



The Friends of Luxulyan Valley

Luxulyan Valley News

Issue No.34



Reg. Charity No. 1090218



Winter 2007/2008

Any article which appears in this newsletter is not necessarily the policy of The Friends of Luxulyan Valley



Inside this issue:

Ponts Mill Auction	3
World Heritage	5
From the Archive	6
Volunteer Work	7
School Visit	9
The Clay Country	10
Clay Country Tour	11
From the Archive	13
An Evening with The King	14
Quiz	14
The Valley in Autumn	15
Rare Hybrid Found	16
Quiz answers	16

Your
committee
wishes you a
very Happy

Cover picture - Maggie

From the Editors

Hello and a very Happy New Year to you all,

I can't believe how quickly the past year has gone. It has been a very busy year for the Friends of the Valley. We have had a full and varied programme of events and there have also been work parties and otter spotting training. Members have undertaken regular otter spotting throughout the year and there have been signs of otters in the valley and Pauline Tigg actually saw two otters (lucky her).

Our membership has gone from strength to strength and we now have 142 memberships which is a grand total of 257 people! Our thanks to all who support us in any way.

I would also like to thank our Chair, Chris Tigg, for his tireless effort on behalf of the Friends and the Valley. He and Ed Harradence have put in untold hours to try and protect access to the Valley after the sale of land at Ponts Mill (see his article on page 3).

We look forward to seeing you at our events in 2008 and hope that you will continue to enjoy your membership.

The Editors

Dates for your Diary

Monday 21 January 2008, 7.30pm Luxulyan Parish.

An illustrated talk by Hazel Harradence about our local treasures.

Meet Luxulyan Village Hall. Map ref: SX050583

Monday 18 February 2008, 7.30pm Wildlife and its Conservation at Lanhydrock.

An illustrated talk by Matt Lewis, Countryside Warden of the National Trust

Meet Luxulyan Village Hall. Map ref: SX050583

Monday 10 March 2008, 7.30pm Annual General Meeting.

Committee Member in Panto

Committee member Lynn Jeffery will be treading the boards at the end of this month.

She is in the chorus of St. Austell Players' production of Dick Whittington.

It runs from Tuesday 29 January to Saturday 2nd February at the St. Austell Arts Theatre in Truro Road. We wish Lynn all the best for her stage debut.

Ponts Mill Land Auction -12th November 2007

For many months, if not years, it has been known that *Imerys* were intending to dispose of land at Ponts Mill. It was also apparent that this included the shed that Paul Mason used for the storage of necessary equipment for him to carry out his role of the Valley Ranger. However, any effort made by Cornwall CC or Restormel BC to persuade *Imerys* to sell, gift or get a covenant included in the sale particulars with respect to the small area leading to, and including this shed, fell upon deaf ears. Concerns had also been raised in the past by Paul Mason that the tarmac area known as the car park, was also not owned by Restormel BC or Cornwall CC.



The Railway Sidings at Ponts Mill Works -

photo Chris Tigg

The release of the auction details by John Keast at *Jefferys* in early October indicated that out of the nine Lots being sold two pertained to the Luxulyan Valley. Lot 7 consisted of two acres that included the Car Park and the tarmac drive, down to and including the large open site of Pontsvale Mill; and Lot 8 extended some 14 acres and included a small section of the road adjacent to the car park, the old Pontsmill China Clay Works, the old Prideaux Wood Works and the footpath through to St Blazey level crossing. (Part of this footpath was originally a two foot gauge tramway from the Prideaux Wood Works to the loading bay at Ponts Mill sidings. Some of this 19th century track is still visible.) There was no clause or covenant in the sale documents that would safeguard any future access for the public use of the car park, footpath or even to the recently re-commissioned Hydro-electric turbine. Subject to the usual planning procedures and with no guarantee that the new land owners would look sympathetically upon the Luxulyan Valley, potentially all the archaeological and industrial heritage within these areas that adds to the history of the Luxulyan Valley, could also be lost.

English China Clays/Imerys over the years have generously gifted the valley, leat system, turbine and other land at Ponts Mill to Cornwall CC. The joint management of this World Heritage Site since 1992 has been by Restormel BC and Cornwall CC, and it seemed to 'The Friends' only natural that they would want to not only protect the access and parking rights for the future enjoyment The Luxulyan Valley, but hopefully help with the preservation of this site.

Concerns of this forthcoming auction were raised with all members of the Luxulyan Valley Partnership and other interested parties, in the expectation that everyone would want to bring pressure on *Imerys*, and do what they could to prevent an embarrassing public relations disaster for all. Ed Harradence and Howard Roberts were making their views clear and bringing as much pressure as possible on those who ought to have been involved in resolving this issue.

Incredibly, policy decisions by the owning authorities of the rest of The Luxulyan Valley meant that they were powerless to intervene. The thought of holding a Public Meeting was discussed by 'The Friends' but

“There was no clause or covenant in the sale documents that would safeguard any future access for the public use of the car park, footpath or even to the recently re-commissioned Hydro-electric turbine.”

Ponts Mill Land Auction -12th November 2007 - *continued*



Brick Tunnel under the Par to Newquay railway line -*photo Chris Tigg*

instead a different tactic was explored in an attempt to avert this, and perhaps one that in hindsight should have been explored earlier: a direct plea to *Imerys*.

Following an approach to *Imerys's* Community & Public Relations Manager, Ivor Bowditch, he fully recognised our concerns and within days made a public announcement to all 30+ people on 'The Friends' rearranged China Clay coach tour of 20th October that he felt the issue of access and the car parking facilities at Ponts Mill would be resolved to ensure their continued use. On the 23rd October Ed Harradence, Ralph Keam and I met up with *Imerys's* Group Real Estate Manager, Mathew Arthur who confirmed that no previous approach had been made to him, but he now recognised the importance of the parking facilities at Ponts Mill. As a result, the sale particulars would be altered to include a covenant that would allow access and free public parking in perpetuity at the Car Park. This was actioned by Mathew, and all interested parties received a letter from *Jefferys* explaining this change.

Unfortunately we could do nothing to change Mathew's decision about the extent of the area being sold, or preventing the sale from proceeding, but it was becoming clear that there were other concerns being brought to his attention regarding ownership of some of the land that *Imerys* thought they owned in respect to Lot 8.

'The Friends' could not afford to buy any of the land, and with no obvious help from elsewhere, we took the only course of action left open to us to try to preserve public access. Under the provisions of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act 'The Friends' applied for a Definitive Map Modification Order. This application was to get the popular, and very important, footpath between St Blazey level crossing and Ponts Mill recognised as a Public Right of Way. With the help of *The Cornish Guardian*, posters and phone calls, we were inundated with support. As a result we were able to submit our completed Application to Cornwall CC four days before the auction on 12th November. We had documentary evidence supplied and testimonials of its continual use as a footpath 'as of right' back to the early 1900's. The procedure for getting this footpath added to the Definitive Map of all Cornwall's Public Rights of Way has now begun. Whilst there is no guarantee of success, the process is cost-free and given the footpath's importance as a link between existing footpaths, and being within a World Heritage Site, we can but hope for a favourable outcome.

A week or so before the auction, Lot 8 was withdrawn by *Imerys*, perhaps as a direct result of ownership uncertainties. However, once these are resolved the site will probably be sold next year. At the auction of Lot 7, John Keast made it very clear about the new clause in the contract that the car park was to remain for free public use,

"the sale particulars would be altered to include a covenant that would allow access and free public parking in perpetuity at the Car Park"

Ponts Mill Land Auction -12th November 2007 - *continued*

and that a Definitive Map Modification Order had been submitted by 'The Friends'. Despite a guide valuation of £20,000-£30,000, and the aforementioned conditions, Lot 7 sold for £41,000.

In the meantime Ed Harradence can go about his Ponts Mill Turbine administrative duties knowing access rights are preserved. However, at present Paul Mason still has no replacement local store shed and so his job remains that much more difficult.

Hopefully the footpath to St Blazey will continue to be left open and enjoyed by all, but it remains to be seen how this sale affects The Valley and what plans the new owner has for it.

'The Friends' want to work with the new owners and not against them, but as ever, we never know how lucky we are until something is taken away.

A big 'thank you' must go to all who helped us in our campaign to get this footpath recognised as a public right of way.

Chris Tigg



Footbridge over the River Par -*photo Chris*

The Luxulyan Valley and the World Heritage Site

Or, to be zackt, the snappily-entitled "Cornwall and West Devon Mining World Heritage Site."

On 15th October, a goodly number assembled in Luxulyan Village Hall to receive a talk from Deborah Boden, from the World Heritage Site office in County Hall, Truro, about the Cornish World Heritage Site and its effect on the Luxulyan Valley.

Deborah illustrated her talk with pictures (I'm desperately trying to avoid using the words 'PowerPoint' and 'presentation', which conjures up Men In Suits and management-speak like Thinking-outside-the-envelope and Pushing-the-box or whatever. But, erm, that's what it was. Without the jargon and the Suits).

The extent of the Cornish WHS was described, ranging from West Devon Consols Mine near Tavistock, through Portreath and its tramway, the huge mining area around Redruth-Camborne, ditto West Penwith, and our Luxulyan Valley and Charlestown. Ironic, really, to lump these two places together, since Treffry and Rashleigh, their respective builders, were at loggerheads both personally and commercially.

The overall strategy for dealing with all the sites was discussed, with the problems about conservation, restoration, development, and exploitation; also the opportunities available for tourism, education, the jobs that could be created and the loadsa money that could be made by the lucky people involved.

"Ms Boden's enthusiasm for the World Heritage Site in Cornwall and the Luxulyan Valley in particular was evident throughout her visit"

The Luxulyan Valley and the World Heritage Site-

It was stressed that the views of the local population, coupled with the actual layout and suitability of each site would be big factors to be taken into account when the plans are designed; this was heartening news to the Friends, who could have been worried about talk of Visitor Experience Enhancement Centres, car and coach parks, retail outlets, entrance fees and the like, items much more acceptable at bigger sites such as The Great Flat Lode near Carn Brea than small intimate places. Because of the narrow approach roads and lack of parking places at the Valley it is accepted that the ambitious plans designed for other sites are not acceptable for Luxulyan, and would totally change the area for the worse.

Being part of a World Heritage Site could be advantageous for fundraising; the WHS organisation itself doesn't hand out grants, but being part of it would tick boxes on Grant application forms. Planning applications that would detract from the Valley could also be better fought with the backing of having World Heritage Site status.

Ms Boden's enthusiasm for the World Heritage Site in Cornwall and the Luxulyan Valley in particular was evident throughout her visit; in fact she told us that the Valley was one of the reasons she wanted to live in Cornwall.

From the Archive

When you read this the Port of Par will no longer be exporting clay. Already the quays are overgrown and the four Buell driers are silent after a life of just forty years. The projected output from Imerys Minerals in Cornwall is about one-quarter what it was at the zenith of ECLP.

However, Cornish clay is not dead yet. As far as the east side of the clay area is concerned, the main production is currently from Littlejohns and Wheal Martyn pits. It is processed at Trebal refinery and passed on to Rocks works. Here a new plant has been built at a cost of £16 million. It contains a battery of 120 tube presses, which can bring the moisture content down to about 18%, at which the clay can be handled as a bulk solid. The small amount wanted at lower moisture levels will pass through a new fluidised-bed drier. Power for this equipment, and heat for the drier, comes from a gas-turbine CHP unit, brought from the abandoned works at Marsh Mills.

By the way, the present method of working the pits has meant the disappearance of their most spectacular sight, an icon of the industry for over a century, of a monitor hurling its jet at the kaolinised rock face.

All the output from Rocks, projected at around 600,000 tons per year, will go by train to Fowey, via Par and Lostwithiel. Imerys have contracted with English, Welsh & Scottish Railway Co for five years - since the latter's purchase by German State Railways we have the unprecedented phenomenon of a French firm working with a German one. There will be two trains per day coming through the Valley, with greater loads than hitherto: up to 570 tons empty and 1,800 tons loaded. The special wagons are

From the Archive - *continued*

having their drawgear strengthened and a change of locomotives is in view, to the Brush Electrical Engineering heavy freight diesels known as 'Class 60'.

Down at the bottom of the Valley, activity at Par will continue for a while. We are assured that the new drier, the milling plant and the calciner will carry on working. For the rest of it, while there are stories of marinas, leisure parks, new towns and what have you, Imerys' declared position is "nothing has been decided".

One feature with no visible future is the railway track, now just a siding, from St. Blazey into the port. We have already seen the Pontsmill branch disconnected, with no word about its preservation even though it is in a World Heritage Site; we urge our members to lend their support to representations for the preservation and, if possible, future use of this small but significant part of the system.

Volunteer Work Day, 20th October



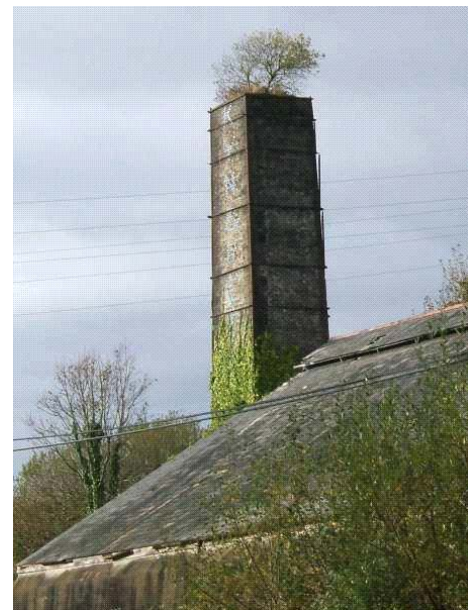
If you went down in the woods one-dull-autumnal-Saturday
You'd've been sure of a big surprise,
For several folks delved by the Wheelpit
In front of your very eyes.

They slashed and chopped
For all they were worth,
Cut weeds and scrub
And scabbled in earth;
'Cos that's the day
The volunteers had
Their wo-o-ork day. 🎵

Those of you who have walked along the top leat to the wheelpit may have, like me, been saddened by the overgrown tangle hiding the remains of the waterwheel-driven china-stone mills.

When the tramway incline became disused following the building of the railway-as-we-know-it-today, the astute entrepreneurs took advantage of the idle waterwheel and built a china-stone grinding mill, using the tramway to bring the stone to the site from the Luxulyan direction across the viaduct.

Eventually this mill, too, was abandoned, and wrecked by vandals long ago, leaving the tantalising bits and pieces of machinery we see to-



Carbon Neutral? Old Clay Dry Chimney on Par Moor Road-*photo Roger*

Volunteer Work Day, 20th October - *continued*

“We spent the morning hacking away at vicious brambles and other tough unyielding vegetation”

day. Or cannot see, since they have become enveloped in brambles, ferns, withies, grass, and other things, looking even more desolate than ever.

It seemed a great shame; the channel for the water has been refurbished, now cascading strongly to supply the famous Community-Turbine at Pontsmill; a lot of steps built so that you can have a proper look, acres of railings erected, complete with ‘Do-not-fall-over-the-edge’ notices so you can do it healthily and safely (and the Powers That Be accrue brownie-points for Duty-of-Care...)—and what do we see? A few walls full of untidy brambles!

Now, thanks to the dedicated band of sweaty Volunteers, supervised by the Valley Ranger, Paul Mason, the Edge-Runner Mill on the right-hand side of the wheelpit can be seen again. We spent the morning hacking away at vicious brambles and other tough unyielding vegetation, splishing around in squidgy mud and feeding a whining host of ravenous midges who hadn’t had a decent human-blood meal for ages, judging by the fervour of their attack. I wonder what they eat when they can’t get people? The chopping seemed endless, but by lunchtime when we paused for a welcome teabreak, a satisfying lack of vegetation revealed the contents of the old mill.

Two circular troughs of smooth granite each with a central upstanding pivot-point (this granite, Luke tells me, is not ‘valley’ granite, which is coarse-grained with large feldspar crystals, but was of fine-grained black-speckled type from the china-stone pits themselves—to avoid contamination of the material as they wore away. They ‘Ole Men’ knawed what they was a-doing-of, dinnum?) There were also various heavy-duty axle-type bits of machinery, with gearwheels and connecting flanges, lying at strange angles where they fell when the wooden supports rotted away or were pulled down by brass-salvors. There was little remaining of the grinding wheels, which might have been of the same granite as the troughs, or perhaps of metal, which is why there is nothing left.

In the bottom of the trough, under a covering of leaf-mould, there remains a few inches (ess, would’ve been inches in them days, my ’ansom, twas a long time ago) of the last batch of china-stone ever ground at the mill. Wonder whose granddad worked his socks off on that last day for a few pennies? (real pre-decimation ones, at 240d to the £.) And did he still have a job to go to the next...? Pause for thought; a little shiver went down my spine, not necessarily from feeling cold...

Just the building on the left to clear now; any more volunteers? (I love that ‘just’; go and see how much more there is to do!) We shall then have an industrial relic fit for a World Heritage Site, and something interesting for every Thomas, Richard and Henry to see.

“They ‘Ole Men’ knawed what they was a-doing-of, dinnum?”

Luxulyan School Visit to the Valley

Our visit to the valley

Last week our school went to visit Luxulyan Valley. We went to do some seed collecting. Paul Mason, the ranger of the valley showed us around. He showed us how to find seeds. We found acorns and beech seeds. We did our best to respect the wildlife. It was a sunny day and the beautiful autumn trees were the colour of a sunset.

We brought the seeds back to school. We tested them to see which were alive and which were dead. We did this by putting them in water, the seeds which floated were dead. We planted the live seeds in compost, and we are all waiting for them to grow, but this could take 2 to 3 months, and 5 to 6 years to grow into a tree!

It was a great day, we really enjoyed finding and planting the seeds. We are very lucky to have such a wonderful valley on our doorstep.

*By Sam Dawson, Bradley Glennon
and Harry Bond from Luxulyan School.*

"It was a great day, we really enjoyed finding and planting the seeds. We are very lucky to have such a wonderful valley on our doorstep".



The Clay Country in Literature

You can't move around here without bumping into Du Maurier, Rowse, Thompson and other pillars of the literary establishment that seem to prop up most of Cornish tourism. Here is another one who would be scorned by the world of Eng Lit, so if that's you, turn the page now.



He is Captain W. E. Johns, who wrote over 100 books of adventure stories in forty years, 85 of them starring James Bigglesworth, action hero in the world of aviation. In "Biggles and the Dark Intruder", the preliminaries include the following dialogue:-

'I had a flash from London Airport to say an unidentified aircraft showing no lights was approaching the coast. If it held its course it would cross the coast somewhere between St. Mawes and Fowey. Then I had a signal to say Falmouth had lost the plane in the region of St. Austell. It was then losing height fast.'

'I know Cornwall pretty well, and if this perisher dived below the beam near St. Austell he'd have to keep his eyes skinned or he'd bump into the Cornish Alps. He wouldn't be likely to land there.'

'What are you talking about? There aren't any alps in Cornwall.'

'Aren't there, by Jove! That's what they call 'em.'

'Do you mean *mountains*?'

'Pretty nearly. And they keep their snow all the year round. They're whiter than white. I'm talking about the china clay workings. They pile the stuff they don't want in tips running to hundreds of feet high, some of 'em. They look like the peaks of the Swiss Alps. Mention of St. Austell reminded me. That's the centre of the china clay industry. That's where the intruder disappeared. No one but a lunatic would try to land there. But there is this about it. If a pilot needed a landmark he wouldn't find a better one than these artificial mountains. They're white and they shine. Moreover, they're the only ones in the country.'

I should warn you that the story as a whole disappoints. It is set at a disused tin mine in Bodmin Moor (!) and although it is about the Special Air Police they spend the whole book on the ground. It was written in 1967, shortly before Johns' death, so perhaps he had lost his enthusiasm. Also, I am not clear whether he actually knew the site. He had his characters take six hours by road from London to Bodmin, about right with a fast car, but his idea that an aircraft might land on the A30 on the moor seems a trifle optimistic even for 1967. And his description of the moor as "rough, flat" and a "melancholy picture" with a "wearisome sameness about the scene" does not endear him to Cornwall lovers.

'2929'

Your Valley Needs You!!

If anyone wants an organised walk in the valley, we can probably - well, possibly - lay on a guide, with extra rain gratis. One such was on 23rd September last. Kilminorth Woods, near Looe in a valley a bit like ours, has Friends a bit like ours, and they asked if we could guide a group visit to show them how we do it. Well, they asked for it ...

"RIGHT YOU LOT! You WILL get your boots on and you WILL absorb the timeless beauty of this place wot is totally natural and unspoiled apart from four canals three railways two mills and a load of Cornishmen digging 'oles everywhere.

Up the Carmears Incline, Double! Pass the electric plant that of course runs on blood toil tears and sweat and sometimes water. Don't trip on the stones roots etc. they is Historical Relics. If you fall into the Wheelpit be sure to admire the workmanship on your way down. Meanwhile, you will learn how this peace and tranquillity is maintained, viz. raise merry hell at County Hall once a month and anyone wot looks wealthy is held over a leat until they agree to empty their pockets. Or you can become a Friend, then get route marched round the Valley regular in summer and bored rigid in the village hall in winter.

And today we have naming of plants. You will hobserve we 'ave plenty of wild flowers, you would get wild if you had tourists gawping at you all year round, there is no closed season in this Valley. Plus noble ancient trees lovingly cared for by the Valley Ranger with 'is chainsaw; and lastly the waterfall which in our case we have not got.

Oh yes, that is the wonderfully built Treffry Viaduct DON'T LEAN ON IT.

We walk back beside the river, where you might see an otter but not if it sees you first.

This here is the Clay Dry, a device for reducing the liquidity of foreign companies. You stick the coal in here, the hot air goes round and around, and it comes out here. Up the back is a Sanctuary, preserved for wildlife by volunteers who then get preserved as newts. The open space is a bird and bat corridor created by Network Rail.

Here we are back at the car park, spent far longer up there than you thought, the pubs have shut long ago - oh dear, how sad, never mind. All mud must be signed for. Any Questions? What is that funny joyful feeling in your hearts and minds? Ah, that is wot the Luxulyan Valley does for you, lovely boys and girls."

Co-operative venture instigated by Lyn Winter, then totally wrecked by Chris Tigg and Steve Austin.

**"Oh yes,
that is the
wonderfully
built Treffry
Viaduct
DON'T
LEAN ON
IT".**

**"What is that
funny joyful
feeling in your
hearts and
minds? Ah, that
is wot the
Luxulyan Valley
does for you,
lovely boys and
girls."**

Clay Tour 2007

The morning of 20th October saw a total of 32 people gathering at The China Clay Museum at Wheal Martyn.

As usual, the tour was hosted by Ivor Bowditch of Imerys whose encyclopaedic knowledge of the industry imparted so many facts and figures it was nearly impossible to keep up. Although there is much sadness at some aspects of the rationalisation of the industry in Cornwall and the transfer of some of the operations to Brazil; Imerys continue to invest approximately £35 million in Cornwall and there are 40 years of reserves remaining in the area. The product in Brazil is closer to the customers and has a higher proportion of material suitable for the main uses of paper manufacture.

Clay Tour 2007 - continued



Littlejohn's Pit

The itinerary commenced with a visit to Littlejohn's Pit near Bugle. When Blackpool Pit closes as part of the rationalisation programme this will be the largest extraction site remaining in Cornwall. At Littlejohn's the chief means of extraction is by means of water cannons or "monitors" which are nowadays remotely controlled. The clay is literally blasted from the working face by the high velocity water jet and forms a slurry. Any particles which are too large are either crushed to make them usable or discarded as waste. Even discarded stone may be used as a by-product for the construction industry. Littlejohn's product in slurry form is pumped to Trebal near Tresturthy for refining.

We then set off for Melbur Pit near St Stephen. This is one of the oldest china clay workings in Cornwall and started in the 1870's. At the core of this site is the old Meledor Pit which started working in the 18th century. Unlike Littlejohn's the product is extracted mechanically by face shovels and large dumpers. It is crushed and screened as appropriate into its different grades. By-products from this works include building blocks and coated stone for road making. These by-products account for some 60,000 Tonnes annually. Two million Tonnes of aggregate were supplied from Littlejohn's and Melbur for construction of the recent A30 improvement.

The next stop on the tour was the Fal Valley Refining plant close to Melbur. Here the finer parts of the product are refined into grades suitable for the respective customers such as for use in paints and paper manufacture. The processes here comprise settlement in tanks and screening on various mesh sizes. Chemicals are also added to impart or improve certain properties.

As part of the next logical step in the production process we were then taken to Treviscoe Dry. Here the product arrives in slurry form and water is first removed by natural drainage. It then passes to the compression drying stage where 'packs' of clay are pressed to squeeze the water out. This results in a moist flakey material which passes by conveyor to the final stage of drying in a vibratory container heated by gas. The vibration helps to keep the now dry product fluidised to enable it to be transported by air to storage and despatch bays. These are adjacent to the railway for loading although some product is despatched by road.

In 1951 there were 100 coal fired dries in Cornwall, many of which are still in evidence such as that at Trevanney in The Luxulyan Valley. These have now been replaced mainly by gas-fired. Imerys's energy bill in 2006 was £40 million.

Our journey then turned south towards Par Docks with a very welcome stop at the Britannia Inn for lunch provided, very kindly, by Imerys.

Par Docks were constructed by Joseph Treffry between 1830 and 1840 to provide an outlet for his mining and quarrying activities mainly in the Luxulyan Valley. It was acquired by the predecessors of Imerys in 1904. As most people will know, Par Docks is scheduled for closure, which will commence in January 2008, at least as far as china clay export is concerned, although a portion of the drying facilities will remain in operation. There is currently some import of timber. It is to be hoped that this dock can remain in operation although there are a number of alternative uses emerging.

Clay Tour 2007 - *continued*

The next stage of our journey was to be a drive through the former railway tunnel between Par and Fowey. Pinnock Tunnel was originally on the line from St Blazey to Lostwithiel via Fowey and is the longest tunnel in Cornwall. Since the closure of the railway it has been used as a haul route by Imerys and their predecessors to give access from Par to Fowey docks. Unfortunately the tunnel was, at the time of our visit, occupied by a survey team. We were therefore unable to use this route. The journey through the tunnel was to have been the highlight of the day for some on the tour – Well, maybe next year!



Fowey docks - *photo by Nick Jeffries*

Fowey Docks at the end of the branch line from Lostwithiel to Carne Point was obtained by 100 year lease from British Rail in 1968. It is one of the principal exporting docks in tonnage terms in the UK and is an excellent deep water port. Approximately 88% of output is exported. Export destinations include Russia and Scandinavia principally for paper manufacture. Most of the china clay exported arrives by rail from Rocks Dries at Goonbarrow. The remainder arrives by road from various sources.

In all this was a most informative and enjoyable day and we came away with a much greater knowledge of the china clay industry which is so much a vital part of Cornwall's economy. Once again we are indebted to Imerys and, in particular Ivor Bowditch for making this a truly memorable event. Even the weather was kind to us.

Nick Jeffries

From the Archive

On the topic of "green electricity", I came across the following item in a men's magazine published in June 1948:-

".... The Government is making a mistake in directing its appeals to save electricity and gas mainly to the so-called weaker sex. Mrs ____ has the firm idea that radio is the main source of electricity consumption in the house and recently arrived home with one of those midget "personal portables" which seem to be coming into prominence nowadays. Her idea was that what she called a "teeny-weeny set like this" could well take the place of my own 20-valve personal all-mains receiver and effect a great saving in the electricity bill. So, in one sense, it would but she seemed to have no idea of the power output to which I am accustomed. She had not considered the enormous increase in electrical energy which the makers of the midget batteries would have to use in their factories if they were to keep one regularly and adequately supplied with their products".

Other than the terminology, nothing seems to have changed in sixty years.

SH Austin

An Evening with the King

On 19 November we had a record attendance of 60 people for a talk on Joseph Treffry by Bob Lewis. After speaking for a while, he accused himself of babbling but what else could one do with just an evening to consider a man who achieved so much and whose family history extends from the year 1100 to about now? Their current home, Place, holds the record for continuous occupation by one family, since 1280.

Susannah Treffry married Joseph Austin in 1780 and Joseph Thomas was born in 1782. In the absence of a male Treffry heir he took the name Treffry on 14 February 1838.

Bob glossed over his youthful hobbies like playing politics, and discussed in more detail his achievements with his Par and Newquay harbours, railway and Fowey Consols mine with its record-holding engine. He showed us evidence that, whatever the relations between the Treffrys and Rashleighs might be, when the Viaduct was built the Carmears Leat originally drew its water from the Charlestown Leat by agreement. We were also interested to see a picture of the proposed suspension bridge over the Fowey at Caffa Mill. (Your reviewer would have liked to see more credit given to James Meadows Rendel, designer of the viaduct.)

Bob pointed out that although Joseph Treffry restored Place from a near ruinous state, he was not greatly interested in accruing wealth for its own sake and when he died, in 1850, he left a legacy of debt. However, he was the biggest employer in Cornwall and a great humanitarian by the standards of the day - he introduced the first system of sickness benefit for his staff. 10,000 people came to Fowey for his funeral.

Other Worlds Quiz

Whatever you say about J. K. Rowling, she certainly brought children's reading and fiction onto the front pages. But what do you remember from the classic tales of your own youth? Try our lighthearted - and young-hearted - quiz. No prizes, answers on the back page .

1. WHO rode into our valley in the summer of '89 ?
 2. WHAT were the occupations, or trades, of (a) John Silver (b) Captain Flint ?
 3. HOW many legs did the Famous Five possess ?
 4. WHERE did Dr Lachlan McKinnon make friends with his former rival Professor Hermanoff ?
 5. WHY did Miss Ruth Blckett refuse to use her given name ?
 6. WHEN did Bill and Ben have to say goodbye to each other ?
 7. WHERE would two Girl Guides be conversing with a bear who wore a red sweater, yellow trousers and white boots ?
 8. WHO was the pilot of the future who rose under the eagle's wing ?
 9. WHAT sort of place did Muffin The Mule call home ?
 10. IN WHICH family was Miss Virginia the youngest (and inclined to stand on her dignity) ?
-

The Valley in Autumn



*Many thanks to
member John Harris
for these beautiful
pictures of the Valley
in Autumn*





Reg. Charity No. 1090218

Your Committee

Chris Tigg,	Chairman,	01726 850072
Elaine Higman,	Vice chair,	01726 850417
John Wright,	Treasurer,	01726 852436
Roger James,	Secretary,	01726 850769
Maggie Wright,	Membership,	01726 852436
Ed Harradence,	Sales,	01726 851158
	Lynn Jeffery	
	Nick Jeffries	
	George Allen	
	Joan Farmer	
	Pauline Tigg	

We like to hear from our members, especially those who are keen to take an active role on our committee

Valley Membership EARLY WARNING

Just a reminder that subscriptions will be due for renewal from the beginning of April 2008 unless you have joined since 1 November 2007.

Reminders will be sent out with the next newsletter.

Membership fees are:

£75 for Life membership

£25 for Corporate membership

£10 for Family membership

£8 for joint membership

£6 for Individual membership

£1 for Junior membership.

Maggie Wright

Rare Hybrid

On the guided walk with Ian Bernalick on 22nd July, we discovered in one of the pastures in the valley, the 2nd record ever of a rare hybrid Hypericum. The parents are the common Square-stalked St John's-wort, and the rarer Wavy St John's-wort which only occurs in the South West. (Hypericum tetrapterum x Hypericum undulatum) It is smaller and less golden than the wavy one, leaves are slightly wavy and there are some red 'stripes' on half the petals. You really have to know the parents well before you can identify the hybrid, as the Wavy St John's-wort also has red tinges to the leaves and flowers tinged red below, and all 3 have square stems. A specimen of the suspected hybrid was later collected and confirmed by Ian.



**Rare plant
found in the
Valley**

OTHER WORLDS - THE QUIZ - ANSWERS

1. Shane (the book of the same name by Jack Schaefer)
2. (a) a cook (b) none - he was John Silver's parrot (Treasure Island by R. L. Stevenson)
3. Twelve (Julian, Dick, Anne, Georgina and Timmy the dog, by Enid Blyton)
4. On the Lost Planet of Hesikos (by Angus MacVicar)
5. Because her Uncle Jim said she was ruthless (Swallows and Amazons by Arthur Ransome)
6. When the man who worked in the garden was coming down the path (Watch With Mother by Maria Bird - BBC Television)
7. Nutwood (Rupert - in the Daily Express)
8. Colonel Dan Dare (by Frank Hampson in The Eagle)
9. His Potting Shed (by Annette Mills with the Hogarth Puppets)
10. The Bell Family (by Noel Streatfeild - on BBC Radio Children's Hour)



**How many
did you get
right?**