



**Large
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WHEAL MARTYN

CLAY WORKS

**Heritage
Ability**



This booklet is intended to be used with an A3 map. Please ask at reception if you do not have the A3 map.

Hello and welcome!

The Cornish china clay industry, over 250 years, has produced some 170 million tons of china clay from deposits across the county. Seventy per cent of this output has been exported, making the industry an important contributor to the national economy.

1 - Indoor Discovery Centre

Engage with our interactive displays.

This is where you can test your understanding of local dialects, try your strength against the village tug-of-war team and meet a Victorian kettle boy.

The museum describes the processes involved in the clay extraction. Unlike other types of clay, china clay is not found in an immediately usable form. It is part of a crumbly white rock, which is decomposed granite. The clay is washed out of the rock and the water is pumped out of the pit and left to settle in tanks.

2 - Flat Rod Tunnel

Can you squeeze yourself through the long tunnel?

Not originally built for human traffic, you will have to crouch as you walk through!

The tunnel was built to take the flat rods through the hillside and on to the pit.

Beyond the tunnel the rods were replaced by cable. Today the route the flat rods took is marked by posts. Small insects and caterpillars are popular with the Nuthatch birds that visit here.

3 - Pit View

Follow a woodland walk to the Pit View overlooking modern machines in action in the working clay pit. This huge working pit is still alive with activity today and is operated by Imerys Minerals Ltd. There are monstrous machines at work and, if you are really lucky, you get to experience the 'blasting' of the rock face with dynamite!

Two hundred years ago the area would have been moorland with a few small farms scattered around it. Today's giant pit is a result of open cast mining for china clay and is the combination of two separate smaller pits which have now expanded and have joined together.

The clay was washed out of the pit sides with high pressure monitors. The clay slurry then accumulated in the pit and was pumped out to the settling tanks.

4 – The 18 foot Water wheel

Our water wheel at Wheal Martyn was crucial for the movement of clay slurry from the pits to the settling tanks and demonstrates the innovation of the people who were involved in its creation.

The wheel was originally built in about 1902 by John Lovering, along with a slurry pump, connected by flat rods and a steel

wire. Together the wheel and slurry pump were used to move clay slurry to the settling tanks higher up the site and the pump could lift 26 gallons of clay slurry per stroke. This working complex of wheel, flat rods and slurry pump is the only working example in Cornwall. The slurry pump is the only surviving pump of its type out of an estimated 200 which existed throughout the clay industry in Cornwall.

5 – The Settling Tanks

Our settling tanks once played a very important role in the clay industry and today they're home to a newt or two!

The sand and mica settle out, leaving china clay, which is drained off and dried.

Mica is a shiny silicate mineral with a layered structure, used as a thermal or electrical insulator.

6 - The Crib Hut

Here at Wheal Martyn one of the most popular places for people to visit on site is our crib hut, which would have housed the Kettle Boy.

A Kettle Boy would have been the youngest male on the site, but had an extremely important job - to collect and boil water for the clay workers' tea, heating their pasties and running errands. The starting wage in

the 1880s was about 6 pence a day and most boys would start work once they had left school, at the tender age of only 14, although many started younger.

Crib for the miners was what we now call a lunch break. It was a little place where the miners could go every day after a long morning to warm up and eat their delicious Cornish pasties. Working 6 days a week for 52 years, the average miner would have eaten an astonishing 16,224 pasties in his lifetime!

7 - The Transport Hut

Wheal Martyn is home to beautiful vintage vehicles. Transport of the finished products was crucial. There are vintage commercial vehicles including:

- **1934 ERF lorry**
- **1926 Peerless lorry**
- **Clay wagons**
- **1899 Lee Moor tramway locomotive**

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1102489)**



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