



KOWETHAS TREVITHICK  
NEWSLETTER 157 AUTUMN 2012



The lettering on the Holman's No. 3 works - old and new.

# CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

## Out with the bath water ...

Along with other organisations that hold similar views, this society steers away from politics. Nevertheless, how much we view them from afar, politics and the politicians who wield them can have a considerable influence on the support received from local and national authorities.

We know of changing economic circumstances and demands on funding as cash is diverted to activities like the Olympics. But we should sometimes look at the goings on nearer to home, these might make us aware of factors that could change the nature of what we do, enable us to understand why we are sometimes frustrated in our attempts to achieve something that we clearly think ought to be done.

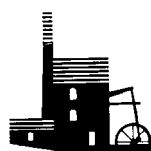
As this is being written it is difficult to miss the disputes between Cornwall's top politicians that are splashed across the front pages of our newspapers. Many of us have known of the unrest surrounding the position of Leader in Cornwall Council's corridors of power but recent events over plans to transfer public services worth hundreds of millions of pounds to the private sector, something that is reputed to be following instruction from central government, plans to build a further 48,000 new homes in the area, the on/off decisions over the disposal of waste and the recent machinations about the archive centre have caused many members at County Hall to take sides, even beyond party boundaries.

While attention is focused on these major matters and politicians are aiming for personal achievement prior to next year's council elections, the more fragile items on the agendas that we hold dear can so easily be swept away; what, if any, support might there be in the future for Cornwall's cultural enlightenment. While the present administration has its faults one should look at possible changes to come and wonder if the strength of Cornwall's way of life, its minority organisations, are likely to benefit.

**Philip M Hosken**

# EDITORIAL

Wearing another hat, I am a Cub Scout leader and earlier this year I took the Society's model of the Puffing Devil along to a Pack evening and got the Cubs to draw it. Some of their resultant sketches suffuse this newsletter. Kingsley, as Trevithick Day Chairman had the difficult task of judging their efforts.



**Colin French**

**Copy date for next newsletter: Dec. 15th**

**Established 1935**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The Ormerod 'Butterfly' hook

Being a Lancastrian, I have always thought that we have very much in common with Cornwall, a history of mining and engineering and a liking of good food -- needed to keep the heavy industry going. Getting back to the mines, it would be interesting to know if any of the Cornish headframes were fitted with the Ormerod detaching hook which prevented an overwind on the ascending cage.

Developed and first used in my hometown of Atherton it is still used worldwide, and is credited with the saving of many lives in the mining industry. The extract below comes from an article on the subject, published by Steel Times International, editor Dr Tim Smith.

### Harry Hodson

A common cause of casualties in coal mines prior to 1870 was where the ascending cage in a pit shaft was overwound into the headgear. This problem was solved by Edward Ormerod (1834-1894), engineer at the Gibfield Colliery, Atherton, Lancashire. In 1868 he patented a device known as the detaching hook, which separated and safely held the cage from the winding rope when an overwind took place. Local miners soon dubbed it the 'Butterfly' which it resembled. The principle of its working is simple, the device

was fixed to the shackle to which the winding rope was attached. When an overwind occurred the Butterfly entered a bell shaped casting which caused it to be squeezed. This action released the winding rope from the cage, which was now safely secured to the shaft. At its first public demonstration in 1867 the press reported the following:

"A crowd of several hundred mineworkers and engineers, etc. were assembled around one of the shafts of the Gibfield Colliery, Atherton, Lancashire. They were there to watch Mr. Edward Ormerod demonstrate the working of his detaching hook, Mr. Ormerod entered the cage and his assistant tried to follow him, but was prevented from doing so by his master. The cage was lowered into the shaft for several feet and instructions given to the engineman to reverse the engine and wind at full steam. The cage quickly ascended past the surface of the shaft and into the headgear, from which the device was activated. The winding rope was detached and thrown clear and the cage was firmly secured, from which Mr. Ormerod emerged much to the relief of a cheering crowd."

Edward Ormerod patented his 'Butterfly' against similar devices which began to be made, but these proved to be less reliable than his invention, which is still being used today worldwide (the photo above comes from Edward Ormerod & Co. Ltd, the other is his headstone).



## FROM BREWERY TO ARCHIVE CENTRE

It's been well known that the current Cornwall Record Office has been bursting at the seams for years; stories of being choosy when accepting further records and items of Cornwall's past are probably true. Some years ago there was a suggestion that the Cornwall Studies Centre in Redruth should be extended into the Market Car Park at the rear but that came to nothing.

The problem could not go away and, when Cornwall Council took it up again nearly every town and village in Cornwall offered to accommodate a new Cornish Archive and Records Office. The new complex was intended to not only house the former CRO but incorporate the Studies Centre and offer meeting and other facilities.

Each application was studied on its merits and a short list of three,

Hayle, Redruth and St Austell, proposed for final consideration. Various criteria were considered including cost, location, ease of access and economic impact on the locality. Hayle was dismissed after negotiations with ING, the land owners. The two remaining sites put up strong cases for consideration. Cornwall Council owned the proposed site at St Austell and that location was closer to the centre of Cornwall.

While the centre would not generate a nett income, the tax payer would have to continue paying for its operating costs; its presence was seen as a fillip to local trade and would bring an estimated £1.7m in benefits to the area. While this would have been a total increase for St Austell the possible loss of the Cornwall Studies Centre was described by a local politician as a 'devastating blow' for Redruth. In the past St Austell has had the benefit of the Eden Project on its doorstep and the town centre has been rebuilt twice since a war in which no bombs fell on it.



Refrigeration compressor by J & E Hall of Dartford in the old brewery.

Of course, these were not the only considerations on this subject made by councillors and committees at CC. The council's officers voted for Redruth and its scrutiny committee then rejected that suggestion by 11 votes to one. Next, it went to a three hour meeting of the council's Cabinet and that chose Redruth. All this has happened at a time of considerable controversy about decisions being made in CC whilst its leader's position is under threat.

Negotiations have taken place with the owner of the site, Mr Horace Yeo of Hong Kong, and the work by the Culture Team at CC has started on an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £5 million to go with the £3 million contribution from CC.

Members will remember the work done by this Society in saving C18th leases and inventories from the former brewery site as the saleable machinery was being removed. These are presently held in the CRO and their existence, along with numerous other interesting items acquired at the same time has been mentioned to officers at CC. Incorporation of some of these items in the new Archive Centre will serve to remember the second oldest working brewery in the country that started in 1742. The future of the rare, remarkable Junkers aircraft hanger on site will now have to be considered.

P.M.H.

## RECENT ACQUISITION AT LEVANT

On 24th May whilst guiding at Levant I was presented with an interesting First World War document by a visitor.

The document, addressed to Levant Mine is headed Defence of the Realm Regulations (Regulation 41A) and appears to be dated 1916. It demands the name, address and age of all male employees between the ages of 18 & 41 years. The form has been completed

by the mine company giving ages, occupations, whether married or single etc. It would appear that some of the men had certificates of exemption from military service granted by a "Mining Court". Do any society members have knowledge of such a court and how it operated? The original document is very fragile and has been deposited with Cornwall Record Office in Truro who have provided me with a photocopy.

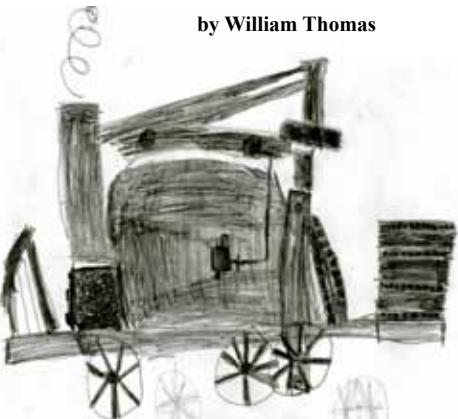
I have also acquired some literature dated 1947 and 1953 in respect of the Cornish Engines Preservation Society including a letter hand written by W. Tregoning Hooper which details membership numbers at that time. If we have a Society archive or any member is interested I am willing to pass these on for safe keeping.

A recent eBay purchase; the Mining Year Book for 1940 in excellent condition. Amongst the many advertisements is one of particular interest.

"William Rich and Sons, Redruth, Cornwall. Established 1876, Mining Engineers & Merchants". There follows a very extensive list of goods and services offered, ranging from candles, carbide, explosives, tools, steam engines to provision of plant and labour. Is anything known of this company and its history?

**Tom BARR,**  
Mitcham Surrey & Levant Mine.

by William Thomas



## LEVANT REPORT

The steam whim has been running very well during the current busy season. Considering that it was built by Harvey & Co. 172 years ago and is run six days a week, it does very well. All recognition must be given to the volunteers in keeping the engine in good condition and to the guides for keeping the visitors entertained. The evening candlelit steaming sessions in conjunction with Geevor Mine with walks and talks hosted by Mark Harandon have had a mixed attendance. Some evenings have had to be cancelled, whilst others have been quite well attended. Last years visitors numbers were about 22,000 and it looks like they will be exceeded this year with an expected figure of about 28,000.

Excavations have started on the old Geevor spoil heap where the pumping engine boiler house was situated. We are hoping that this may reveal the original footings for the boiler and other interesting features. It is believed that the footings for the capstan are also buried under spoil, but that remains to be seen.

We have not given up on the possibility of acquiring a working steam pumping engine to erect in the derelict engine house adjacent to the whim. The Carpalla engine which is held in storage by the London Science Museum for over 60 years is highly suitable, and could be run at alternate times to the whim if only they can be persuaded to part with it, and The National Trust are prepared to fund some of the costs also. Watch this space!

Tom Barr and I recently visited Milton Thomas just prior to his 91st birthday. Sadly he can no longer get to Levant but he was very pleased to see us and we are forever grateful for his expertise and guidance in restoring and maintaining the Levant engine.

**Ron Flaxman**

## TREVITHICK SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

Our latest Society book was published on 22nd August. From Holman Brothers to Compair: The Story of Camborne's Engineering Heritage, is dedicated to our former Chairman, the late and much missed Clive Carter. Incorporating the information in Clive's 2001 Holman volume, this new history, prepared by Peter Joseph, not only brings the story right up to the present day but also looks at the wider activities associated with Holman Brothers and some of the other companies, most notably Climax, which came together as Compair.

The book contains some 200 illustrations, many previously unpublished, and with the permission of the Cuneo Estate, features some delightful colour plates and pencil sketches by Terence Cuneo from Holman's own private history of 1951. From Holman Brothers to Compair is a large format paperback of 342 pages and costs £18.50. It will be available from local outlets and direct from Tormark at St. Day.

**Graham Thorne**



by James Woodward

## PUFFING DEVIL

by Oscar Fletcher

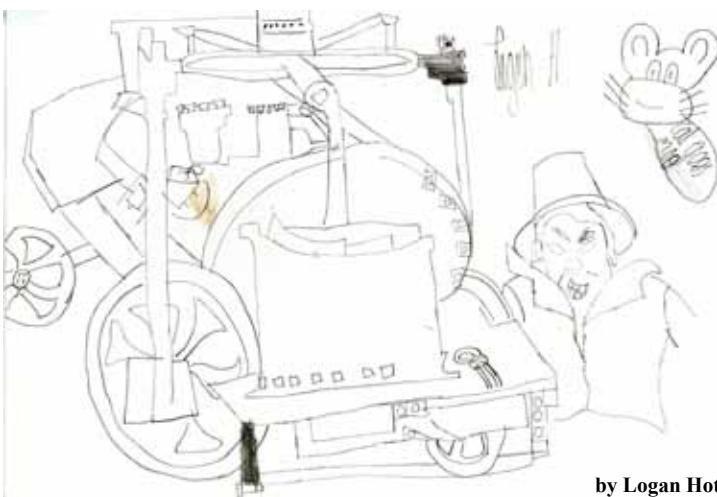
Following its appearance at East Pool Mine and Troon Mid Summer Festival at the end of June the Puffing Devil's next outing was at the West of England Steam Society's Show held at Stithians Show Ground.

The first of the three days was a total wipe out with the arrival of heavy rain and gale force winds. In fact the weather was so bad that it was pointless even lighting a fire. However, the second day saw a marked improvement. The engine steamed well, with Mark, James, Daniel and myself in attendance. Sunday, the last day, was best of all. Colin and I worked the engine. Our pitched location was next to the Trevithick Society tent and just inside the main entrance, giving us a high profile slot with everyone passing us as they entered or left the showground.



With the exception of the weather, this summer's steaming has been trouble free. The fire bars, half of which were replaced last year, are working well and the fire box ends which are not structural but loosely held in place, are reusable for next year.

**John Woodward**  
Custodian



by Logan Hotton

## THE TREWHELLA MODELS MODEL RESTORATION PT. 1

All the effort that I made to bring the models up to working order seems a little irrelevant now that Geevor has decided that they can only have them as a static display. However, they did need cleaning up, rust removing and repainting. This is really all I did until we moved from the flat in Palma in 2003 to live in the country in the middle of Mallorca. Then I was able to augment our furniture with what I had in store in Devon which, more importantly for the models, included all my machine tools! In our new residence, I was now able to set up a workshop in the basement. From that time on, the emphasis of the work on the models was very much on making them 100% operational. That does not mean that the cosmetic side was in anyway ignored or neglected.

### INITIAL RESTORATION WORK

As already mentioned, when initially I undertook the restoration work, we were still living in a flat, and the nearest to a workshop that I had was the office that I used for paperwork and drawings for the repair work I did on yachts around Mallorca, this to keep me out of mischief in retirement. Any machining of parts and anything other than simple carpentry and fitting work would have to be farmed out. For my first job I took the incomplete beam engine pump and the boiler water feed pumps.

### BEAM ENGINE PUMP

During my visit to Geevor in March 2003, our discussions had resulted in an objective, not only to restore the pump but to make an installation drawing of the pump in association with the beam engine which would include mounting the pump and the necessary pump rod to connect it to the beam. I had intended to show a picture of this drawing, but the combination of photographing and reduction did not produce a good illustration. To make the



connections a bit like the real thing, I used details from pictures in the Perran Foundry Catalogue republished by The Trevithick Society. The plunger for the pump and flanges, duplicates of those used by my uncle for the 1-inch rising main from the pump, were made for me by a small machine shop in Palma, except that the flanges were made for the present standard 26 mm copper water pipe. The completed assembly is shown in Picture 1 on facing page.

The pump is mounted on a platform in the shaft and you can see that the extension rod of the plunger is supported by a bearing mounted further up the shaft. The pump rod is made from a piece of ½-inch square blacksmith's iron rod and not wood, as the extra weight is necessary with such a short pump rod to return the engine piston to the top of the cylinder for the next power stroke. This pump rod is connected to the plunger assembly by three U bolts and a wooden spacer. Note the stainless steel water container acting as the pump sump. I was obviously aiming at low maintenance! Because of the shortness of the pump rod there had to be a simple flexible junction to allow for the arc of the beam. This is not shown in the picture, as at that time it was not made. Normally, a mine pumping engine has no Watts linkage at the pump end of the beam, as the pump rod is many fathoms long before there is any restraint on it. However, if you ever go to the Crofton Pumping station on the Kennet and Avon canal where the pump rods are quite short, you will notice that there are also Watts linkages at the pump end of the beams. I hoped that Geevor staff would make the "U" channel open sided shaft look a bit like the real thing. Really, the pump should be down a floor in the basement! When my uncle had the models installed at my grandmother's home in St Ives, the pump was, in fact, in the basement a floor down. I have all the bits to make a balance bob, but without any encouragement I never moved on it! Anyway, in this case it is irrelevant and would be purely decorative.

## BOILER WATER FEED PUMPS

The water feed pumps were removed from their base which was stripped and repainted and the pumps cleaned up and painted where necessary. The missing steam cock was replaced and a new single steam feed pipe feeding both pumps made. On the water side only the water supply pipe needed some minor attention; the output side was fine. Having no air or steam supply after re-assembly, I was unable to test them. However, when tested on air after our move, as expected, they worked well. They are shown in Picture 2 below.



## NEW ITEMS FOR REFURBISHMENT

I had decided that a visit to Geevor would be timely in the autumn after the summer season finished, as I hoped that such a visit might create some drive to find a new site for the models. How naïve can one be! They never got round to finding a new site for the models till 2011. Anyway, it provided an opportunity for me to collect the small twin cylinder generator and the mill engine for renovation. Both these items, although looking awful, seemed to be mechanically sound so just right for cosmetic renovation.

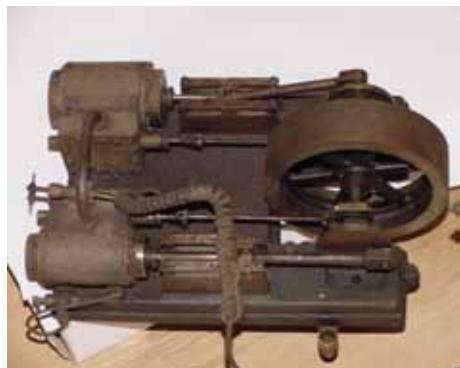
## SMALL TWIN CYLINDER GENERATOR

When I selected this unit, Geevor staff asked that I ensure that it was a 12 volt generator, so what started as just a tidy-up ultimately resulted in a larger project, as the generator was 6 volts and it proved impractical to get it rewound as a 12 volt unit. Another item of importance was that a flexible coupling needed to be inserted between the engine and the generator as any misalignment there results in excessive wear on the rear main bearing of the engine, a problem I knew my uncle had had. All this would mean that after the initial tidy-up this unit would have to wait until I had a workshop to do all the necessary machining. My first aim then was a partial strip to see if there was anything wrong inside the engine, and a clean-up and repaint. I found the bronze bores, cast iron pistons and rings in first-class condition. The rear main clearance was a bit wide at 0.05mm but OK for the moment. The crankshaft journals were round and smooth, but the fixings of one connecting rod big-end were slightly loose. It turned out that the cap was distorted, and with the bolts tightened the rod was solid on the crank. I carefully unbent the cap and made sure it fitted the rod properly and then set to and scraped the bearing



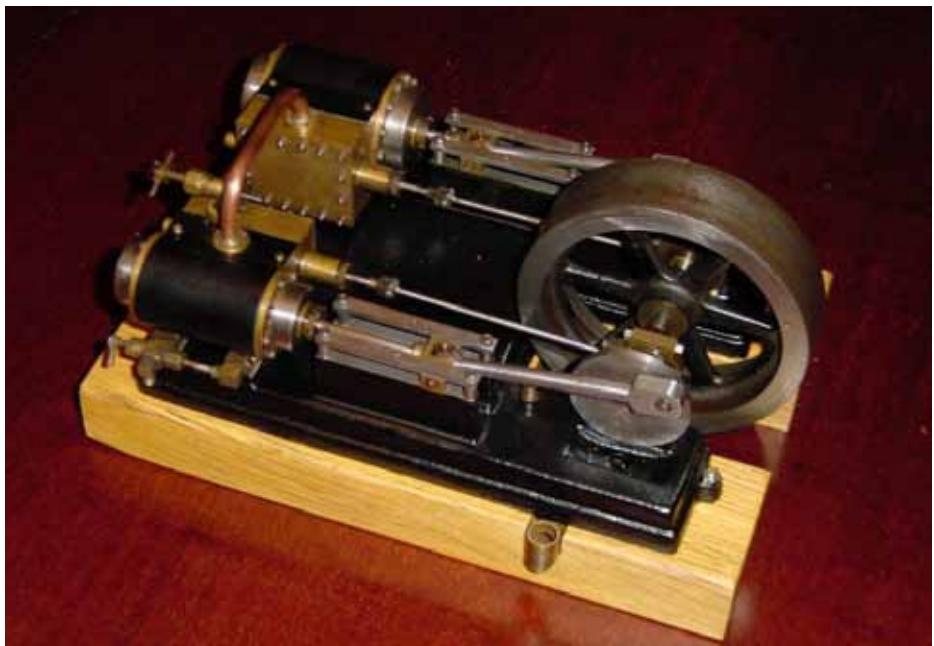
area of the cap to fit the crankshaft. The final fit was perfect top and bottom and a bit wide at the sides, but that does not matter much. After assembly, the engine turned over easily and later, when tested on air, ran perfectly. When stripping the engine, I found that one cylinder-head bolt was broken and several of the sump assembly fixings were badly stretched through over tightening. I eventually discovered that the threads used were, in fact, all small Whitworth sizes, some of which I found and others I eventually made. Picture 3 shows the engine partially assembled after spray painting. Note the missing cylinder bolt. The engine was reassembled, mounted on its stand, wrapped in rags and put in a box to one side to be worked on later (years!).

## TWIN CYLINDER COMPOUND MILL ENGINE



Picture 4 above shows this engine as collected from Geevor, and a right mess it looks! However, looks are misleading and, actually, mechanically it was perfect.



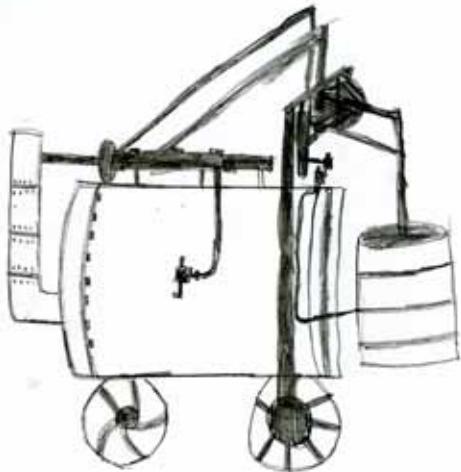


All the bearings were fine, and note that the mains and big ends were ball races. Picture 5 shows the engine in pieces after painting. The wooden block of varnished oak is to mount the engine and provide clearance for the flywheel. The pistons and valve gear felt so good that it seemed a pity to open them and I left what I hoped was well alone. This turned out to be fully justified when sometime later I tested the engine on compressed air. Picture 6 above shows the engine fully assembled ready to run.

#### FINALLY

As you will have noticed from what I've written, various parts of the models could not be completed. Neither could I make various small items missing from the models. So everything had to be put to one side until after I set up my workshop in our new home, which is where my next instalment begins.

**Richard Fishwick**



Remarkably, despite being drawn from a model, which is an almost exact copy of the Society's replica, Joel's drawing looks incredibly like Francis Trevithick's arrangement drawing of the engine (circa 1870), with no chassis.

## KING EDWARD MINE

Although we have had a poor summer weather-wise we have still had a small but steady flow of visitors at King Edward. By the time this is in the hands of readers we will have closed the doors for the winter save for school or booked group visits.

The wet season has encouraged huge plant growth across the site and it is a battle to keep it under control but we are winning. The new mechanical cutter obtained last year has proved a boon as it has "zoomed" over the site with Tony Bunt as pilot.

In spite of the weather, progress has been made on outside painting of the buildings. One large refurbishment job that has been completed has been the north end of the mill which entailed the use of scaffolding due to the height. Thanks to David Blight, Huw Rowe and Alan Bingley for such a concerted effort.

During the coming winter the dippa wheel in the mill has to be rebuilt. This wheel elevates the slurry to enable it to be distributed by gravity through overhead launders to the various pieces of kit for demonstration purposes. The wheel last had some attention in 2005 but rot has set in to much of the timbers which now need replacement.

The area of responsibility of K.E.M. has now been extended as we now have the two engine houses at Fortescue's Shaft under our jurisdiction. This additional land will no doubt give us scope for nature or industrial history trails to add interest to our site.

## HOLMAN'S NO.3 THE NEW LETTERING

Many of you will have seen the old building which used to belong to Holman's and is alongside the railway tracks across the road from Camborne station. If you have looked at it over the past few months, maybe even years, you will have noticed



that the side which faces the road has clearly lost the wording which used to be a feature of the building, see Picture 1 which shows how the building used to look when the wording was still present.

The lettering was removed, spurred on by, presumably, a combination of a desire to sell the letters for scrap, (as they were believed to be made of brass or bronze), and the instruction to demolish the building. It soon became clear that the building was a listed building and this saved it from complete demolition. However the lettering on the wall, by this time, had been removed. Picture 2 shows the side of the building looking distinctly nude without its lettering.

The other Sunday, 2 September 2012, I was driving up Trevu Road towards the level crossing to be met with a queue of cars. The queue was not caused by the barrier of the level crossing, but a temporary "Stop & Go" board system manned by a number of men bedecked in bright yellow "High-Viz." outfits. Also associated with this traffic control was a temporary barrier around a "Cherry Picker". Riding this machine, up against the wall of the Holman's building, were a couple of men who were clearly attaching letters to the side of the building. See Picture 3.

Unfortunately I did not have my camera with me. However, I was on my



way to visit my friend, Stan Spencer, who lives only a few hundred yards (or should it be metres in today's parlance?) up the adjacent road from the level crossing. I continued my journey and explained to Stan what I had seen. We then both made our way back to the level crossing armed with Stan's digital still camera and a digital cine camera. We spent quite a while trying to select the best vantage point for our photographic exploits.

It quickly became clear that the letters going up were not the old ones. One of the contractors said the old letters were not suitable for re-fixing on the wall, so new letters had been made. These modern letters had been cut from aluminium sheet. Each had a few studs welded on the back. The front face of the letters was painted (or perhaps powder coated) a dark-green colour. I understand this colour was a "Holman's Standard Colour". When the exact position of the letter had been established a series of holes was drilled in the granite wall to accommodate the pegs or studs on the back of the letter. These holes were filled with what was described

as an "adhesive resin", and the studs on the letters pressed into the resin filled holes.

It appears to me that the size and spacing of the letters is somewhat different from the original letters. This has the effect that the original fixing holes are very visible. The original letters were possibly fixed with bolts held into holes in the wall by lead which was poured in whilst liquid. The result was quite a large lead filled hole surrounded with discoloured granite – could this discolouration have been caused by the heat of the molten lead? Notice in Picture 2 how each of the original holes has "bled" down the wall. Before the new letters were attached to the wall, the wall was extensively cleaned. The latest appearance of this side of the building, to my eyes at least, is not quite like its original appearance, but a lot better than it has been in the recent past. It is pleasing to know that the new letters are again informing the residents of Camborne, and those passing in the train, just what this imposing building originally was.

Although the exercise of putting

new letters up on the side of an old building looks quite a simple one, I understand that there was a lot of negotiation between the various train companies involved in keeping trains running to the timetable and the contractors who were given the task of fixing the new letters. I was told that if a train is stopped due to something dropped on the line (for example) it could cost the contractors some £50,000 for each hour that trains are stopped or delayed. Also trains all over the country could be affected.

There seems to be some confusion as to the history of the original letters. Several people seem to think that the letters still exist, somewhere. One of the contractors involved in producing and fixing the new letters spoke as if he had seen them somewhere. I am sure that now it becomes obvious that there are new letters on the Holman's building whoever has the old letters will surmise that they are no longer required. This, in turn, I am sure, will lead to them being melted down and sold for scrap, particularly if the letters are made of brass, bronze, or some other semi-valuable non-ferrous metal. The letters may well have been reduced to a shapeless lump already. So if anyone knows of the whereabouts of the old letters please let us know. We would love to have the letters added to our collection of historic artefacts associated with Holman's

and their activities in the Camborne area.

The last picture shows the building with its new letters. Note the evidence of the fixing points for the original letters.

#### Acknowledgments

Thanks must go to Phil Hosken for the top photograph on the front cover, taken from his archives. Also thanks to Stan Spencer for the loan of his camera with which I took the two pictures on the preceding pages, whilst Stan took the bottom photograph on the front cover.

#### Roger Mason

### RECYCLING INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

The valuable land on which Holman Bros built their No 3 Works and has lain derelict for years has now been recycled into living accommodation. We have been unable to trace what was on site before Holmans used it for a variety of purposes including its drill manufacturing. It's known that there were a number of shafts on site and the arrival of the railway from London to Penzance must have cut through an area that was partly occupied by a ropeworks.

Another example of recycling





Blend of new housing with former Holman factory buildings.

has been the use of the former Assembly Rooms. Built in 1890 for use by the people of Camborne it subsequently became the Holman museum and apprentice school. It is currently having its interior eradicated to be replaced by a steel frame that will support the original external walls. The interior will then be rebuilt to provide 18 residential flats.

In addition, the main site has been tastefully redesigned to incorporate various bits of the old Holman workshop walls and provide a variety of 56 houses and flats. Reynolds House, the former manager's house on Trevu Road has been completely rebuilt in its former style and now provides a variety of flats (see photo on facing page).

What some consider to be the most exciting development has been the restoration of the former showroom built by Holmans close to the railway station in about 1900 when most visitors to Camborne arrived by train. The new slate roof has been complemented by a pressure wash of the dressed stonework and the renewal of the Holman lettering on the front. This is the building that the Trevithick Society has its eye on.

The whole site is now known as

Trevithick View as it is possible to see the statue of Richard Trevithick from the entrance and the various sections and buildings have names that reflect the site's former use in the hands of Holman Bros.

All this work has been undertaken by Coastline Housing Ltd, a charity formed to provide affordable housing with work led by the Director of Development, Michelle Foster. At the grand opening on a sunny



John Lander holds the tape while it is cut by George Eustice, MP.

day in September the ribbon was cut by local Member of Parliament George Eustice and speeches were made by John Lander, chairman of Coastline Housing Ltd, Jean Charman, Mayor of Camborne and Mark Kaczmarek, CC.

**P.M.H.**

## DIGITISATION UNDERSTANDING OUR COLLECTION

Following an application made by our consultant, Ian Saltern, to the Your Heritage section of the HLF, this Society has received a grant of £43,900, being 90% of a total project cost of £48,622, to digitise our considerable collection of papers, films, pictures and artefacts. It is intended that this work will bring the records of our collection up to museum standards and make them available for study by schools, on-line and in developments intended by the Cornwall Council and this society.

The collection has accumulated over the past 77 years but has grown substantially in recent years during the curatorial reigns of Clive Carter and Pete Joseph. While the society has collected a great number of items connected to Cornwall's industrial history it acknowledges the considerable contribution made by the general public who have thoughtfully and kindly donated all manner of precious\* items.



The Society has appointed Dr Tehmina Goskar MA, AMA, who has undertaken considerable work with the University of

Swansea into the research of the Welsh copper industry, which we know was almost entirely based on Cornish copper! Dr Goskar has moved to Penzance and will be working with Pete Joseph to set up the project to museum standards.

An important feature of the project will be the instruction of volunteers, probably young people, in the use of computers to undertake this work. There will be press announcements on this in the near future.

\* That's 'precious' in the colloquial Cornish sense, it's difficult to think of a better word.

**P.M.H.**

## TREVITHICK DREDGER ENGINE

We sometimes receive enquiries for drawings suitable for model makers to construct replicas of Trevithick's dredger engine.

This month the Model Engineer's web page 'My Hobby Store' has a link to details of Tubal Cain's article of 1987 on the engine, in both paper and digital form and a three sheet series of drawings for model makers. Go to [www.model-engineer.co.uk](http://www.model-engineer.co.uk) and track down the right hand side to My Hobby Store.

**P.M.H.**



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Crofty Characters. Tales from the depths of South Crofty Mine.* Compiled and edited by Allen Buckley & Peter Hughes, with illustrations by Andrew Trehearne Harvey. Cornish Miners Association. Softback A5 glossy, 52 pages. £5.50. ISBN 978187167876-5.

As the book title suggests this amusing compilation comprises a series of stories from South Crofty Mine charting a selection of funny incidents ranging in date from the early part of the 20th century right up to the closure of the mine. These stories feature a number of well known Crofty characters, such as Howard Mankee, as well as many others who have been anonymised to save their blushes.

The remarkable thing about this book is not the anecdotal nature of the incidents but the overall picture these reminiscences paint of life underground and the way the miners interacted with each other. For instance, some of the stories describe how wrongdoers were dealt with, in a pithy but far more effective way, than the judiciary or mine management could possibly achieve. One incident, which is not in the book, will suffice to illustrate this point. A burly miner was once caught stealing ladies underwear from washing lines. The next time he went underground there were washing lines, festooned with female attire, to be found in lots of places the unfortunate miner had to walk past. Nothing needed saying but justice had been served.

Other stories in the book provide a fascinating insight into the various aspects of the relationship between the miners and the mine captains, or between the underground miners and those at surface in the mill or operating the cages. Other anecdotes describe some of the tricks they played on each other, often exposing an individual's Achilles heel, such as deep rooted superstitious beliefs, or even a fear of being left alone underground. The derivation of some of the nicknames,

which were prevalent underground, is also explained, adding further substance to the overall collage painted of the way in which the harsh working environment moulded the camaraderie of the tight-knit mining community.

I did enjoy reading this book and found it humorous throughout and, in a few places, it struck a chord as I laughed out loud, much to the consternation of my parents who were visiting at the time. However, I would not recommend it to my Cub Scouts to read, given the unsavoury nature of some incidents. Although, I suspect some of the books that are recommended reading for them in school are even more unpalatable.

CNF

## RICHARD WILLIAMS MBE

The Society is sad to record the passing of Richard Williams of Poldark Mine on 4th October, aged 66. Poldark Mine was originally the Wendron Forge visitor attraction and was set up by Society member Peter Young to save industrial artefacts. Unfortunately in 1999 the business went into liquidation and it was then that Richard Williams and a couple of friends acquired the property, redeveloped it and renamed it Poldark Mine. Richard was well qualified to manage this, being some time miner and mineral processor. A workaholic, he was always very willing with help and advice if asked for and was also very generous and an illustration of this was that he always included King Edward Mine in the advertising for his own attraction. In recent times he devoted much time and effort in developing the Cornish Mexican Cultural Society and visited Mexico on a number of occasions.

Thank you Richard for your impish sense of humour, generosity and of being great company in times past. We remember you with great affection.

K.J.T.R.

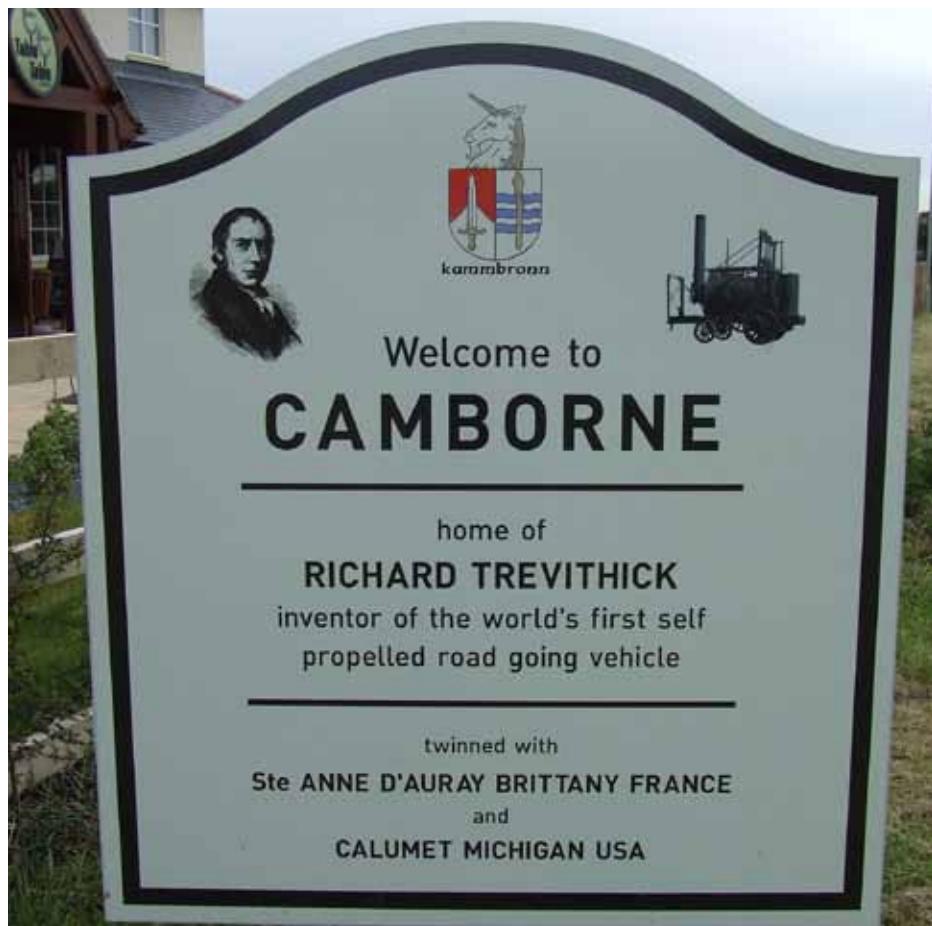
## E-FAITH

E-FAITH, the European Federation of Associations of Industrial and Technical Heritage will be holding its meeting in late October in London. Previously the meetings have been held in Beringen, Kortrijk, Barcelona, Calais and Tilberg. These are contact weekends for volunteers and non profit making organisations engaged in the presentation of industrial heritage. The Society was last represented on 2006 but

will be represented this year in London.

Amongst visits to be included are the Abbey Mills pumping station and the House Mill, considered the largest tide mill in the world, the Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel and Kew Bridge Steam Museum.

## K.J.T.R.



The sign outside the recently opened Trevithick Inn at the western entrance to Camborne.

## SOCIETY MEETINGS

### Society Programme

#### **Friday 12th October. KEM.**

*Cornishmen on the Gold Coast Colony* by John Woodward. An illustrated talk about domestic life, recreation and working conditions of the Cornish miners and their families at Bibiani Gold Mine on the west coast of Africa 1947-1955.

#### **NOTE PROGRAMME CHANGE**

(due to clash with Dingle Steam Event kindly rearranged Saturday 27th October)

#### **Saturday 27th October. ECB.**

Visit to the Robey Trust at Tavistock. Meet 1100 at the Robey Trust, Parade Business Park, Pixon Lane Tavistock, PL19 9RQ. This will be a live steam day for Trevithick Society members, donations will be welcome by the trust towards fuel costs.

#### **Friday 9th November. KEM.**

*Twentieth Century Mining in Devon, England.* By Owen Baker.

#### **Tuesday 13th November. ECB.**

*Cornish China Clay, past and present.* A presentation by Imerys Minerals about the company's history and its operations today.

#### **Tuesday 4th December. ECB.**

*South Crofty - The present and future of Cornish mining.* A presentation by South Crofty. An chance to learn more about this exciting project to bring life back to Cornish mining. Meet Liskeard Public Hall (main hall)

#### **Tuesday 15th January 2013. ECB.**

*Quarry Memories: an oral history of granite and limestone quarries in Cornwall and Devon.* An illustrated talk by Dr Kayleigh Milden Project Officer of Peninsula Quarry Industry Social History Trust

The West Cornwall Branch meets at King Edward Mine (KEM) at 7.30pm on the 2nd Friday of the month.

The East Cornwall Branch (ECB) meets at the Public Rooms at Liskeard and start at 7.30pm, unless stated otherwise.

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**Non members are welcome to all talks.**



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The Trevithick Society, a registered charity, is a recognised body of the study of industrial archaeology in Cornwall. Membership is open to all who are interested in the region's great industrial past, whether or not they live in Cornwall. The Society takes its name from one of Britain's foremost inventors and pioneers of the Industrial Revolution, Richard Trevithick, a Cornishman whose name is inseparable from the development of steam power. This newsletter is published quarterly and, together with the annual journal, is distributed free to members. Letters and contributions are always welcome and should be sent direct to the editor.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Trevithick Society.

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