

## Gem Tin Mine

National Grid Reference: - SX 496 708	Parish: - Horrabridge
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Also Known As: - Walkham Valley Mine 1855; West Sortridge Mine
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**Gem Tin Mine:** - Sir, - On Saturday last this extraordinary young Mine was the scene of a considerable excitement on the occasion of celebrating the starting of a new Engine Wheel with all its necessary appendages for forking out the deepest part of the mine, which was witnessed by a numerous company of interested ladies and gentlemen from Plymouth and the adjoining neighbourhood.

Soon after mid-day the indefatigable managing Director, Mr. J. Legassick summoned the company together and gave orders for starting the ponderous machinery, which rolled round in majestic style amid loud acclamations and cheers, with a unanimous voice of a thorough success, ascribing great credit to the resident agent Captain Unsworth who directed the whole operation in such a praiseworthy manner in starting the machinery without a screw being loose or any alterations required.

Then followed the usual ceremony of naming this great development, which was christened with pleasurable eye in respect of an interested young lady present, called Lucy's Engine Shaft. Also the neat and ponderous wheel rolling round as if it would pump out riches from the bowels of creation was christened the "Elizabeth Wheel" amid loud and vociferous cheers. The principal part of the company then proceeded to the Tin Dressing Floors, and minutely examined the accumulated stock, and the scientific mode of treatment, all of which was declared to be a thorough success.

This concluded the rambles over the works, when the Mine bell rang calling all the operations from underground and at surface to a good repast of bread and cheese and strong beer, which was dealt out without stint, and good justice done to the big barrel in a short time, all seeming to enjoy the treat as if the good old mining like times had again risen from its grave.

At this stage of the proceedings the courteous managing director summoned all visitors and friends to the account house, which was well replenished with the good things of this life, and good justice done to its contents in due course. The company being seated in the most convivial style, the director occupying the chair, commenced his opening address in the most sympathetic and feeling condescension towards the labouring class, in whom he was so intimately connected as neighbours and friends through a period of more than forty years of unremitted perseverance and industry, to which he attributed his present position in life to enjoy the privilege of being able to pay every man, woman, and child a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, which was the height of his ambition; and with the present prospects before them and with the interest he held in the property they now met together to celebrate, there was no reasonable doubt in being able to maintain the same good feeling and ability to his life's end. Although he did not intend on the present occasion to say much about the property he had the good fortune to enjoy, he should in due course kindly propose the health of those practical mining agents in whom he had the pleasure of being supported on either hand who he was quite satisfied would give their decided opinion on the merit or demerits of the mine. But before he proceeded in the line just marked out and so soon as the Royal Toast were acknowledged he should call their attention to a certain gentleman who would have enjoyed himself in being with them to-day. He referred to Mr. Criper, of Tavistock, his co-partner in this rich undertaking. And he was quite sure that Mr. Criper with himself were the miner's friends. In fact his partner was one who has through his instrumentality in the depressing of mining throughout, brought to life a good industrious feeling in this neighbourhood, for which he felt himself much indebted on the present occasion.

The Royal toast being duly acknowledged, and the health of Thomas J. Barnard, Esq., his family, and the principal adventurers of the "Virtuous Lady Mine," (who are proud of the success of this adventure,) being proposed, was received with great acclamation and vociferous cheers. "For they are jolly good fellows, &c."

"The Lords of the Soil" was next proposed and responded to by the Lord's agent, Mr. Babbage, who said he was much obliged for the kind manner in which the toast of the Lords of the Soil was proposed and received, and was proud in his position to have the honour of being servant for so many years past, during which time he had the pleasure of being able to state his acquaintances with very profitable mining which

he hoped would be the result of the present undertaking, and from what he knew about it, there was not the slightest shadow of a doubt.

The health of the resident agent Captain Unsworth, coupled with the agents of the surrounding mines, was proposed and received with cheers. It was first responded to by Captain Unsworth in a most satisfactory statement on the rise and progress of the mine, in which he stated the Present Company had been in existence about eight months. During this short period every one concerned in this undertaking had been, so to speak, at his gun, so that no time was lost. There had been a considerable amount of work done in repairing the leats, cleaning out the mine, laying tram roads, making floors, erecting stamping mills and necessary buildings put up. Also a new engine wheel, set in motion this day, with a permanent line of flat-rods to "Lucy's Engine Shaft," with 10 fathoms of pump work sent down, all of which has gone to work admirably, so that I expect the water to be in fork to the bottom of the mine in a few days, when we shall have further facilities for getting tin, in addition to our former supplies, which has already amounted to nearly £500 worth in this short time, independent of all the other work herein described, with the limited number of hands employed underground. Fearing I may intrude on your valuable time, I beg to say, without the slightest doubt of contradiction that no one in the history of mining can find a parallel, seeing we have thousands of rich tin ground before us, which cannot fail to give bread to the eater and riches to the wealthy.

Captain H. Horsewill, of the Virtuous Lady Mine, in a very amusing address, which caused some considerable merriment, alluded to old Dean Swift digging in a dry season to find water in the dark side of the moon. Supposing perseverance in the right direction sooner or later to obtain success, as in the present case, saying the mine is there, the lodes are there, and the prospects are there, consequently there was no doubt in obtaining a great success.

Captain Rundle followed in the same wake, being impressed with a strong conviction that the Gem Tin Mine would be a prize of 1871.

Captain George Rowe, in a lengthy, able, and most practical speech, concluded the response, by saying that he felt exceedingly thankful to the ladies and gentlemen who had so courteously drank his health, coupled with the much respected friends surrounding the festive board, and was only sorry that he was not better qualified in expression to give vent to his feelings, believing as he did that the Gem Tin Mine would, no distant period tell its own satisfactory tale, and prove to the wide world, the riches it contains, of which he had already on paper expressed his candid opinion.

Mr. W. Cole, of Tavistock, Mr. G. Rowe, of Plymouth and several other gentlemen also expressed their strong conviction, judging, from the rich stones of tin then brought up from underground – that the Gem Tin Mine could not fail of being a success.

A vote of thanks was accorded to the ladies present, and the chairman, which being acknowledged the meeting separated in time for the last train. A Visitor from Plymouth. 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1871.

Tavistock Gazette: Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 1871.

**Wheal Gem Mine:** - Sir, - I was quite surprised on Friday last to read your valuable Journal, giving such an elaborate statement of the influential meeting of ladies and gentlemen at the Gem Tin Mine on the 20<sup>th</sup> inst., so ably describing the progress, and position of the undertaking. From which I was induced, accompanied with other friends, to visit the spot without the slightest disappointment, in fact I must confess that its satisfactory statement was very encouraging to me, and cannot fail to be so to others, who, have the prosperity of the neighbourhood in behalf of the working class at heart that, this once celebrated district is not without its remunerative contents, when prosecuted in the right direction to which I am a thorough convert, and am quite certain so far as mining capabilities are concerned, that many other selected mining properties are also on the eve of showing its fruitful contents, to the enterprising public, which I shall refrain from naming on the present occasion being perfectly satisfied that prosperity is chiefly obtained by dint of perseverance, and good choice, coupled with economical directorship, as in the case before us, on which there is no further need of comment, feeling assured that it would be such a fruitless attempt, as to paint the *lily* or scent the *rose*.

Consequently I shall content myself on expressing my great surprise on seeing in full operation the new scientific Patent Ore Dresser, or Buddle, erected by Captain C. Collom, which revolves around very steadily, and is supplied by a numerous quantity of water pipes and brushes, for cleaning the stuff, which by one single process is increased in value from 5 lbs. of tin to the ton of stuff, to 116 lbs of tin to the ton

of stuff. This is the result of my own personal observation, being solicited by the agent to take samples for my own guidance.

The mine is situated half a mile from the Horrabridge Railway Station. Tourist, and all persons desirous of witnessing one of the great mining sciences of the day, can by a very pleasant and picturesque ramble, behold this wondrous machine in full operation.

One who has visited the Mine.

Tavistock Gazette: Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1871.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - The water is in fork throughout the mine, nearly to the bottom of the Lucy's Engine Shaft, where a few feet of accumulated stuff is required to be cleared up in order to get to all the workings in full operation, which will be accomplished in a few days from this date, when additional hands will be employed stoping upon the lode, both east and west, of the winze, which is put through from the deep adit to the 14-fathom level below, where a great quantity of good tin ground is available for stoping away without any further labour cost, in opening up additional sections for working the lode to advantage. The water is not sufficiently drained to affect a passage through the cross-cut at the bottom; consequently I cannot describe the character and value of the north lode, at this level or the extent of drirage either east or west. The lode in the stopes in the bottom of the deep adit level and going into the hill is 4 feet wide, yielding good quality tin stone throughout, and in places worth over £20 per fathom. The north lode, at the same level is opened up nearly 20 fathoms in length, showing a very kindly appearance being 3 feet wide, worth in places from £10 to £15 and £20 per fathom. There is a great quantity of tin ground already laid open in different parts of the mine, and only requires additional stamping power to place this property in the highly remunerative position.

George Rowe. 6<sup>th</sup> June 1871.

Tavistock Gazette: Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June 1871.

**Gem Tin Mining Company, Limited:** - A prospectus has been issued of the Gem Tin Mining Company (Limited) with a capital of £25,000, in shares of £5, to purchase and work a mine near Tavistock.

The Times: Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1872

**Wheal Gem Mine: - Fatal Accident** - An inquest was held at Horrabridge, on Tuesday, on the body of a lad named Richards, about eight years of age, who was drowned in the River Walkham, on Sunday. James Richards, a miner, stated that the deceased was his brother, and resided at Horrabridge. On Sunday morning last he went to work at Wheal Gem Mine. Between twelve and one he crossed the river to meet the deceased with his dinner. After taking it from the deceased, witness re-crossed the river, and finding it unsafe told the deceased not to cross. Witness then balanced the plank, and told the deceased to come across, but when in the middle of the plank he looked back, and fell into the river. Witness tried to save the deceased, but as the current was strong by the recent rains, it was of no avail. The body was afterwards found by the Weir Head entangled in a bush. A verdict of "Accidental drowning" was returned.

Tavistock Gazette: - Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1872.

**Gem Tin Mine: -**

Devon Post: Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October 1873.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - The various points of operations in this mine are said to be looking well, and are more productive than for some time past. It is to be hoped this will yet prove a productive and profitable adventure.

Tavistock Gazette 12<sup>th</sup> December 1873.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - At a meeting of adventurers, held in London on the 15<sup>th</sup> inst., it was unanimously resolved, that the secretary be authorized to receive on behalf of the Company, loans to the extent of £1,000 from the shareholders, and to give his undertaking that the same be repaid out of the first assets of the Company, or debenture bonds be given in exchange, if created.

Tavistock Gazette 24<sup>th</sup> April 1874.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - A petition has been presented to the Stannary Court for the winding up of this mine. Tavistock Gazette 1<sup>st</sup> May 1874.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - In the Court of the Vice-Warden of the Stannaries. Stannaries of Devon. In the Matter of the Companies Act, 1862, and of the Gem Tin Mining Company Limited. Notice is hereby given, that a petition for the winding up of the above-named Company by the Court was on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of April instant, presented to the Vice-Warden of the Stannaries by Frederick Warwick, of 25, Bucklersbury, in the city of London, Public Accountant, a shareholder in and also a creditor of the said Company; and that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Vice-Warden, at the Law Institution, in Chancery-lane, in London, on Wednesday, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of May next, at twelve o'clock at noon. Any contributory or creditor of the Company may appear at the hearing and oppose the same, provided he has given at least two clear days' notice to the petitioner, his Solicitor or his Agents, of his intention to do so, such notice to be forthwith forwarded to P. P. Smith, Esq., Secretary of the Vice-Warden, Truro. Every such contributory or creditor is entitled to a copy of the petition and affidavit verifying the same from the petitioner, his Solicitor, or his Agents, within twenty-four hours after requiring the same, on payment of the regulated charge per folio.

Affidavits intended to be used at the hearing, in opposition to the petition, must be filed at the Registrar's Office, Truro, on or before the 9<sup>th</sup> day of May next, and notice thereof must at the same time be given to the petitioner, his Solicitor, or his Agents. - Dated Truro, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1874.

Hodge, Hockin, and Marrack, Truro, Cornwall; Agents for Alexander Kerly, 14, Great Winchester-street, London, Solicitor for the Petitioner.

The London Gazette: 5<sup>th</sup> May 1874.

**Gem Tin Mining Company:** - In the Court of the Vice-Warden of the Stannaries. Stannaries of Devon. In the Matter of the Companies Acts, 1862 and 1867, and of the Gem Tin Mining Company Limited. By an Order made by his Honour the Vice-Warden in the above matter, dated the 13<sup>th</sup> day of May instant, on the petition of Frederick Warwick, of 25, Bucklersbury, in the city of London, Public Accountant, a contributory and also a creditor of the said Company, it was ordered that the voluntary winding up of the said Gem Tin Mining Company Limited be continued, but subject to the supervision of the Court, and with liberty for creditors, contributories, or others to apply to the Court as occasion may require. - Dated Truro, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1874.

Hodge, Hockin, and Marrack, Truro; Agents for Alexander. Kerly, 14, Great Winchester-street, London, Solicitor for the Petitioner.

The London Gazette: 26<sup>th</sup> May 1874.

**Gem Tin Mine:** - The Gem Tin Mining Company Limited. – The Liquidator of the above named Company with the concurrence of the parties claiming a lien on the property, now invites Tenders for the Purchase of the Property belonging to the said Company, comprising the Company's Interest in the Lease of the Mine known as **The Gem Tin Mine**, in the parish of Whitchurch, in the county of Devon.

The Mine has been extensively opened, and is complete with all necessary machinery; one great advantage being the whole is worked by water-power, and the cost of steam machinery saved.

The whole will be sold as a going concern, free from any lien or incumbrance. The plant consists of water-wheels, pitwood and fittings in the shafts and levels, stamping and dressing machinery, wagons, tram-road, and all necessary appliances, tools, &c., for carrying on an extensive Mine.

Tenders to be sent to the Liquidator, as below, on or before the 26<sup>th</sup> day of September 1874. Permission to inspect, and conditions of Sale, to be obtained of Mr. Fredrick Warwick, Liquidator, 25 Bucklesbury, London, E.C.

Tavistock Gazette: Friday 18<sup>th</sup> September 1874. Repeated 25<sup>th</sup> September 1874.

**Wheal Gem Tin & Copper Mine:** - In the parish of Whitchurch, near Tavistock, Devon, for sale. In the matter of the Companies' Acts 1862 & 1867, and of the Gem Tin Mining Company, Limited.

Hancock & Sons, Auctioneers, St. Austell, have received instructions to sell by public auction, on the above mine, on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> August next, at half-past twelve o'clock p.m. Subject to such conditions

as will be then and there produced, the interest of the said company in the said mine or sett together with valuable Machinery and Materials thereon, comprising: - 1 x 19 ft. water-wheel 6 ft. breast, with 2 x 14-head iron stamps axles, frames, &c, complete; 1 x small water-wheel; 24 fathoms of 5 in. drawing-lift, about 425 fathoms iron bridge and other rails, 32 fathoms of ladders, 2 shears; 2 large pullies, crab-winch, balance bob, 50 fathoms 1½ in. iron flat rods with pullies and stands, about 60 fathoms 2¾ in. steel wire rope, 20 fathoms 4 in. rope, about 20 fathoms 14 in. launders and stands, patent buddle, 3 round buddles, other buddles, 20 fathoms skip-road and skip, dressing tools, dressing-floors, drags, &c, complete; timber, 5 iron tram wagons; beam, scales and weights; new and old iron, shaft gig, smiths' horse, patent smiths' bellows, anvil, vice, miners' and smiths' tools, barrows, double and single iron blocks, and a quantity of other useful materials, the account-house furniture, &c, also the tin stuff and leavings.

Further particulars may be obtained on application to the agent on the mine; the Auctioneers, St. Austell, Cornwall; or to Mr. Frederick Warwick, the Official Liquidator, 25 Bucklersbury, London. Dated Royal Exchange Assurance Office, St. Austell, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1875.

Tavistock Gazette: Friday 6<sup>th</sup> August 1875 p.4/b

**Walkham Valley Tin Mine:** - We understand the rich little tin sett under the Grenofen Viaduct on the railway between Tavistock and Plymouth, lately known as the Gem Tin Mine, has been taken up and will be at once worked by a company, under the title of the Walkham Valley Tin Mining Company, Limited. The property has a great advantage in its free waterpower, for all purposes of hauling, dressing, stamping, &c., afforded by the River Walkham, running directly through the sett; this is an important feature. The mine has been well reported on; it was worked on a small scale previous to the recent depression and produced a large quantity of good quality tin. Some of the best known copper lodes of the district also pass through the sett, these as well as the tin lodes, will be opened up and worked upon by the new company. Pending the change in times, all the machinery, water wheels, stamps, and necessary appliances, have been retained on the mine, so that the present company will be enabled to start work immediately, and it is hoped in a week or so at most, to clean out the levels, open up and work on the lodes, and develop another valuable mine in a district already fortunately rich in mining enterprises, which are now receiving deservedly their share of public attention. Locally the Walkham Valley Mine is thought very highly of, and is known to be a valuable property, miners of the neighbourhood being ready to work the sett on tribute at once.

Tavistock Gazette 6<sup>th</sup> February 1880.

**Tavistock District:** - Mining in the Tavistock district, our reporter writes, presents a much more helpful appearance at the close of 1880 than at its commencement. Miners are at last looking forward to a return of the old prosperity. Many mines have been re-started. **Wheals Maria & Fortescue**, which were closed some years ago owing to a dispute between the lords, were re-started, under the name of Devon Great United, with much ceremony by Lord Claude Hamilton, Mr. Peter Watson christening the pumping-engine. The **Collacombe Down Mine** has been re-started under the name of the **Devon Copper & Blende Mine** by a limited company, with a capital of £50,000, subscribed in a million shilling shares, a novel way of including those who cannot usually afford to become adventurers in mines. **East Crebor**, the **Gem Tin Mine**, Old Gunnislake, the **Lady Bertha Mine**, the **Anderton Mine**, and the Prince of Wales Mine have also been re-started during the past year. Two new setts have been granted – the **Langstone** and the **West Crebor Mines**. **Devon Friendship**, hitherto known as **Wheal Friendship**, has been transferred by Messrs. Lanyon, the late owners, to a company. Since the depression it has only been worked for arsenical mundic, and a large number of men have been employed in manufacture of arsenic; but now it is intended to work it for copper as well as arsenic, and the adventure promises to be a very profitable one. This extension of the works will necessitate the employment of much additional labour. Arrangements are it is said, being made to re-start **Wheal Jewel**, and the **Furzehill Wood Mine** will probably be started before many months have passed. All the mines in the neighbourhood are now being worked more vigorously than for the past five or six years, and hundreds more men are now employed than were at the commencement of the year; a considerable advance has also in some instances been made in the wages paid. In most of the mines only the old lodes have been worked, but in a few new ones have been developed. Certain points of the **Devon Great Consols Mine** have lately been developed; at Crebor Mine developments have been made in the eastern part of the sett on the same lode which has

hitherto been worked, and considerable quantities of ore are being raised from it. A portion of the East Russell sett has been added to Old Wheal Russell, and as formerly the lode produced considerable quantities of ore, it is probable similar results will follow. The Bridge lode, which was cut at Bedford United two months ago, increases in size as depth is attained; while at Old Gunnislake the same lode is still being developed. The **Wheal Edgcumbe Manganese Mine** has also been re-started, and at **Ramsdown** and **Hogstor** the manganese mines are still being developed. The **Monkstone Mine** has recently been sold, but a company has not yet been formed to work it. Altogether mining in this district presents a very cheerful appearance, three mines having already re-entered the dividend list; and in order to celebrate this revival the principal mine adventurers in the neighbourhood will on Tuesday next meet at a dinner at the Queen's Head Hotel, when the best means of making the revival permanent will be discussed. It is thought the outcome of the dinner will be the establishment of a mining institute at Tavistock.

Western Morning News: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1881.