

# ECMHA NEWSLETTER

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www.eastcornwallmininghistory  
association.org.uk

EAST CORNWALL MINING  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION  
CHARITY NUMBER 1082887

**Jim James**

Sadly ECMHA has recently heard of the death of Jim James, one of its founding members and for many years an invaluable committee member. An obituary will be included in the next Newsletter. Our condolences go to his wife, Daphne, and his family.

## FROM THE AGM OF 12 JULY 2008

This year the venue for the AGM was East Cornwall Farmhouse, Harrowbarrow, at the kind invitation of Ron and Lucy Thomas. About 12 gathered for the AGM in the spacious conservatory. The secretary reported that unfortunately the funding for the restoration of the cottages had hit problems.



*East Cornwall Farmhouse, thought to include the manager's home and couthouse, with the stack associated with smelting and refining processes beyond*

DEFRA had offered £68,000 if it was matched funded. However, the DEFRA grant excluded the Association from Heritage Lottery Funding and the Esmee Fairburn Trust, though enthusiastic, was unable to meet the figure. Discussions are ongoing with HLF as new rules now apply, and EFT to put in bids which meet the new criteria.

The meeting felt that if this fresh approach proved to be fruitless, a major reappraisal would need to be undertaken—perhaps, restoration in phases using local builders under specialist guidance.

Meanwhile, as an essential preliminary to restoration, recording the materials and artefacts on the ground surface has taken place. Volunteers, to whom ECMHA is most grateful, under the supervision of Robert Waterhouse, have worked hard making their way round the outside of the building and some of the inside. The working parties have gradually worked through successive levels down to the original floor, recording everything as they progressed.



*(left) A brass 4 dram weight found outside the cottages and (right) a flat earthenware bottle stamped with 'A Franklyn, Devonport' found tucked under the roof slates.*



Progress in installing a lightning conductor at East Kit Hill Mine had been held up, not by funding this time, but by planning requirements because it involves digging an 8 foot trench for the earth rods. There had been differing advice over whether listed building consent and an archaeological appraisal were required. It was hoped that all would soon be resolved.

# VISIT TO EAST CORNWALL FARMHOUSE

## 12 JULY 2008

*Few British mining fields can claim such a rich and diverse metalliferous mining heritage as the Tamar Valley which has a well documented mining history dating back to at least 1290*



*View from the road of East Cornwall Farmhouse c.1910 (left) with the stack and assay house (now garage) (right)*

After the AGM and a delicious tea served by Lucy, Ron gave us a guided tour of their property on the site of silver and lead mines which were worked by a succession of companies from 1810 to the 1880s.

The house used to be home to the manager, with the kitchen as the possible count-house—the original wicket window through which wages would have been paid surviving.

The garage, believed to have been the assay office, sadly altered before Ron and Lucy moved in, has remains of hearth and flues. Crucibles have been found nearby.

The neighbouring property, once three interconnected units down a slope, was thought to be where silver was to be smelted and refined until operations were abandoned in 1837— only a few silver mines in Cornwall undertook these processes on site.

After the tour Ron showed slides from his extensive collection.

Var-



*The stack, assay office and part of the farmhouse from the rear garden*

*ious artefacts found at the East Cornwall mine site*



*The former silver and lead smelting and refining works for East Cornwall Silver Mines Co. 1835-1837*



## TREASURER'S REPORT

The balance carried forward from 11 August 2007 was -£345.07. Total income of £8,177.89 included £270 from subscriptions, with three new life memberships, and £2,025.89 from donations. The payment of £1,882 from the Rural Payments Agency was an increase on last year because there were more visits to both sites. Total expenditure was £4,695.83 which included expenses for the 2007 AGM: insurances for Trustees Indemnity, Buildings, Employer's and Public liabilities; the restoration of the lintel at the cottages; Robert Waterhouse's archaeological recording report; Companies House annual return and administrative costs. The balance at 12 July 2008 was £3,827.13. The extra income over expenditure amounted to £3,482.06, but most of this is allocated towards installing the lightning conductor at East Kit Hill mine, at an estimated cost of £1,700 plus survey fees. This means that the balance in hand is notional and more funds are urgently required.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- If you know a group who would like to visit the cottages and/or East Kit Hill Mine please make contact (Chairman's details on p.4)
- If you would like to make a donation or have any ideas about how to raise immediate income, again please make contact
- If you would like to help gain grants by sending a letter of support, here is some guidance -

\*PLEASE HEAD THE LETTER 'TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN' SO THAT IT CAN BE USED IN ANY APPLICATIONS. \*INCLUDE AN OPENING TO INDICATE YOUR GENERAL BACKGROUND AND THEN \*STATE WHY YOU SUPPORT THE AIMS OF ECMHA - THESE AIMS INCLUDE \*RESTORING THE COTTAGES AND EAST KIT HILL MINE; \*MAKING THEM MORE ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH PRE-BOOKED VISITS AND \*EDUCATIONAL WORK TO SHOW THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF MINING IN THE AREA.

Please send your letter to the Chairman or the Editor whose details appear on the back page so that a file of support letters can be compiled.



*Balmaiden's costume and miner's helmet prepared by Lucy Thomas for an exhibition on the Kelly Bray mines at Callington Museum (above). Lucy and Caroline Vulliamy by ruin of a possible magazine (right)*

*The Tamar Valley has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site For the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape... There are about 850 sites worldwide, a recent addition being a silver mine in Japan*

**AUTUMN 2008**

## **THE MINERS' BARRACKS, LUCKETT**

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Look at Stoke Climsland Parish website's Local History section to find out more about the miners' barracks. Planning consent for conversion of the Luckett barracks into two houses has recently been given. The Miners' Barracks in Luckett are a unique reminder of the mining boom in the 19th century. They were built in the early 1870s when the mines were one of the largest producers of arsenic employing hundreds of people. The shortage of accommodation led to the erection of the barracks. They were built for 20 men, but were reported to have housed 50 men working in shifts, sleeping in one big space upstairs - amongst all of the arsenic dust and grime - and eating at one large table downstairs. No other miners barracks are believed to have survived this long and the Luckett Barracks have not been altered in any essential detail since originally constructed. (based on Stoke Climsland website information)

The building has recently been resold and it is to be hoped that it will now be kept as one, so that more original features might be retained.



**ECMHA**

### **COMMITTEE MATTERS -**

Members of the Committee are: Brian Spencer (Chairman), Caroline Vulliamy (Secretary), Kim Tasker (Treasurer) and Deri Parsons.

The Committee is small, and might not always meet the quorum, so **other volunteers are urgently needed.** Please make contact if you would like to find out more or if you are willing to offer your services.

[www.eastcornwallmininghistoryassociation.org.uk](http://www.eastcornwallmininghistoryassociation.org.uk)

### **2008/9 SUBSCRIPTION**

**A REMINDER IS ENCLOSED IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID £5 FOR 2008-2009. THE SUBSCRIPTION ROUGHLY RUNS FROM AGM TO AGM. LIFE MEMBERSHIP IS £50.**

**DONATIONS ARE ALSO WELCOME. PLEASE ASK FOR A GIFT AID FORM IF YOU ARE AN INCOME TAX PAYER BECAUSE IT MAKES THE GIFT GO FURTHER.**