

# NEWSLETTER - 2015

## EAST CORNWALL MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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

CHARITY NUMBER 1082887

### Installation of Brian's seat

The bench hand-carved and with an inscription to Brian will be inaugurated on Saturday, 24 October. There are no more details about the ceremony when going to print, so please check with Caroline beforehand. (01579 370411 - [carolinevulliamy@hotmail.com](mailto:carolinevulliamy@hotmail.com))

### Notes from the AGM, held at the Rifle Volunteer, St. Ann's Chapel, 18 July 2015

#### Committee matters

The Committee remains as follows:-

Caroline Vulliamy	Chairman
Kim Tasker	Treasurer
Penny Rowe	Committee Meetings Secretary
Terry Faull	Committee member - with brief to help with grant applications

**More Committee members would be welcome, so please make contact if you are interested.**

Susan Pittman will continue as Membership Secretary and Editor of the Newsletter.

#### New website

<http://mininghistoryeastcornwall.btck.co.uk> will replace the previous website. Several suggestions have been made about contents, which will be followed up in a focus Committee meeting. Members will be informed when the new website is fully functional.

#### Sale of Duchy mine sites

It is unclear whether Gunnislake Clitters has been sold. Two of the three sites at Kelly Bray (not Winsor) were sold beyond the price local fundraisers were able to achieve. Lucketts villagers have pledged a sum to purchase Lucketts mine site, to which ECMHA indicated its support.

#### Points of action

- **Tamar Valley AONB's 'Helping Hands for Heritage'** had employed Robert Waterhouse to give training in the archaeological recording of the cottages, and his report was awaited. Further sessions, including vegetation clearance, had been arranged for August.
- **13 & 19 OCTOBER WORKING PARTIES** - Contact AONB or Caroline for details.
- **A new carpenter and a plasterer have been found**, the former to restore the privy and finish the windows, and the latter to quote for lathe and plaster work to replicate original mortar mixes.



Miners' cottages, Lucketts,  
4 September 2014

- **Heritage Lottery Fund 'Sharing Heritage'** application for up to £10,000 has not yet been submitted, but was being attended to with urgency.
- **Work required at East Kit Hill mine** includes replacing the missing timber in the engine house, and some 'sensitive, sporadic repointing, with voids filled' be done on the stack.



**Donations towards these repairs would be gratefully received, and would mean that timely repairs now would save greater expenditure in the**

East Kit Hill mine stack, engine house and calciner, July 2015

### Notes from the Treasurer

#### **Income - Total £145.09**

- **Membership** - This stands at 40, but as most are life members only £40 was raised from subscriptions.
- **Donations** - £105.09
- (NB £1000 credit from Helping Hands for Heritage shown in the figures was due to be repaid from an anonymous donation.)

#### **Expenditure - Total £927.50**

- **Insurance** - NFU Mutual costs £69.34 a month. A cheaper alternative has yet to be found.
- **Administration** - This is related to Companies House accounts' requirement and insurance of directors and officers, and this year cost £231.45.

**BALANCE AT 5 SEPTEMBER 2014:   £1,070.02**

**BALANCE AT 18 JULY 2015:       £1,287.61**

**As can be seen the above is unsustainable, and the Association is surviving only on generous donations. Without effectively raising income for running expenses the whole project might founder.**

**Getting the grant application completed was considered to be a priority.**

**The wording on the Gift Aid form had been updated by HMRC, and the membership secretary would be sending the new form out to members. When filling it in, it was hoped that life members of long standing might consider sending in an extra donation.**

**The Committee will urgently address the problem of diminishing resources. After the last AGM one member submitted several suggestions for increasing funds, which the Committee is due to discuss further. PLEASE GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUND RAISING or SEND IN DONATIONS.**

**VISIT TO GUNNISLAKE CLITTERS MINE SITE - 18 July 2015**

The C19th to early C20th mine at Gunnislake Clitters, named such from 1877, has a wide range of surviving remains from an unusually long sequence of operational phases. The visible features and buildings are complemented by extensive dumps.

Five of us met for the downhill exploration of the vast site. At the top we parked the car near the pier of the East Cornwall Mineral Railway line which once crossed above the road at this point. Very prominent were the impressive stabilised buildings of Skinners, overlooked by a detached chimney 20m high with brick-built upper quarter.

Extraction of copper, tin, arsenic and wolfram, and the crushing and primary dressing of ore were focussed on Skinners shaft, at 505m below ground one of the deepest in the area.



(Left) Skinners pumping engine house once contained a 40-inch cylinder beam engine made by the Bedford Foundry in Tavistock in 1864.

(Right) Adjoined to the north of the pumping engine house was the boiler house with 3 boilers, two from Lancashire and the third from Cornwall, which

worked 3 engine houses, including the copper crusher almost 60m away which was connected by a steam flue.

(Right) This structure held a 24-inch beam whim engine to wind ore up the shaft and to power the small copper crusher.

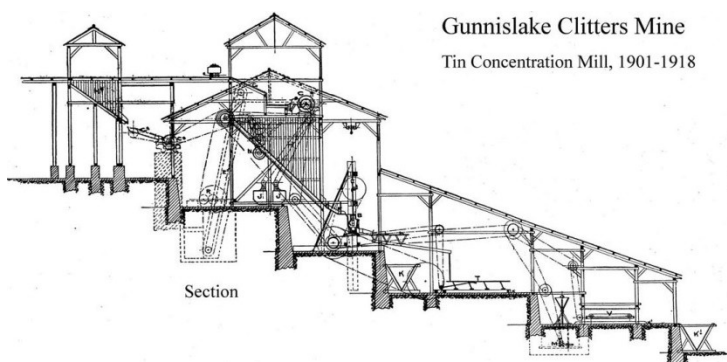
The extensive reddish tips of dressing floor slimes nearby at Skinners are aptly called Redsands. The Skinners site closed in 1889 at a time of widespread economic failure of Cornish mining.



At the side of a long steep downward slope towards the valley floor lies Gunnislake Clitters Mill where extensive remains of ore dressing and concentration and arsenic production survive.

The processing mill, powered by electricity, operated from c.1899-1918, and was regarded as the most up-to-date of its type. In this combined mill wolfram particles (which made tin brittle)

were drawn from tin by magnetic separators. The mill was arranged over a series of stepped levels on the steep hillside, which enabled ore to move by gravity from the top of the mill down to the bagging of finished tin and wolfram concentrates at the bottom.



Much of the mill was hidden by thick summer vegetation, but part of one level is just visible in the photo below.



Plan from website Industrial Archaeology of the Tamar Valley by Robert Waterhouse FSA

Overlooking the Tamar gorge we ended our descent at Whitesands with its distinctive white dumps.

Just visible among the trees below (right) is the riverside pumping engine house built in 1882. Associated with it were an adjacent boiler house, detached chimney and two settling tanks. This complex was to supply clean river water to Skinner's shaft boiler house and to increase water supply to the lower slope dressing floor.



**The whole of Gunnislake Clitters Mine site was scheduled as an Ancient Monument of national importance in 2003.**

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