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# cornish mining

newsletter of the Cornwall & West Devon Mining World Heritage Site

Autumn 2011

## CONSERVATION AT DEVON GREAT CONSOLS AND 'DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY' IN WEST DEVON

Pointing the way: signage in the  
World Heritage Site

Mineros, Bolivia Exhibition

The Cornish Studies Library:  
ten years at the Cornwall Centre

From Kernow to Keweenaw:  
people in search of copper

The Cornwall Tourism Awards 2011

A Taste of Tin with Miracle Theatre



# WELCOME

In this edition we focus on mining heritage matters in the west Devon part of the World Heritage Site through work being undertaken by the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project and the World Heritage Site's 'Discover the Extraordinary' project. The Devon bank of the River Tamar was the location of some of the most productive copper mines in Europe in the nineteenth century and the two initiatives have achieved much in delivering new visitor trails and improvements in mining heritage attractions.

At just under 20,000 hectares, the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site is the largest mainland World Heritage Site in the UK. Its scale and complexity presents particular management challenges and here we look at progress towards creating World Heritage signage appropriate to the Site.

Bolivia has a long history of silver production dating from Spanish colonial times and the new photographic exhibition *Mineros, Bolivia*, currently being hosted by Geevor Tin Mine, showcases Bolivian mineworkers and their families living and working in the high Andes during the 1980s and 90s.

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**Front cover** Main: The arsenic chimney at Devon Great Consols Mine with (inset) the statue of the 7th Duke of Bedford, Bedford Square, Tavistock  
**Photos** Ainsley Cocks / Cornwall Council unless stated.

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This year marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Cornwall Centre in Redruth and we share in a day of celebration to mark a decade of Cornish studies.

The State of Michigan in the United States became a major centre for copper production during the nineteenth century with many mineworkers from Cornwall migrating there for work. In *From Kernow to Keweenaw*, Jean Ellis of Eagle Harbor describes the background and legacy of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

The annual Cornwall Tourism Awards have just been announced by the Cornwall Tourist Board with Cornish Mining Attractions' members Cotehele and Geevor winning Gold and Silver respectively.

Spring 2012 will see the first performances of *Tin* a major new show produced by the local company Miracle Theatre. In *A Taste of Tin*, Miracle gives the audience an opportunity to look behind the scenes at the stories and processes which have inspired this work.

**Ainsley Cocks**, *WHS Research & Information Officer*



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Cornwall and West Devon  
Mining Landscape  
inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2006



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An image from 'Mineros, Bolivia' at Geevor Tin Mine



# CONSERVATION AT DEVON GREAT CONSOLS

From its origins in the 1840s Devon Great Consols was to become one of the largest and most productive copper mines in Europe. Here we look at recent conservation work undertaken within this important part of the World Heritage Site.

Following the discovery of a rich copper lode in Blanchdown Wood adjoining the River Tamar in 1844 the Devon Great Consolidated Mine grew rapidly into a major producer of copper and later arsenic. The considerable profits earned were to benefit the mineral lord, the 7th Duke of Bedford, considerably, which in turn enabled the funding of a programme of grand civic improvements within the town of Tavistock during the 1860s.

The end of this decade also saw arsenic production becoming of major significance to Devon Great Consols as the copper lode and market prices began to wane. This required the construction of a large dedicated arsenic works, including numerous calciners, furnaces and flues, to heat this semi-metal and release and collect the arsenic oxide for refining and sale. The mine survived in operation until 1903.

In 1922, during a later phase of operation, a new arsenic refinery was built (when arsenic prices again rose), including labyrinths, flues, chimneys, Brunton calciners, a bottle kiln and an arsenic flat bed refiner. Much of these features to this Scheduled site survive remarkably well but the site has suffered from neglect and material robbing for several decades as the works ceased operations in 1930.

Recent building preservation work has fortunately conserved the site as part of a £7 million Heritage Lottery Fund project focusing on the

World Heritage Site landscapes of west Devon in the Tamar Valley. The Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project (2005-2011) is being delivered by a small team of project officers and is co-ordinated by the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The project involves the conservation of former mine sites and trails creation, with the works being managed by Chris Hariades, Principal Environmental Projects Officer with Cornwall Council. The historic buildings consultant and site archaeologist attached to the project is Colin Buck, a Senior Archaeologist with Cornwall Council, and Knevitt Consulting (Wadebridge) are the structural building engineers.

Colin Buck, commenting on the recent work to the arsenic refiner, said "this is one of very few that survive in the country and the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project has fortunately been able to conserve this rare feature for future generations."



Above - A mound of earth and rubble in front of a Brunton arsenic calciner conceals the arsenic refiner before the start of building conservation works (Colin Buck © Cornwall Council)

Below - The newly revealed and conserved arsenic flat bed refiner (foreground) (Colin Buck © Cornwall Council)



The Mining Heritage Project has a range of objectives including the opening of around five miles of multi-use trails, some using former railway line routes, and conservation works to the Tavistock Canal and the nineteenth century copper port at Morwellham. Together these will greatly enhance the visiting experience of those exploring the rich mining heritage of the valley. ■

For more about the project please log on to: <http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk/projects/miningheritage/>



Above - The remains of the rare arsenic grinder at Devon Great Consols, now conserved, with the extensive mine processing waste dumps beyond



Examples of newly installed way-markers along trails created as part of the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project; the marker for Wheal Anna Maria (above and left) includes design elements from the emblems of both the World Heritage Site and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), as this site is included within both landscape designations



Left - The multi-use trail at Bedford Sawmills, part of a range of visitor facility improvements achieved through the Tamar Valley Mining Heritage Project



## ‘DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY’ IN WEST DEVON

In previous editions of Cornish Mining we have seen how the WHS Discover the Extraordinary (DtE) project has benefited mining heritage related attractions across Cornwall through the upgrading of visitor facilities and interpretation. Here DtE Interpretation Officer Mary Olszewska takes a look at Tavistock, and how European Union and Defra grant funding through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) is improving the visitor experience at Tavistock Museum.

Above - the Tavistock Canal with below, the canal and Wharf Building; the canal was the essential link in transporting copper ore from the Tavistock mines to Morwellham, for shipment to the Swansea smelters



In partnership with the Tavistock Museum Trust, the Stage 1 building element of the DtE project has now completed an extension in the adjacent Grade II Listed cottage. This has provided much needed working and storage areas, creating additional space in the main building (Grade II\* Listed) for the new and existing displays. The original walled-up doorway at first floor level between the main building and cottage has been opened up and a self-closing fire safety door installed. The Stage 1 building works also included restoration of the historic fabric of the cottage, including use of lime

mortar and lime plaster throughout, under the direction of a Conservation Architect.

Five new bespoke display cases have also been installed in the Sue Davies Room of the Museum. They are of a very high standard with anti-bandit and UV resistant glass, allowing valuable and historically important items to be displayed. The Sue Davies Room is now to be devoted primarily to the museum's programme of temporary and visiting exhibitions.

Elsewhere in the Museum a new historic timeline is on display, as well as some



information panels introducing the concept of World Heritage. A short audio-visual film introduces the fascinating story of the Bedford estate cottages, and how these distinctive examples of workers' housing came into being.

Stage 2 of the planned improvements for the Listed cottage will transform this into the new main entrance with a reception area, audio visual room and museum shop on the ground floor. This element of the plan is being funded by a £50,000 Biffaward Community Grant, a multi-million pound fund that awards grants to community and environmental projects across the UK. Following the completion of this, the room on the first floor adjacent to the main building will be used to display the museum's outstanding collection of minerals from Devon Great Consols and other local mines, owned by the 7th Duke of Bedford.

An audio trail exploring Tavistock starts and finishes at Bedford Square, and can be downloaded onto your phone or MP3 player from [www.cornishmining.org.uk](http://www.cornishmining.org.uk)

The project improvements are bringing substantial changes to the museum and are sure to enhance both the general experience of the visitor to Tavistock and their knowledge of the historic town and its rich mining legacy. ■

**Mary Olszewska**, *Discover the Extraordinary Interpretation Officer*

To find out more about Tavistock Museum, please see:  
[www.tavistockmuseum.co.uk](http://www.tavistockmuseum.co.uk)



The historic location of Tavistock Museum within buildings constructed as part of the sweeping improvements conceived by the 7th Duke of Bedford in the 1860s  
(Top: Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)

Below - some of the display and interpretation improvements within the museum funded by the World Heritage Site 'Discover the Extraordinary' project



Bill Bradshaw © Cornwall Council

An example of existing mining attraction signage within the World Heritage Site, as installed at King Edward Mine, Troon



## POINTING THE WAY: SIGNAGE IN THE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

**D**irectional signage within the World Heritage Site has been an established ambition of the WHS Team since the time of the inscription, with the need for the public to easily identify the Site 'on the ground' being readily appreciated. While this issue may appear, at first consideration, to be straightforward if not somewhat mundane, the 'serial', multi-area nature of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site presents particular problems which need to be addressed before this can be achieved. Moreover with a total area of just under 20,000 hectares and a population in excess of 80,000, many signs will be required to achieve appropriate cover across the Site. The World Heritage Site also spans Cornwall and west Devon which required the agreement and action of three local authorities, Cornwall Council, West Devon Borough Council and Devon County Council, in addition to the Highways Agency before an agreed strategy could be implemented.

The Cornish Mining World Heritage Site designation includes a range of landscape 'components' which together comprise its global significance or 'outstanding universal

value' in UNESCO terms. Beyond former mine sites this list of components includes mining related social infrastructure – the towns and villages which were changed or came into being due to the influence of hard rock mining. Industrial transport infrastructure is also included in the Site, and Portreath and Charlestown harbours are examples of ports which served local copper mines, enabling their produce to be shipped to the banks of smelters at Swansea. It can be appreciated from this that a range of different types of signage will be required to appropriately represent the Site in all its complexity – including directional signage to get visitors to the mining attraction perhaps, or boundary signs to welcome drivers to a particular village or town.

Initial attempts at implementing signage provision in 2008 unfortunately coincided with the transition to unitary authority status by Cornwall County Council which, when eventually achieved in 2009, led to further restructuring to align the new authority's operations across Cornwall. Now that unitary authority status has been achieved, and has had time to settle, the time is right to pursue



An example of town signage to be trialled at Tavistock in west Devon as part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site/Tamar Valley AONB Signage Pilot Study  
(© Gamble-Fearon Associates/ Cornwall Council)

Site-wide signage which requires multi-stakeholder support.

Given the complexity of the Site the agreed approach was to undertake a trial to establish which forms of signs work best in a given area or location. To achieve this, a partnership approach was proposed to include the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) whose signage ambitions overlapped with those of the WHS.

In 2010 a pilot strategy for the Tamar Valley WHS and AONB was drafted to provide a coherent and understandable system of signage to assist the public in locating the designated areas and the publicly accessible features and attractions within them. Following consultation

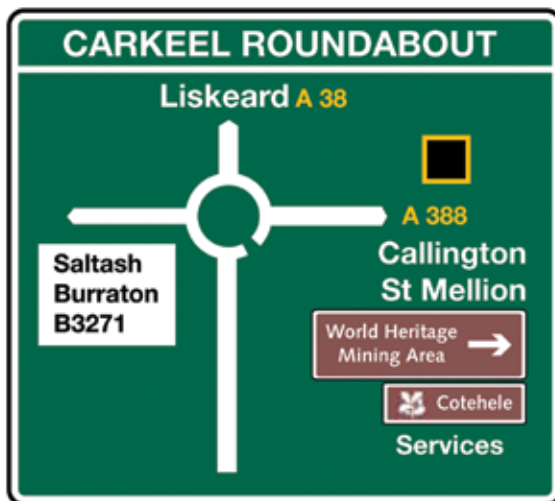
this is being implemented in the Tamar Valley over the autumn/winter 2011, with the ultimate objective being to achieve the same for the remaining WHS areas in Cornwall.

In summary, the purpose of signage overall is to assist orientation within, and to raise awareness and recognition of, the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site designation on the ground. This also needs to respect the character and sensitivity of this important landscape. The objectives of the project trial are to

- Provide clear identity for the WHS areas in a number of different contexts;
- Show the general public that they are within the WHS areas of international importance;

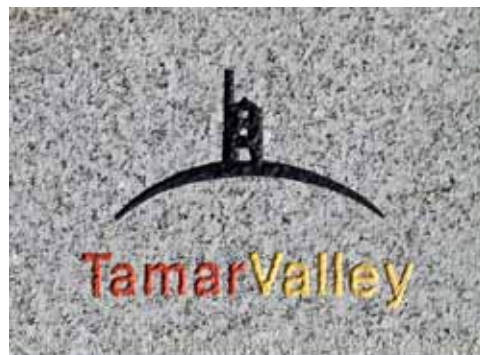
- Provide appropriate levels of signage for different needs and geographical locations;
- Ensure that signage of the WHS is compliant with the Highways Agency and local highway authorities' frameworks

Following the trial period, the various sign types and locations will be evaluated for suitability. This will provide the information required to enable a Site wide approach to be formulated as the next step in early 2012. ■



A sign of the times... examples of a variety of possible World Heritage signs, both free standing and in combination with other elements

(© Gamble-Fearon Associates/ Cornwall Council)





Left - One of the striking images by Jean-Claude Wicky in the collection

## MINEROS, BOLIVIA EXHIBITION

Visitors to Geevor Tin Mine in West Penwith have been given the rare opportunity to view a touring collection of photographs capturing the atmosphere of Bolivian mining in the 1980s and 90s. The exhibition, entitled *Mineros, Bolivia*, showcases the striking black and white photography of renowned Swiss photographer Jean-Claude Wicky.

**T**he collection comprises some eighty photographs and was taken over a period of seventeen years between 1984 and 2001. Jean-Claude visited over thirty mine sites in Bolivia during this time and captured images of mineworkers, their homes and families, highlighting their working and living conditions.

The concept for the project was conceived while Wicky was travelling through Latin America in the 1970s and visiting the city of Potosí in the high Andes. Located in the south of the country and at over 4,000m (over 13,000ft), Potosí was established by the colonial Spanish as a silver mining town in the mid 1500s. While there Wicky followed a miner into a mine level (tunnel) and, profoundly moved

by the experience, vowed that one day he would return and document their lives.

“I didn’t realise at first just the size of the task. How could I photograph the damp air, the heat, the lack of oxygen, the sour mineral smell that seeps into men’s bodies? How to capture the darkness of the mine, the dense blackness - more impenetrable than rock itself - which suspends all sense of orientation, of time and distance, the darkness that burns your eyes and makes your body disappear...”

Through the collection Jean-Claude has created a strikingly evocative record of the Bolivian mineworkers in the daily lives both at home and work. The conditions underground are represented as he found them – harsh and unforgiving, with the risk of accident an ever present threat. Home life is simple by the standards of the Developed World with small two room dwellings offering little comfort for the miners and their families. The photographs record well the distinctive culture of the area, and reflect the pride and determination evident in their communities.

This unforgettable exhibition has been viewed by over half a million people across Latin America and

Europe, and is now touring the UK, giving the opportunity for people here to get a flavour of mining life high in the Andes. Supported by the Bolivian Information Forum and the Durham Miners Association, the exhibition opened in Durham and has previously been on display in Barnsley and Edinburgh. It is hoped the collection will travel to Wales and London in January.

Mineros, Bolivia opened at Geevor on 8 November and will be on display until 6 January 2012 within the mine's Hard Rock Museum. ■

For further information on the collection and Geevor please see: <http://mineros-bolivia.com>, and [www.geevor.com](http://www.geevor.com)

Top - Members of the Durham Miners Association at the exhibition opening - David Hopper, (General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers, Durham Area - front left), Alan Johnson, Robert Liddle, Lawrence Claugan, and George Robson

Right - from left to right: Alex Tilley (Coordinator, Bolivian Information Forum); Nicholas Thomas (Assistant Curator, Geevor Tin Mine); Dr Pattie Richmond (Bolivian Information Forum); Karen Willows (Cornish Mining World Heritage Site)





## THE CORNISH STUDIES LIBRARY: TEN YEARS AT THE CORNWALL CENTRE

**T**he Cornish Studies Library is this year celebrating its tenth anniversary at the Cornwall Centre in Alma Place, Redruth. During the autumn of 2001 the Cornish Studies Library relocated from its upper floor location within Redruth Library, along Clinton Road, to purpose built premises complete with up to date facilities for access and storage.

The Cornwall Centre officially opened on 20 October 2001 and provided a new home for the Library, which hosts Cornwall's largest collection of books and pamphlets about Cornwall. The prestigious development at the heart of Redruth also includes the shopping arcade in Market Way, Foyer accommodation for young people on the upper floor, and access to the Tregellas Tapestries. It has also provided the Library with an improved study area for researchers, an exhibition room and humidity controlled storage facilities for the precious collections of books, pamphlets,

photographs, maps, newspapers and journals.

The collections have continued to grow over the ten years and there are now approaching 40,000 books, pamphlets and journals on Cornwall's history and Cornish life as well as many hundreds of additions to the photographic archive.

The last ten years have also seen new technology being introduced, with over 3,000 images from the collection now available to be viewed online through the photographic database – [www.cornwallphotoimagebank.org.uk](http://www.cornwallphotoimagebank.org.uk). There is improved access to family history resources such as the census returns through Ancestry.co.uk on the Library's public access computers and the Royal Cornwall Gazette newspaper is now accessible through the Library Service's cyber library.

School groups continue to visit to learn more about Cornwall's past and the history of their communities, and the family learning activities available are inspiring children and their families to visit during the school holidays for arts and crafts activities with a Cornish theme.

Kim Cooper, Principal Librarian, said "Since 2001 many thousands of people have visited the Cornwall Centre to use the collections to research and learn more about Cornwall and their family histories. Helpful and friendly staff are on hand to offer advice and guidance and there is also the opportunity to view the Tregellas Tapestries and regularly changing exhibitions."

To celebrate the tenth anniversary an exhibition was held from 18 October to 1 November highlighting the resources available at the Library. This included treasures from the collection including antiquarian Cornish books and photographs from across Cornwall.

During the exhibition week, the Library also hosted a special day of celebration with Cornish stories and an anniversary tea. John Tagholm, author of 'No Identifiable Remains', 'Bad Marriage' and 'Parallel Lives' also visited the Library to read a short story submitted to a recent Sunday Times competition. John made this return trip from London just a few weeks after speaking to a full house at the St. Ives September Festival.

The World Heritage Site Team congratulates the Library staff and extends their best wishes for the future. ■



Above – Former Principal Librarian at the Cornwall Centre, Terry Knight, addresses the gathering  
(Neil Williams © Cornwall Council)

For further information about the Cornish Studies Library, please see: [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

Below - An invited audience celebrates ten years of the Cornwall Centre and Cornish Studies Library at Alma Place, Redruth  
(Neil Williams © Cornwall Council)





Mine captains in Michigan's Copper Country were often of Cornish descent; Red Jacket Shaft was a Calumet and Hecla Mining Company facility in Calumet (1908)

(USNPS, Keweenaw NHP, Foster--C&H--Lib Card--#252--Mining Captains, Red Jacket Shaft--1908.TIF)

## FROM KERNOW TO KEWEENAW: PEOPLE IN SEARCH OF COPPER

Copper on the Keweenaw Peninsula in Michigan is thought to have been mined for around 7,000 years, and from the 1840s many Cornish were attracted to this the most northerly part of the state's Upper Peninsula; Jean Ellis of Eagle Harbor, Michigan, takes up the story of the Cornish and copper, and their rich cultural legacy.

**A**s spring turned to summer in 1979, my aunt returned from a trip to Cornwall. She had a knack for getting her point across in a few words and stayed true to her heritage in saying what she thought. Three of her grandparents were Cousin Jacks or Jennies. (Some people still insist that "Cousin" was simply a derivative of "cussin", not a reference to a relative.) Asked what Cornwall was like, my aunt replied, "They have palm trees in Cornwall. Palm trees! Can you imagine those poor bloody buggers in their first winter here?"

"Here" is the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan. It juts into Lake Superior, about halfway across the 350 miles of water between Sault Ste. Marie and Duluth, Minnesota and 60 miles south of Ontario, Canada. The Keweenaw stretches for about 75 miles from base to tip. Waters of Lake Superior temper the effect of the Upper Midwest's often bitter cold. They also produce a phenomenon known as lake effect snow. During the winter of 1978-1979, that resulted in a record snowfall of 390.4 inches.



Left - The Vivian family home in Opechee, later known as Osceola, just outside of Calumet in 1893; the Vivians were a Cornish immigrant family prominent in the history of the Lake Superior copper district

(USNPS, Keweenaw NHP, Foster--C&H--Lib Card--#139--Vivian Home, Opechee--1893.TIF)

on Lake Superior was closed, and in some cases, with inadequate housing conditions.

In *The Long Winter Ends* (pp.37, 39), a fictional novel about an immigrant Cornish miner Jim Holman's first year on the Keweenaw, Newton Thomas captures the newcomers' dialect and conditions at their arrival:

'Us look comical enough to mun, no doubt—us with our tubbers, bobtailed coats, an' 'lastic side shoes in this climate...'

A snow had fallen during the night and the wind was searching and cold. With the first step from the hotel porch their congress shoes filled and the day began in discomfort. The depth of the snow and the intensity of the cold told them that a Michigan winter was a full-grown, an oversized thing in comparison with the light snows of southern England.

The Keweenaw is an old geologic formation and was home to large deposits of native copper—ore that has not combined with other minerals. From the discovery of ore to the close of the mines, copper was a primary focus that drew people to the area. Like so many mineral-rich areas across the world, Michigan's Copper Country attracted Cornish miners.

Six months before Victoria was crowned Queen of England, in January 1837, a dispute between the Michigan Territory and the state of Ohio was settled and the western part of the Upper Peninsula was awarded to Michigan. In that same year, Michigan became the twenty-sixth state of the Union. Shortly after, Douglass Houghton, state geologist, began his exploration of the western Upper Peninsula. He found rich copper deposits on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Although there is ample evidence of a mining culture on the Keweenaw long before the arrival of Europeans in North America, Cornish involvement in the story began in the 1840s. Houghton's discovery of copper touched off a rush that predated California's gold rush by six years and produced more money. Eventually, copper would draw more than thirty-five ethnic groups to populate Calumet Township. Of course, circumstances there and everywhere varied over the 125 years of mining on the Keweenaw. Exploration for copper began shortly after the first steamship sailed the Atlantic. Mining ceased on

the Peninsula a year before the first person landed on the moon.

The 1840s were a time of hunger for Cornwall, motivating people to emigrate. On the Keweenaw, the Cliff lode was discovered in 1844 and began to be a destination for miners and their families. For miners, the task of getting ore out of the ground may not have been drastically different from what they had done in Cornwall. Living conditions were another story. Women coped with different fuels for cooking, with demanding weather that required different clothing for their families, with food supplies that waned during months when shipping



Above - A parade of members of the Red Jacket (Calumet) Lodge of the Sons of St. George, outside the 5th Street Central Hotel in 1909; many members of the lodge are understood to have been Cornish and the Cornish bezants are visible in the original image to the left and right sides of the banner

(USNPS, Keweenaw NHP, Foster--C&H--Lib Card--#305--[Sons of St. George Parade, Calumet]--1909.TIF)

Earliest explorations on the Keweenaw were haphazard. Sometimes men filed claims from a distance, not having ever been on the Peninsula. Many lost their stakes. As efforts became more systematic, place names like Cliff and Quincy became familiar. Cliff Mine was the earliest profitable mine on the Peninsula. Established by the Pittsburgh and Boston Mining Company in 1845, it attracted many Cornish families to the town of Clifton, now a ghost town. Life in Michigan's Clifton is described in *Diary of a Copper Country Schoolmaster: The Journal of Henry Hobart*. Hobart speaks well of the Cornish men and their mining skills. He is less than complimentary toward the women in the community, scorning their cooking skills. His scorn even extends to the pasty!

Jim Holman's destination was Allouez, a community in southern Keweenaw County. Three of his companions would continue twelve miles farther to Central Mine. In both places, they would meet earlier arrivals from Cornwall, connections between the 'ome they had left and the new home they would make. Larry Lankton, in *Beyond the Boundaries*, (p.84) quotes a poem from Jinny Penhale to friends in Cornwall:

'We're livven at the 'Northwest Mine.'  
And eer we found ould Stephen Vine  
and Joey Blewett and lots more  
We wor acquainted weth before;  
and they wor glad to see us too,  
and gave us hall a tatie stew;  
and cook'd a oggen and a caake  
and put a pasty in to baake,  
nd gav us coffee and good tay  
and mad us appy right away.'

There seems to be consensus that, for the Cornish, assimilation was an easier task than for many other immigrant groups. In his *Introduction to The Long Winter Ends* (p.vii), William H. Mulligan refers to the Cornish as "an extreme case of the phenomenon identified by Charlotte Erickson in her *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English*

and Scottish Immigrants in 19th Century America. As English-speaking Protestants with economically valuable skills as underground miners, the Cornish were able to enter into American society with few difficulties." Nonetheless, the Cornish dialect and the habit of dropping an "h" or two must have represented challenges in communication. Even after a seventy-year Cornish presence in the Copper Country, John Medlyn's 1917 obituary reports that he was born in "Elston". Anyone in Cornwall looking for "Elston" on Furry Day may have trouble finding the dancers!

The skills of the Cornish miner were valued in the Keweenaw mines. Professor James Fisher, in *Michigan's Cornish People* (p.379), writes:

'Mining with the Cornish seems to be an intuitive gift, and the fact that the assistance of Cornishmen has been found necessary to the successful development of mines in many parts of the world bears out this assumption...'



Above - The Copper Range Railroad in the depths of winter (c.1900)

(USNPS, Keweenaw NHP, Foster--C&H--Lib Card--#404--Copper Range Railroad [locomotive in snow]--ca. 1900.TIF)

Below - The Cliff Mine was the earliest profitable copper mine in the Lake Superior district with many of its first mineworkers being Cornish, Irish, or German (1862)

(USNPS, Keweenaw NHP, LaMuth--8x10 prints--[Cliff Mine complex]--1862.tif)





Calumet today: 100 block of 5th Street, Calumet  
(cc) Andrew Jameson

During the [Eighteen] Fifties, Sixties, and still more during the [Eighteen] Seventies and Eighties, there was a stream of young Cornishmen carrying unique skill and knowledge to every mining camp in North America, and the Lake Superior District received and welcomed its quota.

James Fisher grew up at Quincy Mine among the Cornish families there. Quincy came into its own as a profitable venture in the 1850s, just after the "Hungry Forties" and before the copper bust in the 1860s in Cornwall. In the mid-1850s, Quincy attracted John Cliff, born in St. Blazey parish. Cliff eventually became head mining captain, a position he held for nearly a quarter century. Like many Cousin Jacks, he was joined by other family members. Elizabeth Cliff Jeffery, her husband, and four children came from St. Cleer to Quincy in about 1866.

Elizabeth Cliff Jeffery must have passed on the independence in women that Lynne Mayers identifies in her landmark work *Balmoidens* and that Bernard Deacon cites in Cornwall, *A Concise History*. Deacon notes (p.127), "The spell of economic independence between childhood and marriage gave women in the mining districts a taste for economic and social independence symbolized by conspicuous spending on clothes and, it is argued, a *lack of deference*

*toward men.*" (this author's italics) Elizabeth probably didn't spend a lot on clothes but her daughter Clara pursued her education to become a teacher in the Quincy School. Elizabeth's eldest daughter, Mary, born in St. Cleer, married and had six children. Mary defied conventional wisdom and insisted that her three daughters go to college (university) even if that meant all three sons could not.

By 1865, conditions on the Keweenaw had changed. Housing had improved. Clarence Monette in *Central Mine: A Ghost Town* (p.11) describes early conditions:

'The little company-built log or wood-frame homes did not contain many comforts... A coal heating stove was almost unknown. All used wood. Men sawed and split their own wood and frequently had to first go into the woods to cut down the trees. The houses were poorly built, and outer, or storm windows, were unknown... Bedrooms in which there was a single window were often boarded across on the window casing, with sawdust filled in between

up to the top pane. This was to prevent the cold air from entering the room.'

Company-built houses offered more comfortable housing as the 19th century progressed. Some families opted to buy their own homes as mining settlements grew. Satellite business communities became established, providing services to growing populations. Stores had better stock to carry them through winter. Schools and churches showed the transition from frontier mining to communities served families better. Unfortunately, some of the early mines were beginning to show signs of playing out. As in Cornwall, the price of copper hit a long-time low, coinciding with the end of the American War Between the States. There were predictions that the copper boom on the Keweenaw would not last a lot longer.

Much changed in 1865 with the discovery of the Calumet lode, followed soon after by a similar discovery at Hecla. Soon the two would merge to become the largest producer of copper on the Keweenaw, a company large enough to influence world markets. Calumet and Hecla's (C & H) success may have contributed to the decline in copper mining in Cornwall after 1866.

There were big changes ahead for Calumet Township. Cornish immigrants William and Selina Davey likely saw a lot of tree stumps when they arrived in 1868. Building houses was part of the order of the day and women used those stumps as a place to hang their laundry to dry. There were schools in Calumet beginning in 1867; a Methodist church was built in 1869. (Calumet Copper and People, 21) By the time William Davey died in 1898, Victoria's reign would last only three years more. Calumet Township's population topped 33,000. Shaft houses lined Mine Street; copper ingots piled up at docks in nearby Lake Linden; boarding houses provided living places for newcomers and languages of thirty-five different ethnic groups greeted the ear.

The Cornish brought more than their mining skills to the nascent copper mines. Practices such as deducting a small amount of men's earnings for medical care and aid funds for the injured were instituted on the Keweenaw (Rebels on the Range, p.35). They were also more accustomed to the practice of leasing homes, probably drawing from their familiarity with the three-life lease in Cornwall. Many built homes on land leased from the mining companies.

1910 saw the largest influx of immigrants in United States history. The Keweenaw felt the impact of many new people. Cornish folks encountered the different languages and customs, sampled different foods, and held on to some of their own. Pasties were adopted and adapted by different groups. Saffron was in such demand that the manager of the Tamarack Cooperative placed an order for 200 pounds of it! In 1910, those independent women born in Cornwall or their daughters were proprietors of twenty-four boarding houses, either drawing their own income or supplementing their husbands' income with the proceeds.

Following a major strike in 1913-14, people began to leave the Keweenaw to find work elsewhere. With their reputations as good dependable workers, the Cornish found higher paying work 500 miles away in Detroit

where the automobile factories were getting into full swing. World War I (the Great War) began in Europe, creating concerns about families left in different homelands. In the 1920s, after a short recovery in the end of the previous decade, mining continued to decline. By the arrival of the Great Depression of the 1930s, many were unemployed. A story told by Angus Murdoch in Boom Copper (p.237) illustrates the reluctance of the Cornish to accept help or aid.

There is the even more pointed story of the Cornish couple... [who] asked only for enough help to help themselves. They were old and almost destitute and could have asked for

the Armed Services were stationed in Cornwall and became familiar with the land of their grandparents. When they returned home, they found concerns about the future of copper mining. The 1950s saw mining operations continue but the quality and quantity of ore was declining. "Bringing the ore to grass" was becoming more expensive. The finale of mining on the Keweenaw was approaching.

In 1968, mines closed on the Keweenaw after a strike could not be resolved. If the area had followed the usual pattern in the boom to bust cycle of mining communities, that would have been its final chapter. People would leave; ghost towns

Calumet today: Osceola Shaft House [containing headframe]

© Jean Ellis



and received a monthly relief check. Yet all they asked of the relief agency was a new stove. Officials were puzzled. They had had many strange requests but never one for a stove. The old Cousin Jack explained that he and his wife were eking out a living by making pasties and selling them. Such an unprecedented amount of baking had burnt out their ancient oven. Would the welfare people give him a hand so that he could continue to support himself and wife? They would and did and the indomitable old couple asked no more.

World War II brought increased demand for copper and, briefly, more work in the mines. A few local men in

would be a predominant feature of the landscape. Although people did leave, many stayed. Maybe James Fisher's words in his 1945 article were prophetic. "The Lake Superior Cornishman has the same love for and loyalty to his particular mine and locality that his forefathers had for Cornwall." (p.385)

Keweenaw residents went forward from the close of the mines. They had put down roots, forged a community, and cared deeply for their heritage in the area. Part of that heritage was a university originally patterned after the Camborne School of Mines. Established as the Michigan College of Mines, it transitioned from the

Michigan College of Mining and Technology to Michigan Technological University (MTU). Its undergraduate enrolment now numbers more 6,500 students. From 2005 to 2010, the University has awarded an average of fifty-five PhDs per year. MTU is a major employer in the Keweenaw.

Like Cornwall, the Keweenaw attracts many visitors. Some come to explore the heritage of the area. They may have had great-grandparents who were early settlers. Some may come to see the role that mining played in United States' history. Such interests played a large part in the establishment of the Keweenaw National Historical Park, telling the story of copper mining on the Keweenaw.

And the winter weather? That same climate that so dismayed many Cornish immigrants now plays its part as a major tourist attraction for snowmobilers, cross-country and downhill skiers. Annually, the snow statues created by MTU students draw thousands of spectators during Winter Carnival.

Cornwall's contributions to Copper Country heritage show in pasty shops and saffron buns available in bakeries. Traces of the wry brand of Cornish humour survive in stories still told among families. In Elizabeth Cliff Jeffery's family, her grandson's transposition of her solemn epitaph, "She Hath Done What She Could" into "Er did 'er best, but it warn't much," brought a twinkle to many eyes and was passed along for generations.

Efforts by the Keweenaw County Historical Society have preserved some of the buildings where families of Cornish miners lived in Central. An annual service at the Central Mine Methodist church brings repeat visitors who feel transported back to the musical and religious traditions Cornish families brought.

In 1992, Keweenaw Kernewek came into being, an association of descendants of Cornish settlers. Its purpose was to honor the Cornish contribution to the Keweenaw and reinforce ties with Cornwall.

The organization has hosted three Cornish Choirs and two Gatherings of Cornish Cousins, drawing attendees from all over the US and Canada. The Twinning of Camborne and Calumet, officially declared in 2009, bodes well for strengthening the connections between the two areas. Sharing ideas about job creation, stemming the out-migration of youth, and heritage preservation may help to address mutual concerns.

How do present-day Cornish visitors feel when they visit? The bond between Kernow and Keweenaw is strong. Ann Trevenen Jenkin speaks of visiting Calumet for the first time in her book, *Gwel Kernow: A Cornish View*. (p.157)

'A long journey  
To a strange and foreign place  
But then we drive along  
The long, old-fashioned street-  
At once we are at home.'

'... we are at home.' Familiar and comfortable, even without the palm trees.

But then, it's important to remember that Ann was here in the summer. The snow had been gone for a while. ■

**Jean Ellis**, *Kernewes an Keweenaw, Eagle Harbor, Michigan, USA*

Thanks are extended to Jean Ellis for kindly supplying the article and images, and also to Jeremiah Mason, Archivist with the Keweenaw National Historical Park, for permission to reproduce the historic images and information on these. For more about Keweenaw, please see:

<http://www.nps.gov/kewe>

<http://www.keweenawhistory.org>

<http://www.pasty.com/heritage>

<http://www.houghtonhistory.org>

<http://keweenawkernewek.org>



Calumet today: Eagle River in winter, the destination of many early settlers, including the Cornish, from the 1840s

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# CORNWALL TOURISM AWARDS 2011

The Cornwall Tourist Board has recently announced this year's Cornwall Tourism Awards and attractions within the World Heritage Site have secured two of the prestigious accolades. Held annually, these are given to tourism businesses both large and small, and this year the ceremony was hosted by the St Mellion International Resort in east Cornwall. The awards are given across sixteen tourism categories with these including 'Outstanding Contribution to Tourism', 'Outstanding Customer Service', and 'Best Tourism Activity, Sport & Experience of the Year', among others.

Each category has gold, silver and bronze awards and, in this the Award's tenth year, mining heritage attractions within the Cornish Mining Attractions Marketing Association (CMAMA) have much to celebrate securing both gold and silver.

The National Trust's Cotehele House and estate gained the much coveted Gold Award for 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year', with Geevor Tin Mine achieving Silver for 'Small Visitor Attraction of the Year'. Toby Fox, National Trust General Manager at Cotehele, proudly commented "This is a fantastic achievement for Cotehele and a welcome recognition of all the hard work undertaken by staff and volunteers over the last year". Mike Simpson, Geevor Mine Manager, added that "we all feel that Geevor is a very special place and are delighted that the mine and staff have been recognised in this way".

The awards were presented this year by well known TV and radio personality Sue Perkins who is renowned for her ready wit and humour. Sue, who currently lives in Penzance, has a long-standing affection for Cornwall and recently co-hosted the 'Great British Bake-Off' on BBC 2.

The Cornish Mining World Heritage Site warmly congratulates the attractions and staff in securing these much deserved awards. ■

For further information on the Cornwall Tourism Awards and Cotehele and Geevor, please see:

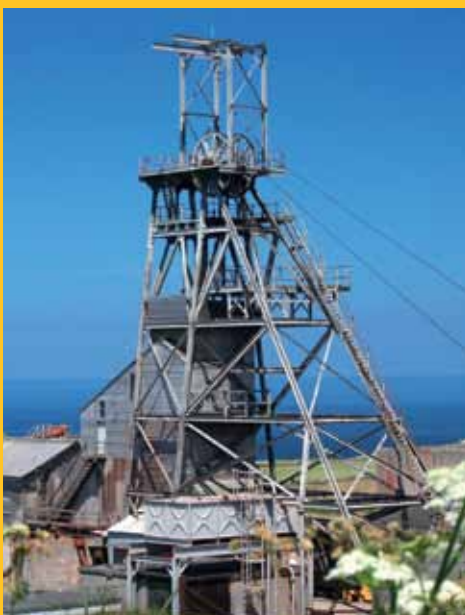
[www.visitcornwall.com](http://www.visitcornwall.com)

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

[www.geevor.com](http://www.geevor.com)



Top - The Geevor Tin Mine Hard Rock Mining Museum; above - Cotehele from the air (Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)



Left - The Victory Shaft headframe at Geevor Tin Mine (Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council); right - the East Range of Cotehele House

# GET 'BEHIND THE SCENES' WITH MIRACLE THEATRE FOR A TASTE OF TIN

In advance of the production of Miracle Theatre's next major show Tin, the company are staging a series of informal events giving a fascinating insight into Miracle's production process. Featuring Miracle Theatre Director Bill Scott amongst other contributors, these events combine film extracts, readings from the play and conversations over a glass of mulled wine. Miracle is Cornwall's foremost rural travelling company which has been touring innovative comic theatre across the UK for 30 years.



'Tin' is a melodrama about love and money, opera and mining and will be touring across Cornwall and Devon during March and April 2012. It is being produced in collaboration with English Touring Opera and has been commissioned by the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site Cultural Events Programme, to increase awareness and appreciation of Cornish Mining culture, and bring its stories to new audiences. The Taste of Tin events are supported by FEAST, a programme to make great art happen across Cornwall.

A Taste of Tin is not a full Miracle Theatre production but offers a glimpse of the real stories that have inspired the show. It will be an interesting and fun night, and showcase the innovative film making process being developed while offering the chance for audience members to get personally involved in the project!

Experience A Taste of Tin at the following venues through November and December:

Wednesday November 23rd - 7:30pm	The Poly, Falmouth	01326 319461
Friday November 25th - 8pm	Blisland Village Hall	01208 851093
Tuesday December 6th - 8pm	Acorn Arts Centre, Penzance	01209 216762
Wednesday December 7th - 8pm	The Burrell Theatre, Truro	01209 216762
Thursday December 8th - 7:30pm	The Count House, Botallack	01209 216 762
Friday December 9th - 7:30pm	Sterts Theatre, Liskeard	01579 362382
Tuesday December 13th - 7:30pm	Miners & Mechanics Institute, St Agnes	01209 216762
Wednesday December 14th - 7:30pm	East Pool Mine, Redruth	01209 216762

All bookings are being taken in advance and on a first come first served basis so those wishing to attend are asked to please contact the venues and book seats to avoid disappointment. ■

[www.miracletheatre.co.uk](http://www.miracletheatre.co.uk)

Also for further information please see:

[www.miracletheatre.co.uk](http://www.miracletheatre.co.uk)  
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