

cornish mining

newsletter of the Cornwall & West Devon Mining World Heritage Site

Autumn 2007

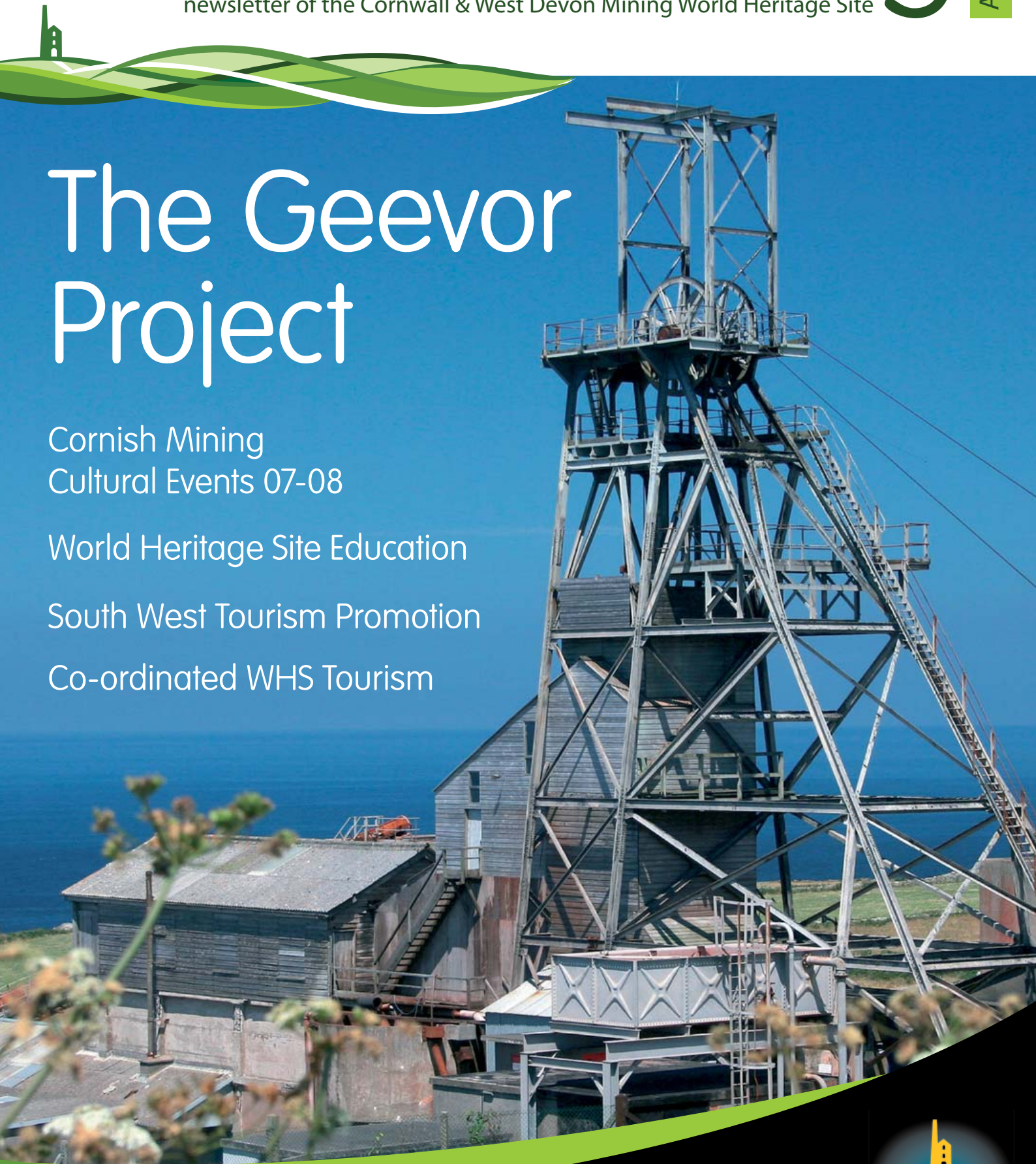
The Geevor Project

Cornish Mining
Cultural Events 07-08

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www.cornishmining.org.uk

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Years of exposure to the Atlantic wind and rain had taken its toll on the mill roof

The Geevor Project

Adam Sharpe BA MIFA

Historic Buildings Consultant, The Geevor Project

(Photographs by Adam Sharpe/Ainsley Cocks)

At first it seemed that Geevor would be quickly obliterated, its machinery sold off for scrap, its buildings demolished and the site levelled and forgotten, but the site was saved from the scrapmen in 1991 through its purchase by Cornwall County Council in recognition of its unique importance to the County.

It has been operated as Cornwall's largest and most authentic mining heritage site since its reopening in 1993, for the past few years being managed by a local charitable trust – Pendeen Community Heritage. The site attracts a large number of visitors, keen to explore this conserved Cornish tin mine, see the impressive range of mining machinery still on site and experience the working environment of early miners in the Wheal Mexico Shallow Adit.

However, many of Geevor's buildings had received no significant maintenance whatsoever for many decades. The extensive mill and satellite buildings were becoming increasingly derelict and dangerous, and the asbestos content of their roofing sheets no longer met modern safety standards.

The museum and other existing interpretation facilities, set up on a shoe-string budget in 1992, were recognised as no longer suitable

for a growing visitor market, whilst Geevor has been put forward as a World Heritage Site Key Centre – one of three locations in Cornwall and west Devon at which the newly-inscribed Site would have overarching

interpretation. If Geevor was to have a future, extensive conservation works and brand new, professionally designed interpretation would be required. ➤

The roof of the mill building with the original sheet covering removed



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The Geevor Project

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In July 2007, successful applications for £3.4m million grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and Objective One allowed work to begin on a major conservation project to achieve these ends. South-west based Midas Construction were appointed as principal contractors, the works are being supervised by Stratton and Holborow of Exeter, and Cornwall's Historic Environment Service are providing a specialist Historic Building Consultancy, given that the whole of the site is a Scheduled Monument.

Many of the works involved are straightforward, though on a massive scale – the large 1980s extension to the mill had originally been clad and roofed in steel sheeting which had not performed well in the salty atmosphere experienced on this coastal site, and which needed complete replacement. On the whole of the rest of the mill and surrounding buildings, cement-asbestos roof cladding had reached the end of its life and hundreds of deteriorating roof sheets had to be replaced with modern, safer equivalents. Other buildings on the site have been spruced up with timber repairs, reglazed in polycarbonate for safety reasons, repainted and provided with power supplies meeting modern standards. Specialist contractors and the highest quality materials have been used throughout to ensure that the works will ensure a long future for the site, whilst work specifications have been carefully scrutinised to make sure that they are appropriate and sustainable.

However, some buildings posed rather more complicated challenges. The miners' dry (or change house) had been built of a poor quality mass concrete reinforced with wire rope, old drill steels and whatever else had come to hand. This had not stood the test of time particularly well, and if it was going to survive would need the application of some radical conservation techniques, as with the 1930's concrete ore bins, where airborne salt had caused advanced corrosion to its steel



With new timbers in place the roof starts to take shape



Geevor Top Fitting Shop: location of the new museum

reinforcing, leading to extensive structural damage. The site's two arsenic calciners required extensive decontamination before building contractors were allowed anywhere near them, and both would need new scantled slate roofs and repointing. The Project has therefore drawn in a wide range of specialist contractors

Work is now well under way and although Geevor is currently a flurry of activity with work in progress on many buildings, careful negotiations between the contractors, project team and the site managers have ensured that visitors can still explore most parts of the site. Indeed, the works have become very much a talking

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and used innovative solutions to the conservation of some particularly difficult problems.

The other major element of the project was the creation of a brand new museum of hard rock mining on the site. Rather than constructing a new building from scratch, the decision was taken to construct the new museum as a free-standing structure within an existing empty building – the Top Fitting Shop. From the outside, this building will look almost unchanged – inside, it will provide a full range of modern interpretation facilities on a number of floors, allowing the explanation of the geological background, technical and social history of Geevor in ways which will be accessible to a wide range of visitors.

point and have added an unexpected angle to the visitor experience, and the site guides lose no opportunity to encourage repeat visits next year to experience the new facilities.

By late spring next year, then, the Project will be approaching completion, and a high profile launch for the new museum is planned. Geevor's days as an active mine may have finally come to an end, but the works currently being carried out will ensure that it will have a long and high profile future in telling the story of this most quintessential of Cornish industries to local school children and visitors. ●

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Souterrain at Dolcoath Mine. (Photographs by Steve Tanner)

CORNISH MINING CULTURAL EVENTS PROGRAMME 07-08

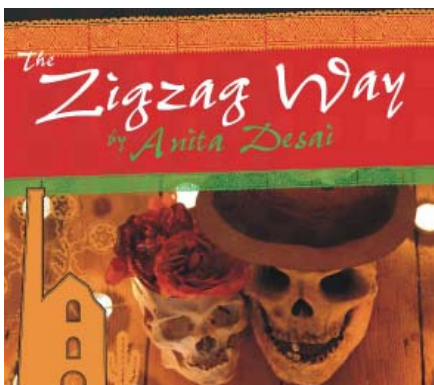
Souterrain

The summer saw the Cornish Mining Cultural Events Programme supporting the Cornish community participation of WildWorks' production Souterrain in Cornwall. WildWorks cleverly used Dolcoath and South Crofty mines as intriguing backdrops to a retelling of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Presented as part of the Mineral Tramways festival of arts events, the production was well received with audience figures of over 5,000 and gained national critical acclaim.

www.wildworks.biz

The Zigzag Way

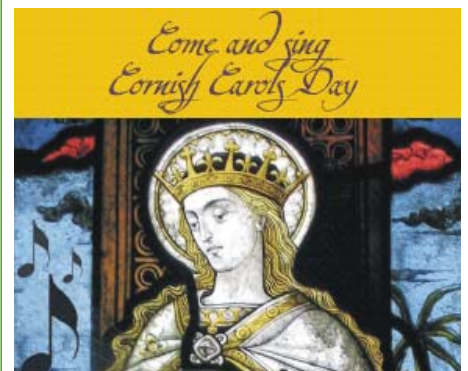
The winter of 2007 will see the Cornish Mining Cultural Events Programme stage performances of a new play adaptation by Pauline Sheppard of The Zigzag Way by Anita Desai. Directed by Rosie Hughes, it charts the journey of self-discovery of Eric, a young American, as he travels on a quest for his Cornish roots in Mexico. The Zigzag Way is a gripping story which winds through cultures and across time to paint a picture of love, revolution and sacrifice. Three performances by the Cornish Theatre Collective are planned for this winter with further dates at Carn to Cove network venues scheduled for 2008.



The Cornish Mining Cultural Events Programme for the coming season also includes a new musical Cornish Lads commissioned from the Cornish Songwriters Collective, which will also tour the Carn to Cove network in 2008, and a new dance piece from acclaimed company C-Scape, inspired by the mining landscape and the people who created it. It is hoped that member sites of the Cornish Mining Attractions Marketing Association (CMAMA) will host some of these events.

In addition, as a direct result of the positive reaction to the Cornish Carolling initiative involving 40 schools in November 2006, the Cornwall County Council Music Service and Cornwall Arts Centre Trust (ACT) have

developed a proposal for a more ambitious, choral singing project and submitted a funding bid for £30,000 to the Department for Education. The decision on this is expected in early November and if successful would see over 200 schools participating in a range of events over the following year.



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Promoting the World Heritage Site

The WHS Office has extended its links with the tourism sector with a further two mining familiarisation events being held for accommodation providers in east Cornwall on 16th and 17th October.

The Looe Valley Railway Line and providers from Liskeard, Minions, Kit Hill and the Tamar Valley took part. CMAMA members in mid and east Cornwall/west Devon were promoted as part of the event, including Cotehele House, Liskeard Museum, Morwellham Quay, Tavistock Museum and China Clay Country Park. The information pack given to all attendees included leaflets for these sites in addition to CMAMA and South West Tourism's World Heritage leaflets.

Together with the South West region's three other World Heritage Sites (Bath, Jurassic Coast and Stonehenge with Avebury), and South West Tourism, the WHS Office are working on a three year promotional campaign. This was initiated with the production this summer of a special leaflet (above) backed by a dedicated website



(www.livingheritagesouthwest.co.uk), and launched via a competition in Heritage magazine, which attracted over 4,000 entries.

The leaflet is being distributed to the London and Britain Tourist Office, and the TICs in major UK cities such as Birmingham and Manchester.

Please see the News & Press page for regular updates on World Heritage Site events:

CATA

During the summer discussions between CMAMA, the WHS office and Cornwall Association of Tourist Attractions (CATA) have resulted in proposals for joint promotion via the CATA Map, and to collaborate in a national travel press familiarisation event to take place in March 2008.

Blue Badge Guides

The World Heritage Site Office has also been supporting local Blue Badge Guides, represented by CMAMA representative Chrissie Le Marchant, and Cornwall College in developing a five day accredited training course for tour guides. This will improve standards of interpretation of the WHS, and further contribute to promotion of and sustainable access to the Site across Cornwall and west Devon.

Co-ordinated WHS Tourism

The WHS Office have submitted an outline proposal and had discussions with the Regional Development Agency regarding investment in rural tourism businesses linked to the WHS, as part of the South West Regional Implementation Plan (SWRIP).

This funding stream will be available from 2008 to 2013, and is focussed on realising the economic benefits that can be derived from our protected landscapes. The WHS has put forward proposals for a co-ordinated programme of investment in conservation, access, training and the development of new tourism products and services, to be funded by a mix of RDA, HLF and Convergence funding streams. With the aim of "...building a quality experience in a world-class destination", the proposals focus on three key areas:

Product improvements – including a capital investment scheme for CMAMA sites to enable them to implement the recommendations in the CMAMA inspection reports and the WHS Interpretation Strategy

Investment in people – including tourism sector familiarisation with the WHS, and staff training in quality service, business planning and marketing

Promotion – Brand awareness, national and international targeted campaigns and promotion linked into the Cultural Olympiad 2012 Olympic Games

The final details of the RDA's SWRIP scheme and budgets are still under discussion, but the WHS Office has been encouraged by the positive response to our approach. Further discussions and development of the proposals will take place over the autumn/winter.

World Heritage Site Education

The WHS Office has recently commissioned an audit of education audiences and school curriculum needs, both for establishments within Cornwall and west Devon and for those from outside the area for whom the Site and its Outstanding Universal Value offers learning opportunities. The audit will identify existing coverage of the themes reflected in the WHS' Outstanding Universal Value within schools, colleges and adult education facilities, and also the curriculum or study areas where the WHS could focus on its education activity. The evidence base created will then be used to inform a WHS Education Strategy.

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