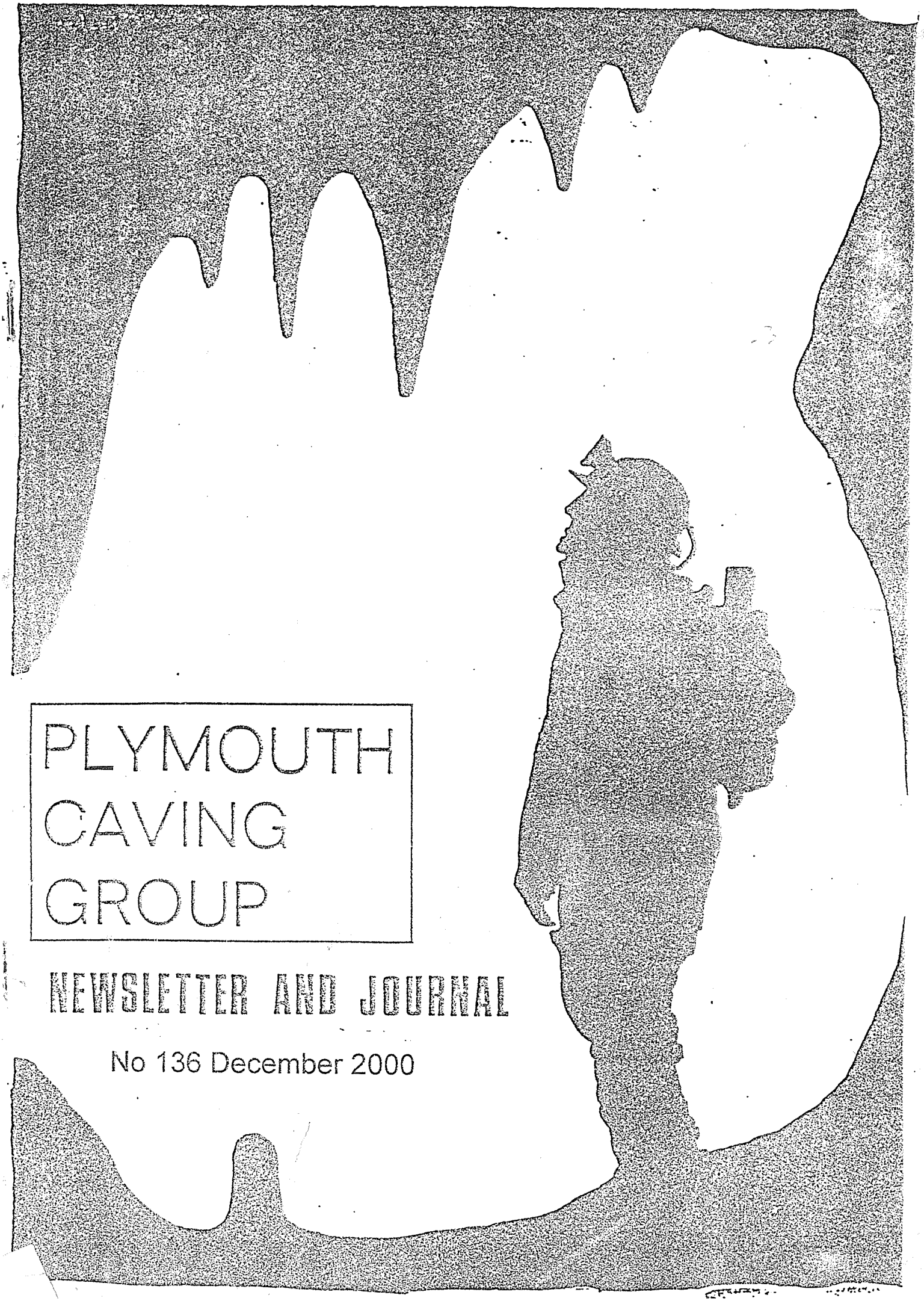


PLYMOUTH CAVING GROUP

NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL

No 136 December 2000

Plymouth Caving Group

Newsletter
No. 136

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Plymouth Caving Group Meets at the Thistle Park Tavern, Cattedown on the first Thursday of each month, when a Committee Meeting, open to all, commences at 8.00pm. On other Thursday evenings members meet at the Seymour Arms.

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Remember – no articles, no newsletter

Editorial

As many of you know (not that there are many of you!) this will be my last Editorial as I am leaving Plymouth and Devon for pastures new. I cannot really take this opportunity to have a rant since I will shortly leave the Devon caving scene. Consequently I cannot think of anything whatsoever to write so I will just go into senile reminiscence mode.

I first joined PCG almost ten years ago when it was quite a vibrant club with some sixty odd members many of whom were active. During this time I have been editor twice, tackle warden and held numerous other posts. It must be said that since I joined, the club has declined (which I don't think is attributable to me!) and it has reached the point of only just being viable. Nobody seems to know why the membership has dwindled (apathy in the general population or no attempt at recruitment by us – who knows?) but little seems to be happening to rectify it. However, while the handful left are still going caving, the club will endure and I hope will experience an upturn in membership.

Looking back over the years I can honestly say it has been good fun (most of the time) and my thanks to all those who made it so.

I will doubtless see most of you fairly regularly in the future but until the – happy caving.

Keith Jackson

Matienzo Summer 2000

The PCG were represented by Ali, Hugh, Trish and the Cawthornes. As well as some pleasant tourist caving trips, much new cave was found (largely in Papa Noel) and a number of new sites were found. Exchange rates make the cost of living in Spain away from the tourist resorts incredibly cheap, so many of us ate in various local restaurants most nights at bargain prices.

46 Sima de Reguilon

A huge shaft in the woods at the top end of the Vega. There seems to be a passage someway down, which would take a lot of work to reach.

15 August, Ali, Pete Egan
A start was made to follow the overhanging wall from the first rebelay. Deviations off a tree route and four bolts reached a point where the wall slopes away at about 45°. At this point we got scared and ran away, but first put in a Y-hang connected to the top with a cord to make this point easy to reach. A harness seat would be advised for anyone trying to get further.

75 Simas del Picón 5 August, Hugh, Billy

A side passage leading off this very impressive cave was found by the PCG some years ago, leading to a couple of pitches then a very tight draughting slot. This proved to be a long term project to open up, so was left.

86 La Cuvia and 89 Cueva de los Grajas

These two caves are on the northern slopes of the Matienzo depression, and were visited by a large group including a team of Spanish ecologists carrying out studies of the Matienzo valley. *La Cuvia* consists of a large entrance below the prominent white house. The entrance chamber contains various farm artifacts, beyond which a number of routes include some impressive passage. *Los Grajas* is a large chamber in the nearby woods, containing some large stal.

107 Cueva Hoyuca

This is one of the main components of *El Sistema de las Cuatro Valles* (the *Four Valleys System*) and is about 42 km long.

2 August, Max, Angela, Dave, Juan, Ali.

A new series found by Dave a few days before was looked at, only about 5 minutes from the entrance. This consisted of about 220m of passage, obviously close to the surface and containing much wildlife. This was entered by a short pitch. As Angela and Ali pushed up one crawl, they came across Pete Egan and Phil Pappard coming the other way from another part of the entrance series. This enabled a loop of 400m to be surveyed, with a closure error of just 1m. Downstream from the pitch a streamway was followed past an inlet for a short distance, both passages continuing low beyond the limit reached.

114 Cueva Llueva (Biggo) 4 August, Ali, Nigel Dibben, Angela Hare, Dave

After a fruitless jungle bash in totally the wrong place and another in the right area, we reached the location which is under a cliff face in the bottom of a large depression. A low passage passes through a blow hole followed by a 15m pitch dropping into a large passage carrying the Matienzo river which sumps downstream – the last place it is seen before the resurgence at Los Boyonnes. Upstream a romp over boulders eventually drops down to a large lake. Before this a climb down through boulders enters the Left Hand By-pass, a route following nice orange gour pools and passing some inlets and a muddy area, before regaining the river upstream from the Lake.

169 Steve Foster's 80m Cave 5 August, Bob & Ted Cawthorne, P Smith, A Quinn, Phil and Hilary Pappard

This cave was surveyed during a day finding GPS locations for caves on Muella.

1338

This very interesting cave was expected to be pushed properly this summer, but in the event not much was done, due to efforts being concentrated on 1471.

26 and 29 July, Hugh, Trish, Dave

Rigging down to the foot of the Spice Pot.

3 August, Ali, Pete, Phil

A few areas of rigging and unstable rocks were sorted out, and an alternative pitch into Sentinel Chamber was partly rigged. This lands on a ledge over a large drop continuing below.

1458 Hole in the Road

This cave was discovered last year by road widening operations, and was opened up at Easter with a hired rock drill to enter a deep pitch. By swinging off 30m down a connection was made into a large passage discovered last year by diving Sump 3 in *Cueva de Bollón (98)*.

16 August, Ali, Pete, Hil

A trip was made to look for a deep water canal seen by a group a few weeks earlier, but we could not find it – perhaps due to higher water levels. A return after a good spell of dry weather may be worthwhile.

1471 Torca de Papa Noel

This was discovered at Easter when 250m was entered. In the summer a further 2km was discovered, including some very impressive passage and a huge chamber. So far none of the expected connections to other systems appeared, but a future link into the *South Vega System* (currently 25.3km long) appears pretty certain.

5 August, Ali and Talking Terry went to the lowest point found at Easter, where a number of shafts descend from a clean washed chamber. Rigging up on the left produced a free hanging 17m pitch, Teamwork Pot. A climb down entered the foot of a large shaft below the chamber, with a climb up on the left. A stream passage carried on down, initially large. After a short distance this became a tall but narrow meandering canyon, where it soon became easiest to climb up to higher levels. This was left where it became necessary to drop back to the stream which disappears into a tight slot.

Meanwhile another team had been tackling a climb seen at Easter in the high level chambers back towards the entrance. This entered a large chamber, Disco Max. A handline climb over a steep stal slope dropped into roomy fossil vadose canyon. This was followed down past a number of awkward climbs, until eventually it broke out into a huge void where Oldham lights were unable to pick out any walls or floor in the distance.

6 August, Ali, Pete Eagen

A return to the passage below Teamwork Pot. Just before the end reached the previous day, a climb up on the left joined a parallel passage. This by-passed the tight slot and was followed by a climb back down to the stream, just beyond which we gained the top of a drop estimated at about 20m. At the climb the passage continues back the other way, passing over extensive false floors and after a short crawl entered a shaft where falling water could be heard. This series totaled about 230m in length.

7 August, Pete with Paul and Santi rigged the pitch into the chamber, named Plaza de Concorde, while Ali, John and Max followed sorting out the rigging around the entrance and shooting video. The pitch proved to be only 30m, landing on a huge boulder. The top part of the chamber proved to be about 50m wide , from which a slope of boulders and choke descended on one side. A route was found down this with much difficulty to where tackle was necessary to progress further. In the top part of the chamber two pitches were seen, one leading into a wet shaft where I ran out of rope 15m down with 10m to go (*Tumbling Dice*) and another short one under a boulder which was left for another trip. On plotting up the survey this chamber proved to be extremely close to the *Edge of the Universe* area of *Torca de Coteron*, above the connection with *Reñada* which is some 100m lower.

9 August One of the pitches near the foot of the chamber, *Belcher's Slab*, was descended. This was 20m down a steep slope followed by a vertical section re-belayed off a boulder jammed against the chamber wall. From here we were expecting to come across signs of previous exploration from *Coteron*, but this was not to be. One way at the foot of the pitch an inlet from above (probably the water from *Tumbling Dice*) dropped down through boulders beyond which a passage could be seen up a climb. This area was only given a cursory inspection. The other way, climbs down over boulders soon reached large voids, around which we eventually managed to force a route without the need for tackle. A sandy slope down marked the foot of the chamber, 100m below the top and which had taken two days to find a route to the bottom of. From here large passage runs off to the west, carrying a noticeable draught. Ali and Paul followed this to a chamber containing a pit and several possible ways on. We then returned to the chamber to meet up with Pete and Santi, who surveyed the route down to this point. We then carried on exploring, along a bouldery passage then a slope up to a chamber, *Alimony Hall*. Beyond this a sandy passage continues to a sandy choke, while up to the right a passage containing much gypsum crystal and 'snow' on the floor also choked. Just before the end, a draughting maze-like area was seen on the right and entered for a short distance. The cave was now heading towards the *Coffin Levels* in *Torca de Azpilicueta*, close to the connection to *Giga Hall* in *Reñada*.

11 August, Ali, Paul, Pete, Santi

The maze area was pushed, starting with a well decorated area then a slope down to a crawl over gypsum 'snow' with a dead bat. This reached a loop with nice formations, from which a way off to the right entered bigger passage, again with much snow. This soon developed into a fine phreatic tube (*BBQ at Saucepan Street*) with various avens, pitches down, loops and side passages. The passage ends at a choke but much more passage is likely to be found here, and there is a good draught. On the way out a bypass to the crawl (*Snowbat Bypass*) was located.

On plotting the survey, the entrance having been properly located, the separation between the *Snowbat* area and the *Coffin Levels* apparently proved to be just one metre! As both points are a long way into the respective caves there is of course undoubtedly considerably survey area, and possibly error, but a connection here would probably make an easier way into the end of *Reñada*. The new passage is at the same level as the main horizontal level of *Azpilicueta*, and also *Coteron*, filling in the gap between the two caves at this level.

13 August, Ali and Nigel Dibben went to the *Snowbat* area to try and communicate with Phil, Paul and Terry who went in *Reñada* to the *Coffin Levels* to try to communicate. Unfortunately this did not succeed, but they managed to find 95m of new passage in the *Coffin Levels*. Meanwhiles Pete Smith and Pete Eagen looked at the pitch left undescended in the *Plaza de Concorde*, to enter the *Gour Series*. This includes a traverse over a deep pitch which may connect to *Reñada*. We then detackled the cave.

<u>1556</u>

This cave, high on La Colina, is visible from the bar! This was discovered by Bob and Ted on 7 August, and explored and surveyed on the 8th – length 40m. It subsequently transpired this appears to be the same as *Cueva del Triangulo* (*94*), a cave explored by the Spanish expedition to the area in the 1960s. However, this latter cave is described as only 5m long – so they may not have explored it properly. Our records give a grid reference several kilometres out!

Bob and Ted also located a number of nearby entrances requiring climbing or abseiling to reach, one being guarded by a large and hungry-looking vulture.

Other Caves

Other small caves looked at by Hugh, Trish, Bob, Ted and others included 148, 343, 412, 866, 1328, 1387, 1440, 1517, and new discoveries 1533-1535, 1545-1549, 1550-1555, 1557-1561, 1563-4.

Alasdair Neill

Mylwr Tunnel – North Wales

I was recently fortunate enough to be able to tag onto a trip down Mylwr Tunnel under Halcyn Mountain in North Wales. The system is entrusted to the Grosvenor Caving Club by the local water company who extract considerable amounts of water from the system. A leader system is in operation and anyone wishing to visit must contact the club.

The entrance is a 400' shaft with cage gates still intact at the head from the not too distant times of working. A series of ladders down one side is used to decend and much work has been done by the club to make this safe. We entered a level halfway down into the old lead workings. These are quite extensive and occasionally large rooms are encountered which were used as wartime munitions dumps. We spent about an hour in these mainly walking size tunnels before dropping down into the limestone quarries. The descent into these is awesome and the scale of the tunnels is huge. The quarries consist of a series of tunnels about half a mile in total length and some 80' high and 100' wide. The stone is a beautiful white limestone and there are numerous railways with electric locos still in place but looking their age. After a good look around here we followed a tunnel to the base of the entrance shaft where we intersected the Mylwr Tunnel. This tunnel is a large adit carrying a fast flowing river of considerable size. At the point we were at the tunnel extended some five miles south to drain far off workings, and another five miles north to the coast where it resurges. Apparently, the last two miles of the tunnel is dead straight so you can see daylight in the distance even though it is a good three quarters of an hour walk. The resurgence is gated and not used for access at the request of the water company.

One part of the system which we did not see is about thirty minutes from the base of the shaft to a huge natural cavern with an allegedly bottomless lake. This is worth a visit by all accounts but we had no time. The full 400' ascent then took about twenty minutes and we had spent about four hours below ground.

Some time was then spent on the top of the mountain with a local stone mason. A tour of the quarries was most enlightening and it is evident that it is an interesting area geologically with numerous types of rock exposed. Some of the limestone seemed to consist of nothing but large crinoid fossils.

This was a trip well worth doing and it will take more than one trip to fully appreciate the scale of what is there. The local club are frequently doing trips requiring camps to explore deep parts of the system where natural cave is intersected.

Keith Jackson

Kerrier District Council Shaft Investigations – March 2000

A number of shafts were investigated by Alasdair Neill and Hugh and Trish Browning, which were part of a list prepared by Kerrier for future treatment. The following is an account of those investigated.

East Grylls Mine

A stope dipping south, about 5m long and 2.5m wide, and a shaft in the hangingwall lie in very loose ground. Workings extending to the east entered from the gunnice were apparently explored some years ago by a member of West Cornwall Mine Rescue Group, but may not now be accessible. This lies just east of Courtis's Shaft at SW 5672 2928.

Carleen Mine or West Wheal Vor

Carleen Mine lies to the west of Wheal Vor, and worked the main lode of that mine between the Valley Fluccan and the tregoning Granite where it dies out. During the main working of wheal Vor up to the 1840s Carleen was included, although the riches which made the concern the richest tin mine in the world at the time were concentrated further east. Carleen engine shaft was sunk to the 120 fathom level, while in the disastrous reworking in the 1850s an 80" engine was erected on another shaft east of the road. This latter shaft was plugged recently, although the foundations of the engine shaft can still be seen in an area devastated by these operations. A number of reopenings independent of Wheal Vor were subsequently made, the last during the First World War when a mill was erected and a few cwt. of black tin were sold in 1915.

Three shafts, including Carleen Engine Shaft, have been included in the next phase of shaft capping proposed by Kerrier District Council. Two of these were descended by A Neill, Hugh and Trish Browning on 3 March. Having obtained permission from the farmer (Mr Harris, Treworlis Barton), we tied a rope to the Land Rover and descended the first shaft. This is at SW 6148 2988.

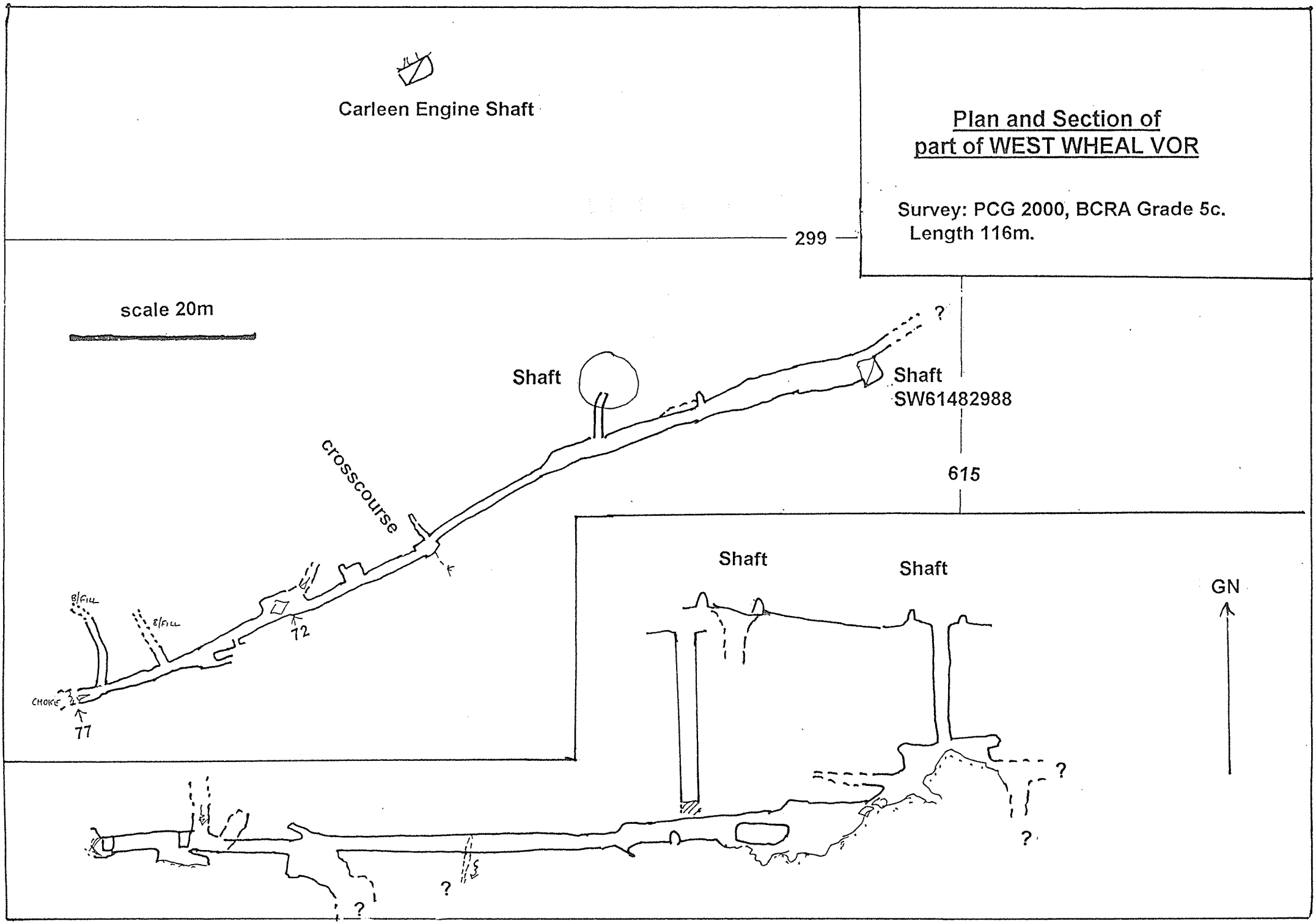
This shaft was about 2.4m by 1.2m, and is 14.5m deep to the top of a slope. To the east a small stope is followed by a small hole sloping down to a drop which we did not explore. This draughts and bat droppings were seen here. The other way, going down the slope the way on was blocked by old fridges etc. which were quickly cleared to enter a stope with water dripping from the roof. A level at the foot was choked but a climb up bypassed this. Beyond a level (perhaps Shallow Adit Level) is followed past a choked cross-cut (which may have connected with a shaft open at the surface just to the west of the entrance). Beyond, some fine secondary copper coats the walls, and runs off down a narrow hole on the right following a crrosscourse. The level then reaches the top of a stope which drops down an unknown distance, but can easily be crossed. A further stope down is filled 2m below the level, where a branch on the right is choked with fill. Beyond the level is choked where timbers holding up deads have collapsed; to the right two cross-cuts are eventually filled.

The total length surveyed was 116m but there is potential to get into a lot more here. Hopefully, it can be arranged to maintain access to this shaft, the farmer appears amenable to this.

Carleen Engine Shaft was also descended; this is about 2.7m by 1.8m, and was vertical to water at 19.7m depth, with nothing going off. This water level appears to be perched well above that in the lode workings. A wall of granite blocks forms on the north side of the collar, and a hollow on the east side is probably the site of the engine house.

Wheal Vor

Many shafts of Wheal Vor have already been plugged by K.D.C., causing a great deal of destruction in some instances. Two shafts are included in the current proposals, at Sw 6252 3025, which is just a rubbish-filled depression on the side of a footpath, and at SW 6169 3029. The latter was descended by Trish, being 18.7m deep to water with nothing going off. This shaft measured about 2.4m by 1.2m, and was easily rigged off trees.


Carleen Engine Shaft
Plan and Section of
part of WEST WHEAL VOR
Survey: PCG 2000, BCRA Grade 5c.
Length 116m.
299
scale 20m
?
Shaft
Shaft
SW61482988
crosscourse
615
Shaft
Shaft
GN
B/FILL
B/FILL
72
CHOKE
77
?
?
?
?

Two other shafts included are probably air shafts on the Wheal Vor adit. These were descended by Hugh on ladders, one was notable for the large number of adders living in the wall around the collar. One (SW 6212 2970) was 10.2m deep to water, with a level running 6m? NE to a choke at 7.6m depth. The other (SW 6213 2962) was 9.7m to water, measuring 0.9m by 1.2m.

West Wheal Metal

The Wheal Metal lode was the last great tin discovery in this district, being very rich during the 1850s and 1860s when a part of Great Wheal Vor United Mines. Small scale workings lasted into the 20th century, in conjunction with retreating the Wheal Vor tailings. A shaft, probably on South Metal Lode of the West Wheal Metal or Old Metal section, is included on the list. This is at SW 6242 2951. This shaft is about 1.8m by 1.2m, and was descended 9m to a cross-cut. The shaft continues another 9m approximately to water, but this was not descended. The cross-cut runs SE for about 4m to the lode, which is in soft light grey killas country. To the north east it runs about 10m and is stoped a short distance; the other way it is choked but perhaps this could be dug.

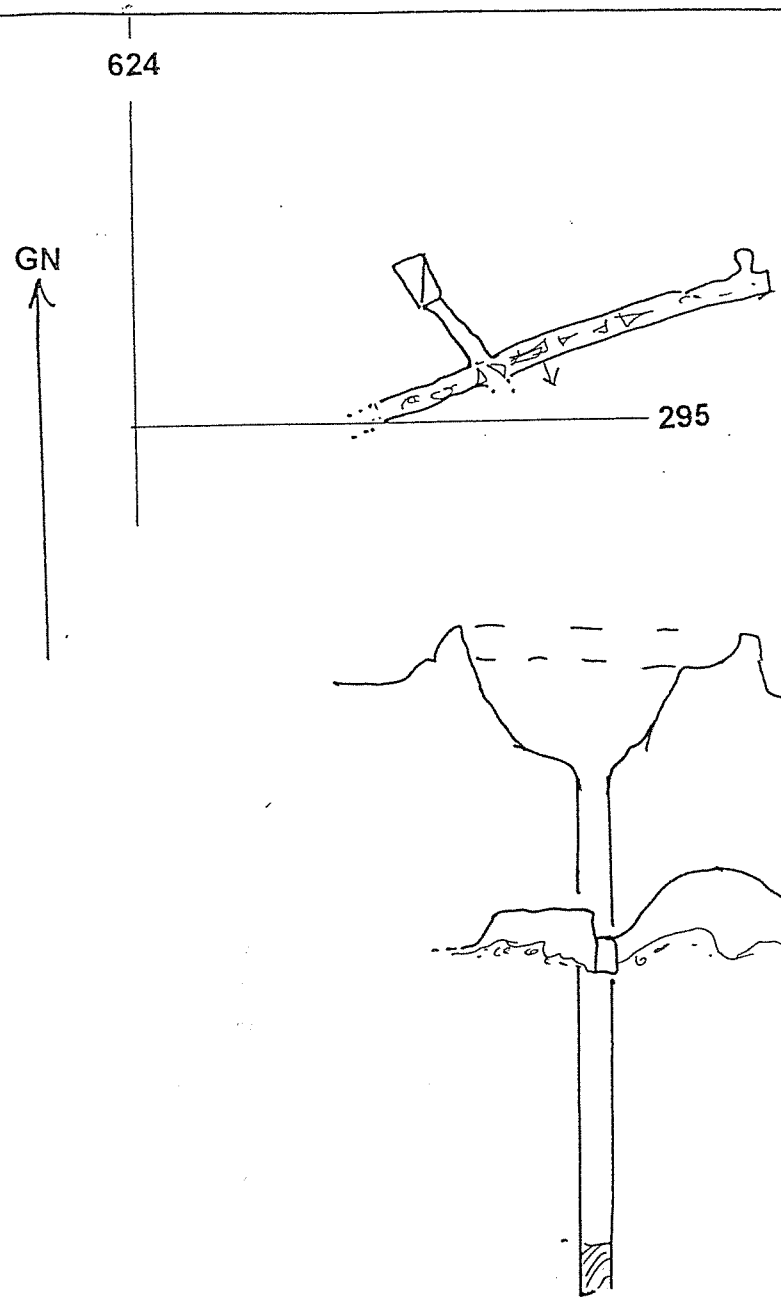
Although West Metal Shaft, the deepest in this part of the mine, was not included in the Kerrier list, the owner (Mr Champion of Polladrass Farm) was very keen for us to go and have a look at it. This is located on a three metre high overgrown dump. Hugh descended this impressive shaft, which was 21m to water. It measures about 3m by 1.5m, once past the usual widening near the top. Mr Champion stated that until recently water could be heard falling in the shaft, but this has now ceased. It seems that the adit has recently become choked, causing water levels to rise by as much as 20m here. Fragments of an engine house adjoin this shaft. Of the other shafts here, one to the south east of West Metal Shaft was said to be infilled, but Parry's Shaft was open to water level. This may be worth descending as a section reproduced by Collins shows workings leading off above adit level here.

Carnmeal Mine

Carnmeal was an important tin mine, which in later years was worked as part of Great Wheal Fortune. Two shafts were listed by Kerrier here. Painter's Engine Shaft (SW 6293 2942) is an impressive shaft rigged off a tree overhanging the shaft. Water and floating rubbish was reached 40m down, the shaft measuring 2.4m by 1.8m. The other shaft (SW 6287 2944) was not descended as the owner was out, but appears to be choked with rubbish about 6m down.

Tindene Mine

Tindene Mine was a small tin mine on the north west side of Godolphin Hill. This was an ancient mine, reopened in 1882 and closed in 1893, and briefly investigated in 1920 and during the Second World War when the alluvials in the valley were worked for tin. Three shafts here are included in the Kerrier list, but being close o the valley bottom all are flooded close to the surface. Newton's Engine Shaft (SW 5723 3147) still contains pitwork, with valve boxes etc. protruding above the water, and the fine remains adjoining the house for a 65" pumping engine (which subsequently went to Wheal Kitty at St Agnes). A small shaft (SW 5718 3145) between this shaft and Footway Shaft was descended to water level at –3.5m, with nothing going off above water. This shaft measures about 1.8m by 1.1m. Tindene Shaft (SW 5712 3141) is well hidden by leaf debris etc., but when eventually located revealed the top of a pump rod just protruding above the water level. This site is of considerable industrial archaeological interest; fortunately Kerrier's proposals for this site appear to be sympathetic to this. Another shaft they have not included, to the south east, is Oola Shaft. This is lost in dense jungle, but was found to be open and being in higher ground is more likely to have accessible workings above water level. This would be worth a future investigation.



Plan and Section of Part of WEST WHEAL METAL

Survey: PCG 2000, BCRA Grade 3.

10m approx

Polladrass Mine

This was an ancient tin mine with records going back to the 16th century. It was worked extensively in the 18th century, and later became part of the Great heal Vor Group. Four shafts were included in Kerrier's proposals, but the owner of one (SW 6156 3078) did not want any work carried out to it. The other three are on land belonging to Lower Polladras Campsite. These are at SW 6164 3083, SW 6165 3075 and SW 6169 3078, and were estimated at 2, 3 and 5 metres deep respectively to water. None were descended. The owner of the campsite showed us a spring (SW 6161 3097) which he thinks may mark a shallow adit. This seems to run SSE towards a wet area in the next field. The water level in this area is evidently backed up about 15m above the adit level.

Many thanks must go to the various farmers and landowners who all were ready to allow us access and showed an interest in our activities. Most seemed to be very ready to allow continued access to any sites which proved of interest. Also to Steven Wood at Kerrier for providing details of the shafts on their list, and also for assisting with locating landowners.

References

JH Collins, 1912 Observations on the West of England Mining Region

HG Dines, 1956 The Metalliferous Mining Region of South-West England, Memoirs of the Geological Survey

AK Hamilton Jenkin, 1965 Mines and Miners of Cornwall, Vol XI, Marazion, St Hilary and Breage

G Williams, 1988 Tindene Mine, *Jnl Trevitick Society 15* p75-81

Alasdair Neill.

Additions to the Library 2000

The following is a list of recent acquisitions. We have not had a full library list published since 1993, but Roger King is producing an up to date list which will hopefully be available soon. Meanwhile, if you wish to see anything in the library please contact Roger at Old Orchard, South Milton, Kingsbridge.

Mallorca Caves – an interim guide Des Marshall 1994

British Mountaineering Council
Summit 17

British Cave Research Association
Caves and Caving 86 (Winter 1999) Dachstein, Draenan 87, Oman, Meghalaya, Llangattock
Cave and Karst Science 26.3 (December 1999)
Conference Programme 2000

Bristol Exploration Club
Belfry Bulletin 506, 507

Carn Brae Mining Society
Newsletter 44

Chelsea Speaelogical Society
Newsletter 42.5-11

Craven Pothole Club
Record 58-60

Devon and Cornwall Underground Council
Newsletter 24

Devon Mineral and Mining Club
Journal 1.2-4
Kent Underground Research Group
Newsletter 64-66
National Association of Mining History Organisations
Guidelines for the Leisure Use of Mines (July 2000)
Membership List 1.12.99
Mining Heritage Guide 3rd Edition 2000
Minutes 14.11.99, 19.03.00, 15.07.00
Newsletter 38, 39
2000 Conference information
National Caving Association
Speleocene 41
Proposed Constitution Amendments 18.03.00
William Pengelly Cave Studies Trust
Studies in Speleology XI 1999/2000
Plymouth Caving Group
Newsletter and Journal 132-134
Shepton Mallet Caving Club
Journal 10.6 (1999), 10.7 (2000)
Shropshire Caving & Mining Club
Below 2000 1.2
Minutes and Meets Lists 2000
South Wales Caving Club
Newsletter 121
Speleological Abstracts 37 (1998)
Speleological Federation of European Community
EuroSpeleo 0
Trevithick Society
Newsletter 108, 109
University of Bristol Spelaeological Society
Proceedings 21.3
Index Volume 21
Wessex Cave Club Journal 269-271
Westminster Speleological Group
Additions to the Library 1999-2000
Newsletter 2001-2003
Tracings of Mine Plans
Bostrase, St Just MRO: 2990
Carn Perran, Perranuthnoe MRO: R56
Collurian, Lelant MRO: 15319
Georgia, Towednack MRO: A24
Goon Earl and North Downs, Redruth and St Agnes MRO: A25

Porthledden Mine

Porthledden Mine lay at the back of the beach of that name, on the north side of Cape Cornwall. A number of lodes have been worked since early times from the cliffs. From behind Cape Cornwall a track runs down to a slipway, recently rebuilt by the National Trust, leading on to the beach. Beside this can

be seen the adit on Trelewack Lode. Further north east lies the lode on which the adit of Porthledden Mine was driven before the First World War.

Trelewack was recorded as a tinwork at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when tin was taken to the Angarrack Smelting House near Hayle. The tin was presented by James and Richard Greenfield, John Gilbert, Bevil Grenville and others. These may have been working miners or adventurers – at this time the adventurers were usually a mixture of miners, local landowners and merchants.

The tonnages of black tin recorded at Angarrack included:

	Tons	cwt	qr	lbs
1707	0	6	2	22
1708	0	13	0	6
1709	0	16	1	27
1710	1	15	0	19
1711	0	6	1	15
1712	2	5	0	25
1714	0	2	1	10
1716	0	13	0	17
1717	0	11	2	9

It is likely tin was also smelted at other Houses, but records have not survived.

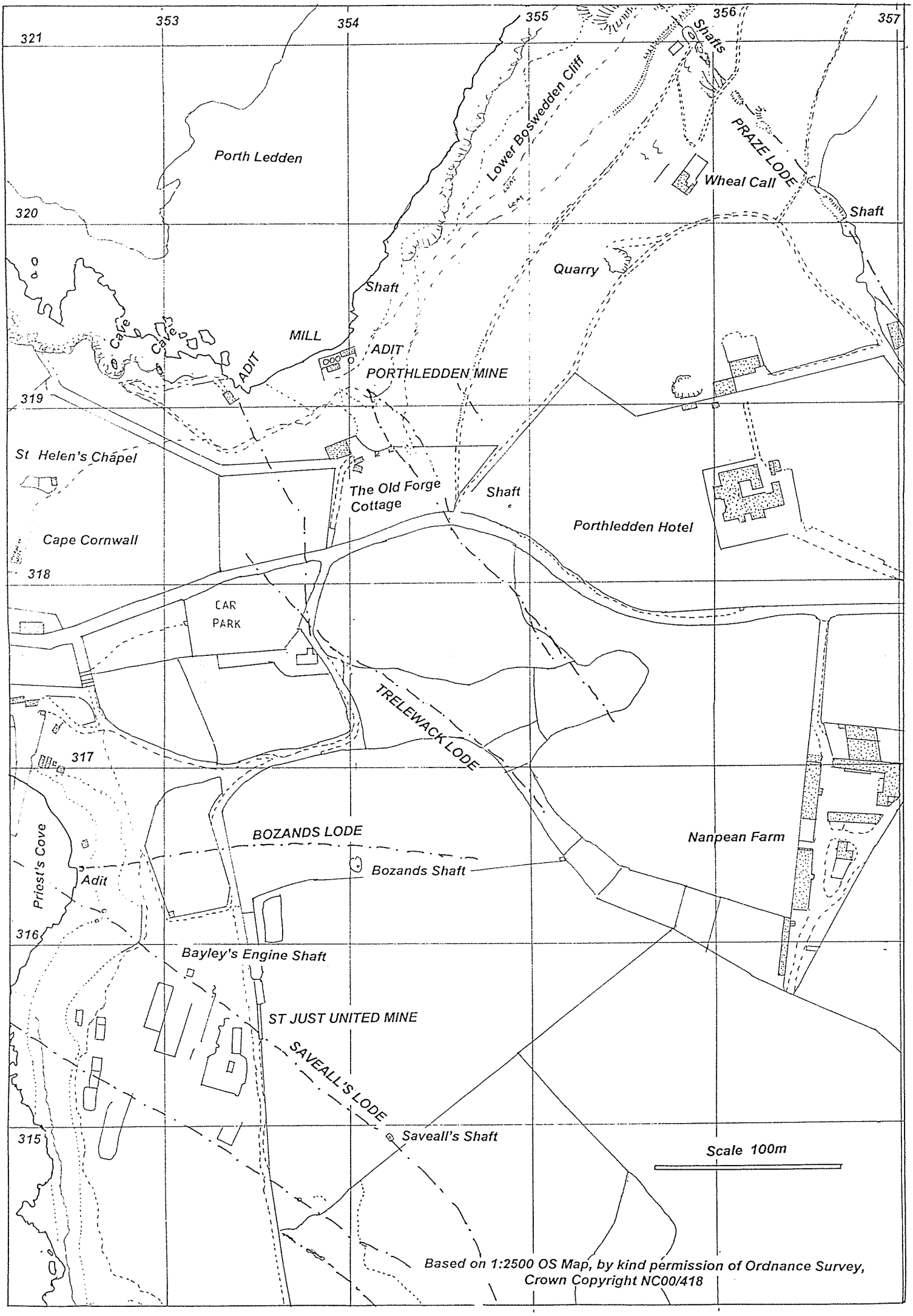
In 1755 a dispute regarding Trelewack Bounds occurred, apparently as a result of the boundary between this and adjoining bounds running over and nearly parallel to the Trelewack Lode. The lode may not have been discovered until after these bounds had been pitched. William Ustick, one of the bounds owners, had received dues from the bounds about 1741 and his agent seemed sure the end then working was entirely out of his cousin Angoves's bounds adjoining, but this was disputed by John Bennetts (the Preacher), who "seems to take a delight in breeding disputes". The following month tinstuff was divided amongst the bounds owners. Ustick was told, "the Dippa where ye stuff was broke by the underlying of the load is entirely out of their ground ...The load holds very good both eastwd and westwd".

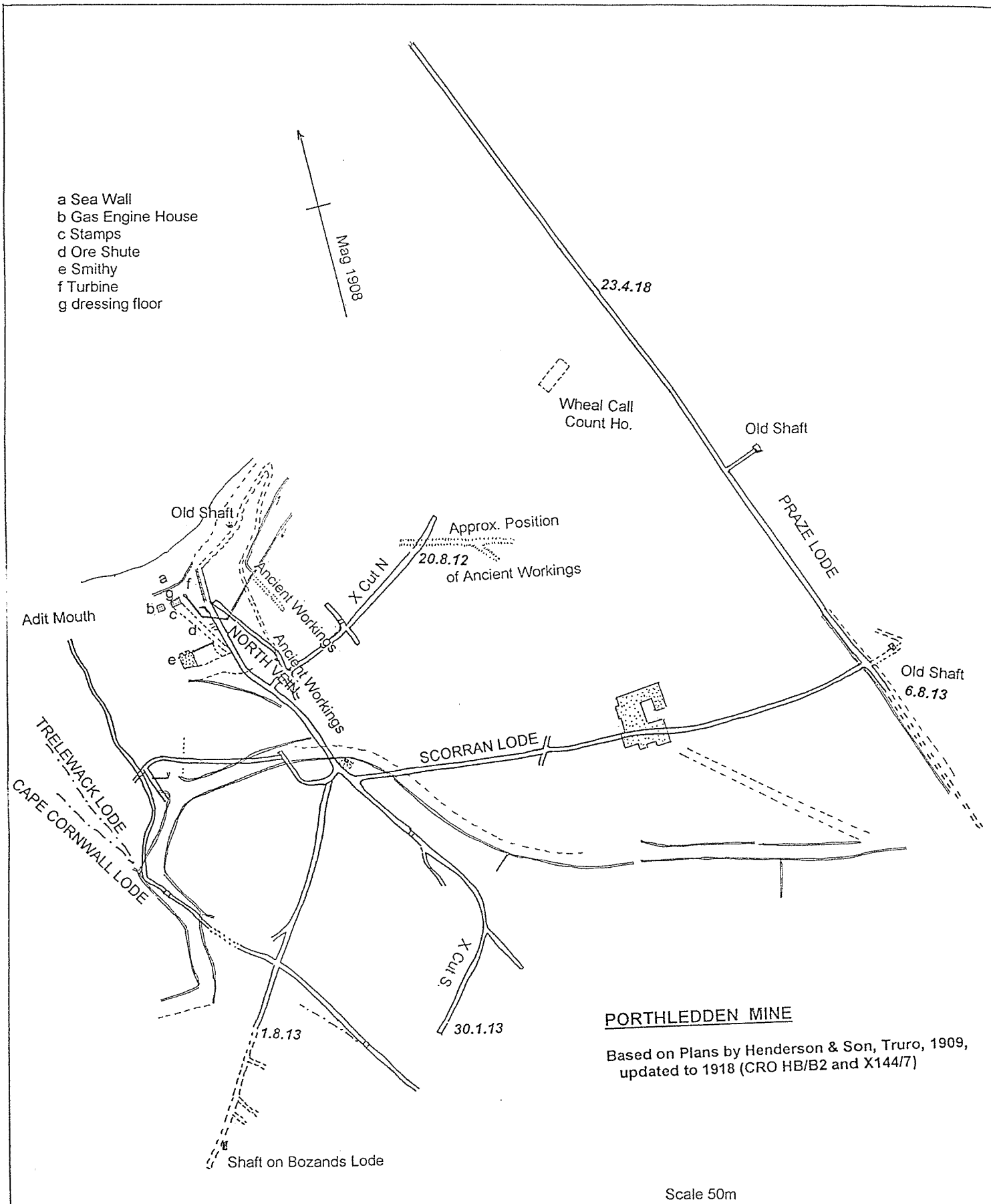
In 1787 a sett "from the Tail of Trelewack Adit" in the various bounds through which the lode ran, and for 10 fathoms on either side of the lode, was granted to William Bennetts.

In 1807 shares in various tin bounds in the area were offered for sale. CB Agar, owner of the Lanhydrock Estate, who owned land and minerals in the area, was told by his agent, "In Porth Leden Bounds, there are about 10 or 12 men working in Search of Tin". However the lodes generally seem to have been poor, and were left abandoned for many years. For many years tin was recovered from the beach sand, apparently being derived from the waste from dressing floors up the Nancherrow valley, and possibly from natural sources. This was certainly going on by 1843, and perhaps for many years before. In 1875-1880 6 tons of black tin were produced from this source.

Work commenced again about 1901, when a small treatment plant was set up at the back of the beach. This was set up by Captain Frank Oats, who had bought the land, and was managed by one of his sons. Oats had made a fortune in South Africa, where he was a colleague of Cecil Rhodes, and had returned taking interests in several Cornish mines, notably Levant and Basset Mines.

He built a mansion (Porthledden House) on the cliff top above the mine, and wanted to remove the tips in view of the house remaining from the adjoining St Just United Mines. Large tonnages were treated in


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Shafts
Lower Boswedden Cliff
PRAZE LODE
Porth Ledden
Wheal Call
Shaft
Quarry
Shaft
Cave
Cave
ADIT
MILL
ADIT
PORTHLEDDEN MINE
St Helen's Chapel
The Old Forge Cottage
Shaft
Porthledden Hotel
Cape Cornwall
CAR PARK
TRELEWACK LODE
BOZANDS LODE
Nanpean Farm
Bozands Shaft
Priest's Cove
Adit
Bayley's Engine Shaft
ST JUST UNITED MINE
SAVEALL'S LODE
Saveall's Shaft
Scale 100m
Based on 1:2500 OS Map, by kind permission of Ordnance Survey,
Crown Copyright NC00/418


a Sea Wall
b Gas Engine House
c Stamps
d Ore Shute
e Smithy
f Turbine
g dressing floor
Mag 1908
23.4.18
Wheal Call
Count Ho.
Old Shaft
PRAZE LODE
Old Shaft
Approx. Position
20.8.12
of Ancient Workings
X Cut N
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Ancient Workings
NORTH VEIN
Adit Mouth
Old Shaft
6.8.13
SCORRAN LODE
TRELEWACK LODE
CAPE CORNWALL LODE
X Cut S
30.1.13
1.8.13
Shaft on Bozands Lode
PORTHLEDDEN MINE
Based on Plans by Henderson & Son, Truro, 1909,
updated to 1918 (CRO HB/B2 and X144/7)
Scale 50m

the mill, which by 1910 included 20 heads of stamps driven by a Pelton Wheel. This was powered by water from a long leat from the Nancherrow valley, with a gas engine in reserve to provide power during periods of drought. Dump material was tipped into a chute running down the cliff feeding the mill, while in addition sand from the beach was transported for treatment using a Blondin-type cableway. By 1905 this disturbance had caused the beach to disappear. Worthless material from the old dumps was got rid of by tipping over the cliffs onto the beach.

In 1914 an accident occurred when, against the rules, Gabriel Thomas (engineer's fitter) and Justin Angwin (blacksmith) got into a bucket of the cableway to oil the overhead pullies. The bucket ran away; Angwin managed to jump clear, but Thomas was thrown out into the sea when the bucket hit a rock at the foot of the cliff. He died of a fractured skull, and Angwin received internal injuries as he fell down the cliff.

Underground work commenced in 1905, when an adit was driven on a lode in the cliffs above the mill. A smithy was constructed at the top of the cliff – now Old Forge Cottage. By 1909 this was in 300 feet, and cross-cuts to try parallel to the north and south were commenced. That to the south connected to the Old Trelewack Lode workings in 1912, and later to the workings in Bozands Lode of St Just United. Here it holed to stopes about 20 feet above the adit on that lode, which starts in Priest's Cove on the south side of Cape Cornwall.

All these lodes proved to be of no value, although a certain amount of ore was stoped and milled. However better results were obtained apparently from a drive east on Scorran Lode, where a rich bunch was encountered. This probably was the source of most of the 50 tons of black tin sold in 1911-1913, which with the high price of tin at the time probably resulted in a fair profit on the small scale operation. In 1913 this drive struck the Praze Lode of the adjoining Boswedden Mine, on which it appears a drive had been pushed over 600 feet back towards the coast by 1918.

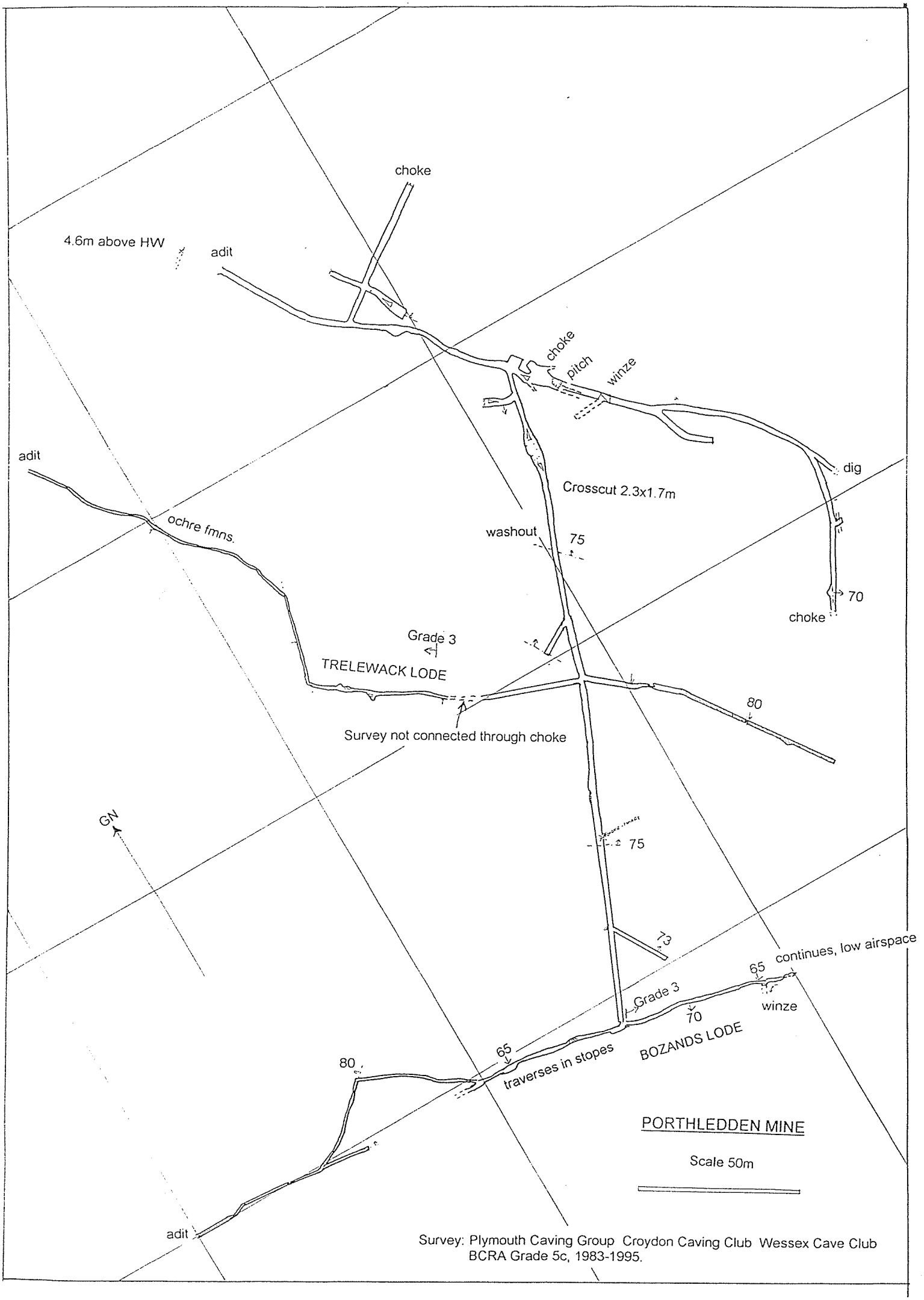
In that year Oats died; with the problems caused by wartime conditions, exhaustion of the immediately available dump material, and slump following the end of the war, the last recorded tin sales were made in 1919.

The through trip entering the adit on Bozands Lode and exiting at Porthledden has long been popular, running from one side to the other of Cape Cornwall. Fixed traverse lines were put in some years ago on the traverses on Bozands Lode, and a handline up to the connection at Porthledden Adit. These should be treated with caution. Care needs to be taken exiting from Porthledden, where a climb up out of the adit is followed by a steep descent to the beach, both of which are unstable. Exit may not be possible here towards high tide, particularly in heavy seas, but at other states the tide is not a problem.

It may be possible to get through from the Porthledden Adit to the old adit on Trelewack Lode, but this would entail an awkward climb in an area of unstable deads, so is not recommended. The cross-cut towards Praze Lode is lost under a major collapse, but this area draughts strongly so could perhaps be dug through.

On the beach, the remains of the mill are fast disappearing due to the action of the waves. Some years ago the Pelton Wheel was lying on the beach, but this now seems to have disappeared.

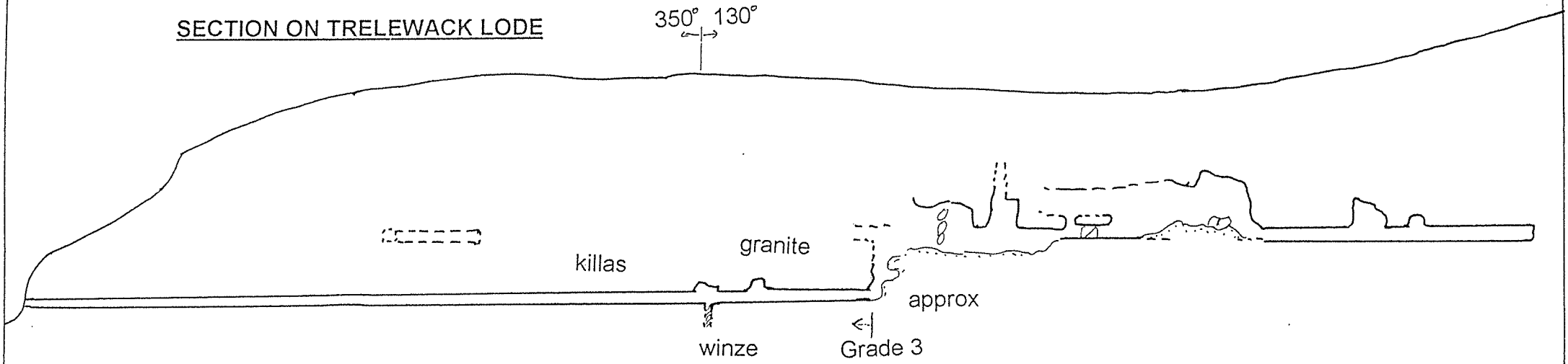
The surface of the area of the mine is now largely owned by the National Trust, but mineral rights remain in the Oats family. Anyone wishing to visit the mine is advised to contact the St Just Mines Research Group for advice on access.



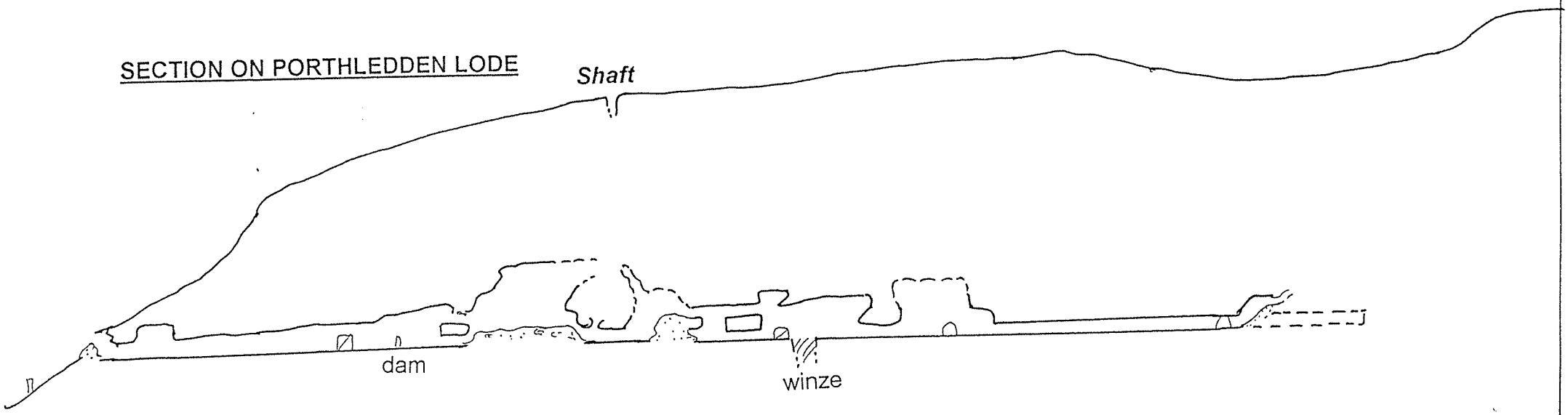
Survey: Plymouth Caving Group Croydon Caving Club Wessex Cave Club
BCRA Grade 5c, 1983-1995.

PORTHLEDDEN MINE

SECTION ON TRELEWACK LODE



SECTION ON PORTHLEDDEN LODE



Scale 30m

Survey: Plymouth Caving Group Croydon Caving Club Wessex Cave Club
BCRA Grade 5c, 1983-1995.

References:

Mining Journal
Mining Magazine
Western Morning News
Cornwall Records Office
Hamilton Jenkin collection – Lanhydrock Papers
Brooke Index
Various Tinbounds documents at CRO and RIC

Alasdair Neill.

Important Notices

Subscriptions

Members subscriptions for 2001 are now due.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Plymouth Caving Group will be held at 8pm on Thursday 1 February 2001 at the Thistle Park Tavern, Cattedown, Plymouth.

Club Information

Members

C Beesom	5 Sunnybanks, Hatt, Cornwall
P Benson & M Prince	7 Marchants Way, Meavy, Yelverton
H & P Browning	2 Sandy Way West, Tavistock
R Cawthorne	Lista de Correos, 03727, Jalón, Alicante, Spain
S Daw	Flat 3, 12 Trematon Terrace, Mutley, Plymouth
J Hanlan	62 Callington Road, Saltash, Cornwall
P Hanlan	'Demelza', Tremabe Lane, Dobwalls, Cornwall
K Jackson	4 Tamar Terrace, Saltash, Cornwall
D Jean	13 Tor Road, Hartley, Plymouth
C Kelland	251 Victoria Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth
M Kent	1 Rockland Place, Well Street, Callington
R King	Old Orchard, South Milton, Kingsbridge
T Miles	Rose Cottage, Lower Durston, Taunton
A Neill	25 Lipson Road, Greenbank, Plymouth
S Newall	21 Fowler, Stantonbury, Milton Keynes
J Palmer	25 College Avenue, Tavistock
C Smith	15 Bearsdown Close, Eggbuckland, Plymouth

Members should remember that the New Membership cards from Calum act as a discount card for the Plymouth Youth Hostel Association Adventure Shop. Subscriptions for 2001 are now due and should be paid either in person on a Thursday, at a Tuesday meeting or by post to Patrick Hanlan.

Planned Meets

Tuesday night trips and weekend trips.

12 December	Radford Cave	Contact Ali
16-18 December	Mendip Trip with DSS	Contact Ali
26 December	North Wales Trip	Contact Keith Jackson
9 January	Afton Red Rift	Contact Ali
23 January	Frementor Mine	Contact Ali
1 February	Annual General Meeting	

Members News

New home telephone number for Ali Neill is 01752 258881

New Address for Keith Jackson is Tanrallt Farm
Llanfachraeth
Holyhead
Anglesey
LL65 4NF Tel: (01407) 730031

Next Newsletter

The next Newletter is due for publication in the late spring.

Please send any articles to Dave Jean, 13 Tor Road, Hartley, Plymouth, PL3 5TE
Or e-mail them to davidjean@tinyworld.co.uk