

## THE STORY OF WHEAL GUSKUS IN THE PARISH OF SAINT HILARY

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### INTRODUCTION

The Cornish tin and copper mine known as Wheal Guskus (sometimes spelt Guskes, Guskas, or Guskis) appears to have been almost completely neglected by industrial historians and industrial archaeologists. It is not mentioned in the indexes of standard works on Cornish mines such as Barton\*<sup>1,2</sup> and Hamilton Jenkin\*<sup>3</sup>, although the latter does mention it in connection with its neighbour Wheal Friendship. Collins\*<sup>4</sup> includes Guskus in his Alphabetical List thus:-

"GUSKUS MINE, St. Hilary. - 1853-6, sold 947 tons of copper ore for £4672, and 1857-66, sold 8180 tons of copper ore for about £36,000. Afterwards worked with the adjoining Wheal Anna as Wheal Guskus and Anna (or Wheal Friendship), which from 1852-66 sold 753 tons of black tin."

This is misleading, as will be seen below. Dines\*<sup>5</sup> gives a description of the physical layout of the mine. There are numerous contemporary reports on Wheal Guskus in *The Mining Journal*, *The Royal Cornwall Gazette* and *The West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, and from these a partial (and not altogether truthful) story of the later years of the mine can be obtained.

The main sources for the history of Wheal Guskus are two collections of papers, one in the Cornwall Record Office (the Johnstone, or more correctly the Hawkins, papers) and the other in the National Library of Wales (the Druid Inn papers). The former collection is in bundles which are (as bundles, not as individual papers) listed in a catalogue; there are about 20 bundles which are relevant to Guskus, containing several hundred papers. The latter collection has never before been sorted, and out of the several thousand papers, mostly referring to Welsh mines and all forming part of the letters and papers of the Francis family, about 100 have been identified by the present authors as relating to Wheal Guskus. This group of papers covers the period 1850 to 1858, but with a heavy preponderance of the period 1850 to 1853 during which Capt. Henry Francis was managing the mine. The papers in the Cornwall Record Office largely exclude

this shorter period. In giving references to the Druid Inn papers, the initials DI will henceforth be used; for those in the Cornwall Record Office, the initials CRO and the catalogue number of the bundle.

Wheal Guskus was a fairly small and not very successful mine which had an independent existence only from 1850 to 1858. It lay just to the south-west of Relubbus, in the parish of St. Hilary, about six miles to the east of Penzance. The grid reference of the Engine Shaft is SW 563 315 and the Guskus stamps (or stamping mills) were at SW 568 317. The mine was based on two lodes intersecting at the place where the Engine Shaft was made. Martyn's Lode ran NW to SE, and was known by this name long before Wheal Guskus existed as such\*6. The other lode was called Guskus lode during the operation of Wheal Guskus\*7, but may have been the same as the Halamaning Lode, shown in a diagram by Henry Francis in 1840\*6.

The sett was "very extensive, being above a mile in length and from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile in width"\*8. There had been previous mining in this sett, for in 1850 the new company was clearing an old adit level "driven west into the hill from Relubbus Main River (i.e. the River Hayle) about 6 fathoms above high water mark ... as soon as the adit level is cleared out there can be but little doubt of finding the old workings under the addit carried down as deep as the old workers could go without Machinery."\*8

The adit was almost certainly at grid reference SW 566 317. There is some confusion among the various diagrams and maps of the lodes, but this adit lay on a lode running through the site of the Engine Shaft and this was probably what we have referred to above as Guskus Lode, although marked as Martyn's Lode on one map\*9.

To the north of the Guskus Sett was Wheal Friendship, which had been operated, on and off, under this name for a long time\*10. In 1840, Henry Francis, writing to the landowner (or 'lord') John Hawkins, says\*11: "Capt. William Richards who is the Manager at Wheal Friendship, is applying for a piece of ground south of the Relubbus Road leading to Penzance, formerly in the Halamanning Sett, Trelease Land in the line of the Wheal Friendship Lode ...". This piece of ground is undoubtedly what later became Wheal Guskus. It seems unlikely, in view of Francis's report of 1850 quoted above, that this application was granted.

In view of this it is interesting that Wheal Guskus terminated its independent existence in 1858 by being absorbed by Wheal Friendship\*12, which by then had been renamed Wheal Anna\*13. From 1858 there were no separate accounts for Guskus, and the 8180 tons of copper ore sold from 1857-66, quoted by Collins (see above), must refer to Wheal Anna (including Guskus).

## THE HISTORY OF WHEAL GUSKUS AS AN INDEPENDENT MINE – THE FRANCIS REGIME

Wheal Guskus started in 1850 as a venture of the Francis family. A list of shareholders\*14 dated 9th January 1851 shows that of 592 shares taken up (out of 1000 advertised in April 1850), the following (totalling 395) were held by members of this family:-

Henry Francis	100
Henry Francis jnr	50
Matthew Francis	100
Absalom Francis	100
William Francis	25
James Francis	20

No other shareholder held more than 40; it is therefore clear that at this stage the mine was a family affair.

The family belonged to Cornwall and was centred around Goldsithney, in the parish of Perranuthnoe, near Marazion, with other branches in Gwinear and Gwennap.

Henry Francis was born in 1784 and had been a mine agent and mining engineer from at least 1813; and reports prepared by him in 1831 exist\*15. Matthew, born 1810, was his eldest son and was a very active mine agent and speculator. George Francis, who apparently held no shares in Guskus, born about 1794, was Henry's brother. It was these three - Henry, Matthew and George - who were most concerned with operating Guskus during its first three years.

Evidently some agreement to permit the 'adventurers' to work the Guskus sett had been reached before April 1850, but the legal document (or indenture) was dated 31st May 1851 and in it Christopher Henry Thomas Hawkins granted "licence liberty and authority to work and search for metals and minerals in and over certain ground and premises in the parish of Saint Hilary in the County of Cornwall" to Henry Francis and Matthew Henry Francis, their executors, administrators and assigns, subject to certain provisos, the sett to be called Wheal Guskus\*16.

The papers concerned with this period are mostly letters written by Henry to Matthew, and show clearly that Henry was the local manager for Wheal Guskus, but that Matthew, away in Wales and concerned primarily with mines there, or in his London office, was nevertheless the real policy maker. Henry employed George as his agent on the site, but had little confidence in him\*17. George took charge for a time when Henry was ill or otherwise unable to attend to local affairs.

Clearing of the old adit had started before 12th April 1850\*18. Progress was good; on June 6th Henry wrote "We are getting on well in Whl Guskes and by the Stones of Tin left by the Old men in The Deads I have no doubt but we shall have a good Mine."\*19 By August, Henry was planning\*20 a water wheel for

pumping and was tempted to modify a wheel available from "Capt. Tom" (probably Thomas Richards of Hayle). This wheel was not used, and one was built specially, for in April 1851 Henry wrote\*21 "We were kept back for want of Timber a little in building the wheel ..... - the whole Pit nearly finished." Flat rods were used to transmit the power up the hill to the pumps, and Henry's rough sketch\*22 of the arrangement is shown in Fig. 1. He thought of 1½ inch iron for the rods, and "thought the Line of Rods would be best carried on, a little above the surface on Pullies, cast very light, about 20 Inches Diameter and only being put just high enough to clear the Ground ..... ." The installation was completed in September 1851\*23, and on 1st October 1851 Henry reported\*24 "We have got out the water in this mine" and "The Wheel and Machinery work quite to our satisfaction, and we shall be able to work cheap as we have a good stream of water to do the work instead of consuming coal to do so."

There had evidently been sceptics in the district as to the design of the water-wheel and pump system, for Henry's brother George (who had evidently taken over temporarily during Henry's absence) wrote\*25 to him "The Relubbus people - who said the whole stream would not even move the flat rods - now says it is one of the seven wonders - as it works with little or no water - Wm Stephens walked in the both launders this morning - and it only covered the soles of his boots ....."

The stream of water used for the water wheel was carried in a leat from some point considerably higher up the main river. This "Guskus Watercourse" remained in use for other purposes, by that name, for many decades, as disputes over rent up to at least 1894 show\*26. Henry Francis negotiated the use of the water in 1850 and reported\*27 on 14th December of that year: "we have completed our arrangement for the water at £50 pr Annum & not more than Engine Mens Wages". The rent was, of course, payable to Hawkins, the landlord.

Although the engineering work and the opening up of the mine were going well, the amount of tin being obtained during 1851 was still small, so that there was practically no income to offset against the costs. By mid-1851 the costs had aggregated about £450 for labour and £350 for materials\*28, and the financial situation was bleak. Henry wrote a series of pathetic letters\*29 to his sons trying to get some cash to pay the men and other creditors, and suggested selling some of their shares in Welsh mines in order to raise cash. In July he wrote\*30 "I wish we could sell the Mine, for I cannot tell how we shall be able to get on with our Merchants Bills else."

Somehow or other Henry managed to keep things going, and the tin production began to improve\*31. Tribute working was being demanded by the men\*32 and had clearly been introduced by February 1852\*33, also tutwork at least a month or two earlier. Copper ore as well as tin was being obtained\*34.

It was at last possible to get more money invested in Wheal Guskus, and not only did Henry sell all his shares and Matthew some of his, but the number of

shares was increased. An undated list\*35 of shareholders, probably February 1852 or soon after, shows 1024 shares allocated, but only 230 remained in the Francis family, and the controlling interest of 522 shares was held by a Mr. Peter Stainsby. Thomas Richards unsuccessfully applied for 750 shares\*36.

The passing of control to Stainsby raised difficulties and unpleasantness for Henry who was now merely Stainsby's Agent. Evidently Stainsby brought in a Capt. Reed whom Henry had to consult, and in May Stainsby had written harshly to Henry regarding a debt he had incurred\*37. This greatly upset Henry\*38 and his relationship with Stainsby became an unhappy one. Henry was paid the very low wage of £3.10.0 per month; "I believe less than any other Agent is paid" he complained to his sons\*39, "not to be paid more than £3.10.0d. per month is almost like a warning to quit". In September, Reed told George Francis that he, Reed, had been appointed Manager, and Henry told Matthew he would not stay on as "a common agent"\*40 and made it clear his financial circumstances were very poor. At this time, the mine was making £200-£300 a month from sales of tin and copper ore\*41,42.

The Capt. Reed brought in by Stainsby was Mark Reed according to the signature on reports in the Mining Journal throughout 1853 and until January 1854. We may note in passing that he was followed by a Capt. James Reed until at least January 1855 and that from Sept. 1855 until September 1856 reports were signed by George Francis, and finally until the demise of the mine as a separate entity by James Richards. The reports are so numerous and so comparatively uninformative that they are not individually cited in our references.

The name Mark Reed is interesting. There was a Capt. Mark Reed who had been manager of the great mine Wheal Vor before its closure in the late 1840's and who was one of the Captains in the re-opened Wheal Vor after 1852 until about 1858\*43. It is just possible that this man was for a short time in charge at Wheal Guskus, but very unlikely, since Henry refers to Reed as having less experience and less standing than himself\*44.

A list of shareholders\*45 dated 11th October 1852 shows the number of shares increased to 10,000, with 1915 held by the Francis family, but none held by Henry. Stainsby had 5,535. This increase must have been a devaluation, foreshadowed at the company's meeting in June 1852\*46, intended to enable further calls to be made for money; certainly a call of 6/- per share was made in December 1853, and another also of 6/- in May 1854. By not responding to the first call the Francises forfeited 836 shares in October 1854\*47. It had also been announced\*48 in July 1853 that £3,000 in calls had been received during February, March and April 1853. It is therefore clear that by May 1854 all possible capital (nearly £10,000) had been raised.

Henry Francis's health deteriorated early in 1853, and although he continued to work at Guskus for some time, he died on 8th July 1853\*49. It can be imagined that the unpleasantness and worry of his last year had hastened his death, although there is no statement to this effect.

There is little evidence of further activity by the Francises at Wheal Guskus. James Francis continued to keep an eye on what was going on there and reported to Matthew\*50,51. George Francis was the agent at Guskus for about a year, from about Sept. 1855 to September 1856, as we have already noted, and in addition to numerous reports in the Mining Journal, there are extant some private reports of his\*53,54. There is thereafter no further evidence of the family's connection with the mine.

Whatever may be said of the other members of the family, there is little doubt from the evidence of his letters that Henry Francis was an upright, honest and conscientious man, kindly towards others, trying hard to get his family debts paid, and with a sincere love for his family.

It should perhaps be added that Henry never worked on a full-time basis at Guskus. From 1833 (if not before) he was mine agent or consultant to the estate of C.H.T. Hawkins, and retained this part-time post at an annual salary of £25.4.0. right up to his death. In this capacity he reported to the landlord on many mines, including Wheal Friendship, and many of his annual expense accounts\*55, as well as the reports\*56, survive. Some of the reports have already been quoted in published literature\*57.

#### THE POST-FRANCIS REGIME

The story of Wheal Guskus during the Francis regime has been obtained almost entirely from family letters. It is necessary to continue the story after 1853 on the basis of formal mine reports and letters of a professional character. Most of these involve Henry Trethewey of Grampond (usually as addressee) who was steward of the Hawkins estates in Cornwall. Little of a personal nature is manifested in these documents. It is rather curious that the collections of papers concerned (the Johnstone papers in the Cornwall Record Office) have an almost complete blank during the Francis regime at Guskus. We thus have a discontinuity of source material: only the adventurers' and miners' side from 1850 to 1853; only the landlord's side after 1853.

On 25th April 1854, Capt. Thomas Richards (of Hayle) sent Trethewey a report\*58 on Wheal Guskus which was evidently taking stock of the mine afresh. As we have not so far described the underground working of the mine, it seems worth while to quote Richard's description fairly fully. He refers to the intersection of Martyn's Lode and Guskus Lode at the Engine Shaft, and says "As much as can be seen already by the ground wrought appears on Martyn's Lode more productive west of the intersection with Guskus Lode, while Guskus Lode has proved so far best to the east of Martyn's intersection, and I will commence particularly upon Martyn's Lode - The 10 fm level driven east of Engine shaft 10 fms, lode rather small. The 10 west of Engine shaft yielded good bunches of Tin & Copper ore for 115 fms in length, the present end poor - The 20 driven east of Engine shaft a few feet, but west 110 fms in Copper & Tin, but the last 20 fms have not been of very much value. The 30 driven east 20 fms upon a small

lode & poor, but I think the main part of the lode is further north - The 30 driven west 62 fms which have yielded a fair quantity of tin & copper - The 40 driven east 17 fms, lode poor, and west 35 fms - to begin from shaft they had good Tin, but not so good of late .... The 50 driven east 3 fms, in a promising lode and west 8 fms in Tin ground - but lode small."

"Guskus lode - The 10 driven east 84 fms in bunches of tin - and at present poor - The 10 driven west 80 fms bunches of tin in places, but not regular - The 20 driven east 68 fms, the first 30 in tin ground, of late not so good - The 20 driven west 44 fms, to begin in good lode, but not the last 20 fms - and poor. The 30 driven east 64 fms, in good lode for long distance but present end poor - The 30 driven west 50, tinny lode in places, poor in the end. The 40 driven east 25 fms, the first 18 fms in tin ground lately not so good - The 40 driven west 35 fms in tin ground for 16 fms, lately unproductive - The 50 driven east 7 fms in large lode, with little tin, west 3 fms & poor."

This shows the extent of the work done largely under the Francises. It was clearly still a fairly small mine of not very good quality. Richards reports 24 men employed on tutwork, and makes suggestions for improving performance. He estimates that "for the next 3 months they are likely to sell 18 to 20 Tons of Black tin say £1400 worth, which will be short of the Cost several hundreds", and states "they have laid out £12000 already, beside £6000 copper & tin sold - or about these figures".

A more complete picture of manpower at Guskus in Aug. 1854 is given by a note\*59 showing 22 men on sinking shafts and driving levels, 30 men stoping at various levels, and 16 men on tribute. But by November of that year, Richards is pleased to report\*60 that "they are employing a good tutwork force 38 men compared with the last inspection only 18 men - the absence of full tutwork has been the means of working out the Tin & Copper faster than new could be discovered ..... but I think with a full number of exploring tutwork force the mine can be made to pay its expenses and perhaps in 1855 make a little profit - at the same time it must be worked in a spirited manner."

Capt. James Reed, the manager or agent at the mine, reporting\*61 to Stainsby the Chairman of the Wheal Guskus Mines Co., in October 1854, stated that 64 persons were employed underground, and 69 men, women and children at the surface.

It was in 1854 that a steam engine was erected at Wheal Guskus. There is a dearth of information on this matter, but a manuscript note of accounts written on the back of a printed company report\*62 shows a 50-in engine costing £1200, and Capt. Reed's report states "The engine is working well".

Right at the beginning, in 1850, Henry Francis had stated\*63 that "If the ground is found to be sufficiently productive, a small Steam Engine will be erected to pump the Water, in which case the Water Wheel will Stamp the Tinstuff." It is clear from another statement in Capt. Reed's report\*62 - "The stamps and

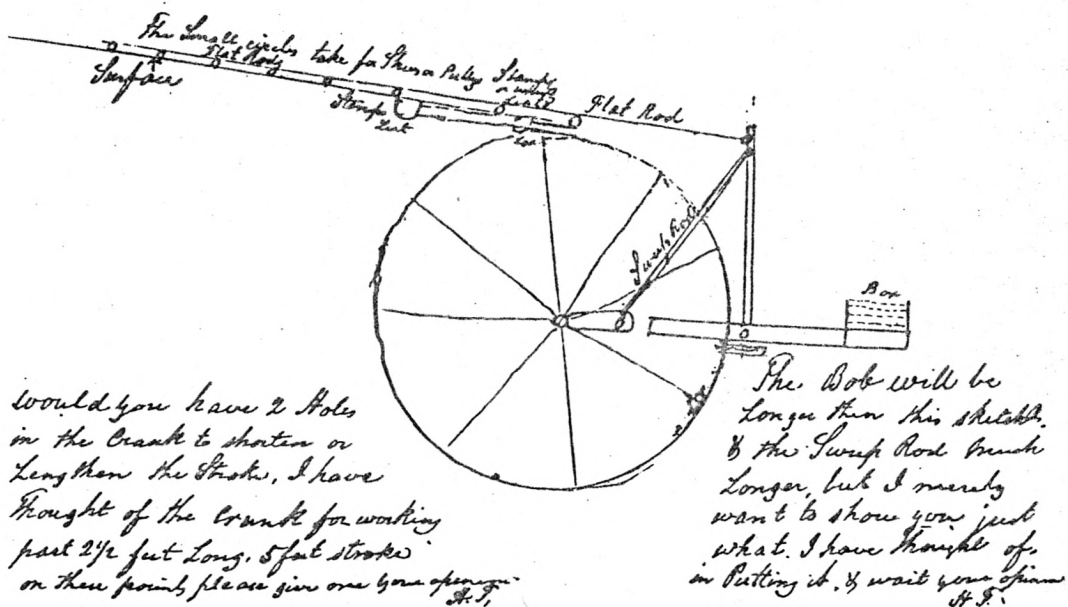


Fig. 10: Henry Francis's sketch of the Stamp's waterwheel

calciner are also in good working order" - that a calciner as well as stamps were erected. Henry's sketch of 1851 (reproduced in Fig. 1) shows that the stamps were intended to be driven by the water-wheel. It is known that the stamps had not been erected in mid-1852\*64, for Stainsby was then pressing for them to be built, and Henry was opposing the proposal. However, 24 heads of stamps were working in January 1854\*65. In the printed accounts\*66 for Aug. 1854 is an item "By sale of old Water-wheel £55.0.0". It is therefore not quite certain that the stamps were water-driven after the steam engine was built. Certainly the stamps were remote from the engine, for Capt. Richards wrote\*67: "They have a good stamps and are putting a road from the Engine direct to it". This may have been a tramroad, for in January 1854 Mark Reed had referred to "having the tinstuff trammed from the mine"\*65. It is most probable that the stamps were driven by water all along and that the "sale of old Water-wheel" was either irrelevant or indicated a replacement, for in March 1857 Thomas Richards wrote\*68 "the water stamping mill quite adequate to return a large quantity of tin ore."

Another matter of some interest is that of the waste of land at Guskus. Richards wrote\*69: "if they paid £100 pr acre for land destroyed as is very common at present, I think they would have hesitated to make so much waste." Trethewy had a survey\*70 made of "Land wasted by mining Operations in Connection with Guskas mine in the parish of St. Hillary" by John Goldsworthy in April 1854.



This showed a good deal of land used for the Guskus watercourse (over half-an-acre), some used for the stack and flues of the calciner (over half-an-acre also), nearly two acres used as dressing floor, and £10 of damage of land by "Arsenick Smoke". This last item is interesting, as the amount of arsenic produced could not have been large; the accounts for May 1854 show 20 tons of arsenic sold (for £37.0.8) but this was probably very exceptional.

The adventurers were very loath to pay the dues to the landlord, and in Sept. 1855 the latter wrote\*71 from London to his steward Trethewy: "-- I am not disposed to give up the dues or arrears of dues: but will postpone calling upon the Adventurers for the same until the mine pays cost - If the mine does not pay cost & is abandoned by the Adventurers, I will give up all arrears of dues. Meanwhile, the water charge (being a fixed charge) to be paid as it becomes due: and all arrears on the same, now, or as soon as practicable." It is possible that Guskus did pay cost for a short time, for George Francis reported\*72 progress in the mine in January 1856, with good sales "which I hope will leave a small profit". Richards passed\*73 Francis's letter on to Trethewy with the comment ".. I think ... they have not an atom of claim for foregoing the dues."

However, this comparative prosperity was short-lived, for in October 1856 George Francis reported\*74 that Guskus was in a bad state - "nearly to a close the Labourers not having been paid for two months & the advrs appear to be in every persons debt ..." George Francis had his appointment as Agent terminated in September 1856, "because I could not keep up the quantity of Tin" as he reported to Trethewy\*74. He was succeeded by James Richards.

A good deal of the difficulties of this period resulted from the financial failure of Stainsby early in 1855. Not only did this leave Wheal Guskus without a financial leader, but Stainsby had apparently misappropriated Company moneys to the extent of several thousand pounds\*75. The scale of his failure was large - about £43,000 - and it was not only the Guskus Company that he defrauded\*76. It was hoped that a Mr. Betteley would become the Chairman, but he withdrew from the company, which thereafter was managed by a small committee of shareholders, the membership rotating regularly every three months. By 1855, the Secretary and Purser of the company was Alfred Jeffree; he was apparently something of a rogue also, and was denounced in 1859\*77 by the company's solicitor J. Berry.

Strenuous efforts were made to resuscitate the mine in 1857. In March that year the company meeting received enthusiastic reports\*78 from no fewer than three independent mining experts, namely Capts. John Dale, John Carpenter and J. Pope. The first-named reported that "The mine was without doubt a good property, but it had been shamefully worked previously..." In May, Trethewy recorded\*79 66 people working on the mine. But by Feb. 1858 Richards had to report\*80: "Very little is being done here ..... the number of tutworkmen being very few, unless a sudden improvement it is to be feared that the workings may

be abandoned.” On 7th April 1858, Trethewey noted\*81 that a distress was to be made on the materials at Guskus Mine and that possession had been taken by the Hayle Company (Messrs. Harveys) for the sums of £1,196.2.8. and £1,400.15.8., although it was stated by a shareholder in a letter to the Mining Journal\*82 that the machinery and plant had been seized and sold by the Stannaries Court. The captain was then James Richards who valued the materials at £2500, and Mr. Berry (the solicitor) was going to try to dispose of the mine. On 3rd May the Truro solicitor J.G. Chilcott wrote\*83 to Trethewey to say that Messrs. Taylors “will buy the materials at Guskus provided Mr. Hawkins will grant them a sett at 1/20th dues ...” On 7th May, Mr. J.P. Bennetts (Taylors’ agent) wrote\*84 to Trethewey: “I purchased the Materials at Wheal Guskus on Tuesday last for the sum of £1850 - ..... Please be good enough to take the necessary steps to revoke the existing sett as soon as possible, that we may resume the working of the mine under a new Grant as agreed on ...” On 9th July Bennetts wrote\*85 to Trethewey asking if they might be put in possession of Guskus “that we may commence operations”.

The existing Sett (in the name of Henry Francis and Matthew Henry Francis) was revoked on 24th July 1858\*86.

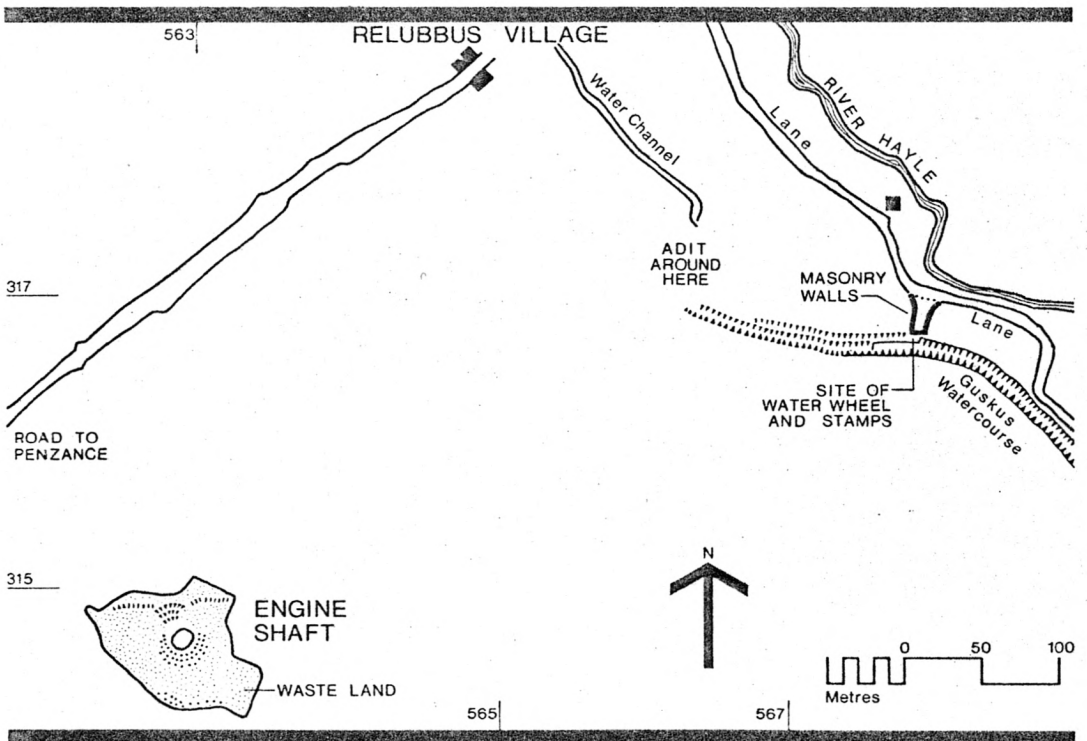


Fig. 11: Site of Wheal Guskus

After this Wheal Guskus was worked as part of Wheal Anna, but still little success was achieved. In 1859 and 1860, Bennetts reported\*87 that the combined mines were very poor, and in 1862 he said\*88 that they intended to take up the pitwork. Nevertheless, they evidently did not do so, for in 1865 it was reported\*89 that 10 months' sales had been approximately Black Tin £700, Copper Ores £205, together with small amounts of lead and arsenic.

The stamps at Guskus had been sold in 1861 to the Wheal Gurlyn Adventurers\*90 and later transferred to the West Great Work mine, and were still known as the Guskus Stamps when their sale\*91 was again being negotiated in 1886, and again when enquiries\*92 were being made about renting them in 1894. The Guskus watercourse was still known as such at least up to 1894\*93. The Guskus sett as such was being negotiated for\*94 in 1882 and 1887. So the name lingered on.

The fate of the Guskus engine is not known, but someone was enquiring\*95 in 1862 if the "Engine House at Whl Guskus" was for sale.

#### STATISTICS OF ORE OUTPUTS FROM WHEAL GUSKUS

Hunt\*95 gives the following data for the years 1853-8, which seem to line up quite well with the story of the mine given above:-

Year	TIN		COPPER ORE	
	Weight (to nearest ton)	Value (to nearest £)	Weight (to nearest ton)	Value (to nearest £)
1853	22	1696	236	1545
1854	77	4950	273	1316
1855	106	6792	260	1026
1856	58	4100	178	795
1857	15	1080	—	—
1858	7	446	—	—

For the later years when Guskus had been absorbed into Wheal Anna, Hunt's data has to be used with caution. This is because there was another Wheal Anna in the Perranzabuloe district, well removed from the parish of St. Hilary. Indeed, for the year 1860, Hunt shows a "Huel Anna and Guskus" in the Perranzabuloe district, but this is believed to be a mistake.

## WHEAL GUSKUS TODAY

There are few remains of Guskus to be seen now. The Engine Shaft still exists as an open hole in the ground, very deep, and being totally unprotected is also very dangerous. The site of the stamps remain as a stone-walled enclosure, and the Guskus watercourse is easily recognisable behind the stamp site and for a few hundred yards eastward. It was evidently a large watercourse, perhaps 6 ft. wide and several feet deep from the top of the earth banks, the latter now forming good sites for badgers' and foxes' homes. There are no remains of buildings or equipment. The adit has recently been filled in.

The layout of the site remains is shown in Fig. 2, based on the 25-inch Ordnance Survey map.

The complete absence of buildings and equipment at Guskus contrasts greatly with some of the neighbouring mines. For instance, the nearest neighbour, the Tindene Mine, still boasts the walls of a fine engine house and part of the wooden pump-rod.

## CONCLUSIONS

The story of Wheal Guskus shows that it was, at best, only a marginal mine from the point of view of potential profitability; it would probably not have kept going as long as it did if it had not been for the rising price of tin in the 1850's. As the price rose over 50% from 1850 to 1857\*97, there was some inducement for investors, and for the companies to carry on in the face of difficulties. The demise of Guskus in the early 60's coincided with a fall in the price of tin. To this extent, its history is logical. It is probably typical of many small mines of the period. There is no suggestion that it was badly managed except towards the end. One thing which makes its story attractive is that so much is derived from family correspondence with its simplicity and frankness, as compared with the more usual business papers. The contrast between the realism of private reports and the optimism of those published in the press is often startling.

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- 7 See letter from Capt. Thomas Richards to Henry Trethewy, 25th April, 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 8 Printed report to shareholders by Henry Francis, 12th April, 1850, DI.
- 9 CRO, DDJ 1316.
- 10 See, for example, papers dated 1819-20, CRO, DDJ 1884.
- 11 Letter of 7th August, 1840, CRO, DDJ 1308.
- 12 Inferred from letter of John P. Bennetts to H. Trethewy, 7th May, 1858, and from Bennetts's reports in 1859 and 1860 on dues from Wheal Anna and Wheal Guskus in a combined account, CRO, DDJ 1391.
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- 14 DI.
- 15 Report on Wheal Prosper, 2nd Feb. 1831, CRO, DDJ 1386.
- 16 Recited in document revoking agreement, 24th July, 1858, DI.
- 17 This is implied in a letter from Henry Francis to Matthew, 11th Nov. 1851, DI.
- 18 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 12th April, 1850, DI.
- 19 Letter from Henry to 'My dear Children', 6th June, 1850, DI.
- 20 Letter from Henry to Absalom and children, 12th August, 1850, DI.
- 21 Letter from Henry to Absalom, 17th April, 1851, DI.
- 22 With letter from Henry to Matthew & Absalom, 9th March 1851, DI.
- 23 Letters from Henry to Absalom, 5th Sept. 1851, and to Matthew, 19th Sept., DI.
- 24 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 1st Oct. 1851, DI.
- 25 Letter from George Francis to Henry, 12th Oct. 1851, DI.
- 26 Various papers in CRO, DDJ 1396.
- 27 Letter from Henry to Matthew & Absalom, 14th Dec. 1850, DI.
- 28 Henry's rough notes, DI.
- 29 DI.
- 30 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 23rd July, 1851, DI.
- 31 e.g. letter from George to Henry, 20th Dec. 1851, DI.
- 32 See letter from George to Matthew, 4th Nov. 1851, DI.
- 33 Letter from George to James Francis, 4th Feb. 1852, DI. This letter (like some others) indicates that James, who was Henry's youngest son, born 1820, was playing some part in affairs, but what part never becomes clear.
- 34 Report of inspection (by Henry?), 6th Feb. 1852, DI.
- 35 DI.
- 36 Undated letter from Matthew Francis to Thos. Richards, DI.
- 37 Letter from P. Stainsby to Henry, 31st May, 1852, DI.
- 38 Letter from Henry to Matthew and Absalom, date illegible, DI.
- 39 Letter from Henry to 'Capt. M. or A. Francis', 21st August, 1852, DI.
- 40 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 16th Sept. 1852, DI.
- 41 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 18th Sept. 1852, DI.
- 42 Letter from Henry to Matthew, 9th Oct. 1852, DI.
- 43 D.B. Barton, 'A History of Tin Mining & Smelting in Cornwall', D. Bradford Barton, Truro, 1967, p.107.
- 44 Letter from Henry to Matthew & Absalom, date illegible, DI.
- 45 DI.
- 46 *Mining Journal*, 19th June, 1852, p.294.
- 47 Report of meeting of shareholders, 20th Oct. 1854, DI.
- 48 *West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser*, 1st July, 1853.
- 49 Parish Registers (also gravestone), Perranuthnoe, Cornwall.
- 50 Letter from James Francis to Matthew, 16th March, 1854, DI.
- 51 Letter from James Francis to Matthew, 20th May, 1854, DI.
- 52 e.g. *Mining Journal*, 15th Dec. 1855.
- 53 Report by George Francis to Thomas Richards, 7th Jan. 1856, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 54 Letter from George Francis to H. Trethewy, 3rd Oct. 1856, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 55 CRO, DDJ 1381 and 1387.
- 56 e.g. CRO, DDJ 1308.

- 57 e.g. H.L. Douch, 'East Wheal Rose', D. Bradford Barton Ltd., Truro, 1964, pp. 27 - 36.
- 58 CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 59 Note of 24th August, 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 60 Letter from Thomas Richards to H. Trethewy, 13th Nov. 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 61 Printed report (with accounts and minutes of meeting of 20th Oct. 1854), 17th Oct. 1854, DI.
- 62 Report of Wheal Guskus Mine Co. meeting, 22nd May 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 63 Printed report to shareholders by Henry Francis, 12th April, 1850, DI.
- 64 Letter from P. Stainsby to Henry, 31st May 1852 and Henry's reply, 3rd June, 1852, DI.
- 65 Mining Journal, 14th Jan. 1854, p.23.
- 66 Report of Wheal Guskus Mine Co. meeting, 20th Oct. 1854, DI.
- 67 Letter from Richards to Trethewy, 25th April 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 68 Letter from Richards to Trethewy, 24th March 1857, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 69 Letter from Richards to Trethewy, 25th April 1854, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 70 CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 71 Letter from Hawkins to Trethewy, 24th Sept. 1855, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 72 Letter from George Francis to Thomas Richards, 7th Jan 1856, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 73 Letter from Thomas Richards to Trethewy, 9th Jan. 1856, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 74 Letter from George Francis to Trethewy, 3rd Oct. 1856, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 75 Mining Journal, 15th Dec. 1855, p. 809.
- 76 Mining Journal, 5th April 1856, p. 221.
- 77 Mining Journal, 8th Jan. 1859, p. 23.
- 78 Mining Journal, 28th March 1857, p. 223.
- 79 Note 'Taken from the Book at the Mine May 6th 57 by A.H. Trethewy', CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 80 Letter from Thomas Richards to Trethewy, 20th Feb. 1858, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 81 CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 82 Mining Journal, 26th June 1858.
- 83 CRO, DDJ 1388
- 84 CRO, DDJ 1391.
- 85 CRO, DDJ 1388
- 86 Document in DI.
- 87 Documents in CRO, DDJ 1391.
- 88 ibid
- 89 ibid
- 90 Letter from John Bennetts to Trethewy, 8th July 1861, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 91 Documents in CRO, DDJ 1396.
- 92 ibid
- 93 ibid
- 94 Documents in CRO, DDJ 1396.
- 95 Letter from Philip Floyd (to Trethewy?), 19th July 1862, CRO, DDJ 1388.
- 96 R. Hunt, 'Mineral Statistics...', Longman for H.M.S.O., for years concerned.
- 97 See D.B. Barton, 'A History of Tin Mining and Smelting in Cornwall', D. Bradford Barton, Truro, 1967, p. 110.
- 98 From B. Earl, 'Cornish Mining', D. Bradford Barton Ltd., Truro, 1968.