

WHEAL JANE

THE FINAL MINING YEARS

John Peck

Wheal Jane was one of the greatest mines of the huge complex of workings in the Chacewater area in West Cornwall. Worked from the mid eighteenth century principally for tin – arsenic, copper, silver and zinc were also extracted. As with many of Cornwall's mines, Wheal Jane suffered the vagaries of the rise and fall in world commodity prices, closing and re-opening at various times. But throughout the centuries it had witnessed the Cornish hard rock miner at work, forging their place in what has become a cornerstone of Cornwall's historic legacy: mining.

A re-opening of Wheal Jane in 1969 coincided with the arrival in the area of photographer John Peck who was asked to take photographs of the mine for an exhibition to include images taken of both underground and surface workings. While on this assignment an accident occurred at the mine and John was asked to record the site for evidence. From this time on he became the 'official' photographer to Wheal Jane, recording all aspects of the work there. It is these unique photographs that appear in this book.

Taking photographs in such extreme conditions requires patience, skill and a breadth of experience born only of actually working underground.

Equally important is gaining the trust of the miners themselves, not only in their co-operation in effecting the best images, but in their confidence that the photographer will record, with honesty, the exceptional challenges of their work. That John Peck fulfilled all these requirements is witnessed in the superb photographs appearing in this book. The high regard in which he was held by the miners is evidenced by his photographs of their meetings and demonstrations, angrily protesting the proposed closure of the mine; events at which photographers from the media were not welcome!

In 1992 pumps at Wheal Jane were switched off once again and all that remains are the memories of those who once worked there and these remarkable photographs, vital documents recording its last years and its mining legacy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

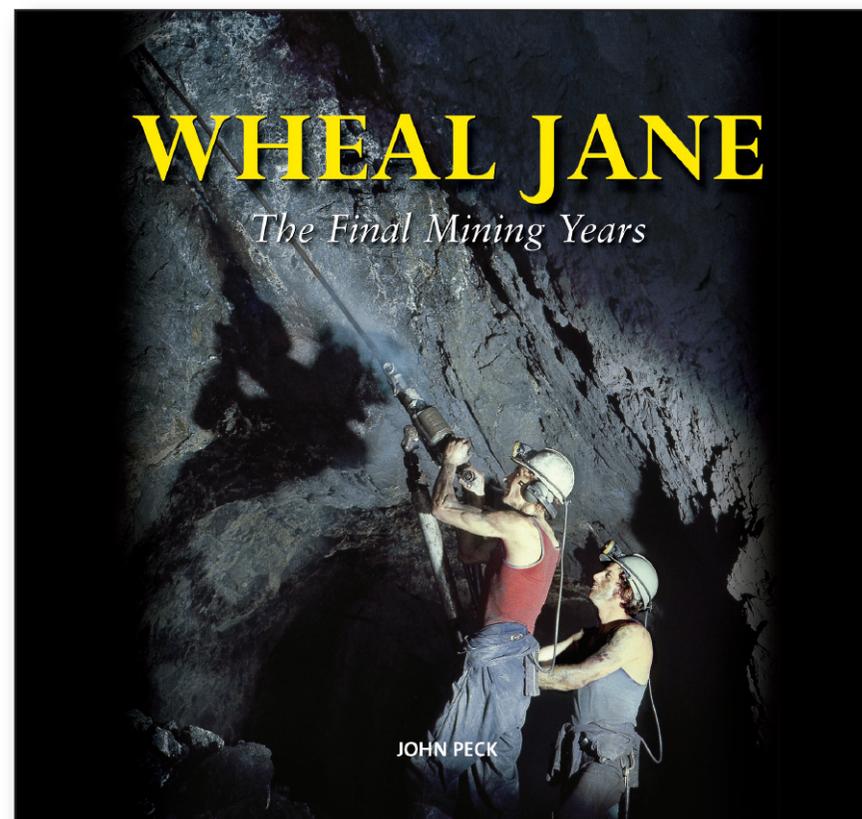
John Peck is a professional photographer (now retired) based near Chacewater in Cornwall. His previous book, privately published, is *Painting a Mine with Light*.

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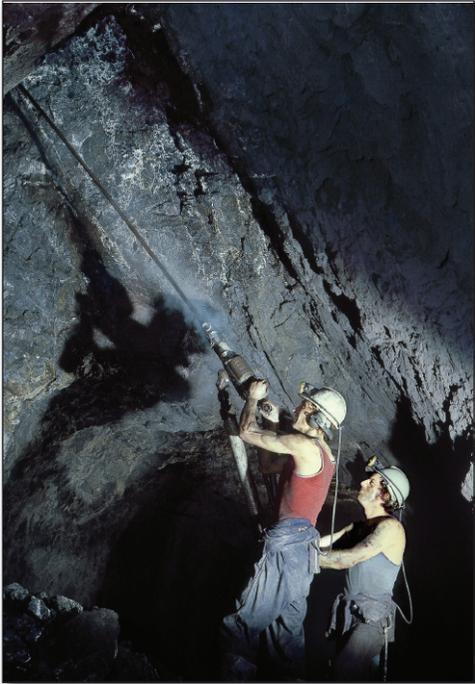
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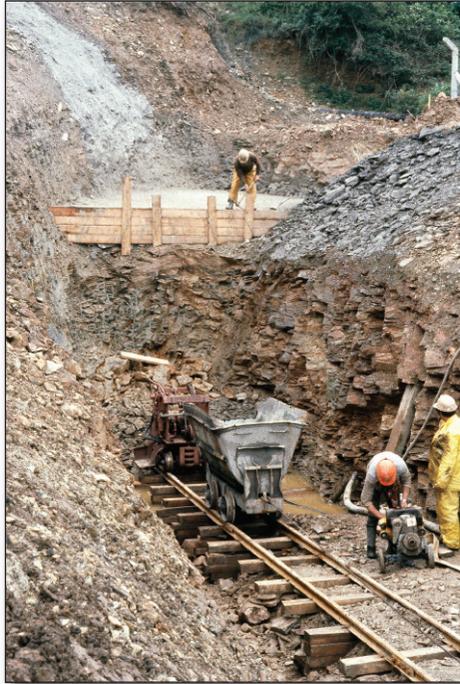


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WHEAL JANE - THE FINAL MINING YEARS



Underhand stoping in B lode Wheal Jane



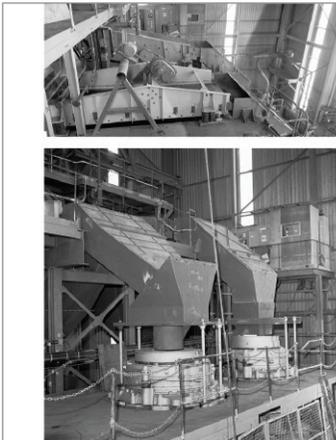
The ground is being prepared for the new portals of the County Adit.



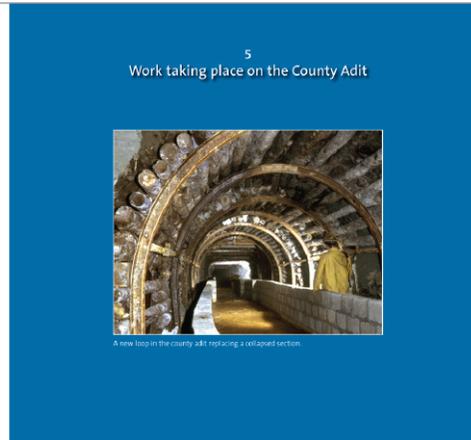
A raise bore machine in operation in the mine. This is a rare underground photograph as it was taken using only available light.

Right: Miners walking through the streets of London. They are heading towards Hyde Park Corner, where the official demonstration will begin.

Example of a double-page spread.



These photographs show the completed primary crushers ready for use.



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Work taking place on the County Adit



A new loop in the county adit replacing a collapsed section.

