



Our mining culture
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cornish mining

newsletter of the Cornwall & West Devon Mining World Heritage Site

Spring 2010

Home of Innovation
The Holman Years

Sam Ham: mystery of
the wrestling cup solved

Geevor: from 'The End'
to a new beginning

WHS Cultural Events

'DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY'



Wheal Peevor, near Redruth - Kirstin Prisk

www.cornishmining.org.uk

WELCOME

Welcome to the spring edition of Cornish Mining the newsletter for the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

This edition highlights a number of exciting new developments within the Site including the 'Discover the Extraordinary' project – aimed at improving facilities and interpretation at member sites of the Cornish Mining Attractions Marketing Association – to the solving of the mystery of the Sam Ham cup, which was discovered at Tuckingmill last year.

While there is of course much to experience and enjoy within the World Heritage Site in Cornwall and west Devon, we also have the wider interest of the Cornish mining migration story and the transfer of skills, technology and traditions to mining fields around the globe. In future editions of the newsletter we will be looking at former mining sites and communities overseas starting in the summer edition with Kåfjord, a small village located near the town on Alta at the northern tip of Norway.

The scope of Cornish Mining is indeed a global one and we wish to highlight stories covering all aspects of our hard rock mining heritage, both locally and overseas. We would be pleased to include articles from contributors around the Cornish mining world in upcoming editions, and if you have an interesting story to tell why not get in touch?

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CONTENTS

'DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY'

The World Heritage Site team has just secured major project funding to undertake tourism related improvements across the Site as part of this exciting new initiative.

HOME OF INNOVATION: THE HOLMAN YEARS

The name Holman Brothers is inseparable from the town of Camborne and we take a look at a fascinating community project presenting film from the extensive Holman Archive to a public audience.

SAM HAM: MYSTERY OF THE WRESTLING CUP SOLVED

Considerable information has come to light concerning the much-travelled Sam Ham wrestling cup since the well received feature in our autumn 2009 newsletter and here we pick up on the latest developments.

3 GEEVOR: FROM 'THE END' TO A NEW BEGINNING 12

It has been twenty years since tin production ceased at Geevor Mine in West Penwith and Bill Lakin and Ian Davey recall the final working days of this famous mine and its role today as a much visited heritage attraction.

6 WHS CULTURAL EVENTS 14

Miracle Theatre's 'Tin' is the latest in the ongoing series of performance events to be supported by the World Heritage Site Cultural Events Programme and Kelly Stevens reports on the first public read through of this new comic melodrama held at the Tolmen Centre, Constantine.



Miracle Theatre's 'Tin' at the Tolmen Centre, Constantine



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



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



Above: The Great Flat Lode near Camborne with South Wheal Frances (foreground) and West Basset Mine (Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)

‘DISCOVER THE EXTRAORDINARY’: MAJOR EUROPEAN FUNDING SECURED FOR THE CORNWALL AND WEST DEVON MINING LANDSCAPE WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Below: Michell's or North Whim at Cornish Mines & Engines, Pool (Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)



The Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site has been awarded almost £2 million in European Union and DEFRA grant aid through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, to use the popular title, has won this funding for its 'Discover the Extraordinary' project – a three-year programme of investments designed to enhance the visitor experience in the World Heritage Site and at partner attractions. It also aims to increase the number of tourists interested in culture and heritage who visit the World Heritage Site from outside the region.

The project plans a number of exciting initiatives including new interpretation which brings to life the fascinating stories behind the World Heritage landscapes and attractions. There will be new displays, family

activity trails, walks booklets, and a series of audio tours for use with mobile phones and MP3 players. A new interactive Cornish Mining website portal will focus on information for visitors to the World Heritage Site, with a link to the established regional Destination Management Systems to allow people to plan their holidays and book accommodation. This will be complemented by visitor information on all the South West's World Heritage Sites, including information on travelling around the Sites and public transport.

A number of business events will also be held for the tourism sector in and around the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, (including accommodation providers, retail and catering

The River Tamar with the lone arsenic chimney at Gawton Mine (Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)



businesses), to help these develop new products and services linked to the area's World Heritage Site status. The final phase of the project will see a major promotional campaign targeting potential visitors from the UK and overseas.

The project has been in development for almost two years and involved consultation with a wide range of partner organisations such as Visit Devon, Visit Cornwall and the Cornish Mining Attractions Marketing Association (CMAMA). The Chairman of CMAMA, Richard Cox, said:

"Since its formation in 2006, CMAMA has been working with the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site team to ensure that our members both support and benefit from Cornwall and west Devon's World Heritage status. It gives us a valuable tool for marketing tourism businesses within both counties to an increasingly discerning customer base. The funding for Discover the Extraordinary will enable us to improve the service we offer and reach a much greater audience, with substantial benefits to the local economy."

The RDPE funding has been awarded through the Sustainable Rural Tourism theme, managed by the South West Regional Development Agency (RDA),

which aims to assist the growth of environmentally sustainable tourism in rural areas.

Mike Johns, of the South West RDA, said: "This initiative is just one project in a far-reaching suite of interlinked investments that are being made through Sustainable Rural Tourism which will have a really significant impact across the whole region. The funding is designed to have a lasting impact on the tourism industry in rural areas through investing in improved access to, and understanding of, the key features and rural heritage of the South West."

"Discover the Extraordinary also offers a tremendous opportunity for businesses in the area to become involved and maximise the benefits for the local economy."

A new team has been appointed to co-ordinate the programme. Gary Jago, Project Manager, has extensive experience of mining heritage related initiatives, having worked on both the Mineral Tramways and Geevor Tin Mine investment programmes during the last four years. Working alongside Gary is Interpretation Officer Mary Olszewska, previously with Exmoor National Park Authority, and Marketing and Visitor Information Officer Samantha Snow, who was

Discovering the legacy of Cornish mining at Wheal Peevor near Redruth (Kirstin Prisk © Cornwall Council)



Exploring hidden depths at Poldark Mine, near Wendron (© Poldark Mine)

formerly with Tewksbury Borough Council.

Funding partners in Discover the Extraordinary include Cornwall Council, Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council.

Councillor Julian German, Historic Environment cabinet member for Cornwall Council, commented,

"The RDPE investment will enable

King Edward Mine, near Troon
(Barry Gamble © Cornwall Council)



the World Heritage Site partners to realise some of the economic potential which research for the World Heritage Site bid had identified. Much of the World Heritage Site falls within the more rural areas of Cornwall and west Devon, and the businesses based here will now have a chance to benefit from the project's aim of increasing sustainable growth in high spending, cultural tourism markets."

"It will also provide a valuable opportunity to enhance our appeal to overseas tourists, many of whom are looking for high quality, authenticity and local distinctiveness in their holiday destinations. All these values are features of a World Heritage Site, and the project will enable us to vigorously promote them."

The Discover the Extraordinary programme is due to be completed in December 2013 and other project partners include Cornish Mines & Engines, Geevor Tin Mine, Godolphin, Gwennap Pit, King Edward Mine, Morwellham Quay, Poldark Mine, St Agnes Museum, Tavistock Museum, Trevanno House and Garden, Minions Heritage Centre and Wheal Martyn (formerly China Clay Country Park). Improvements to visitor facilities are planned at all these attractions as part of the project.

The majority of these exciting attractions are members of the Cornish Mining Attractions Marketing Association (CMAMA) and for further information please see: www.cornishmining.org.uk ■



Hawke's Shaft engine house, Killifreth Mine near Chacewater (Paul Watts © Cornwall Council)

The Cornish Mining World Heritage Site –
a rich landscape with much to explore



Over 500 people gathered for the opportunity to view selected film from the Holmans' archive, now in the care of the Trevithick Society (© Azook)

HOME OF INNOVATION - THE HOLMAN YEARS

HOLMAN CLIMAX FILM SHOW AND MEMORY SHOP, CAMBORNE

The former Holman Brothers' Foundry in Camborne is known as one of the principal Cornish engineering companies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Originally comprising separate manufacturing plants within and around the town, Holmans was to become a by-word for excellence in mining engineering. During the early years of the twentieth century the company was to achieve the status of one of the world's foremost producers of compressed air mining machinery, with a particular specialty of rock drill manufacture. Holman models were to hold a number of world drilling speed records

set in South Australian mines in the early 1900s, and their various air appliances and mobile compressors were to be used in great numbers around the globe.

At its height the Holmans' workforce numbered in the thousands with the company being the principal employer and economic mainstay of the town. Camborne was to maintain a strong industrial focus through the manufacture of compressors and other pneumatic equipment until the



closure of the final plant in 2001. Many local families have close connections with the company and, in some cases, several generations have worked in the industry under its various guises. The Holman name is still held in high regard by many.

From the 1920s Holmans commissioned a number of promotional films to publicise the scope of their engineering activities and set out the long history and tradition of engineering excellence within Camborne. These films were to become part of a much larger archive of material which was to total some 160 reels and cover a wide variety of aspects of the company's activities. At the time of Compair's closure the films were taken into the care of the Trevithick Society which has a long standing role in the futherance of education relating to Cornwall's wealth of industrial and mining heritage. Today the Holman Climax Collection, as it is known, is an extremely valuable asset as it records a time when engineering was the very lifeblood of Camborne commerce.

In 2009 Azook, a community interest company based in Penryn, conceived a project to bring this fantastic collection to a wider audience and with the Trevithick Society's full co-operation has prepared a project which promises to have wide community educational benefits.

Radio personality Ted Gundry (front right) shares his memories of working at Holmans with Camborne residents attending one of the 'memory shop' events (© Azook)

Mrs Duckham, nee Dunstan, the 'Bren Gun Girl' attending one of the memory shop sessions, proudly poses with herself as depicted in war time promotional material for Climax (© Azook)

The South West Film and Television Archive (SWFTA) was approached with the aim being to digitise selected reels for community presentation and later use by schools and the general public. The first of the planned screening events took place at the Camborne Wesley Methodist Church of Friday 12th February, an evening which saw an audience of over 500 people including MP Julia Goldsworthy and Camborne Town Mayor Bill Jenkin in attendance.

Members of the Holman family were also on hand to take part in the celebration and Nigel Holman, son of Treve Holman (and brother of John) spoke of his pride in the company's achievements but also of his sadness that so much of Holmans had been lost. The event was hosted by local radio personality Ted Gundry, a former employee at Holmans, who took the opportunity to share some of his more humorous memories with the audience. The Holman Climax Choir was also present to provide a fitting musical air to the proceedings, the

effect of which added an increased poignancy to the evening.

Additional screenings were held at the Cornwall Centre, Redruth, on the 15th February and at Cornwall College on the 17th which were also fully booked indicating something of the depth of feeling that exists in the locality towards the Holman name. Such was the demand in fact that another date was added at the Cornwall Centre on the 25th with a further screening in March at Camborne Secondary School.

As a follow on to the successful film screenings, Azook planned and delivered a three day 'memory shop' session for the public which was held at Camborne Magistrates Court. This was to allow those many residents in the town with Holmans' connections the opportunity to share their recollections of the works with former colleagues and others. Over the three days many brought in personal documents and photographs relating to their time spent working for the company with others having interesting stories to tell of people and events which were particularly memorable.

Oral history recordings were made during the sessions, including an interview undertaken by Ted Gundry with the 95 year old Archie Jenkin



Above: Some of the many Holman related artefacts brought in by those attending the memory shop session at Camborne Magistrates Court (© Azook)

Right: Reynolds House within the Holmans No.3 Rock Drill Works at Trevu Road; understood to have been the manager's house, this historic building is due to be restored as part of the planned redevelopment of the site. (Eric Berry © Cornwall Council)

who started work at Holmans in 1929. Contact details were also collected for some 40 people who were willing to be contacted and interviewed at a later date. The memories of those present were also able to shed light on the identities of many of the workers shown in the Holman Climax archive photos, now in the care of the Trevithick Society. Volunteers are currently compiling a database of all the information gathered concerning the collection and plans are in place to launch a website to disseminate some of the the film footage and also the audio recordings made.

Responses to the questionnaires circulated during the events have been very positive and indicate that there is a strong desire to see more of the archive film footage and other material. Azook now plan to bid for further project funding to present



similar public events in the future. The Holman Climax Choir also held its own special evening of music and pasties in celebration, which took place at Camborne School on Friday 26th March.

The tradition of engineering excellence in Camborne is an important aspect of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site and it is certain that events such as these will heighten interest in the considerable contribution which Camborne

made to the development of world mining. The sharing of the wealth of information gathered by ex employees and the vivid memories held by many will greatly assist in this. ■

For further information on Azook and 'The Holman Years', please log on to: www.azook.org.uk

SAM HAM – MYSTERY OF THE WRESTLING CUP SOLVED

Below: Sam Ham's cup, unearthed at Tuckingmill by Paul Richards in July last year



The Sam Ham wrestling cup article published in the autumn 2009 edition of the newsletter has generated much interest both locally and further afield, and prompted others to get in touch with the World Heritage Site team.

Sam was one of the tens of thousands of Cornish mineworkers who were to work and prosper overseas, but who also returned to Cornwall periodically during their working lives and finally to retire. Several of Sam's descendants fortunately remember Sam and his wrestling trophies which has led to further information coming to light both here and overseas.

Back in July last year when the now well known cup was discovered by Paul Richards while engaged on highway improvement works at Tuckingmill, little was known of Sam Ham or his past save that he had been to South Africa at some point and been somewhat successful at the Cornish style of wrestling. The diligent research efforts of Truro based genealogist Steve Colwill, however, were to reveal from the UK Census returns for 1881 that Sam Ham was then living at Condurrow near Camborne, with his parents William



Above: William Gilbert proudly posing with his relative's trophies - with Edith Gilbert looking on - probably at the family home at Roscroggan around 1935 (courtesy Jack Gilbert)



Left: Detail of another of Sam's cups, now in the ownership of John and Marlene Roberts of Victoria, Australia

and Elizabeth, sisters Ellen, Edith and Elizabeth, and brother William. Shipping records also indicate that by the time Sam was in his mid twenties he had been travelling to South Africa as he is recorded returning to Southampton in March 1906 as a passenger on the 'Walmer Castle' having sailed from Cape Town. Sam

is also known to have disembarked at Plymouth after arriving on the 'Dunluce Castle' in October 1913, again travelling from Cape Town. In both instances Sam's occupation is shown as 'miner' including him as one of the many from Cornwall who worked in gold and diamond mining in South Africa at this time.

A report in the Cornishman newspaper for the 15th September

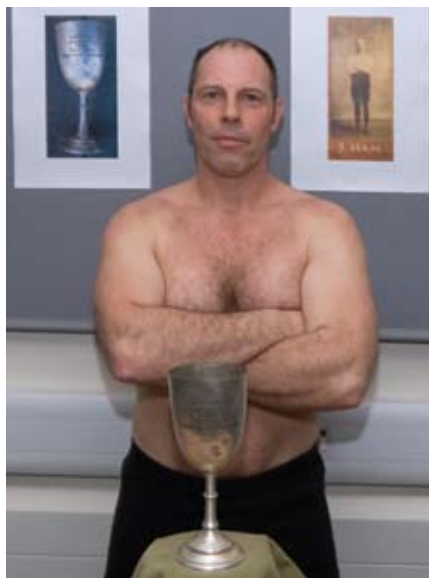


Above: John Roberts with the cup 'down under'
 Right: A reverse view of the above cup which also bears the inscription 'Wrestling Cornish Style' (cup photos John and Marlene Roberts)
 Below, right: Gerry Cawley, of the Cornish Wrestling Association, poses with the centre of attention, the Sam Ham cup



1910 records Sam as having attained the Middleweight Championship of South Africa that year, at a time when W. Littlejohn of Gunnislake was champion in the Heavyweight class. It is unknown if the cup found last year relates to Sam's championship win however. Back in Cornwall, and after his retirement due to miners' phthisis (silicosis), Sam is known to have become a Stickler (Cornish wrestling referee) and is known to have overseen a match in Redruth in 1933, by which time he was 53 years of age.

Following the previous newsletter article, additional photos of Sam's cups have fortunately come to light and an historic shot submitted by Jack Gilbert, originally of Higher Condurrow near Camborne, shows his father William Gilbert, a nephew of Sam's, posing with the latter's collected trophies. Taken presumably at the family home in Roscroggan around the mid 1930s, this excellent shot also shows William's mother, and Sam's sister, Edith looking on from the relative security of the doorway. Jack



feels that William is shown pretending he had won the cups in the photo, which is a charming thought that says much about how Sam's achievements were regarded by the family.

As featured previously, a step daughter-in-law of Sam's, Mrs Doris Butler of Coverack, got in contact with the World Heritage Site team and kindly forwarded a picture of herself



with one of Sam's clearly cherished trophies. Word also spread to Marlene Roberts, a relative living in Victoria Australia, who informed the team that she had once lived with her mother next door to Sam at the Farm Cottages at Roscroggan, until his death in 1946 aged 66. Marlene fondly recalls Sam from when she was a young girl and that he taught her to knit, made paper



Left: Brian Butler gratefully receives the Sam Ham trophy from Paul Richards, of Cormac, who unearthed the cup in July last year

windmills and mended her toys when required. Marlene also remembers Sam's cups, lined up polished and shiny on the family sideboard. Interest in Sam's achievements also prompted Marlene to get in contact with her brother John Roberts, also living in Australia, and he was found to be in possession of another of the trophies which is similarly engraved with the inscription 'Wrestling Cornish style'.

Contact with Frank and Brian Butler, originally from Camborne, cleared up an important issue for the World Heritage Site team, this being who is now the rightful owner of the cup itself. Frank and Brian are the sons of Fred Butler, Sam's step son and originally of Roscroghan, who is known to have been the previous owner until the cup went missing in the 1980s due to a burglary at the family home. How it came to be buried at the construction site in Tuckingmill remains something of a mystery but Frank and Brian were delighted to learn that it had come to light once more and that it would be returned to them for safekeeping.

This very welcome information prompted Karen Willows, the Office

Administrator with the World Heritage Site team, to arrange an informal handover and this was held in front of an invited gathering of family members at the Cornwall Centre, Redruth, on Tuesday 30th March. Frank and Brian Butler, Doris Butler, Peter and Angie Butler, Mrs David Berryman, and Elizabeth Doney with her son John were in attendance, along with Deborah Boden (World Heritage Site Co-ordinator), Karen Willows, Ainsley Cocks and Samantha Snow (World Heritage Site team), Janet Lewis (Historic Environment, Cornwall Council), and Colin Roberts (Administrator for the Cornish Gorseth). Paul Richards and Wayne Wilford of Cornwall Council contractors Cormac were also in attendance and Paul, as the cup's finder, proudly presented the cup to Frank and Brian. Gerry Cawley of the Cornish Wrestling Association was also on hand, fittingly dressed in a traditional Cornish wrestlers' costume to mark the event, and shared his extensive knowledge of the history of Cornish wrestling both in Cornwall and overseas.

The event proved to be a resounding success with the various Butler family members enjoying the opportunity to meet and discuss old times. Media interest has also grown considerably over the months since the trophy's discovery and local TV, radio and press reporters were on hand to bring the event to a wider audience in Cornwall and South Africa.

Thanks are extended to the various family members for very kindly sharing their photographs and memories of Sam. Thanks also goes to Kim Cooper and the staff of the Cornwall Centre for all their help and generosity in hosting the event (www.cornwall.gov.uk). ■

For further information on Cornish wrestling, please see the Cornish Wrestling Association website at: www.cornishwrestling.co.uk

Left: Doris Butler with members of the Butler family – Peter, front left, with Brian and Frank, left and right rear

Below: Sam's headstone in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Tuckingmill: the resting place of a much travelled miner and wrestler





An aerial view of Geevor taken in 2007



The Geevor headframe at Victory Shaft, March 2010

GEEVOR

FROM 'THE END' TO A NEW BEGINNING

It has now been twenty years since tin production ceased at Geevor Mine in west Cornwall, during which time the site has become a major mining heritage visitor attraction as the largest preserved tin mine in Europe.

Bill Lakin, Chair of the Trustees for Pendeen Community Heritage, looks back over the years with Ian Davey, a former miner at Geevor who has rich memories of his time at the mine.

Since the mine's closure in 1990 Geevor Tin mine is now well established as the largest mining history site in the UK and one of Cornwall's leading visitor attractions. Tin has probably been worked for at, or near, Geevor for around 4000 years but the last tin was to be produced there twenty years ago this February, making it the last but one mine to work in Cornwall.

Geevor was very much at the centre of the local community and in the mid 1980s provided nearly 400 well paid jobs which were a vital part of the local economy. When tin prices collapsed in the mid 1980s, due to the failure of the International Tin Council to maintain world prices, the mine suffered and the workforce contracted. The business survived at a much reduced scale until 1990 and Ian Davey, who worked on the last

shift underground, describes the final closure of a mine which is known in mining circles, globally. Ian remains a vital part of Geevor. His knowledge of hard rock mining and his ability to share it with our visitors with great humour and charm are appreciated by all who meet him. He is one of several former mineworkers whom the visitors meet, which are certainly one of the site's major assets and ensure that Geevor remains grounded very firmly in the reality of the recent past.

The last shift at Geevor was Thursday February 15th, 1990 and by then Ian had worked at the mine for some 17 years having started work in 1973. His final job was as a trammer/digger on the 17 Level, some 1,700ft (518m) below surface, and the following are his recollections of the last two days of Geevor as a working mine...

'The last production shift at Geevor mine was Thursday February 15th, 1990 - although we underground workers didn't know that. Rumours had been going around for some months that the prospects for the future were not looking good and

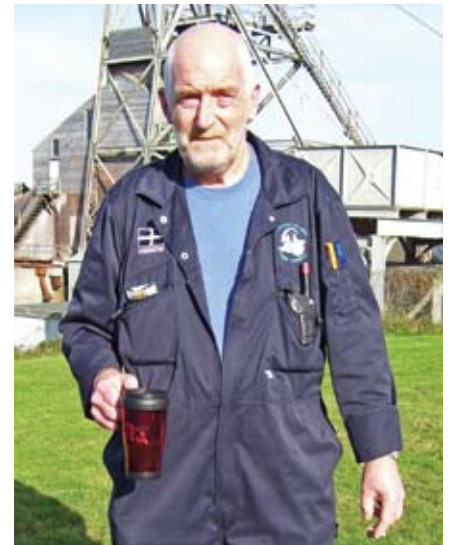
for the people that had been made redundant in April 1986 and re-employed in 1988/89 we roughly knew the signs, and had seen them before.



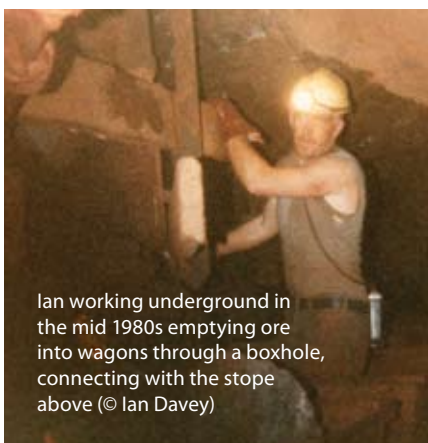
Ian Davey (right) and stoping partner Dennis Way underground in the early 1980s; Ian and Dennis now pass on their considerable knowledge of the mine to visitors in their role as Geevor guides (© Ian Davey)



'The End' – the final working shift at Geevor as recorded in the Miners' Dry, 16th February 1990 (© Geevor Tin Mine)



Above: Ian enjoying a well-earned break from the various demands of the visitor... (© Geevor Tin Mine)



Ian working underground in the mid 1980s emptying ore into wagons through a boxhole, connecting with the stope above (© Ian Davey)

Shift bosses were coming into the mine and talking about the countless management meetings, the falling tin prices, no timber being purchased because of outstanding bills, no overtime, no pay rises, contracts not being upgraded pricewise. All these things made the future of long term employment seem much less secure.

After a while one gets used to the rumours and they become less of a problem but we could see as underground workers that jobs were not being done in the section: track repairs weren't being done - we had to make do and mend; there were shortages of things to work with – timber, pipes (both air and water) and air bagging was in short supply because there was less money to buy the basics. Those who turned up for

their shift on Thursday 15th to work underground, while appreciating that their prospects were not good, did not know that it was to be their last day of employment. It wasn't until about 7 am on the next day that, after months of uncertainty, we definitely knew our future, or lack of it. I arrived at the mine as usual at 6.20 am to change and be ready for 7 am to go underground. Although 7 am was the official start of the shift some miners, like the machinemen who drilled and blasted the ore, would go underground at 6.30 am in order to do their tasks. They were paid according to how much ground they broke and in order to get paid they had to blast every day at a set time.

So, at about 7.15, into the Dry – our changing room - came the managers. We had been run by so many different ones from 1988 that it was hard to know who they were at the time. At that time about 40 miners were waiting to go underground. We were told there was, as of then, no jobs – the day before had been the last day of employment. We asked about the miners who had started their shift in the mine and were already underground: we were told they would have to be fetched out and told they were also redundant.

We were also told to clear out lockers of any belongings that we wished to

keep. As of 9 am that morning we were not to be allowed back in the Dry or on the site. As far as I know any clothes left by the miners were later destroyed by burning although some have survived and are still on display today in the Miners' Dry.

This is my recollection of my termination of service on the 16th February 1990. Although some work on the mine continued with depletion of reserves and asset stripping, this was the last full day of underground production.'

On this day, one of the mineworkers present marked the date on a locker in the Dry and, in doing so, captured what must have been the stark mood of everyone there at the time. Stating simply 'The End 16/02/90', this was to be the last metalliferous mining undertaken in West Penwith, but eventually led to a new role for Geevor in the telling of the rich story of the area and the fascinating legacy of Cornish mining. ■

Bill Lakin and Ian Davey

For further information on Geevor Mine and details of visiting, please see: www.geevor.com

WORLD HERITAGE SITE CULTURAL EVENTS



Dominic Power as East and Angus Brown as Goldsmith in Miracle Theatre's comic melodrama 'Tin'



Above: Ben Dyson as Dyer and Jason Squibb as Longfellow

MIRACLE THEATRE'S 'TIN' BRINGS HERITAGE TO COMIC LIFE

Miracle Theatre has delivered the latest in the series of successful performances presented as part of the Cornish Mining Cultural Events Programme with 'Tin' which received its first public read-through at the Tolmen Centre in Constantine on 23rd March. Based at Krowji at the Old Grammar School, Redruth, Miracle Theatre Company has a well-established track record of staging performance events in Cornwall, producing its first work 'The Beginning of the World' - the first part of the Ordinalia or Cornish miracle plays - in 1979.

Over the years the company has produced a surprisingly wide variety of performances including 24 original works ranging from Georgian-style pantomimes through to Victorian music hall, murder mystery and medieval farce. Miracle has also adapted several European classics

including Victor Hugo's 'Hunchback of Notre Dame' ('Quasimodo') and Nikolai Gogol's 'The Government Inspector', in addition to the sci-fi masterpieces '20,000 Leagues under the Sea' and 'The Time Machine'.

"In the winter of 1900 a windswept troupe of actors arrives in a small town, perched on cliffs above the Atlantic..." So begins Miracle's latest project partly based on an 1880 novel of the same name - itself based on true events - and also inspired by a wonderfully bizarre historical photograph of a turn-of-the-century touring opera company. Along with the story of 'Tin', think curly moustaches, cross-dressing, love and crooked bankers. Throw in excerpts from Beethoven's opera Fidelio, and you have the vital ingredients of a true comic melodrama.

This is the first time that Miracle has staged a public rehearsed reading in

the Tolmen Centre with most of the audience expecting to see the actors, after only four days of rehearsing, perched on barstools and reading scripts. But Miracle's passion for the project was plain to see, in what appeared to be more like a full-blown costumed performance.

Artfully detailed black and white illustrations, projected onto a large screen, provided a historical, literary lens to the piece. With Miracle's trademark comic style, simple costumes, and ingenious use of the simplest of props - a wooden table served as a horse-drawn carriage, desk, boardroom table and kitchen table - it was easy for the audience to imagine how the theatre company plans to stage the show in 2011. The audience barely noticed the actors with scripts in hand, for their characters were already totally absorbing.



Kate Edney, Steve Jacobs, Keri Jessiman, Tom Adams and Jason Squibb in the bank

There was a wheelchair-bound elderly mother (Steve Jacobs) – arguably the heroine of the play – who was a particular hit, with a determinedly dour expression and quirky, stand-up-doily hat. Jason Squibb’s floundering vicar, and Mark Buffery’s menacing Captain Rundle, pulled off poignant spiritual counterpoints. There were some tragic and violent moments, less easy to pull-off than the comedy in an informal run-through such as this, but affecting, nonetheless.

Tin’s informal performance, supported by the World Heritage Site’s Cultural Events Programme, is just the first step in an eighteen-month development process. In the summer of 2011, Miracle plans a touring theatre show in collaboration with community groups, visiting Miracle’s established venues and new non-theatre spaces, including relevant heritage sites. A choral work, yet to be commissioned and adapted from Beethoven’s opera, will be used as a musical score for the play, and in some venues it will be performed live by local choirs.

Perhaps most unusually, the audience were canvassed for their opinions at the end of the evening

Right: Tom Adams, Steve Jacobs, Dominic Power and Ben Dyson perform a scene in the mine counthouse

Right, bottom: Steve Jacobs, Angus Brown, Mark Buffery, Tom Adams and Ben Dyson as the parishioners (photos courtesy Miracle Theatre)

and assured that their input would help shape both the play and the project’s evolution. They were asked which elements of the story were particularly engaging, and to comment on the way Tin brings aspects of Cornish heritage to life – even to suggest ways the theatre company might do it better. As one audience member put it: “Miracle is so good at making our heritage come alive. I feel privileged to be here at the start and help shape what will happen.”

Miracle is looking for additional financial investors and friends to support the development of Tin, which it plans to perform in the South West in 2011 and also make into a feature film. You can find out more about getting involved by contacting Annie Ukleja at Miracle Theatre - info@miracletheatre.co.uk and www.miracletheatre.co.uk

Kelly Stevens



Please see the Cornish Mining website for regular updates on World Heritage Site news and events:
www.cornishmining.org.uk

Mine & Yours

— An activity guide to
the Cornish Mining World
Heritage Site



WHERE CAN I EXPERIENCE CORNISH MINING?

To find out more about Cornish Mining why not pick up a copy of 'Mine & Yours', the activity guide to the World Heritage Site.

Packed with information on each of the areas in the World Heritage Site, including things to explore, activities to inspire and practical information, Mine & Yours is now available for you to see how our mining culture shaped your world.

For details of how to obtain your copy, please log on to:

www.cornishmining.com/mineandyoures