

EAST CORNWALL MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER - 2020

**<http://mininghistoryeastcornwall.btck.co.uk>
CHARITY NUMBER 1082887**

ANNUAL REPORT from Chairman, Caroline Vulliamy

Dear All,

This report would have been given at our AGM this summer but, in line with so many organisations, our AGM is on hold for a little longer! And so we'd like to send it to you now.

We had a fascinating year up to the summer AGM of 2019 – Susan has already reported on our riverside AGM walk below Gunnislake. We then took a gap to concentrate on raising funds, which included a second Jumble Sale and running two refreshment stands at apple pressing events – thank very much Kim Tasker and Simon Streatfield for cooking such wonderful apple cakes!

Towards the end of the year the final scenes were shot for the short film being made for Stoke Climsland Parish Archive about childrens' lives during the 1800s. This used the miners' cottages as a set, and also part of Lockett Mine and the village street. It was great fun for us and for the children involved. We are really looking forward to seeing the results once cutting and editing are finished!

In the new year, we were about to launch our next programme with two more talks –an update by **Jeff Harrison** on the new mining venture evolving at **Redmoor Mine, Kelly Bray**, and something quite different – **Jill Lane** was going to give us a slide talk about the **Tharsis Mines in Spain** which she has visited and where the builder of Tharsis House (Calstock) had made his fortune – when lockdown overtook us!

Another talk to look forward to when we can resume our programme, is promised by **Malcolm Gould** of Wheal Martyn Museum. He is China Clay Heritage Officer and Bard of the Cornish Gorsedh and will tell us about the china clay industry, followed by an invitation for a guided visit with him to **Wheal Martyn Museum!** This is in a totally different area of Cornwall and should be a real treat! It has been offered by two of our own members in exchange for a talk which was given by me to their Old Cornwall Society at Par.

Since the last AGM we have been trying to keep our heads above water by applying for as many grants that ECMHA might qualify for. One seeks a small grant to cover our overheads (mainly insurance), and another is a larger grant to cover the remaining renovation works needed for the cottages.

The second would pay for the external stonework, internal timberwork and plastering – all to match the originals, as befits a project which is about this rare surviving unaltered example of c. 1800 vernacular architecture, as well as the social history demonstrated by these simple homes.

We have had extra specialist help from a historic building engineer, and are still seeking more quotes for the work as I write. Applications are going to three different bodies – keep your fingers crossed that we may be lucky with one!

The smaller grant would be multi-faceted, and, if successful, would pay not only for our regular overheads, but a brand new programme of guided walks around our local sites, and talks too – but on-line until we can get out again in groups, however small. People will be able to follow the routes we video (in their own bubbles) afterwards. The talks will be zoomed or ‘webinars’, straight to your living room; the walks will be short videos made while exploring or explaining local mine sites. Terry Faull (see below) has already promised to give one of them. So watch this space – we’ll let you know as soon as these are programmed.

“Demelza’s People” by Terry Faull (ECMHA member and retired trustee)

This is a superb new book (it must have kept Terry very busy during the lockdown) covering the whole mining story from a human angle. It’s full of insights and nitty-gritty information, explaining the system by which the mining industry was run right through to what it was like for the miners! Throughout we find lovely examples of his uncle David Faull’s work – carefully drawn and painted views of mining scenes as they were in the mid to late 1900s which are full of atmosphere and life – I love their gentle colours.

Do get hold of a copy – you’ll enjoy it! (a very good Christmas present, too).

Copies (£6.25 including postage) and details from this email-address:

treslothan1@gmail.com

RETROSPECTIVE from Susan Pittman

Since I did not come to Cornwall to take new photographs, I thought it would be interesting to look back through previous ECMHA Newsletters and recall some of the past venues and activities. I have copies of the Newsletter from 2002 - so there are about eighteen Newsletters to look through!! This has made me nostalgic, but instead of compensating me for not going to Cornwall this year, it has created a greater yearning than ever!

VISITS on same day as AGM

- 2002 Miners' cottages & East Kit Hill Mine
- 2003 Holmbush & Winsor Mines
- 2004 Wheal Benny, Greenscombe Wood
- 2005 Jopes & Broadgate Engine House
- 2006 Wheal Sheba (1)
- 2007 Wheal Sheba (2)
- 2008 East Cornwall Farmhouse, Harrowbarrow
- 2009 East Kit Hill Mine
- 2010 Wheal Benny, Greenscombe Wood
- 2011 North Hooe mine, Bere Alston, Devon
- 2012 Lockett Mine
- 2013 Kit Hill
- 2014 Devon Great Consols Mine, Devon
- 2015 Gunnislake Clitters Mine
- 2016 Okel Tor, Calstock
- 2017 Calstock Quays
- 2018 Lockett Mine mineral separation area
- 2019 Gunnislake riverside

In making the selection of photographs I have decided to include as much variety as possible to avoid a trail of engine houses or stacks. So the choice is quixotic and also somewhat dependent on the quality of my photography, which is not of the highest standard.

I will start by paying tribute to Kim Tasker, our treasurer, and Caroline Vulliamy, secretary and now chairman, who have long been the driving force of ECMHA. Sadly, Brian Spencer, an able chairman for many years, died in 2012. Many others have also added their guidance and support over the years, for which heartfelt thanks.



Brian Spencer, chairman, & Caroline Vulliamy, secretary, at 19 June AGM 2004.

It is appropriate to begin with property owned by ECMHA.

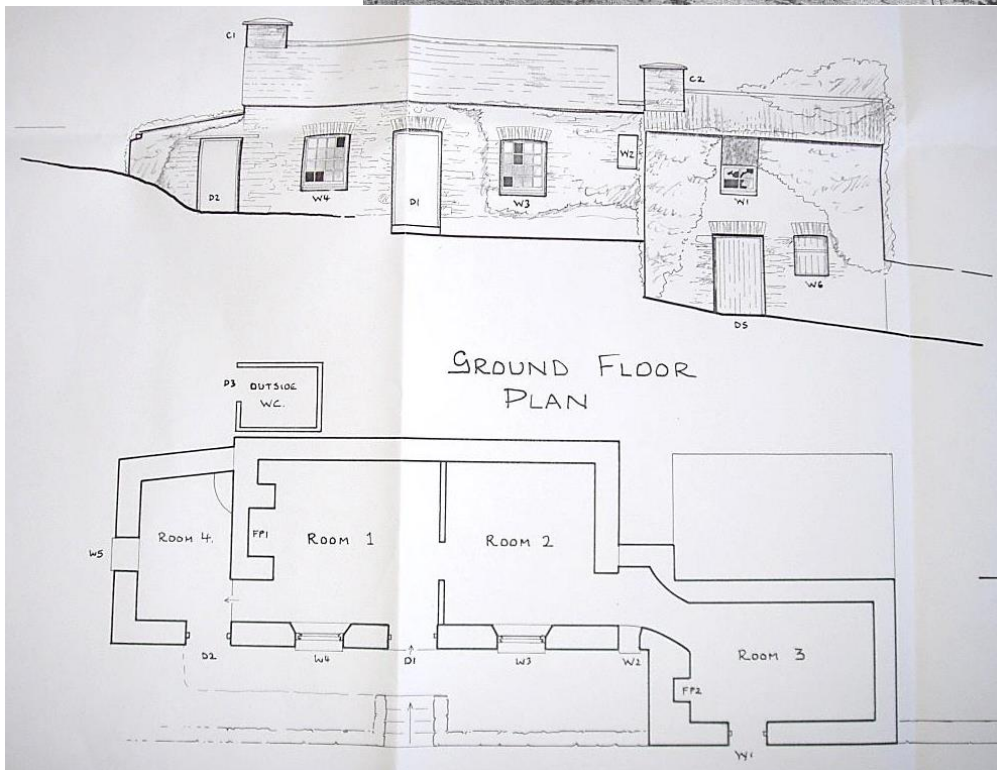
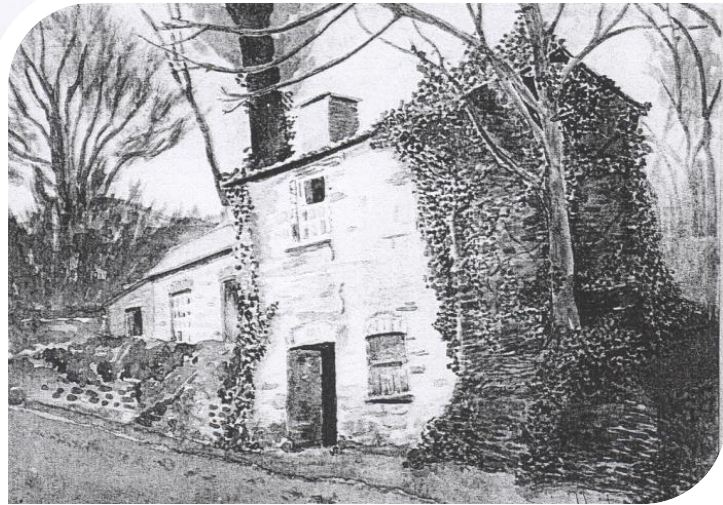
Miners' cottages, Luckett



The Cottages, July 2018



The miners' cottages painted by Valerie Walford in the 1990s. These are watercolours and now gifted to ECMHA. I copied them in black and white at the time of the donation, and have no access at present to scan coloured versions.



Plan of the miners' cottages, and details of the frontage on to the road.



Interior from the lower Room 3 and into the higher level of Room 2 with Room 1 beyond, July 1919 - shown during a phase of restoration of the door and window in the lower cottage.

Restored window frame in the top cottage with some of the original glass saved, July 2012.





The outside W.C. parting from the back wall of the cottages, July 2012.

The W.C. now upright and stabilised, September 2017.



The original W.C. seat in place, July 2012. After clearance a bucket was found beneath.

Bench in the garden in memory of Brian Spencer, October 2016.





The cottages sit in a wider area of land, with a mineshaft in woodland, and a garden strip alongside the road, September 2017. The shed was erected to provide shelter for visiting groups. At the same time the mineshaft was fenced off with warning notices. The garden shown with Brian's seat.

East Kit Hill Mine

September 2017





The boiler house and stack at East Kit Hill Mine, July 2011. In 2009 a lightning conductor was fitted to the stack. The work showed that there were two tunnels linking the boilers to the stack. One had been blocked as it was superseded by the second required after the boilers had been enlarged.



Broadgate engine house and stack before and after lightning strike, July 2005 & July 2006. This event made the installation of the lightning conductor at East Kit Hill Mine more pressing.



Collection of miners' tools found at **East Cornwall Mine, Harrowbarrow**, shown by Ron & Lucy Thomas, July 2008.



East Cornwall Farmhouse, Harrowbarrow, from the road c.1910, with stack and assay house. Lead and silver were mined here (1810-1880s), and unusually were also smelted and refined on site.



The impressive wheel pit at **Wheal Benny, Greenscombe Wood**, visited in 2004 and 2010. Here in July 2010 - you might just be able to see the head and shoulders of a member looking in at the far end.



Calstock Quays, September 2017. Lime kiln incorporated into incline railway support & incline railway bridging the road. Most lime kilns date from 1770-1830, lime was roasted in kilns to be spread on fields to counter acid soil.



ECMHA members on the dam at **Wheal Sheba, Luckett**. The sluice gate is at the far end. The reservoir upstream is now largely overgrown with water-loving plants, August 2007.

Caroline Vulliamy with Deri & Jan Parsons looking at the Count House of Sheba mine, July 2005.





New Mill, Lucket

After the departure of Miss Gilbert, but before modernisation, August 1989. Massive buttresses indicate the strength once required to support ore processing stamps from the early 1500s.



New Mill after modernisation, with much of its original Tudor character lost, July 2007.



Mortar stones on site worn away by the stamps, August 2007.



North Hooe Farmhouse, Bere Alston, visited during an excursion into Devon, courtesy of Penny Rowe, July 2011.



Inside the remains of North Hooe mine engine house. The lead and silver mine was at its peak in 1840s, and it closed down in the 1860s.



Kit Hill summit in contrasting weather to visit to North Hooe on p.12, July 2013.



Looking north-east on Kit Hill from the southern finger dump to the inclined plane leading to the track and then overhead cable. This ran over **East Kit Hill Mine**, the stack of which is visible, July 2013.



Whim engine house,
Gunnislake Clitters Mine, July 2015. This structure held a 24-inch beam whim engine to wind ore up the shaft and to power the small copper crusher. The mine closed in 1889.



Another trip into Devon to **Devon Great Consols**, September 2014. The 1920s arsenic condensing chambers provide an iconic image. Arsenic bearing rock could be refined into 99% pure arsenic.



The modern weir at **Gunnislake** marking the end of the tidal zone of the Tamar, July 2019. Seen on the riverside walk of Gunnislake's industrial past.

The first bridge across the River Tamar from Plymouth was built in the sixteenth century at Gunnislake. This seven-arched granite bridge was built of large regular granite blocks and was considered by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner to be the best of the Cornish granite bridges, July 2019.



ECMHA group investigating one of the gravity separation platforms at **New Consuls Mine, Luccett**, July 2018.



One of 4 round buddles used in the dressing of tin process at **Okel Tor, Calstock**, July 2016. Hosted by Nick Cole.



The jigger house with distinctive slit windows. After the crusher, the ore was taken to the jigger house where the task of separating the heavier ore from the lighter waste rock began.

... And here I will stop. I do hope the summer of 2021 will see me back in Cornwall to gather more happy memories and to meet some of you again in person. In the meantime I hope you all fare well ...

Susan Pittman, 27 Old Chapel Road, Crockenhill, Swanley, Kent BR8 8LL.

Keep an eye on the website for updates.

Ideas for fund-raising and help at events would be much appreciated.

Contact Kim Tasker: kimtasker67@hotmail.com