house standing against the skyline on the grey, wet day of the site visit before the AGM, 22/6/02.



## THE LAST UNALTERED MINERS' COTTAGES FROM THE C19TH

The miners' cottages in Lockett are the last to have survived in Cornwall just as they would have been during Cornwall's mining boom period in the mid-1800s.

The lower, smaller cottage was the first to be built. It has one tiny room above the other with no link between them. The downstairs room has just an earth floor and one small open cooking hearth. The upper room was accessed separately from the top of the bank. Beyond a porch and lobby lay one tiny room with thick cob-like mortar on its curving walls.

When the second cottage was built, it butted onto the porch at the south end so it all sits on top of the bank as a single-storey two room cottage, with a lean-to at the south uphill end. (Interestingly enough the bank originally enclosed the Duchy Deer Park of Kerrybullock and the bluebell wood acquired with the cottages is a surviving remnant of the deer park.)

The second cottage has a central front door facing the road with a room on either side, but if one is in the north room, one can walk into the upper floor of the first cottage.

The lean-to at the south end appears to have been part of the original build, perhaps as a vegetable store off the kitchen with cloam oven (now blocked up). A later Victorian 'Callington range' is now to be found in this room. The lean-to might have been re-roofed in the C20th using second-hand timber and corrugated iron sheets. Behind it is a corrugated shed containing the privy, complete with wooden seat.

*Unique miners' cottages—the last remaining unaltered examples in Cornwall*



The south end of the upper cottage showing the lean-to and the privy shed to the left. Site visit before AGM on 22 June 2002

It is known that at one time 14 people lived in these cottages even before mining really developed. At the peak of the mining period, over one hundred people lived crowded in Lockett just in the stretch of road from these cottages to the centre of the village.

For years the cottages belonged to the farm opposite and were used for wet weather shelter activities and the garden has only been abandoned for the last 10 to 15 years. It is believed that Aubrey Penny, the son of the farmer, was born in the upper room in the early 1900s, because the farm was being renovated. In the Second World War it might have have been used for temporary lodgers.

It was when the Duchy of Cornwall submitted a planning application to convert and extend the cottages that moves were made to save them and ECHMA was born.

The aim is to restore the buildings and garden enough for people to be able to visit and get a feeling for what life might have been like to live in them, and to explain about the mining in this area. People will be able to visit in small groups since the cottage are fragile, and by prior arrangement ,so that parties can be properly guided round and given the full history.

Essential works on the cottages have now been completed, so current restoration will see them through any wet and windy weather over the winter months. All materials will carefully match the originals. Full restoration works should follow next summer, if all funding is in place by then—or sooner if possible!

In the meantime, look out for work going on, and if you would like to support or know more about ECHMA contact the Editor (details on page 4) or phone the Chairman on 01822 834294.

*“Exciting times are ahead, after years of planning and hoping, the sites have been purchased and restoration is underway.”*



The miners' cottages as they face the road. The lower cottage juts out beyond the upper one. The central door and windows of the upper cottage are here boarded up awaiting essential consolidation work on lintels. 22/6/02

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**ECHMA**

## AGM HELD AT STOKE CLIMSLAND OLD SCHOOL, 22 JUNE 2002

About 12 members gathered at 6.30 pm after visits to both sites. At the time of the AGM the purchase had recently been completed, and a builder was expected shortly to undertake some essential emergency works.

It was reported that the buildings had been successfully insured and the mine site fenced off. It was confirmed that the deeds would remain with CET solicitors since the Trust retained a legal interest in the site.

Brian Spencer was re-elected as Chairman, with Jim James as Vice Chairman, Caroline Vulliamy as Secretary, and Kim Tasker as treasurer. Philip Matthews agreed to continue serving on the Committee. Susan Pittman agreed to continue acting as membership secretary and editor of the newsletter. The Committee was thanked for its hard work and dedication.

There was discussion about the proposed boundaries of the World Heritage Status bid for Cornish mining in the Tamar Valley, and some suggestions were made for extending the boundaries.

It was agreed that ECHMA join the bid for funding of mining-heritage conservation, which would form part of a mining heritage trail, but no formal commitment for inclusion in the project would be made until more information was available.

### SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS-

The balance carried forward from last year was £560.08. The highest expenditure was incurred on insurance (about £460) and fencing (just over £1300), but the fencing outlay was offset by a matching grant from the County Environmental Trust. Membership and donations brought in £170, and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme £1436.25p (this is to cover costs of upkeep and management of the sites). The balance as of 22 June 2002 was £1185.78p. The cost of purchase of the sites was not included in the accounts as it was paid directly by the CET to the Duchy.

### Site visit to East Kit Hill Mine prior to the AGM:

Phil Matthews,  
Brian Spencer,  
Ken Pittman, Neil  
Stewart & wife,  
Peter Rundle,  
Anne & Arthur  
Eade, Caroline  
Vulliamy.



### PLEASE CAN YOU GIVE ANY HELP?

The Committee is a dedicated team, but needs more people to share in the decision making. There are also opportunities for people with practical, technical or specialist skills to become involved and all are urgently needed as restoration proceeds. Please contact the Editor if you would like to offer your services—anything from vegetation clearance, computer and clerical skills, to research is needed and a task can soon be found to suit!