

NEWSLETTER - 2016

EAST CORNWALL MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

<http://mininghistoryeastcornwall.btck.co.uk>

CHARITY NUMBER 1082887

Installation of Brian's seat

The solid oak bench, hand-carved with an inscription to Brian, was inaugurated at a gathering of friends on Saturday, 24 October 2015. An intertwined double ribbon band of copper sheet runs from the bench back and across the bench seat. It includes the hope that ECMHA will restore the miners' cottages to mark miners' exceptional skills used to exploit mines all over the world.



Notes from the AGM, held at the Tamar Valley Centre, Gunnislake, 23 July 2016



Committee matters

The Committee remains as follows:-

Caroline Vulliamy	Chairman
Kim Tasker	Treasurer
Penny Rowe	Committee Meetings Secretary
Terry Faull	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.
27 Old Chapel Road, Crockenhill, Swanley, Kent BR8 8LL (01322 669923)

New website (<http://mininghistoryeastcornwall.btck.co.uk>)

Terry Faull has made excellent progress with the new website which is now accessible, but still developing.

A Crowd Funding appeal has been put on the internet.

Purchase of Lockett Mine by the local community

Lockett villagers have formed Lockett Heritage Community Interest Company, and raised enough money to purchase the Lockett mine site from the Duchy of Cornwall. There might be some overlap with ECMHA, and Caroline had offered to lead guided walks round the mine site. Other local Duchy mine sites are as yet unsold.

Greenscombe Woods Logging Activity

There was concern that this might adversely affect the medieval tin streaming area and the remains of Wheal Benney, but these so far remain unaffected.

Points of action

- **Grants** - The Cornwall Community Foundation had offered to match the needs of ECMHA with suitable charities, of which 43 could be processed through CCF. An application to the Comic Relief Fund to cover core costs, such as insurance, would need to be made separately. The processes for grant applications were not straightforward, e.g. finding three quotes for some specialist work was extremely difficult. Caroline would be getting together with Terry Faull as a matter of urgency because grants for 2017 were being processed in September.
- **Tamar Valley AONB's 'Helping Hands for Heritage'** - Robert Waterhouse's report on the archaeological recording of the miners' cottages was still awaited.
- **Working Parties for clearance and other tasks** - Sessions, including vegetation clearance, were carried out last year. Others were being arranged fortnightly from August to October this year, hopefully with help from Plymouth Environmental Action and the Tamar Valley AONB Volunteers.
- **Restoration of the privy** - Money had been donated for this, but the new builder had been unable to fit in the work until September
- **Work required at East Kit Hill mine** includes replacing the missing timber in the engine house, and some 'sensitive, sporadic repointing, with voids filled' to be done on the stack. An engineering contact has offered to assess the cost of the works free of charge.



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

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

Notes from the Treasurer

Income - Total £1,377.44

- **Income from membership** - 33 members (20 Life members). £70 was raised from annual subscriptions, one member paying for 5 years.
- **Donations** - £1,307.44, which included £1,000 to repair the toilet building, the cover of 4 months insurance, and £25 following appeal to life members.
- (N.B. £1000 credit from Helping Hands for Heritage remains in the account until Robert Waterhouse submits his final report)

Expenditure - Total £934.20

- **Insurance** - NFU Mutual cost £70.61 a month, but has now been increased to £73.81. However, a cheaper alternative has yet to be found.
- **Administration** - Costs of £80.38 related to Companies House accounts' requirement and insurance of directors and officers (which had increased).

BALANCE AT 18 JULY 2015: £1,287.61

BALANCE AT 22 JULY 2016: £1,730.85

- **Although, on paper, the charity has £443.24 more than last year, the balance has been distorted by the donation of £1,000 yet to be spent.**
- **As can be seen the above is unsustainable, and at the AGM there was discussion about the future of the Association, because without effectively raising income for running expenses the whole project is close to foundering.**

Finalising grant applications was considered to be a priority, and it was decided to review the situation at the next AGM in the light of any progress in this regard.

Many thanks to members for updating the Gift Aid forms - Gift Aid will now be claimed for the last four years.

PLEASE GIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR FUND RAISING
or SEND IN DONATIONS

(Caroline Vulliamy, 01579 370411 - carolinevulliamy@hotmail.com
2 Rose Cottage, Lucket, Cornwall PL17 8NJ)

The Archaeology of Mining and Quarrying in England: A Research Framework of
the Archaeology of the Extractive Industries in England

Collated and edited by Phil Newman

(NAMHO 2016)

A copy of this book has been donated by member Dr Peter Cloughton, who was Project Director, and main contributor to 5 chapters.

This is a comprehensive overview of mining, quarrying and associated infrastructure. The book aims to assess current knowledge; to formulate strategies for future research; to formulate future conservation strategies; to help raise general awareness of the significance of the extractive industries. This book is well worth adding to the bookshelf.

(Downloads can be made from NAMHO website)

VISIT TO OKEL TOR - 23 July 2016

We are grateful to member Nick Cole for giving us access to part of the site on private property. For further details and for holiday lets at Okel Tor - www.tinmine.com



View down river from site

OKEL TOR - a corruption of 'Tokelyng Torre' (Register of the Black Prince, 1351) in relation to Tamar fisheries. It is presumed to refer to a prominent outcrop of exposed rock in the river bank. The present form of the name can be traced back to 1813.

(Kenneth Brown & Bob Acton, Exploring Cornish Mines, V, Landfall Publications 2001. Walk 1: Okel Tor Mine, pp. 10-35)

In its heyday Okel Tor was one of the most important mines near Calstock.

- Dates from the 1840s
- Most prosperous period was from 1851
- Okel Tor Mining Company exploited lead, then copper and finally tin and arsenic
- 1850 a working quay capable of taking vessels up to 200 tons built, saving cost of horse-hauling to Calstock
- 1853 a 50-inch engine erected
- By 1864 107 employees (surface and underground workers)
- Engine shaft had reached 80 fathoms below adit
- A rotary engine drove the copper crusher as well as winding from the shaft



The boiler house chimney with miners' dry to the left. The fine chimney is unusual, with 2 types of brick (lower red; upper blue, probably produced from local brickworks). An early plan shows it in this form, rather than height being increased later to improve draught.



The Count House



The smithy



The Crusher House for copper dressing floor
- Nick Cole in the doorway

Stamps and whim engine house (1881-1883) with stack above. Arsenic processing buildings below



- In 1870s heavy expenditure involved installing arsenic calciners and flues
- Tin was also discovered and by 1872 there were tin dressing floors including a 22-inch stamps engine with 24 heads of stamps
- Long tramming underground hampered recovery of the tin ore
- Heavy debts incurred and copper production ceased
- 1874 the mine was sold
- A couple of years later new company produced arsenic 1876-1881
- New shafts sunk for copper and arsenic (west end), tin (east end)
- Okel Tor arsenic production peaked 1883, tin and copper yields disappointing
- 1885 Company wound up
- Another company took over 1886/7 but mine finally closed.



One of 4 round buddles used
in the dressing of tin process



The jigger house with distinctive slit windows

Overall Production

13,300 tons of 4% copper ore
5,800 tons of arsenic from copper ore
200 tons of black tin
10,600 tons of arsenic pyrites from tin ore
(from interpretation board on site)

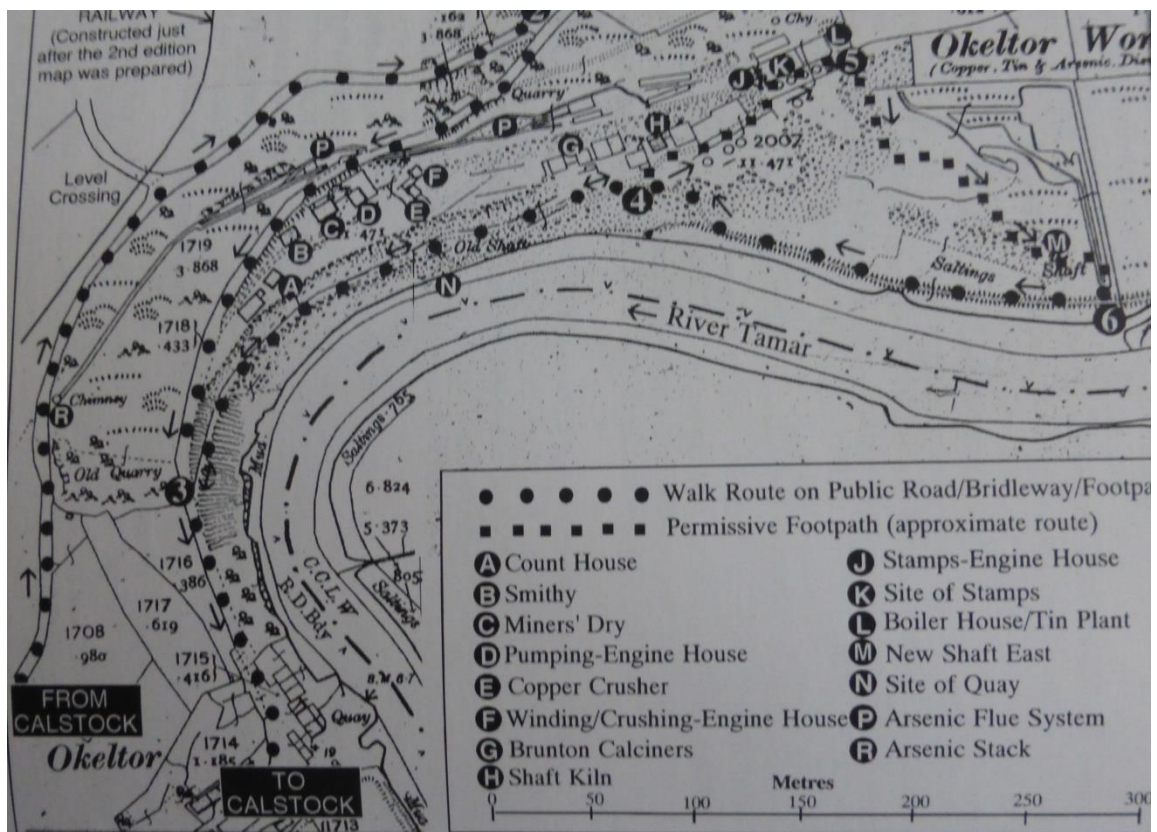
Sources:

Industrial Archaeology of the Tamar Valley, Frank Booker (David & Charles, revised 1971)
Exploring Cornish Mines V, Kenneth Brown & Bob Acton (Landfall Publications 2001)
www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1140215



View towards Calstock from Okel Tor showing site of medieval quay

Exploring Cornish Mines V, Kenneth Brown & Bob Acton (Landfall Publications 2001)



View



Okel Tor Mine photographed from the west in about 1905. Left to right: count house; part of gable end of dry to right of stack; pumping-engine house; house for winding/crusher engine; crusher house; stamps stack and engine house; gable end of tin plant. (Courtesy John Snell)

Views of Devon Mining Sites from Okel Tor



Rumleigh brick and arsenic works. Pioneer of brick and tile making, Thomas Westlake, took over Rumleigh where deposits of boulder clay produced a finer quality of brick (c.1879-1914). Later works used for arsenic refining (c.1885).



Gawton mine

Old copper mine restarted 1846.

Worked until 1893 but never really successful.

Prominent slanting stack put up in 1890s, said to slant because mortar on south side dried out before that on the north. Arsenic flue running up to it thought to be longest in the country. Dumps are a feature of the landscape (perhaps because treated for copper precipitate in 1920s). It produced arsenic between 1881 and 1902, these buildings are chief remains today. The main copper lode passes from Okel Tor under the river to Gawton.

We had a really worthwhile visit to Okel Tor chosen this year because the site had recently been made more visible and easy to understand - Heritage England having just funded clearance of vegetation which was overwhelming the very interesting set of spoil heaps and some of the buildings, prior to proposed consolidation works to the delicate Crusher House remains and the boiler / jigger house ('L' on map).