

## **Kresen Kernow guide to researching mining in Cornwall**

Kresen Kernow's hard rock mining collections are Designated as internationally important as they tell the story of Cornwall's mining history, and include everything from insights into the workings of the early 'miners' parliament' (the Stannary) to designs for the technological inventions which made Cornwall famous the world over. They include gems such as letters from engineers Matthew Boulton and James Watt complaining about Richard Trevithick, detailed cost books outlining every miner's job and pay, accounts and correspondence from some of the richest families in Cornwall, and letters vividly describing the lives of migrant miners overseas. Watercolour plans show the honeycomb of shafts and tunnels which run through the Cornish earth and evocative photographs bring to life the reality of working in these, while newspaper articles and official reports detail the tragic disasters which sometimes befell those that did.

This guide will help you research miners, mine workers, mine owners, accidents and technical information using sources held at Kresen Kernow. As well as original records we also have a huge range of books and journals that might be useful for your research, particularly if you are just starting out.

### **1. I'm interested in finding out about individual mines and mine workers**

#### Stem/wage/cost books (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards)

These records name individual miners and their pay received. We hold these for only a small number of mines, including detailed costbooks for Levant mine in St Just-in-Penwith.

#### Mine plans for individual mines and area plans 18-20<sup>th</sup> century (MRO collection)

Mainly underground plans of abandoned mines in Cornwall, some also show the surface, with engine houses and mine buildings. Kresen Kernow is home to more than 35 000 plans of more than 500 different mines.

#### District Valuation plans and Domesday books c1911 (DV collection)

These consist of annotated, Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, with reference books for each parish, compiled for land tax purposes. The books give details of the land owners and occupiers of each rated property. The maps are OS second edition 1:2500 scale.

#### The Cornwall Military Survey of 1522, TL Stoate, 1987

This includes the Tinnars Muster Roll of 1535 section starts on page 138 and names all tinnars and owners of tinworks who were mustered, with their armour, under the lord warden. It is indexed by surname, parish, hundred, Stannary and Duchy manor.

## **2. I'm interested in finding out about mine managers and owners**

### Stannary Court documents, 1703-1923 (STA collection)

The Stannary Court of Cornwall and Devon dealt with mining related disputes, bankruptcy and petitions. The records can contain names of ordinary miners who may have had shares in the mines.

### Mining Index by Justin Brooke (X745 collection)

This is an index compiled c1970-1990 listing the mine/company name, arranged by parish. It also includes a typed description of each mine, usually with names of mine captains/senior staff.

### Cornish Mines by R Burt, P Waite, and R Burnley, 1987

Arranged by name of mine, includes amounts of ores produced, ownership of mine and manager's names, plus the annual number of employees. Mainly covering the mid 1800s to 1913.

### Biographical index of Cornish mine workers, compiled by FL Harris, 20<sup>th</sup> century (AD894/9/1-5)

List includes mine captains, managers and pursers.

## **3. I'm interested in finding out about a mine in a specific place**

### The Metalliferous Mining region of South-West England by HG Dines, 1956

Gives a brief outline of the location of workings and the types of minerals extracted, includes sketch maps. The Index to mines is in the second volume.

The reference numbers of each plan link to our MRO collection (see below).

### Mine plans for individual mines and area plans, 18-20<sup>th</sup> century (MRO collection)

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### Mines and Miners by AK Hamilton Jenkin, 1961

A series of 16 volumes published locally. Contains index divided into different mining areas with plans and Ordnance Survey grid references. This collection complements the information in Dines' publication as it includes lesser-known mines.

### Ordnance Survey maps

First, second and some third editions, dated c1878, c1907 and c1933. 6 and 25 inch scale (for first and second editions), useful for looking for building details e.g. shafts, engine houses, chimneys etc.

### Tehidy Minerals Limited 1647-1978 (TEM collection)

This company was set up in 1919 and acquired the mining rights of the Basset estate of Tehidy and the Robartes estate of Lanhydrock. The mineral papers contain their tin streaming activities mainly in the Camborne/Redruth area and other documents

related to mining in mid and west Cornwall, including many setts (legal arrangement used to manage tin extraction).

#### **4. I'm interested in technical information**

##### Mitchell brothers, mining engineers of Redruth, 1647-1978 (M collection)

This firm built equipment for mines and the collection includes records of mining setts, photographs, plans, engineer's drawings and other related material.

##### Harvey's of Hayle 1687-1960 (H collection)

The Harvey family were iron founders and mine engine builders, and their collection includes plans, share certificates and ledgers.

##### Tehidy Minerals Limited, 1647-1978 (TEM collection)

Mining records, mostly for the Illogan-Camborne-Redruth area, including letter books, ledgers and cost books.

##### Bolitho, 1703-1930 (BL collection)

Includes records of smelting houses, tin ledgers, plans and coinage accounts.

##### Trestrail, 19-20<sup>th</sup> century (TL collection)

Engineers of Redruth, includes plans of mine engines and machines.

##### South Crofty, 1834-1970s (SC collection)

Records of South Crofty (the last mine to close in Cornwall) and Levant mines.

##### Holman-Climax, 1684-2014 (X542 collection)

Accounts, photographs, minutes, deeds, leases, annual reports and other company records of business that made mining tools.

##### Henderson Bull collection, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries (HB collection)

Plans of Cornish mines.

#### **5. I'm interested in researching a mining accident**

Use our catalogues to search for a specific disaster or accident (e.g. search under the mine name, such as Levant) or search our newspaper collections for reports of particular disasters.

##### *Cornish Mine Disasters*, Cyril Noall, 1989

#### **Other resources**

##### *Gazeteer of Cornwall*, R Symons, 1884

This includes a glossary of mining terms, an alphabetical list of mines, promoters of mining and a list of tin and copper smelters in UK. Also includes a geological map and article on mineral wealth.

### Photographs

Our extensive photographic collections include images taken both above and below ground from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Historic Environment Record also contains aerial photographs and huge image collections and archaeological reports related to mine workings and buildings.

### Boulton and Watt letters (AD1583 collection)

Letter books, mainly by Matthew Boulton and James Watt – pioneers of the industrial revolution - or their agents to Thomas Wilson, their agent at Chacewater, and papers concerning steam engines and their use in mining.

### Mining Journal, 1835-1932 and 1964-2000

Articles in the Mining Journal help put Cornwall's mining history in its international context.

## **Websites**

### [www.balmaiden.co.uk](http://www.balmaiden.co.uk)

Database containing the names of thousands of 'Balmaidens' (women and girls who worked above ground and in tin streaming)

### <http://projects.exeter.ac.uk/cornishlatin>

Database by Sharon Schwartz of miners migrating to South America

### <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/nocomico/>

British Geological Survey mining plans portal, a GIS searchable database of mining plans with their repositories and reference numbers.